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1930

728TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, JANUARY 6TH, 1930,
AT 4.30 P.M.

BENJAMIN I. GREENWOOD, ESQ., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the Election of the following:— Miss Katharine R. Oke, as a Life Member; David Willoughby Lambert, Esq., M.A., as a Life Associate; and James Bruce Norris, Esq., and the Rev. George Houghton Thorne, as Associates.

The CHAIRMAN then called on the Rev. F. W. Pitt to read his paper entitled "Christ and the Scriptures. The Old Testament: The Implications" (being the Second Prize Essay, Gunning Competition, 1927).

GUNNING PRIZE.—SECOND PRIZE ESSAY, 1927.

CHRIST AND THE SCRIPTURES.

THE OLD TESTAMENT: THE IMPLICATIONS.

By THE REV. F. W. PITT.

IN the days of the Cæsars, before the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews, there existed in Palestine a Book, Jewish in its origin and scope; read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day; peculiar to the nation of Israel; believed to have come down out of Heaven from God; older than any other sacred book, and surpassing all in sublimity.

So jealous were the Jews of this Book, that to preserve the text from corruption, the letters, words, and verses were carefully counted, peculiar expressions and combinations were noted, and the very accents pointed, to ensure integrity to the meaning. There were officials specially trained to copy, teach and interpret the writings, and to guarantee safe custody.

The writing of the Book was begun by Moses about 1,500 years before our era. King David, and over a dozen prophets, priests, and unknown authors, continued the work. A most curious fact is that one author would write his portion, and nothing would be added for many years, when another would come forward and add a few chapters. Isaiah wrote sixty-six chapters, but Obadiah added only one page.

By what influence these various parts became compacted is a mystery. If the Book were only a code of laws it could be understood, but while there is in it a code of laws, and a very good code too, there is much more.

History and prophecy, poetry and philosophy were, during more than a thousand years, woven into one harmonious whole. Heroes whose fame never dims, criminals whose crimes never die, are pictured here. It is a Book of tears and laughter; a Book of God and man, of angels and devils; a stirring romance, and a register of genealogies; a Book of penal laws, and a Book of sacred songs; a Book for the learned and devout, and a Book for the wayfaring man and the fool; a Book of worship, and a Book of judgment; as marvellous in diversity as it is in unity. Sometimes it rolls like a cataract, and sometimes it sleeps like a lake. It is sweeter than honey or the honeycomb, yet "brackish with the salt of human tears." For a thousand years the story ran on, and then it suddenly stopped; no man dared to add another line.

Four hundred long and troubled years passed, and the nation became vassals to Imperial Rome. All that was left to them of the spacious days of David and Solomon was an unfulfilled promise that David's son, a greater than Solomon, would yet appear. The Jews, clinging to their Book, and, like many of ourselves, reading and believing only the parts they wished would come true, were ready to listen to anyone who brought forward a workable scheme to restore the kingdom to Israel. If it had not been for the sacred writings it is probable that the nation would have been exterminated or absorbed.

Herod the Idumæan usurped the throne of David; but if the Jews lost hope in themselves, they still had the Book. True, in many respects it had become a dead letter, strangled by commentators, made void by tradition, yet out of the jungle of confusion there gleamed the fiery eyes of promise; and "hope springs eternal in the human breast."

Great events, when they begin to come to pass, have a way

of moving rapidly. After four centuries in the slough of despond, the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death light sprang up. At least, if it was not light, it was something unprecedented. A man of Nazareth, Jesus the son of Joseph the carpenter, came forward after living unknown for thirty years. In a thousand days He achieved a fame which increases after two thousand years. Augustus and Tiberius are but moths in the candle of the Lord.

This Man, though meek and lowly in heart, was certainly not wanting in the courage of His convictions. The Jews would have been satisfied if He had rallied them to the standard of the Lion of the tribe of Judah; but He went far beyond that, and took up the whole burden of the predicted "sufferings of Christ and the Glory that should follow" as revealed in the wonderful Book.

Without hesitation, Jesus said that Moses wrote of Him (John v, 46); that a cameo of the Christ in the prophecy of Isaiah represented the day when "He went into the synagogue at Nazareth and stood up for to read" (Luke iv); David, by the Holy Ghost, "called Him Lord" (Ps. cx); Abraham rejoiced that he should see His day; the manna in the Wilderness was a type of His flesh which He gave for the life of the world (John vi); as the serpent was lifted up by Moses, so must He, the Son of Man, be lifted up (John iii); He came "not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil" (Matt. v). He focussed the Book upon Himself, so that it appeared to refer wholly to His Person and work. The Scriptures testified of Him (John v).

