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A Journal devoted to the study of the inter-relation of the
Christian Revelation and modern research

Editorial

The Editor regrets the delay in the appearance of this issue of the Journal. An eye operation for cataract, domestic difficulties, a further change of address and delay in receiving papers for publication have made it impossible to get the "copy" to the printer at an earlier date.

We apologise to Dr. J.A. Walter of the School of Humanities and Social Science, University of Bath, for the misspelling of his name on the cover of our last issue.

Christian Parapsychology. We are informed by Mr. Leslie Price (1 Devonshire Gardens, London, W4 3TW) that *The Christian Parapsychologist*, of which he is Editor, is arranging for an international Conference to be held at Digby College, Roehampton, London, from Wed. 30 Aug. to Fri. 1 Sept. 1978. Information can be obtained from the Conference Secretary, ICCP, St. Mary Abchurch, London EC4N 7BA. Papers, which may deal with any aspect of Christian parapsychology ranging from christian assessments of current secular parapsychology and non-Christian psychism, to studies of paranormal aspects of the Christian tradition, are invited. For details apply to the Conference Secretary.

News & Views

RETURN OF THE DEAD

The possibility that in rare cases those who die are reincarnated (in Jn. 9:3 Jesus did not refute this possibility) is apparently supported by the occasional birth of a mathematical or musical genius. A recent book (*Nadia: A Case of extraordinary drawing Ability in an autistic Child*, Academic Press, 1977, £6.25) tells the story of an autistic girl whose drawings from the age of 3½ "show a grasp of three-dimensional form and perspective, ... vitality and movement entirely beyond child art".

Commenting on our review of Petteward's recent book (this VOLUME p. 172), Dr. H.T. Laycock of Pietermaritzburg, Natal, South Africa, writes: "Not long ago I attended extramural lectures at the University here on Parapsychology by a certain Dr. Poynton. Possession was one of his 'hobbies' and he quoted remarkable cases he had investigated personally. Eg., an Indian teenage girl walking with her family in a Durban street suddenly 'recognized' another family on the opposite pavement. She insisted on crossing over to talk to these people who were complete strangers and it was quickly apparent that she knew all sorts of intimate details about them that were quite unknown to her own family. A little later she went to stay with this other family and for a time she took the place in it that had been occupied by a teenage daughter who had recently died. The whole phenomenon was investigated in detail by Dr. P. and his assistants who were forced to conclude that the spirit of the dead girl had taken over the body of the live girl and enabled her to remember things and people that belonged to her former life. This apparent possession only lasted a few weeks and after that things reverted to normal."

There are many good points made on this and related problems in John Hick's *Death and Immortality* (Collins, 1976). Some hundreds of alleged instances of reincarnation have been investigated in which memories of supposed previous lives are

'remembered'. But the vast majority have been found only in cultures in which reincarnation is accepted as a fact. It seems not unlikely, therefore, that when in such cultures children hear their elders talking about previous existences, their imaginative faculties are set to work. In cases where accurate knowledge of supposed previous lives is encountered, telepathy may be involved. In most cases the 'memories' are those of children: with advance in years they are soon forgotten.

As for the apparently compelling arguments in favour of the return of the dead in the séance room, Hick reminds us that the phenomena of spiritualism run parallel to experiences in Graeco-Roman times, yet in ancient times no claim was made that the dead were involved: instead the 'spirits' claimed to be gods and demons.

On the whole the resemblances between the phenomena described by the Neoplatonists [such as Iamblichus and Michael Psellus] and those recorded as occurring in the *séance*-room today appear sufficiently numerous and striking as to afford *prima facie* ground for the assumption that the facts underlying the two sets of records are of the same order and referable to similar agencies... [And yet] with all the parallelisms I have enumerated there is associated one fundamental difference, viz that what the spiritualists attribute to the activity of a discarnate human mind the Neoplatonists attribute to gods and daemons" (from E.R. Dodds, *Jour. Soc. Psy. Res.*, 1931-2, 27, 220).

Another point is that even quite ordinary people, when hypnotized "are able to enter wholeheartedly into all sorts of often strange roles - imagining that they are riding bicycles or talking to men from Mars, or even that they are themselves from Mars, etc. The 'information' which they are acting out has in this case been suggested to them by the hypnotist, and the hallucinated individual then devotes his own dramatic powers to sustaining the role (for example, that of a visitor from outer space) and uses his intelligence and inventiveness in responding to tests and challenges".

There is evidence that telepathic powers are enhanced in the hypnotic state and that mediums can hypnotize themselves. If the dead are present in the séance room, we might expect that they would be able, on occasions, to describe in detail, what it is like to be in the world beyond. This detail, however, is nearly always missing. Oliver Lodge's *Raymond* is a rare exception, but even so no details of the heavenly streets etc. are given and all that is said is related to previous

experience on earth, even to the point of individuals smoking cigarettes and factories to make them. This can be interpreted (as Hick points out) to mean that the spirits have no conscious experience when they are not in contact with the medium and are in fact parts of the medium's unconscious mind. (An impersonation theory by non-human spirits might also explain the reluctance to describe a mode of existence which would reveal the fraud.)

ORIGIN OF LIFE

The Haldane-Oparin theory of the origin of life has been widely accepted in scientific circles. It assumes that the earth's atmosphere was reducing in early times, that lightning discharges or some other energy source acting on an atmosphere consisting of hydrogen, methane and ammonia produced amino-acids, purines etc. which collected in water to form a nitrogenous primeval soup in which large pre-biotic molecules were synthesized which later evolved into cells. All of which depends upon so many assumptions that faith, in no small measure, is required to generate the conviction that it is true. Nevertheless, influenced by Oparin, a vast literature has developed, with periodic international conferences, in support of the theme, numerous subsidiary hypotheses, by no means all compatible, being suggested to fill in the details.

Now, perhaps, a reaction is beginning to set in. Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe (a Professor of mathematics at the University of Cardiff), have challenged the whole scheme (*New Scientist*, 19 Nov. 1977, p. 402). There is just no evidence, they say, for the assumed large excess of hydrogen in our planet's early atmosphere — no evidence from astronomy or geology. "Indeed, an original oxidising atmosphere appears more likely, and in this case no primeval soup could have developed." The synthesis by Miller and others of traces of amino acids, nucleic acid, bases and sugars under the conditions described may have no relevance to life's origin. At best "their concentrations in primitive lakes and oceans would most probably have been too low to lead to the start of life." Furthermore there is a disconcerting lack of evidence for any large scale nitrogenous carbonaceous deposits in the oldest sedimentary rocks. "Such deposits are certainly to be expected if the soup existed for any length of time, and their absence in the geological record may be construed as evidence against the soup." (See this JOURNAL 1974, 101, 118. The absence of Prussian Blue deposits also tells against the occurrence of the frequently postulated HCN in early times.)

In recent years astronomers, Fred Hoyle among them, have been claiming that a great variety of organic compounds can be detected in space. It is claimed that formaldehyde and its polymers, which might include sugars, have been spectroscopically detected together with a wealth of small molecules and radicals, and that many of these are present in comets. The authors suggest that life did not originate on earth but in space. "Terrestrial life could well have originated about four billion years ago by the soft landing of an icy comet already containing primitive organisms."

It seems difficult to take this theory any more seriously than the Haldane-Oparin theory. If the concentrations required to generate life on earth were too low, would they not have been smaller still in space? The chemical reactions necessary for the formation of small living organisms would have required the presence of free moisture: when near the sun the water would evaporate from every speck of cometary dust on which the process is imagined to have taken place, while when too far from the sun it would have been present as solid ice only. Although there seems to be little doubt about the identification of some of the smaller radicals and molecules, there is certainly room for doubt about the complex molecules claimed. (The authors reproduce two diagrams showing the infra-red spectrum of a polysaccharide dust model and another showing the spectrum obtained from a source in the Orion Nebula: these are said to show "exceedingly close agreement", but in fact the curves do not look much alike and do not refer to the same part of the spectrum. According to a later correspondent in the *New Scientist* the orion spectrum in question is generally attributed to silicate dust).

Hoyle and Wickramasinghe close with the startling suggestion that when comet tails enter the upper atmosphere they still, even to this day, inject their forms of life into our biosphere. Hence waves of new types of influenza which from time to time inflict mankind and spread with surprising speed - a speed which was evident even before the use of aeroplanes and steamships. So the ancients were right after all in thinking that comets are the omens of disease and death.

Later, Hoyle, in delivering his Milne Lecture at Oxford (reported *New Scientist*, 19 Jan. 1978, p. 139) suggested that viruses, synthesised in comets, after descending from the sky, insert bits of their DNA into the genetical make up of the living forms on earth. This is, he suggests, the mechanism of evolution.

Ingenious!

CATASTROPHE

Interest in catastrophe is increasing, more and more space being devoted to the subject in books and journals. In an excellent work by A.E. Scheidegger (*Physical Aspects of Natural Catastrophes*, Elsevier, 1975) the author suggests that the almost total lack of interest in the subject until recently was due to the failure of specialists to be interested in one another's fields. Engineers left the study of nature's phenomena to the scientists. But scientists were not much interested in unique phenomena like catastrophes which seem to them too exceptional to be of much importance. So in the end little was done. The point is of some interest. Science deals with the natural, with events which happen again and again according to laws of nature: exceptional events, both natural and supernatural, seem out on a limb.

Catastrophe theory has lately centred on prison life. (*New Scientist*, 17 Jn, p. 630 and 15 Jly. p. 140, 1976). Disorder is assumed to be related to two factors, tension and alienation, and there are two possible equilibrium values of disorder for some of the combinations of the two variables. Tension and alienation are measured by such quantities as the number of men reporting sick, requiring welfare visits, confined in the punishment wing or asking for segregation. All of which figures, substituted in appropriate equations, should make it possible, we are told, to tell when a riot will break out! The mathematicians at work on this problem are still as vague as anyone else on why riots occur. "Many find it [prison] monotonous. In this situation it is common for people to seek sensation, that is go out of their way to generate stimulation." Enlightening!

But why the new interest in catastrophe theory by prison governors? J. Rosenhead of the London School of Economics is full of suggestions. "Possibly the mathematical apparatus manages to impart a scientific authority which the social theory alone could not bear. Possibly there is a grasping at straws — in a state of confusion and where existing methods are failing, any strongly argued policy... may be preferable to none". Or is it an attempt to show that social problems are "the exclusive domain of neutral experts"?

Rosenhead comments on the change of meaning since 1968 in the word *catastrophe*. Till then it always carried negative overtones of "an unfortunate conclusion, a sudden calamity" but now it is being used by mathematicians merely for discontinuous change. As such, no doubt, it will soon invade the religious

field (conversion, God's judgment on peoples, the advents) and so help to confer an illusion of all-conquering science!

In a thoughtful article (*Nature*, 254, 381) H. Chilver discusses the importance of catastrophe thinking in modern society. Designers of machines and buildings create the lightest and most efficient structures possible, but these are the most likely to suffer from unanticipated catastrophes. Production in factories is optimized to high efficiency and low cost, but small changes in the many variables involved make systems unstable. As we pursue optimisation in systems, how are we to find the parameters to which they are most sensitive? (Chilver cites examples from construction of aeroplanes and box girder bridges in which buckling may occur as a result of small manufacturing imperfections.) As civilisation advances, so production of specialised products becomes increasingly concentrated in individual factories. We are all increasingly liable to suffer from accidents, strikes etc. which otherwise might have local consequences only. These considerations make the series of world wide disasters described in the prophetic parts of the Bible increasingly relevant to our times.

Recently the *New Scientist* published extracts from *The War Physicists*, a collection of documents relating to JASON, mostly from 1972, compiled by Bruno Vitale, an Italian physicist. (*New Scientist*, 22 Sept. 1977, p. 738). The group known as JASON is an elite group of scientists, mostly physicists, who were responsible for much of the early thinking about the electronic battlefield. Vitale speaks of "the hypocrisy of establishment physicists; their lust for power, prestige; their arrogance..." In 1976, he says, there was a catastrophe conference. "They went on for hours about the technicalities. Only three of us talked about the misuse of catastrophe theory in social science. Five years ago this would not have happened." The physicists, he says, are now trying to forget about the Vietnam war — "let us forget and get on with our scientific work."

SPIRITUAL PHYSICS

A rather long letter published under the title *Science and God*, published recently in the *New Scientist* (23 June 1977) caused some controversy. It was written by the Nobelist B.D. Josephson FRS (after whom the Josephson effect is named). He asks the very sensible question, Is it necessary that a hard and fast boundary should be drawn between physical laws relating to matter and energy, and laws relating to spiritual truths?

Science, Josephson reminds us, often starts at a purely subjective level. In the early days of radioactivity, the dark adapted eye was the only instrument available for detecting flashes of light on a fluorescent screen: only later could more sensitive and reliable detectors be made. It is quite possible, then, that spiritual experiences have external causes: they must not be rejected as subjective because "the human nervous system is the only instrument we know of sensitive enough" to respond to them.

The sensitivity of the nervous system varies greatly from person to person, but the insensitive have no right to say that what the sensitive claim to experience is illusory. The vast majority of the population can only see six or seven stars in the Pleiades but that is no reason for thinking that the few who can see more are imagining the extra ones. If this is the right approach to spiritual experiences, we need to know whether the few who are unusually sensitive can agree on what they experience: it does not matter that every member of the population cannot experience the phenomena.

The first priority is, then, to collect data of a qualitative kind. Ultimately something quantitative might emerge. God and spiritual beings have properties vastly different from the objects with which classical physics deals, but physics itself now deals with qualities far removed from concepts in vogue in the 19th century - "charm" and entities in non-ordinary spaces; are far removed from common experiences. So "A theory of God need pose no serious problems to the modern physicist (in a first approximation, at any rate)".

He then draws attention to a suggestion made by Dr. Lawrence Domash of Maharishi International University. Vacuum fluctuations occur in empty space, as predicted by the Heisenburg uncertainty principle, and they enter it into some branches of physics. These fluctuations are "absolute in nature, i.e. not connected with matter or energy" yet given the right conditions, they are capable of interacting with both matter and energy. The suggestion is that it is a specific property of life that the nervous system is sensitive to vacuum fluctuations and that these can create order. Thus "a person's thoughts are determined only in part by the self contained activity of his nervous system, and partly also by the external influence of the vacuum fluctuations" which may also be a direct cause of spiritual experience. If, in such a way, physics was able to incorporate spiritual matters, there would almost certainly be a changed concept of man's place in the Universe; his role would almost certainly be perceived to be considerably greater than the insignificant one which present science will allow."

Coming from an eminent physicist, these are interesting suggestions. Even if they could be made to foot the bill for certain mystical religions of the East, the type of religion thus brought within the orbit of physics would have no place for a personal God, or for human sin. The suggestion that the fluctuations might produce order is defended by an analogy with coherent laser light which can produce "dramatic ordering effects on the system with which it interacts" (as in isotope separation) but this argument seems to depend on the common confusion between the two meanings of the word *order* (see Denbigh, this VOLUME p. 84). The order created in the separation of isotopes is order in the sense of the order in a crystal, but mind creates order in the sense of organisation.

PORTENTS

Renewed discussion on the star of Bethlehem has been concerned in part with observations made in China in BC 4-6. It was believed in China that the activities of heaven, earth and man were closely united so that "reports of strange natural phenomena could be used to criticise authorities of state for the failure, misdirection or oppression of government".

The nova of BC 5 was visible for 70 days and was taken by certain treasonable persons to be an omen that the Han dynasty had run its course. This was at a time when the Emperor was ill, but later these people faced the death penalty for their disloyal suggestion.

Other curious portents were reported in the same year. Senior Ministers of State heard an unexplained sound of the ringing of bells in BC 5 and in the following year seven 80-foot monsters were cast up on the shores of East China. "Elsewhere the hewn timbers of a rotten tree suddenly arose of their own accord; and from another fallen wooden column there sprouted a branch shaped like a human being, strangely coloured, and bearing hair". These events were regarded by many as omens of a strange outbreak of popular feeling which culminated in BC 3 when mass meetings called on "the Queen Mother of the West" to protect them and bestow upon them the gift of immortality. (Letter from Michael Loewe of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge Univ. *Times*, Dec. 21, 1977).

It is well known in the Graeco-Roman world superstition connected with portents was widespread. It is amazing to reflect that so little of this found its way into Judaism and

early Christianity. Judging from the tone of the pagan world, one might have expected the pages of the Bible to be full of prophecies based on portents. But it is not so. Even the story of the star of Bethlehem arose, not from Jews, but from wise men of the East.

CHRISTMAS LECTURES

Carl Sagan, in his delightful Royal Institution Christmas Lectures to children drew attention to the way in which scientists, filled with a logical conviction of the truth of one view or another, sometimes allow hope to interfere with observation. In the third Lecture he quoted Percival Lowell (1855-1916), the American astronomer, who, speaking to children in the same Lecture Room of the Royal Institution in 1910, told them about his 'discovery' of the canals of Mars. (He and his colleagues had described over 585 of these canals in the literature by 1908.) The language he used permitted of no manner of doubt.

To begin with, you should know that the lines (canals) which you will see are certainties, not matters admitting of the slightest question for all their strange regularity, and so seen by all those who from the most prolonged and careful study are qualified to speak... Not only I but all my assistants have seen them thousands of times the same. Nor are they near the limit of vision...

In fact, as we now know, the lines are nonexistent. They cannot even be accounted for by the natural tendency of the human eye and brain to join randomly placed dots by lines, for the genuine markings on the planet bear no relation at all to the lines which Lowell claimed to see. (Has anyone, we wonder, considered the possibility that the canals bear some relation to the positions of blood vessels in the human eye?). His other claim to have seen a green seasonal colour on the planet is more easily explained. Much of the surface of the planet is orange-red due to the prevalence of iron oxide and even the atmosphere is pink as a result of the suspended oxide, whilst the winds are probably seasonal, and of very high velocity (200-300 m.p.h.). Where an orange-red area conjoins a light area, there is an appearance of green, because green is the complementary colour to red. However, there is no genuine green colour on the planet, though in the past the colour was taken to afford convincing evidence of vegetation.