None of this would the Jews acknowledge, and till to-day they shut their eyes to the fact that if it had not been for Jesus their name would be but a ghost of the past, and their Book a literary curiosity, a monument of unfulfilled prediction.

It must have required a stainless sincerity to confidently stand alone in the converging beams of a thousand years of prophecy. If "the fierce light that beats upon a throne blackens every blot," how much more shall the blaze of divine revelation scorch and shrivel meditated falsehood. Every false Christ that ever appeared stood away from the glare of Holy Writ; Jesus stood, with open breast and uncovered head, in its directest rays.

No false Christ ever said anything which showed that he knew and loved the Book, but its incidents are threaded into the

discourse of Jesus like pearls upon a string of gold. He takes us into Paradise and makes us witnesses of the first wedding; we hear the blood of Abel crying for vengeance; we see Noah building his Ark, and we sail away with him while the Flood breaks loose, as it will at the coming of the Son of Man. Like Moses, we take off our shoes at the burning bush, and tremble with joy as we listen to the words, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." The God of the Bible of Jesus "is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live unto Him"!

We become silent, but reverent, spectators in the Upper Room where Jesus ate the Passover that pointed back to the Exodus from Egypt. We sit at the feet of the prophets; sing the songs of Zion, weep with Jeremiah, run with Elijah to Jezreel, mount up to Heaven in the chariots of imagination, and live through the whole story of the elders who obtained a good report through faith.

It was certainly not because Jesus was unaware of the nation's cherished and unparalleled past, that He took up the challenge of history. By His words we see that He knew the Book from cover to cover, and so vividly do the pages shine that we have no difficulty in recognizing the Bible of Jesus as our Old Testament.

This Book He interpreted. Sweeping aside narrow and bigoted interpretations, Jesus breathed the spirit of life into the law, which tradition had embalmed as if it were a corpse. Except to a few pious individuals, the Bible had for centuries been an impregnable but antiquated lighthouse; Jesus installed a new light. The interpretations of the Lord Jesus would fill a volume, for they cover the whole realm of Scripture. His manner must be gleaned from "the corners of the field."

"Whatsoever ye will that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. vii, 12). The Jews had never dreamt of such luxury of love; they thought the law was meant to bind on the people a burden too grievous to be borne.

Twice the Lord quoted from Micah "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." The first time (Matt. ix, 13) He said it meant that He had not "come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The second time (Matt. xii, 7), He said that if the Pharisees had known what the verse meant, they "would not have condemned the guiltless." The elicitation of this double meaning shows that Christ had a careful and penetrating view of

Scripture not obtainable by a brief glance or a passing word. "Well hath Esaias prophesied, saying 'This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me'" (Mark vii, 6), an interpretation of Scripture that must have stung like a whip of small cords. The Lord interpreted Isa. liii as predicting his own sufferings. After his Resurrection He reproached His disciples for not believing the Scriptures, and then interpreted the Word of God.

Christ's method of interpretation would not have been adopted by one who had any misgivings as to the authority of Scripture or of His own. There is a note of quiet, masterful confidence which does not hesitate or doubt. Christ expressed no opinions: "He spake with authority, and not as the Scribes." He never substituted His teaching for that of Scripture. He was not a reformer, cancelling antiquated formulas and advancing more progressive ideas, like a politician. "Till heaven and earth pass," He said, "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v, 18).

By authenticating the Scriptures, the Lord confirmed *their inspiration* without expressly saying they were all inspired. He did say that David spake, by the Holy Ghost; and what Moses said He described as the Word of God. But when the Lord declared, as he so variously did, the immutability of Scripture, He covered their own declarations of inspiration. He was not troubled by the difficulty that Moses wrote in Genesis the history of things that happened before the writer was born; nor does He stay to explain whether Moses collated the facts from oral traditions, which must have been well known, or whether they were given in panoramic or other direct revelations of the Holy Spirit, or whether he received them when he spake with God face to face, as a man speaketh to his own friend. In accepting and authenticating Moses, the Lord implicitly confirmed his inspiration. The more difficult it was for Moses to write of things of which he had no personal knowledge the more necessary was it for him to have been inspired in what he wrote. And as the Lord confirmed the truth of Moses He must have confirmed His inspiration, because Moses could not have written the truth without inspiration, nor have repeated the phrase, "The Lord said." We, therefore, conclude that the Scriptures the Lord declared to be the Word of God were the original inspired Scriptures of which we have translations, all the parts of which are of equal authority, and that they are true.

The *Lord's knowledge of the Scriptures* and His regard for them awakened in others such expression of astonishment that it appears as if His attitude to the Word of God was so unique as to be sensational. "Whence hath this Man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son?" they asked at Nazareth, after hearing Him in the Synagogue (Matt. xiii). "The Jews marvelled, saying 'How knoweth this Man learning, having never learned?' Jesus answered them, and said, 'My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself'" (John vii, 15).