Sagan pointed out that very strong views tend to be held on all kinds of matters in science, even when the evidence is very poor. He was quite surprised when he realised that today the astronomical world is divided sharply between those who want life to exist on Mars and those who do not! It is easy to feel critical of views which are not based on evidence, but he reminded the children that in science they provide the motivation for research. If people did not care one way or the other about life on Mars; they would not have bothered so much about watching Mars through telescopes in the nineteenth century, nor would there be motivation for sending probes to Mars today to attempt to detect life.

CONTROL OF NATURE

As Christians we believe that God has given us the planet Earth on which to live and it is natural to think that He has also given us brains which, used to His glory, can be used to prevent or anticipate those natural catastrophes which have been the scourge of man since the beginning of history.

Science has given a good deal of encouragement to this kind of thinking. The earth's surface can now be kept under constant surveillance from space so that the progress of hurricanes and conditions which favour the development of locust swarms can be detected and warnings given.

The Chinese have had some success in predicting earthquakes. After the pumping of water for example the waste from atomic power stations into deep bore holes, small earthquakes have been triggered off. This has encouraged the belief that it might be possible to release stresses in the earth slowly and safely rather than wait for nature's cataclysmic events. So far this has not been tried though the obvious place for a trial might be the San Andreas fault line in California.

Lightning is another natural power of nature over which hitherto man has been unable to exercise much control, save that lightning conductors have been used effectively since the time of Franklin. In recent experiments 2 kg of fine fibres, 10 cm long and numbering about 10 million, were released near the bases of potential thunder clouds. Corona discharges appeared at their ends and made the adjacent air slightly conducting so that the charges in the thunder cloud were given opportunity to leak to earth. Using this technique the frequency of flashes (compared

with similar clouds) was reduced to less than half by the presence of the fibres and it was reckoned that larger quantities of fibres might have reduced them still further. (H.W. Kasemir, *Jour. Geophys. Research*, 1976, 1965).

Acetylene and air explode with peculiar violence. A patent (BP 1 434 112) describes how an acetylene generator can be fixed up to project a violent shock wave into the clouds above every 15 secs. Cloud structure is altered and it is claimed that a hail storm may sometimes be converted into a rain storm by this means, thus protecting vineyards and orchards.

Attempts to alter the course of nature are not unconnected with potential danger. In a number of cases the filling of reservoirs has resulted in minor earth tremors and in one instance (in India) in quite a severe shock. The vast energy loss expended by volcanoes has often prompted the thought that some of it might be used by man. With this end in view, geothermal drilling started in 1975 on the sides of the volcano Krafla in northern Iceland. This volcano had not been active for two and a half centuries, but no sooner did drilling commence than activity started: the volcano belched out little lava and ash but huge quantities of hot water, steam and stones. In other countries also there is interest in looking to extinct volcanos as a source of energy, but the wisdom of so doing now appears doubtful in view of Krafla's behaviour. (*New Scientist*, 29 Ap. 1976, p. 214). See also this JOURNAL 103, 57.



SHORT NOTES

The Bomb Droppers. A recent book (*Ruin from the Air*, by G. Thomas and M.W. Witts, Hamish Hamilton, £5.95) tells the story of how the 20 Americans who dropped the first atomic bomb, that on Hiroshima, have reacted to what they did. Major General Paul Tibbets commanded the B-29 bomber that carried the bomb. He claims that he has never lost a night's sleep over the death of 100,000 people. "I was not emotionally involved on the dropping of the first atomic bomb." At the other extreme is Claude Eatherly who flew the reconnaissance aircraft: he later had a mental breakdown and co-authored a book entitled *Burning Conscience*. Under military discipline the bomb droppers had little chance of knowing what they were required to do. Even commanding generals were not told of the plan till the latest possible date - the crews knew nothing of the bomb until they were briefed for the flight.

P.J. Wiseman on Genesis. (see this VOLUME p. 176) Kenneth Kitchen, Reader in Archaeology at the University of Liverpool, has commented helpfully on P.J. Wiseman's *Clues to Genesis (Life of Faith*, 6 Aug. 1977). Though highly appreciative of Wiseman's work, he is unconvinced that Gen. 2:1-4 is a colophon belonging to Chapter 1. Rather here and elsewhere *toledoth*=generations is part of a heading to what follows rather than a colophon relating to what went before (eg. Num. 3:1; Ruth 4:18; 1 Chron. 1:28, etc.) This, however, does not destroy Wiseman's thesis. Colophons are found in Genesis (10:31-32 covering Chap. 10; 36:19, 30b; 43b,c as well as elsewhere Lev. 27:34 Num. 36:13). "Wiseman was undoubtedly right both in appealing to ancient literary usage and in suggesting some kind of series of records from which Genesis was composed."

Drugs and Psychological Phenomena. There is a good deal of unusual material of interest in the writings of Dr. Stanislav Grof (*Realms of the Human Unconscious*, Viking Pr. NY, 1975. This is the first of five volumes on LSD). Grof left Czechoslovakia in 1965 at which time LSD was manufactured legally, was freely available to doctors, researchers etc. and was listed as a potentially valuable drug in the Czech pharmacopoeia. There was no black market and no case of abuse had been reported. When he went to USA he found misuse common and research into its use rare. Grof made an intensive study of the action of the drug. It seems that quite often it led to possession and mediumship experiences (p. 194) and spirit guides were encountered; also UFO contacts. The experiences of one patient are given in which he was given a vision of light and darkness fighting at every conceivable level even in the tissues of the body. Vol. 2 (not seen) deals with LSD and death.

Problem of Evil. Much if not all of so called evil is the result, direct or indirect, of human wickedness. (See esp. Arthur Jones, this JOURNAL 100, 10-12). As a result of the fighting between Somalia and Ethiopia the internationally sponsored programmes for the control of the tsetse fly have had to be abandoned. In Rhodesia the same has happened because of guerrilla activity. The same thing is happening in Southern Angola where Government forces are fighting rebels. The tsetse fly is returning to all these areas from which it had been eradicated, and is now spreading to regions where it was never known before. Full scale epidemics of cattle disease and human sleeping sickness are expected. (*Times* 11 Oct. 1977).

Equality and Liberty. In a sensible lecture given to the British Humanist Association on 29 July 1977 Anthony Flew of Reading University argued cogently that the more men seek equality the more they must lose liberty. One form of equality is equality of opportunity but this is hardly possible when home backgrounds are so different. To achieve such equality society would need to deny the liberty of parents to rear children in accordance with their wishes. Another kind of equality — there is often a failure to distinguish between the two kinds — is equality of rewards and results. This is the version most often accepted by the egalitarian. The job must be given to a man or woman irrespective of background, colour of skin, religion, or political views. But here again it is impossible to reconcile democracy with equality. Democracy involves a "vote-the-scoundrels-out" freedom which is a denial of the egalitarian system. Either way it is nonsense to pretend that egalitarianism can be squared with freedom. (Reported, *Times* 30 July 1977).

RI in Schools. *The Times* (13 Oct. 1977) has drawn attention to a rather dismal report by the Church of England on the effect of religious education (RI) in schools. One hundred (too few? fair sample?) young students were closely questioned. Most found RI "Boring in capitals, with thick underlining strokes". Pupils passed the time away playing at crosswords, flicking pieces of paper around or even rioting. The children had been brought up on Bible stories at school but soon came to believe that the stories could not express literal truth, whereupon "they gave the whole thing up as a kind of fairy story". They accepted morality but could not see how it is related to religion, and this applied equally both to those who had or had not some form of religious belief. "Instead of religion" says the report, "our young people have a mild form of science fiction", belief in spaceships, ghosts and poltergeists being prevalent. Though rejecting religion young people are willing enough to retreat into beliefs however

ridiculous, provided they are clothed in acceptable scientific language. The writers of the report do not think that much good can result from attempts to improve RI.

Corruption. Lord Shawcross, addressing the Hongkong Chamber of Commerce recently (*Times* 3 Nov. 1977) drew attention to a world-wide and incidious increase in corruption. It is now to be found everywhere, he said, except (at the present time) in Singapore and China and is often so endemic that it is accepted as a way of life and not regarded as unethical at all. Even in countries whose governments are the sworn enemies of private enterprise, hands are ever open to bribes offered by capitalists.

Israeli Zoo. According to press reports (*Sunday Times* 4 Dec. 1977) the Jerusalem Zoological Gardens are developing an ambitious plan for a series of biblical tableaux involving animals. A recent idea is to create a literal fulfillment of Isaiah 11 which speaks of predator animals which will live peacefully with those upon which their ancestors had formerly fed. Wolves, leopards, lions and bears "will be trained from infancy to live together with their future partners", we are told. However it is admitted that there will be some deceit, for the carnivores will be fed to bursting point before being exhibited in cages with their biblical partners. We are reminded of Lord Rutherford's story about the zoo in New Zealand which exhibited a lamb and a lion together, almost in each others arms. A stranger came from far to view the scene and, feeling incredulous, asked the keeper if it was genuine. Yes quite genuine, he said, but noting the utter bewilderment which his reply had caused, he added casually that he did not mind admitting that there had been a good many replacements (A.S. Eve, *Rutherford*, 1939). One may well wonder if the wit of man will be able to fulfil a prophecy which has reference to Messiah's reign.

Desertification. The UN conference on desertification ended in Nov. 1977 but without offer of any real hope by way of cure for the rapid encroachment of the desert in many lands. *Nature* summed up the position: "Those charged with the problem may therefore find themselves having to run very hard just to stand still. And come to think of it, that is a bit like chasing a mirage, after all" (269, 367).

Age of the Earth. The current issue (Dec. 1977, pp. 120-127) of *The Christian Graduate* contains an unusually long article on Radiometric Dating by Dr. A. Fraser of the Department of Geology, University of Hull, helped by Dr. P.G. Nelson of the Chemistry Department. Much of it follows the pattern of the recent article by John Byrt in this JOURNAL (Vol. 103, pp. 158-188) but it is more technical.

The author finds it impossible to reconcile Morris and Whitcomb's *The Genesis Flood* with known facts. Science assumes the uniformity of natural law: if this assumption is wrong owing to miraculous intervention by the Creator we adopt an approach "which takes us outside the realm of science". So far, so good but "reasoning of this nature ought not to be employed alongside scientific arguments for a young earth" which is what *The Genesis Flood* attempts.

Sir Brian Pippard, Cavendish Professor of Physics at Cambridge, recently made some apposite comments on the way science is going. The scientist directs his efforts to areas where he knows that definite results can be obtained hoping to draw a line at the end and say "I have solved the problem". But the world will not be made a better place in that way: its problems are vastly harder and require ingenuity, skill and imagination of a high order. Unfortunately science and high technology tend to take high talent away from the areas where it is so desperately needed. (Lecture given at the Leys School, Cambridge, Reported *Cambridge Evening News* 21 Nov. 1977).

Gravity. Newton's Law of Gravity has proved so astonishingly successful, in so far as astronomy is concerned, that no one has bothered much about its accurate experimental verification in the laboratory. Henry Cavendish's work, done in the 18th century, is still cited in text-books.

Recently, Dr. Daniel Long of Eastern Washington State College has been repeating refined Cavendish-type experiments. He makes use of a 50g ball attracted by 1 to 40 kg metal rings. After many repetitions the attractions measured at distances of 4 to 30 cm prove consistently low by nearly 1%. As the design of the apparatus is basically simple it is difficult to understand what the cause can be. Against all the intuitions of the physicist is it conceivable that the inverse square law must be substantially modified at short distances?

Even though some simple explanation will probably turn up, Dr. Long's experiments illustrate the point that there could be loopholes in some of our most confident scientific beliefs. We cannot test laws over every conceivable range and we take it for granted that they are more universal than perhaps they are.

E. von Dänkiken. In a recent issue (July, 1977) of *Griffin Observer* (published by the Griffin Observatory, Los Angeles) E.C. Krupp, who works at the Observatory, writes on "The von Daniken Phenomenon". Two pages are devoted to a photograph of the numerous books, in lurid jackets, which purport to prove that space travellers have visited Earth in prehistoric times. He reckons that the best exposures of von Daniken and similar books

are B. Thiering and E. Castle, *Some Trust in Chariots* (NY paperback available); Peter White, *The Past is Human* N.Y., Taplinger; R. Story, *The Space-gods Revealed* (Harper and Row, N.Y.) and, for young readers, Daniel Cohen's *The Ancient Visitors* (Doubleday). This article first appeared in 1974 since when the author has been further investigating the many new claims made by von Daniken all of which prove as baseless as the old. Some months ago a BBC Horizon programme was also devoted to von Daniken — a delightful and devastating reply to his claims.

Misuse of Psychology in Russia. A great deal has appeared in scientific journals and in the popular press about the now common habit of confining dissidents to mental institutions in Russia. (See especially *Nature* 268 578). In Russia Marxist-Leninism is a science in its own right and the basis of all other Soviet Science: qualifying Soviet physicians take an oath which contains the pledge that they will "be guided by the principles of communist morality" which is explicitly stated to mean putting the good of the community above that of the individual. As an example of the diagnosis of the disease from which a dissident may be suffering, we hear of "schizophrenia with delusions of reformism".

Cost of War. The Third World share of global military expenditure was 6% in 1966 but had risen to 15% in 1976. The rise is not accounted for by arms transfers which remained steady at 14.5% of Third World war expenditure. (SIPRI *Yearbook* for 1977: *Nature* 268 476).

TV Violence. Discussion on whether or not violence on TV increases violence among those who watch it continues unabated. The various investigations made thus far do not always give the same answer. However Dr. Thomas Torrance of Edinburgh University adds a new point to the discussion. Even if there is no causal connection, he says, it does not at all follow that all is well. Constant violence may sicken us but, worse, it can deaden sensitivity. "A subtle boundary control may come into play which is more powerful and total in its effect upon us, if only because it is not subject to clear formal analysis or, therefore, to easy detection and counter-control." (*Times*, Sept. 14 1977).

EVOLUTION; THEORY AND THEME

In this sequel to his article on Immanentism (this VOLUME p.119) Dr. Sell studies the reactions of Christians and others to evolution from c.1860-c.1930. He shows that Darwin did not set out to attack Christianity or the Church, and that his hypothesis concerning natural selection was *relatively* little heeded by theologians. Rather, some succumbed to the mood of optimism which the ideas of evolution, development and progress encouraged; some made more cautious use of the theme of evolution; whilst others, conscious of the ways in which evolutionary thought could be exploited by naturalists and agnostics, recognised the threat its uncritical acceptance posed to the central message of the gospel.

Whatever truth may lie behind the suspicion that the ultra-conservative no less than the ultra-liberal *needs* an Aunt Sally, the fact is that Charles Darwin (1809-1882)¹ has been regarded as an appropriate target by many in the former category. To him has been attributed a slide into scepticism of gigantic proportions; an increase of moral laxity fired by the belief that humans are but animals - and so on. It will not be our purpose to examine the detailed scientific arguments which Darwin and others proposed, nor the counter arguments which other scientists urged against them. Rather, we shall attempt to put evolution into its proper perspective as an influential motif within nineteenth century thought, and we shall be especially

concerned with the use theologians made of it. We shall suggest that Darwin himself, far from being an originator, was in debt both to that immanentist tendency whose origins we have uncovered in Kant and German Romanticism,² and to that increasingly popular understanding of history which sought to explain the present as being a development of the past.³ We shall show that Darwin's distinctive scientific contribution, the hypothesis of natural selection, far from holding any real terrors for the more thoughtful theologians, was quite often ignored by them in their positive constructions: the evolutionary theme rather than specific theories was what appealed to them, not least because it harmonised so well with what, on other grounds, they wished to believe in any case. We shall observe in passing that the generalisation to the effect that large tracts of the world of nineteenth century thought were caught up in a wave of evolution-based optimism to which only the First World War could give the lie is open to question. That there *were* such optimists we shall not deny (and the further they were from the theatre of war the more of them there seem to have been); but some had a properly sober understanding of sin *before* the War, whilst others managed to retain their optimism *after* it. Whatever nineteenth century theologians might think of evolution, they could not ignore it: not indeed that they were always very clear about what it was that they were not ignoring! As one commentator put it, "Evolution has, since Darwin's time, become invested with an omnipotence which, it may safely be affirmed, belongs to it only through a haze in the ideas of those who so exalt it".^{4a}

The liberal preacher T. Rhondda Williams was typical of many popularisers in his pragmatic approach to the matter: "Evolution is still a hypothesis, but it is *the* hypothesis which is now used in every department of investigation, and, quite apart from the question of its ultimate validity, the use made of it at present is such that no man who wishes to serve his age in the interests of the Kingdom of God can afford to ignore it".⁵ To the extent that Williams is accurate here — and undeniably evolutionary thought did permeate many fields of enquiry — we have impressive testimony to the rapidity with which the concept of evolution took root in the minds of men; for as A.J. Balfour said, even "men of science did not habitually think in terms of evolution till well into the second half of the Victorian epoch".^{6a} That they began so to think at all is as much owing to the work of geologists as it is to workers in any other field of science.

The researches of Charles Lyell (1797-1875), which were written up in his *Principles of Geology* (first volume 1830), had two main effects. First, they demolished the approach of Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) to biblical chronology.

Ussher, it will be recalled, had calculated that the world was created in 4004 B.C. Lyell showed that the rocks gave evidence that the earth was much older than had once been thought. Secondly, Lyell's findings suggested that uniformitarianism rather than catastrophism was the more tenable hypothesis in respect of the development of the universe. Lyell thus threw down the gauntlet not only to natural theologians in the line of Paley (1743-1805), who *required* God's dramatic creative intervention to shore up their version of orthodoxy, but also to such a pioneer *geologist* as Adam Sedgwick (1785-1873), who by no means relished the possibility that science might undermine the scriptures. Dr. Young has put the terms of the debate in a nutshell thus: "If Sedgwick was concerned that *without* creative interference there might be no God, then Lyell was concerned that *with* creative interference there would be no science".⁷

At least three kinds of response were open to Christians confronted by the work of Lyell and his fellows. They could argue, as Dr. Pye Smith did in his Congregational Lecture for 1839, that theologians had erred in the chronological deductions they had made from scripture, and that uniformitarianism more accurately reflected biblical teaching than did catastrophism.⁸ They could be deeply troubled, as was John Ruskin who, as early as 1851 wrote, "If only the Geologists would let me alone, I could do very well, but those dreadful hammers! I hear the clink of them at the end of every cadence of the Bible verses".⁹ Thirdly, there was the somewhat later response to the effect that science can do the Bible no harm because each seeks answers to *different* questions. This approach is typified by R.W. Dale's comment that "ordinary Christian people...have frankly accepted all that the geologists have ascertained in relation to the antiquity of the earth and the antiquity of man; but their faith in Christ is undisturbed".¹⁰

It was when Robert Chambers (1802-71) published his *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844) that the transition was made in the popular mind from concern with rocks to concern with man; for Chambers scandalised some by maintaining that Lyell's uniformitarian principle ought to be applied not only to the physical creation, but also to man and his mind.¹¹ On this very problem Darwin was hard at work. Not indeed that he was without predecessors in the field. Certainly the notions of development and progress were well known in the ancient world. To take examples almost at random: Anaximander (611-547), Anaximenes (588-544), Xenophanes (576-480) and Empedocles (495-435) all entertained, in however *a priori* a fashion, the notion of the evolution of man from lower orders of creation. Again, Heraclitus (c.500) is famed for his doctrine of flux. Still more definite

affirmations (we use the term advisedly) concerning the origin and development of living things are to be found in the writings of Aristotle (384-322). He supposed that life originated from the inorganic, and that there was movement through successive stages from plants, which neither feel nor think, through animals, which feel and have elementary powers of thought, to man, who both feels and engages in abstract thought. The whole depends upon the Pure Form, said Aristotle, though what exactly he meant by this, and what kind of dependence he had in mind, is not altogether clear. Although Aristotle thus thinks in terms of successive stages of development, he does not employ the idea of evolution; indeed, he could not, for to him both species and genera are eternal. From Platonism, and especially from Neoplatonism, came the impetus to think of spiritual growth towards the divine; and the New Testament, with its teleological emphasis (growing up into Christ; the consummation) could be summoned in support. We find intimations of evolution in Leibniz; Lessing, Schelling and Hegel applied the evolutionary principle to history (though Hegel could well manage without a *scientific* hypothesis!); and J.G. Herder (1744-1803) regarded evolution as the vehicle of the divine providence. Ideas of development, progress, evolution, were thus not new when Darwin came on the scene, and indeed the implications of such ideas for social reform had already been indicated by Comte (1798-1857). It remained for modern scientists, by the production of evidence, to anchor these concepts empirically and, above all, to posit an explanatory hypothesis which would answer the "how" question.

Whereas Linnaeus (1707-78) in his monumental *Systema Naturae* did not raise the question as to how the species which he so diligently classified had come to be differentiated from one another, Georges Buffon (1707-88) was not so inhibited. It was one of his speculations which Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829) and Geoffroy de St. Hilaire (1772-1844) exploited — namely, that change occurred as a species progressively adapted itself to its environment. Both the contemporary scientific and theological orthodoxies were implacably opposed to any such suggestion, and it was not until Lyell's results were known that the modern evolutionists found much extrinsic support. Even then the evolutionist blaze was slow to kindle, not so much because of the opposition already mentioned, as because of a feeling that the crucial clue had yet to be produced. What Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913) independently arrived at was the principle of natural selection — of what Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) was to call the principle of "the survival of the fittest".¹² Justice prompts the comment that not even here were Darwin and Wallace the first in the field. The idea of natural selection had been mooted by W.C. Wells (1757-1817) in 1813 and by Matthew in 1831; but Darwin and Wallace were the men of the hour, and,

moreover, they had the *evidence* with which to support their hypothesis.

Both Darwin and Wallace had been influenced by Malthus's *Essay in the Principle of Population* (1798), which showed that when the human population outgrew the available sources of food an inevitable struggle ensued. They drew the analogy and applied it to all forms of organic life, thereby providing the world with an explanatory hypothesis to account for that change and development which many agreed was too well documented to be gainsaid. Once the secret was out — and *The Origin of Species* appeared in 1859 — Huxley remarked, "How extremely stupid not to have thought of that!" Principle Griffith Jones was only echoing those of an earlier generation when he expressed his opinion that Darwin had formulated "one of the most revolutionary generalisations ever attempted by the human mind".¹³ In working out his theory Darwin was able to use the insights of his grandfather and of Lamarck concerning environmental factors in the production of change; and the special significance of Wallace from the theological point of view is his denial that distinctively human qualities could result from natural selection — for these an unique "special influx" was required.

It was only to be expected that Darwin's work should prompt jubilation in some quarters and consternation in others. The numerous debates and pamphlets often engendered more heat than light, and for this very reason it is especially important to record the fact that Darwin himself was the humblest of men, and that, unlike some scientists before and since, he was reluctant to pronounce upon matters outside his field of specialised knowledge. He did not regard himself as doing more than advance a biological hypothesis: it was not until his *Descent of Man* (1871) that he extended his interests specifically to man. An agnostic himself (though he defined himself thus only very hesitantly), he had no wish to upset the faith of others. He did recognise, however, that "the old argument from design in nature, as given by Paley, which formerly seemed to me so conclusive, fails, now that the law of natural selection has been discovered".¹⁴ Even so, Darwin truthfully declared that he had never "published a word directly against religion or the clergy".¹⁵ Some of the latter found no difficulty in thinking otherwise. Thus Bishop Samuel Wilberforce (1805-73) attacked Darwinism in the *Quarterly Review*, and spoke against the new teaching at the Oxford meeting of the British Association in 1860; whilst from the ranks of the laity the statesman W.E. Gladstone (1809-1898) rose to the defence of *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture* (1890). Among the numerous complaints were the following: that what was presumed to be the biblical teaching concerning the fixity of species was being

undermined; that, despite Wallace's concession, man, as now naturalistically understood, could no longer be regarded as God's special creation;¹⁶ that there was something morally offensive in the idea that survival depended upon an individual's being sufficiently aggressive; that the tendency of evolutionists to observe results rather than seek causes left little room for the idea of purpose — as Huxley declared, evolution dealt the death blow to teleology;¹⁷ and, as we have noted earlier, that apologetics had been undermined. For all of these reasons, and others, some, including the judicious James Orr, were persuaded that Darwinism "asks us to believe that accident and fortuity have done the work of mind".^{4b} Such scholars took little comfort from Darwin's own testimony that "The birth both of the species and of the individual are equally parts of that grand sequence of events which our minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance";¹⁸ indeed, given his presuppositions, they were hard put to understand how he could say such a thing at all.

Few Christians gave evolution so cordial a welcome as did Baden Powell F.R.S. in his paper in *Essays and Reviews* (1860). Rather more felt that the Ark was being assailed. Two types of development assisted thinking men and women towards a more balanced view. In the first place, a number of scientists began to fault Darwin's detailed case. More importantly, some, including the highly respected Lord Kelvin, affirmed that science required rather than destroyed the concept of a creative power; still others began to reach the conclusion bluntly expressed by Sir F.G. Hopkins, President of the British Association in 1933, that "all we know is that we know nothing" of life's origin.¹⁹ Secondly, such views as T.H. Huxley's that "it is not true that evolution necessarily presupposes natural selection"^{4c} came to be regarded as providing theologians with a convenient escape from naturalism. This accorded well with their twin desires to shun a doctrine which "estimates a man solely by his worth to the community, and is proud of him only as he has the strength that can be victorious in the struggle",²⁰ whilst exalting the ideas of progress and of ethical development.²¹ *A fortiori* it armed them against "the sanctified competitiveness of a Social Darwinianism in which, as Bishop Gore said, 'it is a case of each for himself as the elephant said when it danced among the chickens'".²² So it transpired that R.W. Dale could sound in no way untypical in arguing that whereas Christians had for too long, in deistic fashion, employed God as a necessary hypothesis, "It will be something if science enables us to recover a firmer hold of the ancient faith, and enables us to see for ourselves the present activity of God".^{23a}

The very fact, however, that theologians could be as sanguine as this confirms our claim that *Darwin's* views had been so

modified as to be almost unrecognisable. Dean Inge was not wide of the mark in asserting that "In reality, human progress is the primary assumption, which the scientific theory of development was brought in to support. A popular religion is a superstition which has enslaved a philosophy. In this case the superstition was belief in the perfectibility of the species; the philosophy was a misreading of the biology of Darwin".²⁴ If we overlook the fact that we are confronted by a *variety* interpretations of evolution, and that evolution is pressed into the service of a number of different and sometimes contradictory presuppositions, we shall be in danger of making those very generalisations which it is part of our purpose to question. Thus, for example, Professor H.G. Wood reminded us that whilst Marx read revolution out of evolution, the Fabians contented themselves with gradualism.²⁵ Again, whereas A.N. Whitehead thought that Victorian Christians were ill advised not to give evolution a more cordial welcome since, by virtue of its anti-materialistic organic principle and its underlying necessary activity, it lent itself to the very kind of teleological interpretation in which they might have been expected to be interested,²⁶ Huxley, as we have seen, thought that evolution destroyed teleology. This latter view was reaffirmed by Otto to whom Darwin was the Newton of biology because of the "radical opposition" of his doctrine of natural selection to teleology.²⁷ Some Christians knew only too well that if they were to purge evolutionary theory of its less congenial aspects they would have to *spurn* Darwin's gift of *natural* selection. Even Baden Powell, "advanced" as he was, was under this necessity, for he invoked "a Supreme Moral Cause, *distinct from and above nature*".²⁸ Whatever the precise terms of his personal ideology may have been, Darwin's biological hypothesis left little room for this. But if Powell trimmed evolutionary thought in the direction of deism — as the words we have just italicised suggest, others employed the notion in quite different ways.

In the first place, there were the naturalists. Few subjected them to such searching criticism as A.J. Balfour (whatever we may think of his own alternative), and it will suffice us to hear him:

this is a position which is essentially incoherent. Its conclusions discredit its premises. The doctrines in which we believe throw doubts upon the truth-producing value of the process by which we have come to believe them. For we remember that these reasons are without exception not only reasons but effects. As effects they owe nothing in the last resort to reason or purpose. If snatches of reason and gleams of purpose occasionally emerge in the latest stage of the evolutionary process, this is but an accident

... Everything we believe, because in the order of causation blind matter and undirected energy happened to be distributed in a particular manner countless aeons before man made his earliest entry on the cosmic stage. From this senseless stock, and from this alone, has sprung, according to naturalism, all that there is, or ever can be, of knowledge, practical or speculative, earthly or divine — including, of course, the naturalistic theory itself! How then can we treat it with respect?^{6b}

Next, there was the ambivalent and delightfully eclectic Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), whose writings had considerable vogue, and who was the butt of many a theologian's jibe. He was, moreover, in the evolutionary field before Darwin's *Origin* appeared. As early as 1850 he had published his *Social Statics*, and in 1855 there appeared his *Principles of Psychology*. From 1862-93 he was found publishing the several parts of his synthetic philosophy. Spencer's evolutionary stance, and in particular its ethical implications, earned him the attention of numerous theologians. Turning his back upon the older intuitionism, Spencer held that our ethical notions are inherited from our ancestors, and that our present mental and moral capacities are as they are by virtue of the evolutionary process which must continue. The empiricism here places Spencer in the line of Hume; the implied relativism he, together with Hamilton (1788-1856), explicitly affirmed; and his agnosticism emerges in his declaration, following Kant, that the Absolute is unknowable. We might therefore have expected to find consistent naturalism or materialism in Spencer, but we do not. His ambivalence emerges in that so long as evolutionary process is allowed he seems to fluctuate between cashing the doctrine variously in idealistic or materialistic terms. Thus he can allow that there is a Power behind the universe, though when he declared that "the Power which the Universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable"²⁹ he provoked not a little incredulity among such competent theologians as Dr. Iverach: "He speaks of knowledge and its manifestations, and does not see that if the Unknowable is manifested, so far as it is manifested it can be known".^{30a} Iverach and others were equally baffled by Spencer's insistence on explaining the higher in terms of the lower: "One has sympathy with those who labour at an impossible task. It is hard on one who has undertaken to explain evolution in terms of the distribution of matter and motion to arrive at a stage where matter fails, and then to be compelled to deal with super-organic matter... We can but express our sympathy, and pass on to the conviction that the source of explanation lies not where they are seeking it".³¹ Many theologians appealed to naturalists to "come clean" on these two points, and H.R. Mackintosh was subsequently to feel that "The

one fact which has given Materialism its otherwise inexplicable fascination for the less instructed modern mind is, we can scarcely doubt, its wholly illegitimate alliance with the doctrine of Evolution".³²

Turning once more to the theists we find that many of them absorbed evolutionary theory (though not Darwinism) into their systems by the expedient of assuming God to be immanent in the evolutionary process. (The refrain of the jingle comes to mind: "Some call it evolution; others call it God".) On this basis even the cautious Dr. Orr could envisage the possibility that evolution "may become a new and heightened form of the theistic argument".^{4d} A.E. Garvie went further in maintaining that the notion of cosmic evolution demands an immanent, dynamic God, and declared that since God works out his purposes in history, the understanding of religion as "the flight of the alone to the Alone" is no longer tenable.^{33a} Garvie further held that evolution indicated the method by which the immanent God made himself known - that is, gradually and progressively, rather than catastrophically.^{33b} Edward Caird (1835-1908) and Henry Jones (1852-1922) were among those who followed a similar line from the side of philosophy. It cannot be maintained, however, that the immanentists gave an entirely satisfactory account of the divine transcendence. They tended, perhaps in partial reaction against both the older natural theology and deism, to leave the concept on one side, and certainly Kingsley's early attempt to solve the difficulty by redefining all *natural* events as miracles did not find universal acclaim.³⁴ Again, some theologians were alive to the fact that certain forms of teleological idealism, in which the end was determined from the beginning were, as William James said, but the "reverse side of mechanism";³⁵ whilst Professor Emmet, viewing the debate from a more distant vantage point, noted that evolutionary idealisms tended to get into difficulties over the empirical, and that the supreme deductive idealist, McTaggart, was forced to recognise that apart from the empirical premise that "something exists" his system could never have got under way.³⁶

If some varieties of evolutionary idealism were as inimical to theologians as the various kinds of naturalism and materialism, there were other developments of evolutionary thought which promised them more encouragement by reason of their "spiritual" approach to matter. Thus James Ward (1843-1925) in his *The Realm of Ends* (1911), and Bergson (1859-1941) in his numerous writings, spoke respectively of epigenesis and of the *élan vital*.³⁷ According to both evolution was the datum, but in opposition to materialism they held that the more recent was not merely educed from the earlier, but that there was novelty attaching to it. The process is dynamic, vital, creative - not merely reproductive.

The appeal which such teaching could have to the more homiletic popularisers is plain, though such men had perforce to sit rather loosely to such empirical factors as disease and pain — in theological terms, the problem of evil — which tended to militate against it. Dean Inge had his own, characteristic way of expressing his dissatisfaction:

"Bergson and his followers naturally advocate the Lamarckian *élan vital*, an inner impulse towards change, in opposition to the merely mechanical doctrine of Darwin, which does not admit of qualitative alteration. It must, however, be admitted that for a metaphysician a minimal change is as great a problem as a mutation. We cannot admit the excuse of the girl who palliated the appearance of her baby by saying that it was a very small one".^{24b}

In the twentieth century we find a development in the direction of emergent evolution. According to this theory the Creator himself is subject to change, and reality is identified with process. This doctrine is variously associated with the names of C. Lloyd Morgan (1852-1936), Samuel Alexander (1859-1938) and A.N. Whitehead (1861-1947), and some theologians felt, with Donald Baillie, that they were too ignorant to pass judgement upon it.³⁸ Others felt that their understanding of God could be neither helped nor harmed by the more esoteric speculations of their philosophical contemporaries, Lloyd Morgan's talk of "Spiritual Agency"³⁹ notwithstanding. It is only much nearer to our own time that Charles Hartshorne, Schubert Ogden, John Cobb and others have developed process theologies out of Whitehead's later metaphysics; and into these we cannot at present enquire.

We turn instead to the doctrinal implications of the earlier theological utilisation of evolutionary theory. Concerning the doctrine of creation, the realisation that Darwinism was not a theory of causes, but rather an account of causal methods, gave considerable comfort to theologians:

All these terms — Evolution, Natural Selection, the Survival of the Fittest, and the like — are descriptions of a method, or of a result, and not a definition of a cause. Yet to mistake a result, a method, or a description for a reason and a cause is the failing of the common talk of many Evolutionists; a mistake from which Darwin, at least in his circumspect moments, kept himself entirely free.⁴⁰

Theologians thus felt justified in understanding evolution as being God's way of revelation. Dr. Garvie said as much:

"Evolution is God's method of creation of the world and man, and it is no less the method of His revelation, for a communication beyond the capacity of man to receive and respond would be idle and vain. We may say that human development is by divine education".^{33c} (It is interesting to note in passing that a not dissimilar stance was adopted by those who were working within the Roman Catholic fold for a revival of Thomism. They urged evolution as the *modus operandi* whereby universals were realised in the actual world). Garvie and others like him were quite convinced that evolutionary theory could and should coexist with supernaturalism:

The recognition of evolution, and of progress in evolution, removes an objection to the admission of the supernatural which was rooted in the static view of the world. If the world were thought of as a finished article...any fresh departure must seem incredible. But admit the conception of progress, then no stage can be regarded as so finally and adequately expressing the whole mind and will of God that any new expression would appear incredible.^{41a}

As far as man is concerned, it is by a gradually evolving process that man increasingly co-operates in God's advancing purpose;^{41b} evolution inspires us onward in the struggle against evil;⁴² indeed, "in the whole long story of evolution pain is the condition of progress"⁴³ — and of this the Cross is the supreme illustration.