Here, it is evident, the Lord had been expounding the Scriptures, so that in the very shrines of Judaism, in synagogue and Temple, Jesus showed that He knew more of the Scriptures than His teachers; gave it such spiritual meaning; made it a help when the Scribes had made it a hindrance; that their jealousy was aroused, and He had to say, "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill Me?" (John vii, 19).

It was after this that a most extraordinary thing happened: "Some of them would have taken Him; but no man laid hands on Him. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, 'Why have ye not brought Him?' The officers answered, 'Never man spake like this Man'" (John vii, 46).

Were His words like lightning that made them afraid, or did He call down the thunders of Sinai and shake the earth, or were the words sweeter than honey or the honeycomb, and they had not the heart to serve the writ? If so, they were different from the Pharisees themselves, to whom Jesus said, "Ye seek to kill Me, a Man that told the truth which I have heard of God" (John viii, 46).

As Jesus Himself accepted the judgment of the Scriptures, so He made them the judge of those who believe not: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how can ye believe My words?" (John v, 47).

In this marvellous passage, the attitude of the Lord to the Scriptures is seen in the strongest light. It is almost as if Jesus said He was without credentials if Moses had not given them,

and it is quite equivalent to saying that if Jesus did not rise to the heights of Moses, He was not the Christ, for Moses wrote of the Christ.

The Scriptures are thus no longer at the bar with Christ as the Judge. Christ is at the bar with the Scriptures as judge. He accepted the verdict of Moses : " If ye believe not his writings, how can ye believe my words ? "

It is impossible to imagine a man being willing to stand or fall by Scripture, if he had the least doubt as to its inerrancy and infallibility. And it is impossible to concede Divinity to Christ, if He was incapable of discerning the inspiration of the authority by which He decided to support an undertaking which involved the destiny of mankind.

It is quite remarkable that the Lord charged the Jews with trusting, yet not believing, Moses. That such an attitude of mind is possible is proved by people to-day, who conform to religious rites without faith in God. It is much like saying, " O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul ! "

To believe the Scriptures is to surrender one's own opinion and judgment to the Word of God. A man cannot be born a believer. As he grows up there comes a moment, swift or slow, in which he definitely accepts an authority outside of himself : some find that authority in the Church, and rest there. But if there was one thing upon which the Lord was insistent it was *belief in the Scriptures*, which, according to the passage under consideration is equivalent to belief in Himself.

Everywhere in the New Testament the necessity for belief is emphasized both by the Lord and His Apostles, but the remarkable thing is, that while they declare that they themselves believe, *Jesus never does*. He authenticated the Scriptures ; testified to their authority ; risked His all on their Divine inspiration ; declared that they were inviolable even to the jot and the tittle, and guaranteed their truth. Yet it may be asserted, even at the peril of being misunderstood, that *Jesus did not believe* the Scriptures ; more, it can be adduced, as an evidence of the inspiration of the New Testament, that *it never says He did, while it says everyone else did, and that He insisted that they must*. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a book dealing favourably with our subject which did not say that Jesus *believed* the Old Testament Scriptures.

We can only reply, that if our Lord believed His Bible, there must have been a time when He did not believe it. There is a

time when every man is not a believer in the Bible. He may not be an active disbeliever, but a passive non-believer. It may or may not take him years to make up his mind, but he only becomes a believer when he decides that there is sufficient ground for accepting the Scriptures as the Word of God, or when he feels shut up to the choice between that and perdition. Such a thing never took place in the case of the Lord Jesus. Man believes. Omniscience knows. Christ knew, so that we might believe.

Every reference of the Lord to Holy Writ opens up its special line of thought, showing not only diversity in unity, but resilience with inflexibility, as witness the words, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, ye are Gods? . . . to whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken'" (John x, 34).

The portion of "the law" here referred to is Ps. lxxxii; "the Word of God" that came to Israel is the law of Moses, which the rulers had to administer, and these are described as the "Scripture which cannot be broken." With a touch as sure as it is light, the Lord in this great sentence shows the mobility and inflexibility of the Old Testament both in its whole and in its parts.

Whatever led Him to do it, whether it was the condescension of Deity or the ambition of humanity; whether He was the Truth or whether He was an impostor—Jesus Christ regarded the Scriptures as referring to Himself, and made the written Word and the Living Word stand or fall together.