Thus it was that some theologians, not to mention many preachers, adopted an optimistic attitude towards the world and man's place in it. One might have thought that Spencer's declaration concerning the inevitability of both the disappearance of evil and immortality, and of the perfection of man, would have given them pause. But the appeal of the idea in the air was too much for some. We can understand this — after all, it really did seem that science and the new technologies held the promise of a better life than most had ever dreamed of. As early as 4th January 1851 *The Economist* had roundly declared that "All who have read, and can think, must now have full confidence that the 'endless progression' ever increasing in rapidity, of which the poet sung, is the destined lot of the human race".⁴⁴ Even the sober Martineau, having examined regress, stoicism and progress, could affirm that the last alone "is the most accordant with the divine interpretation of the world...neither of these two modern discoveries, namely, the immense extension of the universe in space, and its unlimited development in time, has any effect on the theistic faith, except to glorify it";⁴⁵ and Garvie, even after the First World War could still declare that God "is

completing the evolution of the world and of mankind in the progressive manifestation of the sons of God".^{33d}

Commentators have sometimes generalised from such statements in an unacceptable way. There was optimism, but it was not universal — as the works of von Hartmann (1842-1919), for example, show — and it was not always unthinking. Many of those theologians who wished to make most of progress, development, aspiration, sought also to take due account of sin, and of the actuality of moral stagnation and decadence. In this connection Dr. Garvie comes to mind once more.^{41c} Others were even more reserved concerning the inevitability of progress. Of Croce's words "The plant dreams of the animal, the animal of man, and man of superman..." Inge confessed, "I can see nothing in his hymn to progress except delerious nonsense".^{24c} And with even closer implications for the theological utilisation of the evolutionary principle the poet James Thompson averred,

I find no hint throughout the Universe
Of good or ill, of blessing or of curse.

In his Romanes Lecture for 1893 Huxley warned that the theory of evolution "encourages no millenial expectations". Those who overlooked such warnings may have felt that they were in good company, for near the end of *The Origin of Species* Darwin had said that "as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection".⁴⁶ Thus if he had wished, Dr. L.F. Stearns, the American Congregationalist, could have claimed quasi-apostolic authority for his jubilant statement, "We have seen the scientific theory of evolution turned from an enemy to a friend of religion".⁴⁷ It was but a short step to Social Gospel theory.

Dr. Iverach, by contrast, was by no means so persuaded of the unqualified benefits of evolutionism. Whilst he was prepared to accept a version of theistic evolution according to which evolution was the method of God's working, he did not wish to obscure the importance of sin, or the need of grace. He could not regard evolutionary progress as automatic: "Many hindrances there are on Christ's view to the communication of God to his creation; but the main hindrance is that men are not pure in heart".^{30b} The Anglican Scott Holland complained that the doctrine of evolution "yields no Categorical Imperative";⁴⁸ John Dickie argued that whereas evolution may at best be able to tell us why we do what we do, it could not explain why our moral sense condemns some of our actions as *sinful*";⁴⁹ and, above all, James Orr attacked those who would replace the doctrine of the Fall with the view that sin is a necessary part of man's ascent rather than

"the voluntary defection of a creature who had the power to remain sinless",⁵⁰ and who overlooked the fact that "Sin is that which ought not to be *at all*. It has throughout the Bible a volitional and *catastrophic* character".⁵¹ Orr may sum up for us the adverse bearings of an uncritically accepted doctrine of evolution on the heart of the gospel:

Man, on the new reading, is not a fallen being, but is in process of ascent; he deserves, not blame, but, on the whole, praise, that he has done so marvellously well, considering the disadvantageous circumstances in which he started; the doctrines of redemption associated with the older view — atonement, regeneration, justification, sanctification, resurrection — have no longer any place, or change their meaning... Unfortunately, the elements it is proposed to dispense with — the sense of sin and guilt, the pain of spiritual bondage, the war between flesh and spirit, recognised as *evil* in the shame and self-condemnation that attend it, the craving for atonement, the felt need of regeneration, the consciousness of forgiveness and renewal — are not simply so interwoven with the texture of Scripture that to part with them is virtually to give up *Christian* theology altogether, but are parts of an actual human *experience* that cannot be blotted out of existence, or dismissed from consideration, even to suit the requirements of a modern scientific hypothesis.⁵²

We believe that in showing the bearing of evolutionary theory upon the doctrines of sin and salvation we have reached the crux of the matter. This is not to deny that evolution impinged on other aspects of theological thought. We have already referred to the doctrine of creation; but in addition to that evolutionary theory fertilised the doctrine of development beloved of Catholic Modernists; it undergirded the work of the new breed of comparative religionists, some of whom profoundly disturbed the faithful because of the relativism to which their position tended, and in which some of them rejoiced;⁵³ and Dr. Gill has recently pointed out that evolutionary assumptions persist in sociology down to our own day — "even within the sociology of religion".⁵⁴ It is not difficult to echo E.C. Moore's sigh, "This elaboration and reiteration of the doctrine of evolution sometimes wearies us".⁵⁵ But *we* need elaborate no further, for we have provided enough evidence for our case, and may now present our summary conclusion.

We have seen that Darwinism was a debtor both to an age-long idea of progress, and to that modern immanentist thrust which

derived from Kant and the German Romantics, and which found one of its expressions in the modern understanding of history. We have emphasised the fact that Darwin himself did not set out to destroy the faith, and that his particular offering of natural selection was by-passed by the majority of theologians.⁵⁶ Some theologians, of whom Orr was a prominent example, entertained serious reservations concerning evolution; others, like Dale, saw advantages in the theory provided that the rights of conscience and morality were not submerged under naturalism.⁵⁷ The upshot is that even when the more competent theologians utilised the evolutionary principle they were not entirely uncritical of it, and many of them retained a sufficiently strong sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. On the other hand, truth to tell, some were bowled over by an optimism in man which could hardly be described as scriptural. That last word prompts the reflection that those who took most readily to evolution were, on the whole, those who were most open to the findings of the newer biblical criticism. There have ever been those who have set their faces against that criticism, and Professor Floyd E. Hamilton may be taken as representing their view:

Whatever prejudice theologians have against evolution is due to the fact that they have independent proof that the Bible and Christianity are true, so they feel that a theory which denies the truth of both is false and should be rejected... We have, it is true, certain presuppositions ... A man may have assumptions and yet be fair in his examination of evidence and arguments. His very prejudice may enable him to see flaws in the evidence that would escape the advocate of the theory.⁵⁸

But this was a minority view. Most would have endorsed the following typical statements: "Physical Science may render service to Religious Faith; but first of all Religious Faith must render a greater service to Science by teaching her that Nature is not God, and that although the Heavens declare His glory, and the earth is full of His goodness, in Nature God is not seen at His highest and best".^{23b} Again, "in Jesus Christ, and in Him alone, we have the pledge of the human world's fulfilling its destiny, of the vanquishing of all the obstacles that can arise, of the great career's reaching, at last, that

...one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves".⁵⁹

Here we see clearly the qualified use of the evolutionary idea. Undeniably Darwinism created a climate of thought in which such affirmations could gain wide acceptance among Christians. But

upon Darwin's distinctive biological hypothesis such affirmations do not depend in the slightest degree. To those theologians who got most mileage out of it, evolution was more a theme than a theory.

NOTES

- 1 It goes without saying that the literature on Darwin and (what is by no means entirely the same thing) evolutionism is vast. Since we are concerned not so much with scientific detail as with evolution as a theme in nineteenth century thought, it will suffice to mention the following works in addition to the writings of Darwin, T.H. Huxley and Spencer, and to the works to be noted later: H.F. Osborn, *From the Greeks to Darwin*, New York 1894; A.R. Wallace, *Darwinianism*, 1909; J. Huxley, *Evolution: The Modern Synthesis*, 1942; C.C. Gillespie, *Genesis and Geology*, Cambridge Mass., 1951; R.E.D. Clark, *Darwin: Before and After*, Exeter 1966.
- 2 See A.P.F. Sell, "Immanentism and the Theological Enterprise", this JOURNAL, 1977, 104, 119.
- 3 This was, of course, a spirit upon which the Oxford Movement capitalised, and it goes far towards accounting for what E.B. Pusey (1800-82) called "ecclesiastical antiquity": "If a Reformed Church must be a student of Scripture, a Catholic Church must add to the study of Scripture that of ecclesiastical antiquity". See H.P. Liddon, *Life of E.B. Pusey*, 4 vols. 1893-7, I p.336.
- 4 James Orr, *God's Image in Man*, 1907, (a) p.84, (b) p.95, (c) p.89 n.2, (d) p.96.
- 5 T. Rhondda Williams, *The Working Faith of a Liberal Theologian*, 1914, p.205.
- 6 A.J. Balfour, *Theism and Thought*, 1923, (a) p.8, (b) pp.237-8.
- 7 David Young, "The impact of Darwinianism on the concept of God in the nineteenth century", *Faith and Thought*, 1972, 101, 25. The entire article is most illuminating, particularly on the more strictly scientific aspects of the debate. It is amply furnished with references.
- 8 See his *The Relation between the Holy Scriptures and some parts of Geological Science*.
- 9 L. Elliott-Binns quoting Cook's *Life of Ruskin in English Thought 1860-1900*, 1956, p.175n.
- 10 R.W. Dale, *The Living Christ and the Four Gospels*, 1895, p.5.
- 11 Chambers's work appeared anonymously, and it was not until 1884 that the author's identity was made public. See Robert M. Young, "The impact of Darwin on conventional thought" in ed. A. Symondson, *The Victorian Crisis of Faith*, 1970, p.16. This article, though factually informative, contains some

- generalisations of the kind which abound in discussions of evolution, and which it is part of our purpose to modify. Thus Mr. Young says that "what evolution took away from man's spiritual hopes by separating science and theology and making God remote from nature's laws, it gave back in the doctrine of material and social and spiritual progress" (p.27). But by no means all evolutionists adopted the *quasi*-deistic stance here implied. Idealist-immanentist evolutionists were, as we shall see, of quite another mind.
- 12 Wallace's paper and Darwin's abstract appeared in 1858 in the same number of *The Journal of the Linnaean Society*.
- 13 E. Griffith-Jones, *Providence - Divine and Human*, 1925, p.22.
- 14 Quoted by Darwin's son Francis in his *Charles Darwin*, 1908, p.58.
- 15 ed. F. Darwin, *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, 1887, II p.289. By the same token Darwin refused to allow Marx to dedicate the English edition of *Das Kapital* to him on the ground that he did not wish to be associated with attacks on Christianity and theism. See R.M. Young, n.10 above, p.31 and refs. Again, when Tennyson asked Darwin whether his conclusions adversely affected Christianity he replied, "No, certainly not". See L. Elliott-Binns, n.8 above, p.37.
- 16 Hence the celebrated "Monkey Trial" of as late as 1925 in which William Jennings Bryan successfully prosecuted John T. Scopes for having broken the law of Tennessee by denying Biblical creationism and teaching that man had ascended from lower forms of life. For this case see e.g. Stewart G. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism* (1931), Westport, 1971. Dr. C.F.H. Henry draws attention to the naturalistic, anti-theistic impetus of John Dewey upon American thought, and points out that whereas in the first edition of the *International Standard Bible Dictionary*, whose General Editor was Dr. James Orr, there was an article in favour of evolution and none against, in the second edition (1929) the latter deficiency was made good. See his *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology*, Grand Rapids 1957, p.41. With Dewey may be contrasted John Stuart Mill, who conceded that the hypothesis of a limited God was not altogether improbable, and who was anxious to maintain the mind-body distinction, and to deny that the former could be understood exclusively in naturalistic terms.
- 17 T.H. Huxley, *Lay Sermons, Addresses and Reviews*, 1870, p.330. He further explained: "According to Teleology, each organism is like a rifle bullet fired straight at a mark; according to Darwin, organisms are like grapeshot of which one hits something and the rest fall wide" (p.31). For example, where Teleology says that cats exist in order to catch mice, Darwinism says that (surviving) cats exist because they catch

- mice well (p.332). Cf. John Oman's way of making the point in *The Natural and the Supernatural*, Cambridge 1931, p.259: "All that put Darwin's theory in motion – the purpose of the living creature, its will to live, its subjective selection from environment, its choice of partners – instead of being the positive, directive, creative elements of evolution, were regarded merely as results".
- 18 C. Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 1871, II, p.395. In Darwin's view the term "chance" was used to "acknowledge plainly our ignorance of the cause of each particular variation". See *The Origin of Species*, 1963 edn. p.128.
- 19 Quoted by J.S. Bezzant, *Aspects of Belief*, 1937, p.23.
- 20 A.M. Fairbairn, *Studies in Religion and Theology*, New York 1910, p.92.
- 21 Cf. e.g. James Iverach, *Theism in the Light of Present Science and Philosophy*, 1900, p.73. The same writer provides a still useful survey of the evolution debate in his *Christianity and Evolution*, 1894.
- 22 Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Newman to Martineau, 1850-1900*, Princeton 1962, p.173.
- 23 R.W. Dale, *Fellowship with Christ*, 1900, (a) p.186, (b) p.187.
- 24 W.R. Inge, *God and the Astronomers*, 1933, (a) p.142, (b) pp. 137-8, (c) p.154.
- 25 H.G. Wood, *Belief and Unbelief since 1850*, Cambridge 1955, p.53.
- 26 A.N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, New York 1926, p.157.
- 27 R. Otto, *Naturalism and Religion*, 1907, p.89.
- 28 B. Powell, *Essays on the Spirit of the Inductive Philosophy*, 1855, p.168.
- 29 H. Spencer, *First Principles*, 1862, p.46.
- 30 J. Iverach, *Christianity and Evolution*, (a) p.208, (b) p.207.
- 31 J. Iverach, *Theism in the Light of Present Science and Philosophy*, pp.94-5.
- 32 H.R. Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, n.d. but preface has 1923, pp.284-5.
- 33 A.E. Garvie, *The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead*, 1925, (a) p.14, (b) p.184, (c) p.318 and cf. many others, e.g. A.M. Fairbairn, *The City of God*, 1903, p.60, (d) p.214.
- 34 Kingsley wrote, "My doctrine has been for years...that below all natural phenomena, we come to a transcendental – in plain English, a miraculous ground". See his *Letters and Memories of His Life*, ed. by his wife, 9th edn. 1877, II p.67.
- 35 E.g. Dr. Griffith-Jones as n.13 above, pp.125-6.
- 36 D.M. Emmet, *The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking* (1945), 1966, p.84.

- 37 For Ward see *DNB* 1941-50; for Bergson see *inter alia*, H.W. Carr, *Henri Bergson*, 1912; A.D. Lindsay, *The Philosophy of Bergson*, 1911; B. Russell, *The Philosophy of Bergson*, Cambridge 1914; J. McK. Stewart, *A Critical Examination of Bergson's Philosophy*, 1912.
- 38 D.M. Baillie, *Faith in God and its Christian Consummation* (1927), 1964, p.276.
- 39 For these philosophers see e.g. J.W. McCarthy, *The Naturalism of Samuel Alexander*, New York 1948; William McDougall, *Modern Materialism and Emergent Evolution*, 1929; D.M. Emmet, *Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism*, 1932; W. Mays, *The Philosophy of Whitehead*, 1959.
- 40 J. Scott Lidgett, *The Christian Religion*, n.d. but preface has 1907, p.59. Among numerous books designed to relate evolutionary theory to Christian doctrine we may note S.A. McDowall, *Evolution and the Need of Atonement*, Cambridge 1912; and ed. F. Hastings and A.F. Muir, *Christianity and Evolution*, 1887.
- 41 A.E. Garvie, *A Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, 1913, (a) pp.58-9 and cf. A.C. Fraser, *Philosophy of Theism*, Edinburgh and London 1899, p.210, (b) p.209, (c) pp.116-7.
- 42 A.C. Fraser as n.41 above, p.281.
- 43 O.C. Quick, *The Ground of Faith and the Chaos of Thought*, 1931, p.132.
- 44 Quoted by Gordon Harland, *The Thought of Reinhold Niebuhr*, New York 1960, p.99. Cf. the similar view of Condorcet and some of the Encyclopaedists.
- 45 J. Martineau, *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, 1890, p.17.
- 46 C. Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 1963 edn. p.462.
- 47 L.F. Stearns, "The present direction of theological thought in the Congregational churches of the United States", *Proceedings of the International Congregational Council*, 1891, p.81.
- 48 H. Scott Holland, *Personal Studies*, 1905, p.173.
- 49 J. Dickie, *The Organism of Christian Truth*, n.d. but preface has 1930, p.154.
- 50 J. Orr, *Sin as a Problem of Today*, 1910, p.139.
- 51 J. Orr, *Sidelights on Christian Doctrine*, n.d. preface has 1901, p.94.
- 52 J. Orr, *The Progress of Dogma*, n.d. but preface has 1901, p.328.
- 53 Professor Robert Watts attacked the relativism of Henry Drummond's *Ascent of Man* (1894) in his *Professor Drummond's 'Ascent of Man' and Principal Fairbairn's 'Place of Christ in Modern Theology'*, *Examined in the Light of Science and Revelation*, Edinburgh, n.d.
- 54 Robin Gill, *The Social Context of Theology*, 1975, p.116.

- 55 E.C. Moore, *An Outline of the History of Christian Thought since Kant*, 1912, p.17.
- 56 The Calvinist James McCosh is an interesting exception here. In his *The Religious Aspect of Evolution*, 1888, he utilised natural selection as an analogy of that gracious election of God whereby men are saved. This view did not command widespread support, not least because by now all things Calvinistic were under a cloud.
- 57 R.W. Dale, *The Ten Commandments*, n.d., p.159: "If it be said that this scientific history of our physical organization constitutes a theory of human nature, that it explains our position in the universe, that it solves those questions concerning our destiny by which the hearts of the wisest men in all ages have been perplexed, I can only reply that it explains nothing that I am most anxious to understand. My moral life remains a mystery still".
- 58 F.E. Hamilton, *The Basis of Evolutionary Faith*, n.d. but preface has 1931, pp.58-60.
- 59 Robert Mackintosh, *From Comte to Benjamin Kidd*, 1899, p.281.



JOHN RICHARDS

The Occult Explosion & the Church

In this paper, based on the fourth lecture given at the recent VI Symposium on Superstition and the Occult (see this VOLUME p.76) the author considers some of the causes of the occult explosion and outlines the ways in which Christians commonly react towards it. He then makes helpful suggestions about how the Good News of the Gospel delivers those in bondage to occult powers.

If by 'the occult explosion' we are thinking about the social phenomenon of the mid 'sixties (following the Beat Movement and the swing to Eastern Religions) we must remember that interest in the occult is by no means new. In Old Testament times God's people were very explicitly taught to cut themselves off from the occult practices of their neighbours (Deut. 18:9-14) and no doubt there were good reasons for the warning.

What follows is Dom Landau's description of Germany between the Wars. It was written over thirty years ago, and not only puts the recent 'explosion' in some historical context, but suggests five reasons for the occult explosion of that time; these certainly apply today.

The country was riddled with all kinds of psychic currents. Though there were certain 'occult' activities of a serious and scientific kind, the majority of them were spurious, if not positively dangerous...patriotism, social respectability, economic security...even science had shown their feet of clay. There seemed little within the established order that held any promise...The antidote to the precariousness of the present and the hopelessness of the future was sought in experimenting with unending sexual thrills...[and] ... the country abounded with [psychic] lectures, magazines, study groups, fortune-

tellers, astrologers, hypnotists and mediums. Communication with the 'other side' was almost as common as with the friend next door.^{1a}

In addition to these reasons many others have been noted; among them are -

1. The growth of Spiritualism in response to the needs of the bereaved of two world wars.
2. The death of Rationalism in society, but its healthy existence in the 'ivory towers' of certain academic theologians!
3. The repeal, in 1951, of the Witchcraft Act, together with the paperback 'explosion' - which enabled any decent housewife to operate as an amateur witch in her cooking, and any schoolboy to have a go at dangerous psychic experiments.
4. The media followed the lead of the paperbacks, and continued to make public what had hitherto been private. There are some who say that that is *all* the occult explosion is, but I think publicity encourages growth. On our television screens, incidentally, the occult is not really to be found in the late-night discussions on the subject, but - certainly at one period - fairly undiluted on the children's programmes!
5. The growth of serious investigation into the paranormal is now known to the man-in-the-street, and no one thinks it strange for an astronaut to conduct ESP experiments during his mission. At another scientific level, the view of matter has changed, and some physicists seem to be able to talk more naturally of 'mystery' than do some theologians!
6. The world has become a Global Village and our own society pluralist in its beliefs. Travel is available to all - not least that experienced in front of our television screens. It is hardly surprising that Evensong in the Parish Church is not seen by many people as the ultimate experience in Man's religious life!
7. As the insights of Freud and Jung filter into the thinking of society, and the teachings and reality of Eastern Mysticism are pursued, so *inner space* becomes more immediately relevant to many people than *outer space* -

especially now that the novelty of the latter has worn-off, and Western Society suffers increasingly from diseases of strain and stress.

8. Linked to the awareness and importance of 'inner space' is the increased use of drugs to induce what one might call, 'religious' experiences. According to Timothy Leary the aim of L.S.D. "is to develop yourself spiritually...drugs are the specific, and almost the only, way that the American is going to have a religious experience."^{1b} It seems to some people engaged in the pastoral scene at this level (and I do not write from personal experience) that kids are finding that 'kicks' can be had rather more cheaply through occult experimentation than through drugs.

So much for some of the contributory causes, I want now to turn to the question, How are we to *understand the occult explosion?*

Beyond doubt it is a reaction against materialism; a reaction against a society whose architecture and whose bureaucracy seem designed to minimise man; a reaction against a society which claims that 'happiness is a cigar'; that sexual conquest depends on your after-shave; that a mother's love lies in her water-softener; that family happiness and security are to be found in your breakfast cereal; that security in marriage (or out of it!) depends on a woman's perfume! (In view of the examples I have given, it is surely a sign of real hope that the most popular TV commercial is the monkeys who promise nothing more than a laugh and a cup of tea!)

In addition to this negative aspect, occultism is also, without doubt, a very positive search. I would see the occult explosion as a search for at least four things —

- a) a search for *personal experience*, and, through that —
- b) a search for *personal identity* and, hopefully —
- c) a search for a *framework* (whether it is philosophical, or scientific, or religious) in which to see and place one's life.

In addition to these, and among the young in particular — it is

- d) a search for *adventure*,

Finally — very basic to adolescence — it opens up a way of *testing* the promises of the adult world. (I think that a great deal of behaviour among young people is testing the implicit or explicit promises which the adult world makes and — disturbingly for us — protesting loud and strong when the promises prove false!)

The Church

In this section I deal briefly with (1) the Church's *failure*, (2) the Church's *view* of the occult and (3) the Church's *answer* to the problems it raises.

1. *The Church's failure.* It is sad to have to state it, but I believe the occult explosion is, in large measure, due to the failure of the Christian Church. There are many reasons; among them are —

(a) *Mistrust of Experience.* Experience of God as vast as God himself, and response to that experience is likely to have as many variations as there are people. Yet, in our theological tidiness, experience of God is commonly narrowed to a 'party' issue, and experience and response pigeon-holed and labelled, whether it is 'Conversion' or 'Second Blessing' or 'The Cloud', or whatever! So often we do not rejoice with them that rejoice, only with those on whom we can pin *our* particular label!

Our mistrust of emotionalism has unthinkingly led us to drive-out emotion as well, and we go to Church to allow our wills to be stirred² or our minds to be stimulated, but the only things that matter below our necks, are feet to arrive on time, and hands with which to reach into our pockets! This view of man is not the Biblical view, because it misses out his heart — which may only be touched at an evangelistic rally!

It must surely puzzle any informed outsider that personal experience is so mistrusted, when the God whom we purport to worship is a God of *love*; when the central symbol of our faith indicates someone actually *laying-down his life for us*; and when the gifts of His Spirit are not only 'meekness' and 'patience', but '*love*' and '*joy*' (Gal. 5:22).

If man is truly a religious animal, it is hardly surprising that he generally looks elsewhere for his religious experience than to Church.

b) *Divorce from society.* Having adapted itself to the 'materialistic society', it now finds that society has moved-on and rejected materialism! Kenneth Leech writes "Religion is on the increase everywhere, except *inside* the Church"³ and John Kerr says "Sadly the established Church may be the last sector of society to believe in the supernatural".⁴

Academic theologians, having worked hard to rid Scripture of unusual items they have not themselves experienced, are divorced from a society in which most children at secondary school know the terminology of parapsychology and even experiment freely in this field.⁵

c) *Reluctance on the part of those who claim the Bible to be authoritative to undertake a ministry of healing.* The Healing Ministry has been firmly established in the Church of England this century⁶, yet little laying-on-of-hands and anointing takes place in some circles!

The healing ministry of the church tends, therefore, to be polarised, between the 'sacramentalist' on the one hand and the 'charismatic' on the other. This poverty of Christ's Healing ministry leads outsiders to go to *anyone, anywhere*, for non-medical healing — other than to the Church! So spiritistic and mediumistic healings abound, and anyone who has any psychic ability or power is regarded as ministering the healing power of Christ. In my local evening paper all the churches advertise their mid-week and weekend activities. Time and time again 'healing' is advertised in the spiritualists' programmes but never ever among those who have been commissioned by their Lord to 'preach the Kingdom, heal the sick, and cast out demons' (Lk 9:2; Mt (10:8)! So a white witch can write⁷"... unlike other religions we believe we have the power to heal people". Yet each one of us lives in a Diocese the episcopal head of which has been directly commissioned at his consecration as Bishop to "heal the sick"!⁸

d) *Lack of teaching.* Just as her poverty of witness in healing contributes to the growth of the number of so-called 'faith healers', so the Church's lack of teaching on *death* leads many to seek the comfort they need by trying to contact those they have loved. The Catholic tradition supplies a need here as the Eucharist is seen as a 'thin spot in the veil between time and eternity' where worship has a cosmic dimension.

Another area of lack of teaching is the Church's silence on *superstitious customs*. I was talking with a Vicar once in his study. At one point in the conversation, he hauled himself up out of his deep armchair, walked to the other side of the room, placed one finger on the wooden mantelpiece, murmured 'touch wood' — and then returned! The editor of a well-known church newspaper used the phrase 'providential good-fortune! — at least he did until I wrote to him...

Superstition seems, to me, to be the greatest danger we face, not because *in itself* it is dangerous, but because it is an expression of woolly-thinking which is damaging to Christian thought, to Christian practice and to Christian witness. In theological terms, to imply that one's day will be changed when a black cat crosses one's path, when, as a Christian that day has been committed to God for his guidance and ruling, is to believe that the Creator is at the mercy of his creation, and to ascribe 'the kingdom, the power and the glory' not to God, but to that which he has created. This is essentially idolatrous and blasphemous.

2. *The Church's view.* Theologically the occult is *pre-Christian*, it is the worship of the creation rather than the Creator. The very word 'occult' means 'hidden', and the contrast is apparent the moment we use the phrase 'the Christian Revelation'. The occult is a religious search, and might be defined as *seeking that which is 'hidden'*, as distinct from the Christian quest which leads to the recognition of *that which is revealed*.

The occult-ridden society bears a striking resemblance to the society of the first century to which the Christian message came as Good News, a call out of darkness into Light, a call from death into Life, a call from the spirit of slavery and fear into sonship and liberty (1 Pet. 2:9; John 5:24; Rom. 8:15 etc.).

God's wisdom — his WORD has been spoken and incarnated — does not lie hidden as the property of an initiated few, but is a light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of God's people Israel.

The occult view of life is theologically pre-Christian. It is however reasonable, in that the future, the minds of others, and the state of the departed are in large measure hidden from us and so are causes of uncertainty and interest. Yet occultism helps little, if at all, for it contains nothing of the paradox of Christianity — it is man-based rather than God-revealed. It holds out the promise of finding one's life, the promise of becoming first, and the promise of gaining the world — and we all know how Christ turned *that* thinking up-side-down!

Among Christians a number of different views of the occult are held.

1: Those with a syncretical view of their Christianity — I am thinking particularly of a number of 'modern' University chaplains — combine Eastern mysticism with their Death of God theology — and hope, thereby, to achieve resurrection!

2. At the other extreme, there are those who abhor anything remotely connected with the occult, and view the 'occult explosion' as a Devil's Field Day. Whatever the justification of this view, it does little to commend itself to other Christians if its holders seem unaware of the forces of evil in politics and in power structures, or if it leads them to minimise human responsibility.

3 and 4. There is another polarity in the Christian view of the occult which needs to be kept in mind — that between seeing the occult primarily as a spiritual area of promising scientific investigation on the one hand, on the other, as an area of religious experimentation with casualties from which people need to be rescued. There is, and perhaps always will be, a tension between the *scientific* and the *pastoral* attitudes.

This was brought home to me recently when I received a letter in which it was said that a certain priest, about to take some of his colleagues back to a disturbed place, "hoped" (his word) that the disturbance would manifest itself again for the benefit of his friends. Those with a more pastoral leaning would have hoped — indeed prayed — that the disturbance would *not* reappear!

I am clearly aligned with the pastoral view, and I am very sensitive to the possibility that the scientific investigator might pursue Truth at the expense of People. But, to be fair, there can be even greater danger in the pastor who helps people at the expense of Truth⁹. I have in mind the enthusiastic individual who jumps onto some healing bandwagon and actually *creates* in people's lives the distress he is hoping to find.

3. *The Church's Answer.* I have already hinted strongly at what this is. In describing the occult as essentially pre-Christian in a theological sense, the 'answer' is the New Testament — the Christian Gospel. As I wrote in *Renewal* (1972) —

...where the Gospel in all its richness is both preached and lived, people need look no further in their search for identity, meaning, purpose, security and reality. Who would renounce Christ and swear allegiance to Satan if first they had been attracted to the soldiers and servants of Jesus Christ and invited to join their ranks and follow him? Who would seek out the destructive powers of the psychic, the magical or the demonic if they had *first* met the transforming power of the Holy Spirit?

The church is touchy about 'Fundamentalism' today, but we must not confuse Fundamentalism with the Fundamentals. Some years ago the Bishop of Woolwich wrote -

I believe we are living in an age of genuine spiritual revolution...It is crucial that the clergy begin to pray again. That may sound absurd, but they have truly forgotten. Five years ago no youngster would have stopped me in the street and asked why I love Jesus. But it is happening. We *must* preach Jesus.^{1c}

Compare that with what David Edwards sees as the Church's theological enthusiasm for - ...the death of God, the suicide of the Church, the unknowability of Jesus, the impossibility of preaching, and ...the uncanny ability of so much contemporary church life to avoid mentioning matters such as God..."

This list of the Church's failures may seem unduly long: its purpose is to map the areas which need looking at if the Christian answer is to be presented convincingly. Our mistrust of religious experience; our divorce from the religious searchings of society; our lack of commitment to spiritual ministry and healing; our failure to give instruction on death and superstition or to practice healing - all these reduce the credibility of Christian witness.

Deliverance and Exorcism

I want, finally, to say something about the ministry of deliverance from evil powers and to answer some of the questions most frequently asked about it.

To understand the situation as it is today, we must realise that there are two views of this ministry.

The first is sacramentalist and based on the traditional wisdom of the Church handed down largely within the 'Catholic' tradition. The ministry dependent upon the first views is rooted in the past, and those who practice it operate very much within the disciplines of the Church. In the Anglican Church, teaching on these lines has, in this century, been given by the late Fr. Gilbert Shaw and others, also in the teaching and literature of the Guild of St. Raphael which exists to promote a right understanding of the Church's ministry of Healing. Dom Robert Petitpierre attended his first exorcism in the nineteen thirties and has been an adviser to many Bishops and others since that time. He points out that in the early centuries of our era, candidates for baptism were exorcised by their sponsors at the end of each weekly period of instruction and again immediately before baptism. This was done not because candidates were thought to be 'possessed' or under attack by 'demons' but to free them from the baneful influence of the Fall. This is not so much to free them from something as to confer a freedom for God. In 1958 both the then Archbishops called a commission to report on healing, and the document *The Church's Ministry of Healing* (C.I.O.) was produced. In 1964 The Bishop of Exeter's Commission on exorcism gave guidelines to every Diocese, and in 1972 published and revised their report.¹⁰ Two years later, the Archbishop of York's study group produced guidelines for the clergy, guidelines which Dr. Coggan commended at that time for the consideration of the wider church. Space forbids any further elaboration, but enough has been said to establish the point that for many Christian ministers exorcism is well-established and has a small part to play within a total ministry of reconciliation.

In 1974, however, with *The Exorcist* (novel and film) and the 'Barnsley Case', the subject became 'news'. Those who had no previous understanding of the subject, relying only on what they had read about these two items reacted violently against the whole subject — as well they might! Soon moves were made to make the practice illegal; theologians objected to it, and Bishops tried to restrict the practice or even forbid it. The Bishop of London said at the time that no priest in his diocese was licenced to perform exorcisms. This particular statement highlights the two views, for Prebendary Cooper, through the Guild of St. Raphael¹² had consistently taught that exorcism was not a specialist ministry, but was simply part-and-parcel of the work of any ordinary parish priest. Dr. Cooper for many many years had been designated in the press and elsewhere as 'the Bishop of London's adviser on exorcism'. The two views were apparent side-by-side — Dr. Cooper, speaking from the position of knowing all about the ministry of exorcism within the sacramental life of the church, while the Bishop of London treating it (as so many did!) as if it was something completely new and unknown:

The reaction — perhaps 'over-reaction' is a better word — of the sixty-five academic theologians was similarly related more to the film and to the public hysteria than it was to the understanding which the Church had acquired over the years.

I was much disturbed by the unhealthy and near-hysterical publicity given by the national press to the question of exorcisms in the Church of England. I was also disturbed by the number of requests for help and advice about the exorcising of places or persons which I was receiving.

In spite of its contemporary relevance, these words were not written in 1974, but by the late Bishop of Exeter when describing the situation which confronted him in the early 'sixties, and which prompted his commission on the subject!

I have drawn attention to these two opposing views — which might be termed the 'established' and the 'new' views of exorcism — because, as I have indicated in my Grove booklet¹³ I believe one can only begin to understand the Church's mixed attitudes to exorcism by relating what is said to one or other of these two positions. (It is obvious, but needs to be stated nevertheless, that if we want to know more about a subject we must learn from the experience and writings of those who are familiar with it, rather than those who are not!¹⁴)

In conclusion I would like to direct attention to some features of the ministry of deliverance, to make some useful distinctions which are often overlooked, and to answer some of the more common criticisms of the deliverance ministry.

1. The context of exorcism is within — and only within — the wider healing ministry of the Church. To divorce it from this is like taking surgery out of the context of the wider caring and healing work of the hospital community. "You cannot go far in the healing ministry," wrote George Bennett, "without being confronted by the need for yet another ministration — exorcism or the casting out of evil."¹⁵ We cannot understand it unless we see it in that context and work within it: otherwise it raises more questions than it answers.

2. There are some useful distinctions to be drawn.

(a) Between christian exorcism undertaken in the name of Christ operating with his authority by his Holy Spirit within the sacramental life of the Church, and exorcism accomplished by other means. It would perhaps clarify things if we opted more than we generally do for the term 'Christian exorcism' when that term is appropriate.

(b) A second distinction is between a disturbance in a person and a disturbance in a place.¹⁶ In their over-hasty reaction to the events of 1974 it was quite clear that many Bishops were thinking exclusively of ministry to disturbed people, in spite of the fact that up until the occult explosion the Church's ministry had been chiefly concerned with places! Christians are learning that there is an inter-relation between the two, but the ministries are distinct, and since one only hears of a disturbed place because of its effect on people, even places cannot be divorced from the pastoral care of those concerned.