Such a proceeding would have been open to suspicion if the Lord had spiritualized away, as did the Jews, the sufferings of Christ, and attempted to hasten the Glory that should follow. But He did nothing of the kind, though pressed to do so by His contemporaries when they sought to make Him a King. In claiming that He was the Christ, He accepted the fate of the Christ; not blindfolded, but with open eyes and calm deliberation, turning over, as it were, day by day the leaves of prophecy as they fell due.

In a great mystery the Lord showed that He undertook not only to explain and authenticate the Scriptures but to *fulfil them*. He magnified the law, and made it honourable by keeping it. In His life He was without sin, and was the only Man who ever lived that never transgressed the law of God.

But a broken law exacts penalties. The broken law of God demands the death of the transgressors. For thousands of years

substitutionary sacrifices were accepted by God, as satisfying justice for sins "passed over through the forbearance of God" (Rom. iii). The Lord Jesus knew this and undertook responsibility for the, as yet, unredeemed pledges, which were sealed with "the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer."

He undertook, not only Himself to keep the law unbroken, but to take up all that was due to Divine righteousness as pledged by the sacrifices of the law, and bear it in His own body of flesh through death. Such an undertaking was only possible to God manifest in the flesh, and it is here that we see in its most solemn aspect the attitude of Christ to the Scriptures. He set His face like a flint toward the Cross. Its shadow had fallen over every step of His holy path, and now that the clouds of judgment were gathering over His head, He pressed on, despising the shame.

The predictions of Scripture foretold the blood-red way down which the suffering Christ must pass through the valley of the shadow of death. With unflinching consecration to His terrible task, the Lord went forward, His devotion to the Scriptures unchanged to the end. They were as inflexible when they said He must suffer, as when they said He must be glorified.

The swelling current of prophecy was running swift when the Lord said, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner' . . . and when the chief priests and Pharisees heard . . . they sought to lay hands on Him." (Matt. xxi, 42; Ps. cxviii, 22, 23).

The Great Hallel may have been the Lord's morning portion that day, when He "drew nigh unto Jerusalem." A Psalm was again on His lips while Judas still remained at the supper-table on the night before Christ's death: "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scriptures may be fulfilled, 'He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me'" (John xiii, 18; Ps. xli, 9).

When the traitor had gone his way, the Lord, as if His finger were on the plan, said: "This cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, 'They hated me without a cause'" (John xv, 25; Ps. xxxv, 19).

Had Jesus been only a man, He could not thus have taken up the clues in the labyrinth that led to Calvary without missing one, but rather looking them out, so that the Scriptures should stand, even if He must perish.

Thus, in a tense moment, when within sight of the end, and

when He might be excused if He felt it did not matter now, the Lord Jesus, His hand still on the Book said : " I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me, ' And He was reckoned among the transgressors ; for the things concerning Me have an end ' " (Luke xxii, 37 ; Isa. liii, 12).

When, an hour later, the Lord was taken in Gethsemane, there was an attempt at rescue. Peter's sword might have been of little use, but Jesus said : " Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels ? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be ? " (Matt. xxvi, 53). With the certainty that the armies of Heaven would have ensured His deliverance, had He so willed it, the Lord chose between the breaking of His body and the breaking of the Scriptures.

When Jesus had been on the Cross for three hours, and the cup of agony was full, the Book of the law did not depart out of His mouth, for " at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ' My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ' " (Mark xv, 34 ; Ps. xxii, 1). It is said that the Lord repeated the whole of Ps. xxii while on the Cross. If so, the first words were uttered with a loud voice, while the last words, " It is finished," were scarcely breathed, and can only be faintly identified with " He hath done it," the last words of the Psalm.

There is nothing in all history like this mysterious quotation of prediction by Jesus as He fulfilled it unto death ; and though His heart and flesh were failing, it appears as if the mind of the Lord was still fixed on Scripture, for He went out with the words, " Father, into Thy hand I commit my spirit " (Luke xxiii, 46 ; Ps. xxxi, 5).

On the first day of the week the Lord Jesus rose again from the dead. The first thing He said to His disciples was " O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken : ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory ? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself " (Luke xxiv, 25-7).

There are no words that can express the devotion with which Jesus consecrated Himself to the trusts appointed in the Word. Only the absolute certainty that they were the trusts of God would have induced any man to keep them.

It is good to do good when it is pleasant. But to choose the

heaviest burden ; to be anxious that not one demand of the law should be slurred over or one sacrifice of love unpaid, this shows, not the rectitude of a legal mind ; not the appreciation of a literary expert ; but the breadth, and depth, and length, and height of the Love which passes knowledge.

The handwriting of ordinances was nailed to His Cross without erasures. The penalty exacted by Righteousness was paid in full. This is the measure of Christ's attitude to the Word of God.

The testimony of the Scriptures to Christ, as the Messiah and Son of God, is good ground for accepting Christ's testimony to the Scriptures, as the true and inspired and infallible Word of God. If, however, as some think, it is proved that the Lord compromised with falsehood, either in history or science, the proper thing to do is to reject His claim to be the Christ of the Scriptures ; instead of which, some of the most devoted in their allegiance to Christ are those who hold the most pronounced views against the Scriptures. This would be reasonable if Christ were only a man who " wore the white flower of a blameless life," and, though His supremacy condemns us all, He is the pride of humanity and the idol of a Christendom that denies His Deity.

But there are also some who admit the Deity of Christ, and are perplexed by the fact that He gave His and God's imprimatur to a " bookful of errors." For Jesus did not guarantee the Scriptures on His own responsibility alone, He committed God to them : " The Word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me " (John xiv, 24). Because of this, attempts are made to retain the Christ of the Scriptures and reject the Scriptures of Christ. This is as impossible as it would be to remove the dome of St. Paul's and leave the cross where it stands.

There are two methods articulated for the purpose of explaining away Christ's attitude to the Scriptures : one suggests that the Lord accommodated Himself to the current error of the day ; the other tries to prove that His knowledge was limited by the necessities of the Incarnation.

The accommodation theory is not supported by any proof-texts. It just cannot accept as true such stories as the Flood, the passage of the Red Sea, and Jonah and the whale—all singularly enough connected with water, but considered as incapable of " holding water."

The Kenosis theory, like the accommodation theory, is valuable as corroborative evidence of Christ's emphatic confirmation of the Scriptures. Satan attacked Christ, who turned the attack from Himself to the Scriptures. The Kenosis attacks the Scriptures, and refuses to allow the attack to be diverted to Christ. It determines to have the Christ of the Scriptures without having the Scriptures of Christ. This, again, violates the inductive principle by building the evidence on the verdict, instead of building the verdict on the evidence; which is exactly what Judge Jeffreys is said to have done at his "Bloody Assize."

Being *unable* to deny that Christ authenticated records incredible to modern criticism, and being *unwilling* to deny His divinity, the Kenosis theory finds a way out of the difficulty by assuming that the knowledge of Jesus was limited by the necessities of His Incarnation. To support the assumption, Phil. ii, 7, is advanced as a proof-text; and Mark xiii, 32, is cited as the Lord's own admission, that there was one thing which He did not know. Neither of the passages has any direct reference to the inspiration of Scripture, but it is suggested that if the Lord's knowledge was limited in one instance, it is legitimate to infer that it was so in others.

A man might say he did not know the time, but it would not prove that, with a watch in his pocket, he could not tell the time. The frank statement by the Lord that, concerning a certain day and hour, "knoweth no man, neither the angels, no, nor the Son," conveys no more admission of inability to know than that a man's confession that he did not know the time conveys the idea that he was incapable of telling the time. Christ's statement, therefore, that there was something concerning a certain day and hour which the Son of Man did not know, is no proof that His knowledge was limited, for He said the Father did know. He also said, "I and the Father are One." Besides, it would be a very peculiar limitation of knowledge, to give with the same breath a detailed prediction of events that cover centuries, and exclude only a possibly alterable day and hour at which those events would commence.

The least that can be said is, that the Lord was not declaring His inability to authenticate the Scriptures, but was urging the necessity of being ready for a climax which might come at an unexpected moment. And the most that can be said in support of the view, that Christ owned to limited knowledge, is that only one text can be manipulated in favour of a verdict, pronounced

beforehand, on a subject to which the text bears no relation.

What the Lord said concerning the day and hour of the Advent is evidence that, if He was only a man, He was unlike every other man that ever lived. Most men would have suppressed their ignorance of an unimportant detail, for fear of awakening suspicion of greater and more vital utterances. Some men would have filled up the gap from the reserves of imagination; others would have hesitated to prophesy far-future events at all, if they were conscious of limited knowledge. But the Lord was sublimely confident, and said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." With that solemn affirmation still ringing in the ears of His disciples, He added: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

He could not have intended that His statement should be construed as meaning that His knowledge of the Old Testament was defective. It might as properly be maintained that He was confessing that He did not know His own Mother. Besides, He knew also, that men and the angels did not know and that the Father did know. How was that possible if His knowledge was limited? If he was only a man, other men would know what He knew, as well as He knew what they knew.

But only if we claim that our knowledge is greater than Christ's is it compulsory that we should explain words which He left unexplained. It is sufficient for our present purpose to prove that they do not disqualify the Lord's imprimatur on the Old Testament.