(c) A third distinction must be made between, what I would term, 'deliverance' and 'exorcism'. Many of us experience spiritual bondage in our lives, from which we need to be delivered. We are not molested or inhabited by evil spirits or demons, but distortive pressures act on us from outside, or even within, affecting unhealed and unredeemed parts of our humanity. This has next-to-nothing to do with the very rare cases of genuine 'possession' in which a person seems totally at the mercy of a malign influence over which he has no control. It is evident that if Christ is the Saviour and the Healer he can heal through His Body, the Church, overcoming evil of all kinds. Yet I think we should avoid referring to demons in conversation or attempting to cast them out, except in situations where no other course seems appropriate.

So really under this third heading we have a double distinction, (i) that between the lesser and major degrees of human spiritual suffering, and (ii) corresponding to that, the range of Christian ministry appropriate to any given state. (I would want to state here that the main healing ministries of the Church are prayer, worship and fellowship). Terms to designate the range of ministry might range from 'deliverance' (for the normal oppressions and bondages with which we are familiar) to 'minor exorcism' and 'major exorcism'. This latter designation is the one used by the Roman Catholic Church. A 'minor' exorcism would be a prayer of deliverance from evil — as indeed is the Lord's prayer and within the competence of any faithful Christian, clerical or lay; a 'major' exorcism on the other hand is what it says it is and should only be conducted by experienced ministers and with Bishop's permission. My own feeling is that if the Church learned to take more seriously the reality of minor exorcism, or indeed to be the 'cultural exorcist' that Harvey Cox would like it to be, then the need for 'major exorcisms' would decrease. Corresponding roughly to the 'major'/'minor' classification would be either a *command* addressed to the evil entity to depart, or a *prayer* to God for deliverance (I gather it

is only really the Western Church which does exorcism by command, perhaps the Eastern Church has something to teach us in that respect.)

(d) A fourth distinction I would make would be between *true exorcism* and *pseudo-exorcism*. Many critics of exorcism assumed that it is undertaken by a minister who adopts his language to the delusions of the patient. The general *impression* is that a patient comes to a minister saying "I am possessed, will you exorcise me?", and that the minister (while not himself believing in any such thing!) agrees to do so and goes-along-with the patient's own wrong diagnosis of himself. This, were it actually done, would be to use exorcism as a therapeutic technique. The honesty of so doing is questionable, and employment of a psychiatric technique is outside the competence of the majority of Christian ministers anyway!

In a genuine case the patient would *not* be very willing to see a Christian minister, would *not* have insight into his condition, and if he *was* 'possessed' the last thing to enter his mind would be to ask a Christian minister to help! In a severe case the patient has no memory afterwards of what goes on, so the language of the minister has little direct bearing on him!

Finally I want to give short answers to the questions most frequently raised in this connection.

What is the relationship between 'possession' and mental illness?

Firstly one must say that although we may talk of man as spirit-mind-body he is essentially a unity, so that illness at any one level is likely also to affect other levels. Having said that, most psychiatric terms are descriptive of symptoms not of causes, and sometimes the descriptions — like schizophrenia — are such 'blanket terms' that they can cover many causes. A possessed person would certainly present a picture of 'illness' to GPs and psychiatrists, and they would find a label to describe it. That is not to say that they know the cause. Terms like 'demonic influence' or 'possession' relate to causes.

How is possession diagnosed? There is no quick and easy answer, but diagnosis should depend on cumulative evidence rather than just one or two only of the classic symptoms. I would look to a detailed case-history of the person and would want to relate his disturbance to his personal history and his place of work and home.

Correct diagnosis involves both — reason and discernment; since few people have both, it is evident that 'two minds are better than one', and that this ministry is a ministry for the Church rather than for the individual specialist (Mk. 6:4 etc.).

Recurring factors in such cases are often links with the occult and manifest a reaction against the things of Christ.

Exorcism seems altogether too negative a procedure, should it not be more positive? This impression arises because 'exorcism' is a short-hand term for a much wider ministry. Exorcism is always followed by blessing, and in its right pastoral context is really good news to the poor and liberty to the captives. Dr. Mackarness says of it that it is 'life-saving and can mend broken lives' and you can not have anything more positive than that!¹⁷ It is based not on a demonology but a Christology, and it seeks to restore the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Do not those who engage in this ministry believe there are demons everywhere, and that we are all at the mercy of malevolent forces? Is not this superstition and/or dualism? Such is the range of opinions within the Church that certain people can be found to support any view, but it does not follow that those who acknowledge the reality of evil necessarily inflate their concept of it out of all reasonable proportion. It is obvious that if the Church's Ministry is based on the Lordship and Victory of Christ, one is not involved in a dualistic struggle.

...but I know of Christians who use demon language for just about everything...? I think this attitude can be traced to two errors. The first is that certain sections of the Church do not have any real and regular way of dealing with sin. Where sin is not dealt with and forgiven and a new life started, it grows — "sow a thought reap a deed, sow a deed reap a habit, etc." Christians may find themselves dealing with those who are fast bound by sin in the grips of the 'daemonic' in Rollo May's use of the word. The second error is the unthinking use of the formula 'if it works it is right'. It works to split a pea-nut with a sledge hammer but it does not follow that pea-nuts are best split with sledgehammers if the same can be accomplished by the fingers. Similarly those who have recently learned that exorcism is effective may use it to accomplish what might far more easily and sensibly be accomplished by counselling, or fellowship, or prayer or praise. I am constantly advising Christians to avoid demon language, to avoid doing the Devil's advertising for him, and to opt always for the lesser ministry.

I want to conclude with a story from my own experience which, to me, puts the ministry of deliverance and exorcism in perspective.

In one parish in which I served, I was contacted by a local schoolteacher. She had a very troublesome pupil, a teenage girl, who was causing a great disturbance in her school. She had taken the girl to her doctor and her doctor had advised her to bring her to see me. The girl seemed to be the member of some witchcraft group, to be heavily involved with occult games and so on. She was violent from time to time and could not concentrate; she suffered from headaches and other pains.

Immediately I learned the facts we started praying for her.

Her teacher brought her to me and the three of us sat in my study. I pointed out to the girl that the pains she was suffering and the other unpleasant things were symptoms of the kind of life she was living. I told her that I cared for her far too much to ask Our Lord to rid her of the symptoms, because if she didn't change her life-style, she would suffer much more in the long run. I said "you're old enough to decide whether you want to go on living this way with these results, or whether you want to change. If the time comes that you want to change, I'm available anytime of the day or night. Come and see me, and I'll pray for you and ask Jesus Christ to clear up your past and its symptoms. But the decision is up to you. Go away and think about it."

She left, and for quite a while we and some of our friends continued to pray for her. Then came a change of job, and suddenly about two years later out of the blue, I received a letter from her teacher, thanking us for what we had done, and saying that the girl was now well, a committed Christian and a Sunday School teacher.

If I by the Spirit of God, said Jesus, cast out demons, then is the Kingdom of God come among us.

The Kingdom comes by *God's action and our co-operation*, and not, as it is so easy, but fatal to think, by *our action and God's co-operation*.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 J. Richards, *But Deliver Us from Evil*, Seabury, 1974,
(a) quoted p.25; (b) quoted p.35; (c) p.33.
- 2 See Collect for the Sunday before Advent.
- 3 K. Leech, *The Jesus Revolution*, Church Literature Association
(a pamphlet) 1972.
- 4 J. Kerr, *The Mystery and Magic of the Occult*, 1971.
- 5 The Rev. Peter Anderson's survey of 80,000 school children
showed that 80% were involved in ouija sessions or playground
séances.
- 6 See particularly Professor Chas. W. Gusmer's fine study,
The Ministry of Healing in the Church of England (Alcuin Club),
1974.
- 7 'The Rise of Modern Witchcraft' in *Man Myth and Magic*, quoted
in ref.1.
- 8 Immediately after the Archbishop and Bishops have prayed and
laid hands on the new Bishop, he is handed a Bible with an
exhortation, part of which runs, "Be to the flock of Christ
a Shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not. Hold
up the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring again
the outcasts, seek the lost..."
- 9 This is something about which rightly the academic theologians
are particularly sensitive, and it lies behind much of their
mistrust of exorcism.
- 10 *Exorcism*, Edited by Dom Robert Petitpierre, 1972.
- 11 See his *Exorcising Devils*, Hale, 1976.
- 12 A guild which has existed since 1915 with the object of
"working for the restoration of the ministry of healing as
part of the normal function of the Church". The Guild
publishes a quarterly magazine, *Chrism*, and useful
introductory leaflets on all aspects of the Church's
ministry of healing. Address — Secretary, 22 Orchard
Gardens, Cranleigh, Surrey.
- 13 J. Richards, *Exorcism, Deliverance and Healing*, Grove Booklet
on Ministry and Worship, No.44. (Available from Grove Books,
Bramcote, Nottingham, £0.30).
- 14 See refs. 10 and 17. Also *The Christian Ministry of Healing
and Deliverance*, Diocese of York, 1974; *A Memorandum on
Exorcism — for the Guidance of all Clergy*, Archbishop of
Wales, 1974; *The Occult*, Archbishop of Sydney's Commission,
1975; K. Koch *Christian Counselling and Occultism* (Ev.
Verlag, 7501, Bergausen/Bd., W. Germany) 1972.
- 15 In A. James, *Heart of Healing*, 1971.

- 16 It is interesting to note that the recent *Methodist Statement on Exorcism* — which was set up by a committee 'to consider the questions raised by the practice of exorcism' felt able to concern themselves solely with disturbed *people*, and to ignore places. (Statement available from The Division of Social Responsibility, Central Buildings, Matthew Parker St., London, SW1H 9NH).
- 17 R. Mackarness, 'Occultism and Psychiatry', *The Practitioner*, Mar. 1974.



LESLIE PRICE

SUPERSTITION AND THE OCCULT: BLACK, WHITE OR GREY?
- PROBLEMS OF DEFINITIONS AND BOUNDARIES

Mr. Leslie Price's Lecture given at the recent V.I. Symposium on SUPERSTITION AND THE OCCULT (see this VOLUME p.76), here reproduced in substance, deals with borderline areas of superstition and with the need to encourage Christians who are gifted psychically.

One of the most significant landmarks in Christian history was Paul's sermon at Athens (Acts 17:22). He began by telling the Athenians, in the words of the King James Version "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." The RSV has "I perceive that in every way you are very religious". The NEB, however, introduces another term, "I see that in everything that concerns religion you are uncommonly scrupulous". The Good News Bible prefers "very religious".

The problems facing the translator confront, also, the Christian in his assessment of superstition. Most of us do not mind being thought religious, despite the attacks on religion by Jesus Christ and reformers down to Karl Barth. Better to be thought scrupulous than unscrupulous, though the former may be a problem for the psychiatrist or pastoral counsellor. But superstition is condemned; we may define it as unreasonable belief or practice. Yet what is unreasonable to one group is reasonable to another. It may even be thought to be ordained by God. Upon superstition may depend life or death: physical death if it hinders life-saving medical treatment, spiritual death if it leads to idolatry. The message of the prophets from Moses to Jesus makes it clear that being religious does not free us from sin, superstition included.

Dr. Barker's paper explains why superstition is popular, and Canon Stafford Wright's (this VOLUME p.146) gives us biblical criteria for identifying and repudiating superstition. Clearly it is also possible to use Scripture in superstitious ways as in certain credulous cults, and in exposition that does not take

account of the context. Some of the most determined opponents of Jesus Christ were those who quoted the Old Testament against Him.

What is commonly known as the occult embraces hidden knowledge, real or supposed, and it includes much that most of us would think superstitious and idolatrous. Christians are bound to repudiate the claim that there is any path to salvation except through Jesus Christ. This salvation is offered to all men, not to those who know secret words (like those of the Gnostics) or special theoretical teachings, or possess extraordinary powers like those of the magicians. Word and sacrament must be in the vernacular. Yet we must recognise that sometimes even the Christian gospel has been made to appear unnecessarily occult.

Many minor occult teachings deal with divination. I should imagine that we all deprecate divination, though there is no avoiding the fact that some approved Old Testament characters practised it. Daniel is even called "chief of the fortune-tellers" (Dan. 4:9. Good News Bible). In the New Testament, lots are drawn to select Matthias as an apostle, though this is before the Holy Spirit was sent. I think most of us would argue that as Christians have the Spirit, they have no need to use divination, and we would probably reject all attempts to know the future. This should include the attempts by some writers to discuss the future by using Scripture as a kind of device for divining. It is unfortunate that some of their books (by Hal Lindsey for example) are assured of places in religious bookshops, simply because they have much to say about Satan and his works, and are liberally sprinkled with biblical references. Such works are a perennial Christian deviation — many were produced in the early seventeenth century in England. One is not sure if it represents progress or not that the Pope has now been replaced as leading candidate for the role of Antichrist by the Russian leader of the day.

How do we assess individual groups of teachings that might be occult? John Richards has a useful paper on "Christians and yoga" in *Renewal* (Ap. 1977). "Truth" he says, "is never found by comparing the worst of one side with the best of the other, although this arises frequently in conversation. Nor is God's world quite as black-and-white as we would sometimes have wished he made it. There is a lot of grey, enlightened by white and punctuated by darkness, and we view it wrongly to see only the extremes, although it makes decisions easier to oversimplify in this way".

One of John Richards' suggestions, "Never move into any area unnecessarily which certain Christians feel to be dangerous;

one's motive is likely to be to prove them wrong (which is not a very good start) and they may be right!" Ironically, this would rule out the kind of activities described in *Renewal* which is the magazine of *The Fountain Trust*, the main body in the non-Roman charismatic renewal in Britain. Charismatic practices have been condemned as occult by such writers as Kurt Koch and W. Graham Scroggie, and charismatic leaders themselves recognise the danger of a new Gnosticism in their teachings.

The urge to condemn is very close to the surface in many religious people — they had a field day when faced with Jesus Christ on earth — and though we have to speak out against evil and false teachings, we must choose our criticisms carefully and express them fairly. The Talmud says that Jesus was a sorcerer. "You have a demon in you" is the charge made in John 7:20. "He has Beelzebub in him. It is the chief of demons who gives him the power to drive them out" was what the scribes said (Mark 3:22) to explain the deliverance ministry of Jesus. Jesus says that he who says evil things against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. This should give us pause. The Holy Spirit works at times through channels that the religious condemn. The channels may not be entirely pure. Authentic revival, for example, may occur in a mixed denomination which readers of the *Evangelical Times* would expect the Spirit to be too scrupulous to try to revive!

In dealing with occult groups, fairness starts with getting the names right. Not without reason, there have been many criticisms of a body called *The Churches' Fellowship for Psychological and Spiritual Studies* — it is unfortunate that over 50% of these get the name wrong. It is desirable also to distinguish between different types of the same genus. The book *Christian Deviations* went through many reprints before its author Horton Davies acknowledged the problem of "Christian Spiritualism" as a species of Spiritualism distinct from the more obviously anti-Christian varieties. Dr. Kenneth Greet, in his book *When the Spirit moves* disposes of Theosophy in one page. Such treatments of complex movements are more convincing to their authors than to adherents whom one would wish to win to Christian commitment.

Special problems arise in the area of healing. Let us suppose that a man has a wish to heal the sick, and one or two unusual incidents with sick persons recovering after contact with him embolden him to open the question with his minister. If his minister is an Evangelical he may belong to a group who believe that the healing miracles of the New Testament were ended by God at about 100 AD. The man may not receive much encouragement to exercise or even explore any possible gift of healing, and it may even be hinted that what he has is not of God. There are,

in contrast, many cults and sects that do find a place for particular healing ministries, and they will welcome a man who seems to be gifted in that line. If our man links with those, he may well be a channel for cures, though connected with teaching which will probably be heretical. There will not be lacking Christians to tell him that his cures are evil in origin. And indeed some of the heretical groups draw inspiration from polluted streams. The real problem however is that the Church lost part of the gospel for centuries. Many Christians are now engaged in reviving the ministry of healing in the Church, and this will prevent some persons drawn to that work, from drifting into outside groups, as well as leading others to return. Some Evangelicals influenced by charismatic renewal are now enthusiastic about the healing ministry, but to safeguard their own position, their attitude to healers who are in cultic groups is unsympathetic. Evangelicals may say, in effect, "You can only join us if you are prepared to denounce your friends in forthright terms".

These comments are not intended to encourage cults that practice healing, but rather to urge a careful response to them. J. Cameron Peddie in his book *The Forgotten Talent* (Fontana) shows a more excellent way. His wife was cured by a Spiritualist healer, one of a number of cases that came to Peddie's attention. He was "afire with jealousy for the honour of my Lord". He offered himself to God in the healing ministry and in due course was accepted. If we find an occult group appealing to needs that can legitimately be met within the Church, but which are not being met, our first task is to correct the deficiencies in the teaching and practice of the Church. There will always be those who choose to go outside, but it should not be because the food for the sheep is in some way deficient.

Unusual experiences — of healing, of extrasensory perception, precognition — occur frequently in the lives of a small minority in the population, and, rarely, to most of us. Most people who have such experiences reserve them for family and friends. Some, seeking understanding, are pushed into occult groups. A friend of mine, a medium respected by parapsychologists in Britain and America, used to be taken as a child to Mattins by his mother who was a Sunday school-teacher. He would see shadowy shapes in church which he called angels. He asked the minister about them, and was told he was imagining things. He went on enquiring over the years, and followed a well-beaten path into amateur mediumship, and then professional work. At first he would work only in "Christian Spiritualist" churches, but later he found such discrimination against the non-Christian "National Spiritualists" unjustified. This man is also engaged in a healing ministry.

You may not feel there is any place for his sensitivity in the church, but perhaps you would agree that there has to be a way of dealing with psychic people, especially children, which helps them to come to terms with their experiences without driving them from the Church. I would suggest that after the charismatic renewal has evolved for a further decade, and has come generally to the balanced view of psychic and religious experience already found in such writers as Simon Tugwell (*Did you receive the Spirit?*) and Morton Kelsey (*Encounter with God*), it may be able to provide such an environment. At the moment the personal and collective insecurities of the charismatics often prevent this.