There the matter might rest, if it were not for Phil. ii, 7, which declares that Christ Jesus "emptied himself," some say "of His knowledge" and others "of His glory"; and while the latter are endeavouring to answer one error by another, the clash of conflict obscures the fact that the Scriptures give no support to either addition to the text. "We beheld His glory," says the Apostle, "the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"; and if that were not sufficient, he says later: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth His glory." The Lord evidently did not empty Himself of His Glory, for He was full of it, and on occasion manifested it.

True, the Lord prayed that His Father would "glorify Him with the glory He had with Him before the world was," but

that refers to merging His manhood in the glory of His Godhood after His Death and Resurrection, in the manner of the rehearsal on the mount of Transfiguration. So that, as the Lord did not empty Himself of His Glory, the suggestion that He did so is no answer to the assertion that He emptied Himself of His knowledge.

The only reply to the latter, is that the passage does not say the Lord emptied Himself of His knowledge or of anything. It says, "He emptied Himself." The context shows that this means, that being originally in the form of God, He was made in the likeness of men. God became Man without ceasing to be God. It was not a Person emptying Himself of an attribute, but the same Person passing from one state to another.

Christ Jesus was as much God the Son in the days of His flesh as He was before the world was made: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." "I and the Father are One," He said, and "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

How could Christ have emptied Himself of His knowledge if He still knew the mysterious relationship of the Father and the Son? But the Kenosis only requires for its purpose that Jesus emptied Himself of the knowledge of a particular day and hour. Did He retain all His knowledge except that? The disciples confessed that they had heard enough to warrant them in saying "Thou knowest all things," as it was expected that the Christ should; for the woman of Samaria said, "When Messias cometh He will tell us all things." Jesus tacitly admitted this when he answered, "I that speak unto thee am He." And He did not add that the woman had over-estimated Him, and that He had emptied Himself of His knowledge. Quite the contrary, for the woman left her water-pot and went to her friends, exclaiming, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

Even if Phil. ii, 7, really said that Jesus emptied Himself of *any* knowledge, evidence that He had done so could only be found in His admission that He knew not a certain day and hour, *if it could be determined that He once knew it, but had surrendered that one item when He came into this world.* And then we should be left wondering why He had surrendered it, and how He knew of the glory He had with the Father before the world was; and many other things.

But it is more difficult to deal with those who reject the

Kenosis doctrine than with those who accept it, for they seldom, if ever, believe that the Babe on His Virgin Mother's bosom retained the knowledge of His glorious past. "He grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man," is interpreted as meaning, that in spite of the denial that Jesus emptied Himself of His knowledge, there was a period during which that knowledge was inaccessible to Him, and there must have been a moment when it dawned upon Him that He was the eternal God.

Was it by an accident that He discovered that He possessed supernatural powers? He raised the dead and fed the multitudes, stilled the sea, healed the sick, and did other marvellous things. If the Lord had emptied Himself of the knowledge of His Deity, He must have been as surprised as the spectators to find that nature, and life, and death responded to His lightest touch.

Assuming that He grew up like any other child with His mighty pre-existence a blank through His having emptied Himself temporarily of His knowledge; at what time, and in what circumstances, did it all come back to Him? It was not hidden from Him during His ministry, for He was aware of "the glory He had with the Father before the world was."

Did the Lord Jesus in the lowly cottage at Nazareth pore over the Scriptures with the interest common to lads brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? If He had no knowledge of His divine origin, the Book of the Law would, in those early days, have been just what it was to any other child, sacred, indeed, and by repute the Word of God; but with His own past knowledge an impenetrable void, He must have traced the Scriptures out, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. With exceptional precocity He might have attained a superhuman familiarity with the Law and the Prophets, and learned more than all His teachers, but such an attainment would be exactly that admitted by the Kenosis theory, and no more.

To give divine authority to the Scriptures, the Lord, if ever He lost it, must have awakened to the fact of His pre-existence and Deity. He must have discovered Himself. When and how did that take place? Did it break in upon Him as He studied the Scriptures, which prophesied the birth of Messiah at Bethlehem? Did He say, "That is a remarkable coincidence, for I was born at Bethlehem?" With this thought lingering in

His mind, did He read that the Christ should be a son of David, of the tribe of Judah, and link up the predictions one after another till He exclaimed, "I must be the Christ of God"; saying, like Philip, "I have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write, 'Jesus of Nazareth the Son of Joseph'?"

If the Kenosis theory or any theory proved that at any time Jesus was without knowledge of His goings forth of old, even from everlasting, the day must have dawned when He regained that knowledge. Some think it was when He was baptized of John in Jordan. But Jesus went there, knowing that John was sent before Him to herald His coming, and he expressed no surprise that a Voice from Heaven said, "This is my beloved Son." Had that been the first intimation of His Deity, it would have been like a thunderclap, and Jesus would have been hard pressed to live up to the call after spending thirty years in ignorance of His Deity. Besides, at the age of twelve, Jesus had at least an idea that God was His Father; though that, if it were all, would prove nothing, for a man might call God his Father without claiming to be divine.

We must therefore, without prejudice to its implications, judge whether the Kenosis is true or false. If it is true, and the Lord acquired His knowledge of the Scriptures by learning, then His authorization of them was purely human, and therefore fallible. The purpose of the Kenosis is thus attained. It is no use to say that His matured experience confirmed His early instinct for truth. We can only accept His imprimatur of the Scriptures, if He gave it, as One who knew by Divine Omniscience, and not by acquired knowledge, that the word was inviolable. This, of course, is the point at issue.

The Kenosis prejudices itself from the outset, by the evident intention it reveals to cancel the Lord's authority. Finding that Scripture nowhere states definitely that the Lord was liable to error, it synthetizes its theory by two fragments of inference which in their context contain no words bearing on the question involved. To make up for this lack, words are interpolated into the passage in Philippians which gives its name to the theory. "He emptied Himself" is rendered "He emptied Himself of His knowledge."

An interpretation is thus made to take the place of a Scripture. The context being ignored, which is that "originally subsisting in the form of God, he emptied Himself" (made

Himself of no reputation) and "took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." This surely did not necessitate giving up His knowledge; at any rate, it does not say He did so, but only that He changed His form. He became a Man, and was at one and the same time both Man and God. Everything the Lord said of Himself accords with this view. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; "I and the Father are One." His consciousness of Deity is expressed in the clearest terms, and it was in His relationship to the Father, that He spake the Word of God: "As My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things" (John viii, 28, etc.)—a divine co-operation of revelation.

And if this co-operation were not in abeyance, as it could not have been, when Jesus said, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the angels, neither the Son, but the Father," He must have said what the Father and the Son agreed must be said.

There may be some explanation of the text beyond finite knowledge, but the fact that it is recorded that the Lord said the words, is evidence that in His wisdom He made a statement which might be misinterpreted, but which to Him did not clash with a series of revelations in the same discourse, concerning things to come, which, from their magnitude, showed that His knowledge comprised future events known only to God.

It would be much more reasonable to say that the Lord's affirmation of the limitless things He did know proved that He *did not* empty Himself of His knowledge, than that His admission that He did not know one tiny fragment proved that He *did* empty Himself of His knowledge. At the most it would prove that He emptied Himself only of the knowledge of one moment of time; an absurd conclusion.

In facing the implications with confidence, we are bound to assume that Christ never laid aside His Deity or ceased from knowledge, but that He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

From the memory of our own dawning intellect we are eager to recognize a parallel with the Lord's; but the cases are really quite different, for we cannot possibly realize a past which was greater than the present, for it does not exist with us. Behind us is an impenetrable blank as impenetrable as the future. But Christ from the valley of His humiliation looked backward and forward to the mountains of eternity.

It is difficult to explain the inscrutable, but in passing from the Form of God to the Form of Man, the Lord's consciousness of His Deity and of His manhood may have been, during the process, suspended, as it would be when Jesus slept. Memory vanishes at the approach of sleep, but it is there all the time, ready to function when we awake. We do not, during slumber, surrender our ability to speak our native language when we wake. So that if the Lord was unconscious in His mother's womb—which there is no absolute reason to assume—when His human faculties developed, His Divine personality would assert itself unchanged, unless in becoming man He ceased to be God.

The Lord's authorization of the Scriptures depends on whether He was Very God of Very God, or whether He was only a highly endowed human being. In the latter case, it is a question of man against man, and Christ ceases to be the final authority on the Inspiration of the Scriptures.

But if, as we have sought to prove, He was God manifest in the flesh, then His authorization of Scripture admits of no appeal. The Law and the Prophets and the Psalms are the Word of God, infallible and true. Inspired of God and "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," and "able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

On the call of the CHAIRMAN, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the Lecturer.

DISCUSSION.

MR. SIDNEY COLLETT said: I consider we have listened to a very able address on a most important subject. I quite agree with the Lecturer that it is entirely out of place to speak of Christ "believing" the Scriptures. The Bible is not only the Word of God, and the Sword of the *Spirit*; but it is also the Word of Christ! so that it is incongruous to speak of Christ "believing" the Scriptures which were inspired by His Own Spirit.

As to the reference to Phil. ii, 7, on p. 50, it is just possible that but for the faulty rendering of the latter part of that verse in our Authorized Version, and the word rendered "emptied" in the first

line of the verse in the Revised Version, the difficulty referred to might never have arisen. For, whatever the limitation of our Blessed Lord involved, the Holy Spirit has made it abundantly clear, as shown in the Revised Version of this verse, that this particular passage refers—not so much to anything that Christ may have given up; but rather to the fact that His humiliation implied his taking up of something which He had not before by “*taking upon Him* the form of a Servant, and being made in the likeness of men” (R.V.).