Psychic experience has no necessary connection with superstition or the occult. Like left-handedness it is noticeable in less than 10% of the population. It resembles sexual emotion in deriving from the non-intellectual side of our nature, and alarms religious people accordingly. It can be dangerous, or subversive of authority. It is fallible, but may come with such resonance as to suggest otherwise. There is a psychic element in many religious experiences and Dr. Martin Israel has even suggested that evangelical conversion is in fact a psychic experience. The Christian attitude to psychics must therefore be a mixed one, as it is to sexual experience. It is harder for Christians to do justice to the psychic person because whereas even the most scholarly theologian may experience sexual emotion, his intellectual training may have closed off any tendency towards psychic awareness. There is a natural tension between the masculinity of the analytical mind and the feminine exercise of psychic gifts. Over 4000 "witches" died in Scotland after the coming of the Reformed faith. They were mainly women, but their clerical opponents were of course men. In the male-dominated World of Evangelical Christianity (cf. the virtually all-male cast at the National Evangelical Anglican Congress 1977!) it will be a long time before justice is done to the intuitively gifted.

The scientific study of psychic experience is called psychical research or (as the Americans and Continentals prefer) parapsychology. Properly it is the preserve of scientists. The main British groups of parapsychologists are in the Psychology departments of The University of Edinburgh and of Surrey; there are about a dozen postgraduate parapsychologists, some being in departments of engineering, sociology and philosophy, because this is an interdisciplinary area of study. Christians cannot give carte-blanche to parapsychologists to do what they like any more than we can do so with atomic physicists or genetic biologists. The implications of controlled psychic power — in war, commerce and politics — are too great for the subject to be ignored until the psychic equivalent of Sputnik goes into orbit. Among ethical

problems that arise are, the use of children in psychic experiments; the propriety of experimental attempts to contact the dead (though this is much less popular today); the inflicting of tests for ESP on animals; and whether one should or should not permit Eastern European parapsychologists to know of the progress of work in the West. Parapsychology is not a central issue in a discussion of superstition and the occult, though it should be noted that parapsychologists can be superstitious in some of their beliefs; that some of their experimental subjects will have connections with occult groups; and that the parapsychologists themselves may lack the armour of Christian faith which would permit them to distinguish the true from the false in these matters.

We have noted four topics - superstition, the occult, psychic experience and parapsychology, which overlap frequently, though it is helpful to keep them separated in our minds. Many of the adherents of occult groups, many of the victims of superstition, many psychic persons, could be brought to Christ, and indeed there are testimonies on record of this being done, though sometimes one set of rigidities is exchanged for another. There is a vast ignorance of the Christian faith among occult adherents, and a need to intensify missionary work in this area. Let us remember, however, that our first priority is to seek God's help to correct those blemishes in the Church that drive some to seek service elsewhere; and that we must do justice to the positive points in the practices we reject if we are to rescue from them their finest adherents.

ESSAY REVIEW

PSI THEOLOGY

Dr. M.T. Kelsey, a leading Christian writer in the field of parapsychology, has recently written a challenging book.¹ The author's thesis is that the christian churches have neglected the psi faculties in man which alone enable him to make contact with another world of existence: the church he says cannot make much appeal to modern man until it can discover ways and means of opening up these psi or ESP experiences.

The author seeks to show that all the phenomena described by the parapsychologists are to be found in the Bible and in christian tradition. Man, he says, has an urgent need to escape, at times, from the space-time box in which science places him and escape is perfectly possible within the christian tradition: no need to cast wistful eyes on yoga and the religions of the East! Christian "Psi Theology" is, in fact, vastly superior to that of other religions which, like Buddhism, deny love its rightful place in life and have no means for dealing with the very real forces which tend to drag us downward.

For Kelsey there are two areas of experience, the one as natural as the other, and each offers a way of knowing. If we are interested only in what we learn through our five senses we shall ignore the other part of our being which is concerned with dream life, psychic experiences generally and parapsychology. In support of his thesis he surveys the evidence given us by the parapsychologists in some detail. Here, inevitably, much well trodden ground is covered and there is little new to say. Unfortunately the treatment is rather uncritical in places (eg. Kirlian photography is included in ESP phenomena, though it appears to be purely physical: see this JOURNAL vol. 101, 172 and D. Milner & E. Smart, *The Loom of Creation*, 1976).

The author insists that the two areas of experience are both natural. It is wrong, therefore, to attribute the strange happenings recorded by parapsychologists to God, to the devil, or to the supernatural, for this interpretation is a form of gap theory. It invokes the supernatural when natural explanations are lacking. (This argument seems to depend on the way we choose to define *nature* and *supernature*. Of course we may, if we so choose, decide with Kelsey to speak of a natural world which includes what most other people call the supernatural, but one

may wonder if understanding is advanced by so doing. And what, one may ask, is the meaning of saying that an experience is *natural* if there is nothing that is not natural?).

The author outlines the various ways by which contact with the other world may be achieved — *ouija*boards, mediumship, divination and the rest, and he points to the great dangers involved in some of them. Unlike J.S. Wright (F & T, this VOLUME p. 146) however, he does not take the biblical warnings against mediumship etc. too seriously because he says they must be interpreted as warnings to the people of Israel not to follow the strange gods of the heathen nations around them. But parapsychical powers, he says, can be directed towards good and religious ends, as well as evil.

Indeed, he claims, that according to the Bible, we cannot do without them. In the Book of Acts, which sets a norm for christian life and activity, every single new advance of the early christian church involved the use of these powers — healings, dreams, visions, casting of lots, direct communication between God and Paul and so on. It is therefore the task of the church today to offer guidance as to the safest ways by which this other realm of experience may be brought within the ken of church members, so that ESP may be used to God's glory.

How can this be done? He thinks that dreams, spontaneous visions, meditation (about which he says a good deal) speaking in tongues and performing rituals in holy places are the least likely of all the occult practices to lead to harm and it is these which Christians may cultivate. In the East constant repetition of some word or other is common, but this does not square with our Lord's warning that His disciples should not use vain repetition as do the heathen.

Another legitimate way of contacting the other world is through synchronicity, an idea which is prominent in the ancient Chinese work, *I Ching or Book of Changes* — the Chinese Bible of the sages since Confucius. Synchronicity has reference to extraordinary coincidences which happen in the lives of very many people — a classical case is that of C.G. Jung who dreamed of a kingfisher and then found a dead kingfisher near Zürich where they are not commonly encountered. Coincidences of this kind, we are told, should be carefully observed: like dreams they may reveal our hidden motives, desires and insights.

The argument of this book is developed with great persuasiveness but some obvious points appear to have been overlooked and it is these which must make one pause before accepting Kelsey's views too enthusiastically.

(1) It is simply not true that psychic manifestations are typical of the bible story of God's dealings with man. There are long periods in the OT when God did not reveal Himself, when there was no open vision and the word of the Lord was rare. The thought that perhaps at long last God had visited His people caused a stir in Palestine in our Lord's day. Only rarely in history did God intervene in a direct way, in revelations to Abraham, Jacob, Moses etc. at the time of the Exodus and the ministries of Elijah and Elisha etc. The Bible presents these times of intervention as exceptions, not as a norm. May we not regard the miracle gifts of the NT in the same way?

(2) In the NT when Jesus promised to send the Spirit, He promised that the works which His disciples would do would be greater than the works which He Himself did. Surely no one would claim that the healing powers possessed by spiritual healers today reach this standard. This being so, what confidence can one have in those who claim that modern works of healings are comparable to those of the NT? There is no doubt that the mind has great power over the body, but the powers which modern Christians exhibit, perhaps by the Holy Spirit, are not more remarkable than those shown by non-Christians. We can hardly imagine a modern Elymas offering money to a pentecostalist for information as to how he performs his miracles.

(3) Another puzzling feature is the fact that so few of the most saintly people we have met in life have these powers. God-fearing and saintly men and women have prayed for the gifts all their lives, believing that God would send them again at the end of the age in which they believed that they were living, but many of them have died without receiving them. Why?

(4) The NT makes it plain that spirits must be tested in a definite prescribed way (1 Jn. 4) not merely accepted as being of God as a matter of course; but again the author has little to say on this and that little suggests that a subjective if sanctified judgment suffices.

May we not conclude, in short, that if there are Christians, which undoubtedly there are, whose presence, or the laying on of whose hands, gives peace and spiritual comfort and the soothing of shattered nerves, then the church should accept gratefully the

gifts offered, but agree that this gives no warrant for connecting these gifts too closely with the gifts of the Holy Spirit described in the NT?

These points may not be fatal to Dr. Kelsey's thesis but it is disappointing to find them virtually ignored.

There is a short up-to-date bibliography but, regrettably, no index. The printing and appearance of this paperback are appealing but unfortunately the binding is of that irritating variety that makes it quite impossible to lay the book open on the desk.

REFERENCE

1. Morton T. Kelsey, *The Church and the Supernatural*, Search Press, 1977, £2.50.

REDC

REVIEWS

John Ferguson, *War and Peace in the World's Religions*,
Sheldon Press, 1977, 166 pp., £5.50.

Much knowledge and much wisdom are packed into the pages of this slender but impressive volume — the author's 38th! Professor Ferguson of the Open University is involved in the Peace Movement and in this book, apparently the first of its kind, he tackles the seemingly stupendous task of outlining the teaching on war and peace given by each of the world's major religions.

Ten chapters deal in turn with Tribal Religion, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism and Jainism, Buddhism, Religions of the Far East, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, and, lastly, the Baha'i. These are followed by a short Conclusion and an excellent index prepared by Mrs. Ferguson.

In every culture there arises, from time to time, opposition to social conformity. The prophet senses the call of Truth and seeks to lead his contemporaries to a higher morality. In course of time the message is forgotten or twisted, but eventually revived, perhaps again and yet again. Thus Christianity was pacifist at the start but became the religion of conquerors, war mongers and exploiters. In early times Buddhism, though not completely pacifist, greatly reduced the will to fight among Tibetans and Mongols: in the form of Zen Buddhism, starting in the 12th century, it became the religion of the soldiers in Japan. In our own day Buddhists have considered it a religious duty to kill Americans. Even the Jains who early became vegetarians to avoid the taking of life, produced warriors.

In Hinduism the virtues of non-violence are appropriate to a Brahmin, but not to one of inferior caste. The *Bhagavad Gita* justifies war, even against one's own relatives, on the grounds that physical death does not touch the *atman*, the essential self, and that war which comes of its own accord is "an open door to

heaven". (Rather implausibly Gandhi claimed that the Gita describes a spiritual war in the soul of Arjuna.) But there are glimpses of another view in the Hindu tradition — as in the story of how the bear talked to the tiger: "You should not retaliate when another does you injury. Good conduct is the adornment of those who are good. Even if those who do wrong deserve to be killed, the noble ones should be compassionate, since there is no one who does not transgress."

For the Buddhist, aspiration for peace is self-centred; it most definitely does not arise from love of others. "From love comes grief, from love comes fear; he who is free from love knows nothing of either grief or fear." The punishment for taking life is a gloomy sorrowful reincarnation. He who kills another "may, in his next birth, meet death unexpectedly while in the prime of life."

For the Christian the chapters on Judaism and Christianity are of particular interest. It is instructive to note that the Rabbis interpreted the bloodier parts of the OT in a wonderfully humane way. God was sorry, they tell us, when the Egyptians were drowned after Israel has passed through the Red (reed) Sea. Deborah gloried in Jael's assassination (Judges 5) closing with the words "let all who love thee be like the sun rising in his strength". The Rabbis understand these to be those "who are reviled but revile not others etc.". Military victors like David and the Maccabees were little remembered for their military exploits. Many other examples are given.

Christian history starts with a religion more pacifist than any other, yet in the end the most militaristic of all. "Probably no religion, not even Islam, has ever launched quite such an intensive succession of holy wars" as did Christians in the days of the Crusades. Christians took over the doctrine of the Just War from pagans but in time forgot to bother whether any particular war in which they were engaged was just or not.

Today pacifism is rare, though not unknown, in Islam. In 1930 Abdul Ghaffir Khan, the Gandhi of the frontier provinces, persuaded the Pathans of northern India to adopt non-violence which they did with great perseverance and bravery. But in the Koran wars against rebels and dissenters are considered justified. "The punishment of those who combat Allah and His Apostle, and go about to commit disorders on the earth: they should be executed or crucified or have their hands and their feet cut off or be banished from the land. This shall be a disgrace for them in the world, and in the next they shall have great torment" says the Prophet.

We may close by quoting Yen Fu (1854-1921) who, says Ferguson, did more than any one else to introduce Western thought to China, but in the end rejected it with the words: "It seems to me that in three centuries of progress the peoples of the west have achieved four principles: to be selfish, to kill others, to have little integrity, and to feel little shame. How different are the principles of Confucius and Mensius, as broad and deep as Heaven and Earth, designed to benefit all men everywhere."

This book deserves high praise and we hope that it will be widely read and studied. It is a pity that the price is so high.

REDC

W.H. Austin, *The Relevance of Natural Science to Theology*, Unwin Bros, 1976, 132 pp.

In 1972 when the Creationists of USA were insisting that the possibility of creation should be raised in scientific texts used in schools, the National Academy of Sciences issued a statement which includes the words:-

...Whereas religion and science are, therefore, because religion is not susceptible to validation by objective criteria, separate and mutually exclusive realms of human thought whose presentation in the same context leads to misunderstanding of both scientific theory and religious belief; and...etc.

The idea here expressed is commonly held by many scientists but no one previously, it appears, has analysed its sources or examined the proposition critically. This is what Dr. Austin attempts to do, and he does it well. He believes that he has exhausted all the arguments that have been used in its favour and that all of them are fallacious.

The first view, called instrumentalism in science, is that expressed in the famous preface by Osiander to Copernicus's *De Revolutionibus* in 1543: "It is not necessary that these hypotheses be true. They need not even be likely. This one thing suffices, that the calculations to which they lead agree with the results of observation". Duhem carried the argument further in his *Aim and Structure of Physical Theory* applying the point of view not to astronomy only but to the whole of physics. He deplored the weakness of mind of those who believed in hypothetical entities such as atoms which we could perceive only if our senses were

acute enough. Religion, for Duhem, deals with fact, but science does not; so the two realms are independent.

Chapter 3 deals with the converse proposition, that religion does not deal with reality, but science does. Here the views of R.B. Braithwaite and W.T. Stace come in for criticism. A typical view is that religion tells stories — it does not matter if they are true or false — which elicit religious feelings. For Stace only mysticism matters.

In Chapter 4 the Two Realms Arguments come in for consideration. The idea is that theology and science deal with separate realms or areas of thought so that science has nothing to do with what religion is *about*. As representative of such views, those of Karl Heim and Donald MacKay's are considered in some detail. The book closes with chapters on Linguistic Arguments (D.D. Evans and others) and Providence.

"The widespread belief that theologians should, or can safely, ignore the findings of the natural sciences thus appears to have quite shaky foundations" concludes the author whose thesis is "that the question of the bearing of natural science on theology remains much more open than is commonly supposed."

The treatment throughout is commendably clear and concise, but of course rather too philosophical for the general reader.

REDC

Howard Marshall (Editor), *New Testament Interpretation: Essays in Principles and Methods*. Paternoster Press, Exeter, 406 pp., £6.00.

Most of us are happy to take our Bibles at their face value. Yet from time to time we hear rumours of some new approach that tells us we must not, and indeed cannot, continue to do so. We know that this is specialist talk, and most of us are not specialists enough to go into it deeply. We can however be thankful that God has raised up good evangelical scholars who can wrestle in the rarefied atmosphere of the mountain tops while we camp on the plain.

This book by 17 scholars, 16 of whom hold university posts, gives an excellent report on how the battle is going. Naturally much is highly technical, with strange names and ideas being tossed about like cricket balls from bowler to batsman and back again. To give an idea, the indices, compiled by Norman Hillyer, the only contributor not holding a university post, contain some 850 names and 900 subjects. Yet it is perfectly possible to get

the drift of the technical chapters, while others are simple and clear.

As examples of the latter, the section on exegesis has three straightforward articles on how the NT uses the OT (Earle Ellis) and Approaches to NT exegesis (Ralph Martin). The third in this section is a masterly demonstration by R.T. France of how Matt. 8:5-13 and the very difficult 2 Peter 3:18-22 may be taken through in great detail. Later John Goldingay includes the same passages in his chapter on expository method.

F.F. Bruce's History of NT Study is naturally a good preliminary chapter, and John Drane on the religious background brings out things we need to know for understanding references and atmosphere. Donald Guthrie on authorship concludes that claims for authorship should stand until shown to be untenable. Robin Nixon begins to draw the whole book to a close with a straightforward chapter on the authority of the NT after all that has been heard.

The remaining chapters are more technical, but, if we want to know the strength and weakness of criticisms that we have heard about, we can follow the general drift. Each is well handled, although there are places where an old-fashioned conservative may feel that the authors have gone further than we would like. Howard Marshall takes Historical Criticism, with a discussion of accuracy in the Gospels. David Wenham on Source Criticism examines the relation between the sources which were used for the Gospels. Stephen Travis takes Form Criticism; on what principle were the different types of sayings and incidents selected for inclusion in the Gospels? Tradition History (David Catchpole) asks how far the Gospels developed what was actually said and done. Two examples that he produces are unconvincing, and he is taken to task by Robin Nixon (p. 348) for the difficulty he creates over Matt. 18:17. His treatment of Mary Magdalen's visit to the tomb is undigested, although he does refer to Guthrie's solution, which I had always imagined to be correct.

Stephen Smalley with Redaction Criticism looks for the editorial work done by the evangelists. Naturally also one meets demythologising. James Dunn handles this, and, while disputing the wholesale interpreting of history as myth (e.g. the Resurrection) shows that one is bound to use some subjective mythology in places, as with the description of the Second Coming.

There are two essays by Anthony Thiselton, which I found fascinating. One is on semantics, which gives a caveat against interpreting words in isolation. Much of what he says reminded

me of what Dr. Basil Atkinson used to say; "The Greeks had no word for *word*". His other chapter on The New Hermeneutic looks for objectivity, but not at the expense of all subjectivity, which produces an effect on student, preacher, and congregation.

Taking a cool look at the book, one approves of the publisher's blurb, "This unique survey with its constructive approach will be especially welcomed by all who fear that critical study undermines faith." And yet I wonder where all the old ideas have gone. I still see good reasons for regarding Mark as the interpreter of Peter when he set down what he had heard Peter say so often. Lately I have noticed how quickly a family story quickly assumes a constant verbal form, so that the family know exactly what is coming. I was glad to see in the book the possibility that telling the same story in the same way might have been the custom in the early church, as it was in Judaism.

What about Luke's prologue, which is not mentioned here although it is vital for interpretation? Was he entirely self-deceived when he claimed to have investigated his facts with those who knew? Even this book seems to be written as though the apostles were taken away to heaven at Pentecost. Luke and others met most of them, and would have checked their records.

Of course there are problems in the text, but they are far less than hostile critics suppose. It would never surprise me if once more some old-fashioned ideas are restored. John Robinson has already made some beginning.

J. STAFFORD WRIGHT

Hugh Evan Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*,
Hodder and Stoughton, 1977, 240 pp., £5.95.

At the close of the 18th century, orthodox religion had reached its nadir in England. Of the few incumbents of the established church whose outlook was evangelical nearly all were impoverished underpaid curates without hope of preferment. Bishops drew their stipends but commonly resided outside their dioceses and vicars, too, often lived far away from their parishes. At Cambridge half the students entered the University with ordination in view, but only as a way to earn a livelihood. Religious teaching there was almost non-existent: university sermons were almost unattended while the confirmations, conducted by the Bishop of Ely every four years, were occasions for "most

unseemly noise and laughter". In the evenings the town was invaded by prostitutes whose centre was at Barnwell and the proctors could do, or did, little.

In 1779 Charles Simeon (1759-1836), a boy from Eton, entered King's College, then especially corrupt, as a freshman. He was, apparently, as wicked as his peers, but while he was settling into his college rooms, ordering wines in quantity and establishing his coachman and horses, the porter called with a letter from the Provost demanding attendance at Holy Communion in three week's time. Aware of how little he cared about religion young Charles was greatly perturbed. He looked around for books to help him and soon, as a result of reading Thomas Wilson's *Instruction for the Lord's Supper*, he realised as in a flash that it was possible for him, a sinner, to lay his sins on Jesus his Saviour, and claim forgiveness. The joy of that discovery remained with him for the rest of his life.

While still in his early 20s Simeon conceived the idea that he would like to be vicar of Holy Trinity, "that I might preach the gospel there". It happened that the incumbent died shortly after and Charles mentioned his ambition to his father - a man by no means sympathetic with evangelical views. However, his father mentioned the matter to his friend the Bishop of Ely. To please the father the Bishop promptly appointed Charles, who had never served as a curate, nor even as yet taken his B.A. (no examination was necessary for this at Kings!), to this important post.

Not surprisingly, deep resentments were generated. In the early days pew owners not only absented themselves when the new vicar was preaching, but locked their seats to make them unusable by others. When Simeon provided new pews at his own expense the church-wardens threw them out into the yard. It became a crime even to speak to Simeon - students who did so were reported to their parents. Yet Simeon, eschewing marriage, which would have terminated his Fellowship at Kings to which as a graduate he had been automatically elected, remained to his dying day Vicar of Holy Trinity. He based his preaching at his church and in the surrounding villages on the Bible alone, sought out the poor and sick and collected funds for their needs, converted hundreds of ordination candidates who later went into every corner of England and, in the end, entirely transformed the moral tone of the University. Through the Bible Society and recruitment of missionaries his influence was world-wide. In later life he purchased numerous advowsons to ensure that evangelicals were appointed to livings. Despite early rejection Charles Simeon lived to be the most respected man in the University, his advice sought by bishops and archbishops, and all this without pretence of scholarship.

The story is full of interest and is well told, warts and all, in this well-produced and fascinating book. Looking back today it is amazing and most encouraging to reflect that God was able to use a man with many failings so greatly. Once converted, Simeon's mind was one-track. He made no attempt to advance or appreciate scholarship, and so set an example which has been the bane of evangelicalism almost to this day. Despite all his loving care for the poor, he showed no interest in changing the wicked laws of his time which were the cause of much misery. He would seek out the condemned man in his cell and lead him to the Lord, but did not raise his voice against a system of justice which demanded the death sentence for relatively trivial offences. The corrupt electoral system of his day did not concern him. Though he knew Wilberforce personally, he seems never to have lifted a finger to help his friend in his brave and exhausting fight against slavery. All this notwithstanding, he followed the light he saw: it is given to few men to accomplish so much for God in their time. In reading this book the thought comes forcefully home that though we too have many failings, more obvious to others (perhaps yet unborn) than to ourselves, this need not disqualify us from useful service for God.

REDC

Vern S. Poythress, *Philosophy, Science and the Sovereignty of God*, Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co. USA, 1976, xvi + 244 pp., 7.50 dollars.

In view of the "need ... for Christians to say something coherent about modern science" the author of this book proposes "to concentrate ... on the positive task of uncovering some biblical foundations for science and the philosophy of science." In Chap 1, *Orientation*, he argues that autonomy or neutrality of thought does not exist. This being so, he feels free to express his own presuppositions. These are belief in a personal God and that this God does "what ... is recorded in the Bible". The Bible itself should be interpreted in a way similar to that of the Westminster Confession of Faith. "All I am saying is that these [presuppositions] are in fact my sure basis for doing philosophy, and that they *ought* to be other peoples' basis." He admits that he is biased, but this creates no problem, for "the Bible indicates that an unbeliever also has a bias, and a bad bias at that".

In Chapter 2, *Ontology*, the author raises the question, whether there is a theological basis which underlies the philosophy of science and mathematics. "How" he asks, "do we answer from a Christian point of view, the following questions:

(a) What is there? (ontology), (b) how does everything function (methodology) and (c) Why is it there? (axiology). Tackling (a), all that exists, he deals with God and angelic beings, down through human and subhuman kingdoms, dividing them into triads and summarising his findings in tables. This treatment throws into relief the idea that rationality in creation, based on Gen. 1:28-30, is the perennial basis of scientific thought.

Chapter 3 is called *Methodology* a "poor word" for what the author is undertaking. Instead of confining himself to mere techniques which scientists either employ or ought to employ, he wishes to ask the much broader question "How does everything function?" He answers it by extending his classifications from the previous chapter into the field of 'modes'; thus the 'human kingdom' rules, speaks and is generally active in the personal mode; the animal kingdom breathes, fears, eats, in the behavioural mode; the plant kingdom lives, grows, reproduces in the 'biotic mode' and the inorganic kingdom in the physical mode, has colour, shape, temperature, weight. This is certainly odd, considering that atoms bond, split, behave as particles and/or waves. Moreover ruling, breathing and living are activities, whether observed by a percipient or not; but colour, shape, and temperature express relationships between sense data and a percipient.

When we ask: "How does everything function?" the natural scientist will describe the regular ways in which matter behaves, and how it is structured. But the fact that energy and matter can create, for example, sounds, embodying thought, remains an awesome mystery. No cosmogony can be satisfactory until our vision is 'Face to face', but we can still learn from the dynamic penetration, the imaginative sweep of a Ficino, Goethe or Teilhard, even when the details of their systems are out of date, or some of their assumptions wrong. The author's numerous classifications and neologisms never get him off the ground. His tables show the layout of the various forms of existence, never what Goethe's Mephistopheles, with envious mocking, calls *das geistige Band*, the bond uniting a logos-actuating creation.

In the section on *Temporality* the author classifies the periods of history. The weakness of the procedure reveals itself when, having demonstrated the 5-10 major epochs of OT history, demarcated by covenants, the author asks as "the remaining question, Which epochs and which prominent persons are to be subgrouped with which?" I would have expected the question: What is the overall shape and the underlying rationale of this series of events? With regard to the detailed treatment of the texts, the author uses biblical persons and events as 'types' to

characterize features of the *Heilsgeschichte* for, example, Joshua and Solomon are types of Christ; being fruitful and multiplying is fulfilled physically and spiritually; Paul's depiction of Abraham's two wives prefigure the Old and New Covenants; Augustine's Two Cities and Boehme's Three Principles operate in a similar way. These are not intended as *history* as we understand the term. Rather the method represents a theological reflection on a set of events already well known to an audience which seeks, not factual knowledge, but *prophecy*, that is, an understanding of God's will for man as shown in mundane events. Unfortunately, the term 'period' is used ambiguously, referring, now to chronology, now to typological features, and the relationship between the two is never worked out properly.

Chapter 4, *Axiology*, deals with values, in answer to the 'third major' metaphysical question. "Why is it [i.e. all that exists, hence, all that is, potentially, open to investigation] then?" Like the other two questions [raised in chap. 1: What is there (ontology)? how does everything function (methodology)?], it may be the product of a religious malaise." The problem, under what conditions would this be the case, is not discussed. After an inadequate survey of different perspectives opened up by this question, the chapter deals mainly with ethics, describing the possible approaches - 'normative', 'existential' and 'situational'.

Chapter 5, *Epistemology*, concentrates on 'a biblical answer' to the question 'how can we know anything?' Assuming that this question is posed because of 'a religious malaise', the answer can be given in terms of man's relation to God. Under the sections, Ontology, Methodology and Axiology, the account passes from God's knowledge of himself and His creation to man's knowledge of God the creator and Christ the redeemer as a gift of God. This redemptive knowledge is taught by the Holy Spirit. "Any one who does not know him is a fool (Ps. 14:1; Rom. 1: 21-22; Eph. 4:17-19). But Scripture doubtless implies that even knowledge that a book is on the table is a gift of God and has been shown to us by God". As this problem is central, it is disappointing not to have biblical references, where 'Scripture doubtless implies' such knowledge. Nor are we helped with the methodological problem of how - given God's encouragement to man's epistemological enquiries - the problem regarding the book on the table is to be tackled. Instead, there are many more classifications, often suggesting valuable insights, but never really pursuing them in depth.

Chapter 6 deals with *Study and its Ethics*. Here theology, philosophy and science are classified according to the human functions of prophet, king and priest and their resultant fields of activity: study (prophetic weight), technics (kingly weight) and beneficence (priestly weight). In the complex interactions between genuine and pseudo study, the "unbelieving scientist's activity is Pseudo Study, but the result (in terms of articles, books and knowledge may be largely genuine, because he does not succeed in escaping God and the knowledge of God." Does the unbelieving scientist escape from the fallacious conclusions to which he is driven by 'pseudo-study' (i.e. false or inadequate premises? faulty logic? both?) into true answers, because God somehow prevents him from not confronting His divine truth? What does this *salto mortale* from the 'pseudo' to the 'genuine' look like more especially when such a scientist does not abandon his unbelief?

Science (in its broadest meaning, like German *Wissenschaft*) is then mapped out according to types of approach as modal (i.e. animal/behavioural; plant/biologic; inorganic/physical), Ontological, Temporal, Structural, Axiological. Further classifications then serve to characterise what are more commonly called the Natural and Social Sciences, History, Philosophy and Theology. In discussing the latter, the author's inadequate attention to hermeneutic theory is all too apparent. For example he raises the question, whether the Bible is 'mistaken' when camels are mentioned in the patriarchal stories. He briefly raises, but does not pursue, the all-important question whether these stories are actually intended as history or as fiction — what, in fact, was meant by these terms at the time that these passages were written and what do we mean by them today; under what conditions can chronical and fiction coexist in order to communicate truth, and what kind of truth is disclosed. The different types of universe of discourse vary considerably in different parts of the Bible, and need to be investigated with great care, if God's Word is to speak to us with clarity.

In the brief concluding chapter 7, and in four appendices, the author's position *vis-a-vis* the work of the Amsterdam school of Reformed philosophers is defined.

There are some useful discussions, e.g. on the Word of God (pp. 80-81) but for the most part the book is poorly argued. Ambiguities abound and there is a general lack of refinement, so that basic problems are glossed over and the problems raised by the sovereignty of God receive scant and, at that, insensitive treatment.

Noel and Rita Timms, *Perspectives in Social Work*,
Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, 233 pp., £4.95.

Social Work has not, as far as I am aware, been a concern discussed in the pages of FAITH AND THOUGHT. Several factors, however, invite the introduction of such a discussion. Firstly, social work, even though it may not have become professionalized (and I am among those who believe that it *should* not), has become to a certain extent intellectualized. That is, one may take a degree or a higher degree in social work which has, along with placements in social work agencies, a considerable theoretical content. (That the theories are marked by their relative barrenness compared with, say sociology, is another matter.) Secondly, debates over the social work role, and the wider context of social policy and the Welfare State are becoming increasingly marked by ideological conflict. The simple notion of social worker as 'helper' is under considerable strain as competing definitions enter the arena. Thirdly, Christians, who have for too long complacently imagined that 'social work has a Christian origin' or that 'social work is an indisputably honourable occupation', are still entering the field with precious little literacy in the theology of the social world.

A consideration of the Timms' new book is a good place to begin. With considerable experience and prestige in social work writing, they approach in a fairly unique way many of the contradictions and ambiguities of social work theory and practice. They wish to stress a number of issues: Social work should be planned action. Social workers are members of agencies, not private practitioners. Above all, social work is 'altruism under social auspices'. What they are doing is attempting to steer between the current polarizations of conventional and radical approaches. They neither wish to view social work as professional activity in autonomous 'private practice', where the social worker is to client as 'expert' to 'inadequate', nor as revolutionary activism in community work, where the social worker is a consciousness-raising agent, showing the client his or her (oppressed) position in capitalist society. They argue that the agency of which the social worker is a member should not be immune from criticism, and that a catholic approach to solutions should be maintained (that is, that there is more than one way of running a household or keeping Johnny out of the hands of the police). They believe, in short, that social work stands in its own right, and should not be diverted into professionalism or activism.

The Timms stress clarity and specificity in their approach, and argue for an airing of assumptions and beliefs held by social workers. The influence of analytical philosophy is clear here, as in N. Timms' other recent book (with D. Watson, 1976, *Talking about Welfare: Readings in Philosophy and Social Policy* RKP). It also leads to an emphasis on *practical reason* as a social work tool, over against the conventional overemphasis on the pathological and causative force of the irrational.

The breadth of this book is considerable, and the Timms give more than a cursory glance in the direction of the more contentious social work dilemmas of 'intervention' and 'self-determination'. It is humane and refreshing in many ways, leaving open ends and unanswered questions. However, it is to be hoped that *Christians* will take up the Timms plea to examine critically beliefs underlying social work. Let me suggest lines of enquiry, regarding the thesis of this book itself. I suspect that the background humanism of some of the assumptions of the authors is at variance with Christian humanism. The very concept of altruism, for example, was invented by Auguste Comte to express the prime virtue of his infamous Religion of Humanity, over against Christian neighbour-love, which is rooted in God's general care, and indirectly related to God's saving love for mankind. This religion, intimately bound up with his sociology, was concerned to show that humans are ultimately self-directing, and that *practical reason*, rightly applied, could solve all human problems. The Timms say that the social worker, in their definition, may embrace any ideological position. However, it could be argued that, consistently applied, with the 'service of persons' having no anchorage in the example of Christ, and possible alternative lifestyles having no warrant in biblical revelation, the Timms' social worker could not, in fact, be Christian. But perhaps Christians are not willing consistently to apply *their* Christian commitment in this area: the dearth of writing would seem to indicate that this is the case.

DAVID LYON

Also Received

- Donald L. Gelpi SJ, *Charism and Sacrament*, 1977, SPCK, 258 pp. £3.95. (The author, a R.C. writes on the tongues movement. Before his recent unexpected death John Gwyn-Thomas read this book, commented favourably and promised to review it for F and T.)
- R. Lafflamme et M. Gervais (eds.), *Le Christ, hier, aujourd'hui et demain* 1976, available from L'Ecole, 11 Rue de Sevres, Paris, France, 487 pp. 18.00 dollars. (We have been unable to find a reviewer and would be glad to hear from anyone interested.)

- Robert Way, *The Wisdom of the English Mystics*, 1978, Sheldon Press, 86 pp. PB £1.75.
- John R.W. Stott, *Christian Counter-culture: The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, 1978, IVP, 222 pp., £2.35.
- Rhena Taylor, *Rough Edges: Christians abroad in today's World*, 1978, IVP 165 pp. £1.25. (Short stories "where the rough edges of human nature are exposed to view, but where God's love is none the less at work".)
- Derek C. James, *Just in Time!*, 1977, IVP, 75 pp.
- Helen Roseveare, *He gave us a Valley*, 1977, 188 pp., £0.95.
- James W. Sire, *The Universe next Door: a Guide to World Views*, 1977, IVP, 239 pp., PB, £1.95.
- Peter Lee, Greg Scharf and Robert Willcox, *Food for Life*, 1977, IVP, 208 pp., PB, £1.50. (A graded Bible study book, suggesting different ways of studying the Bible.)
- Patrick Sookhdeo, *Asians in Britain; a Christian Understanding*, 1977, Paternoster P., 64 pp., PB £0.80. (Introduces beliefs and practices of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. Tabular comparisons with Christianity are included. A concise and useful booklet.)
- Roger Moss, *Christians and Homosexuality*, 1977, Paternoster P., 48 pp., £0.55. (The author, a consultant psychiatrist, challenges Christians to offer homosexuals responsible love and acceptance.)
- Beryl Bye, *What about Life-style?* 1977 Paternoster P., 36 pp., £0.45 (Challenges readers to look again at their homes, holidays, eating habits and recreations.)

Erratam

- p. 148 l 13 (bot) for 'n' read 'so'.
- p. 165 l 14 for 'endued' read 'ensued'
- p. 169 l 3 (bot) for 'all' read 'at all'
- p. 176 l 15 for 'promise' read 'premise'.

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