During the late war two men were conscripted—an employer and his employee. Both were placed in the same section of the army; but, by a strange coincidence, the employee became a captain and the employer a common soldier. In other words, the master became a servant; he changed his position, but otherwise he was essentially the same man as before.

So with our Lord, who, in wondrous condescension, became the Servant, and acted as such; yet throughout it all, remained, as indeed He definitely claimed ever to be, the great “*I AM*”—John viii, 58.

As to that even more difficult verse, Mark xiii, 32, referred to on p. 49. Here again the trouble has been caused by the translation in our English version, which reads:—“Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” The late Archbishop Trench, who was regarded as one of our greatest authorities on words, called attention to the fact that the word “but” in that verse is represented in the original by two Greek words *ei mē*, which mean “if not”; and it is not a little remarkable that we have those two same Greek words in another verse (John ix, 33) with a similar thought; but there the words (*ei mē*) are correctly translated “if not,” thus:—“If (*ei*) this man were *not* (*mē*) of God, He could do nothing.” So that, as Archbishop Trench showed, literally translated, Mark xiii, 32, should read:—“Neither the Son, *IF NOT* the Father”! In other words, if “I and the Father were not one, even I should not know.” But in view of Christ’s positive statement “I and My Father are One” (John x, 30) the undoubted implication is that, unlike angels and all mere men, who did *not* know, He, being the God-man, *did* know! Hence, the actual words used here by our Lord, instead of being

a confession that His knowledge was limited, are, in reality, a declaration of His omniscience, since He claimed in this very passage to be One with the Father, and, as such, to know all things.

Mr. W. E. LESLIE said : Mr. Pitt devotes his last eight pages to a not altogether conclusive discussion of certain "proof texts." Should we not, however, endeavour so to frame our arguments as to appeal to those for whom "proof texts" have so little value ? The following line of argument is suggested to that end.

Our Lord's knowledge and teaching are commonly divided into two categories—theoretical and ethical. His "ethical" teaching is often acclaimed with an enthusiasm which appears to be a kind of "set off" against the doubts thrown upon His "theoretical" teaching. But we must ask whether the conflicting view of the nature of the Old Testament have not implications extending beyond the purely theoretical realm ? They involve fundamentally different conceptions of the methods by which God has revealed Himself. Can there be no difference in their moral and spiritual value ? It would not be difficult to show that in the view of advocates of the new conception it is morally superior to the old or "evangelical" view, and more in conformity with the character of God. But if this be so, either our Lord's moral intuitions were at fault, or He deliberately encouraged men to hold what He knew to be unworthy views of the ways of His heavenly Father.

It is difficult to see how either of these alternatives can be reconciled with anything that can reasonably be called "Christianity."

Mr. WILLIAM C. EDWARDS said : We have had a magnificent paper and I join in thanking the Lecturer for it. As regards the difficult passage Mark xiii, 32, I have long felt, with Ambrose of old, that the words "Neither the Son" were interpolated. The parallel passage in Matt. xxiv, 36, led him to take that view. I think that we now know the author of those last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel, and the hand that added them possibly added also this early gloss which has got incorporated into the text.

To me it is difficult even to tolerate a discussion of the *Kenosis* theory. Surely the greatest miracle of the ages past and the greatest that can ever be to come is the Incarnation. We *believe* it, but we cannot *explain* it. When we try to "think it out," we feel our

finiteness and we realize that we are plunging beyond our depth. This is one of the things that even the angels desire to look into. We finite mortals cannot hope to understand it, God only knows. To understand it we must be equal with the Deity. Sometimes "in seasons of fine weather" we get glimpses—a revelation like the annual parallax of the astronomers as we see it from new or different angles. I can recall three such. Once the words of Matt. i, 20, "Conceived in her of the Holy Ghost," came like an illuminating ray into my mind. At another time the study of our Lord's Baptism. I saw in my mind the manifestation of the Trinity; the Incarnate One coming up out of the waters; the Emblem of the Holy Ghost descending upon Him, and heard the Father's voice saying, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." What a glorious vision of the Unity of the ever-Blessed Trinity! Our great difficulty seems to be to imagine a "localized Omnipresence." Num. vii, 89, has helped me. Moses went into the Tent of the Assembly to *speak with* God, but there in the presence of the shekinah glory God *spoke to* him; the Voice spoke from off the Mercy-Seat. Was not our Lord just that? Omnipresent and yet localized? "The Word" that once said "Let there be light," men now beheld in flesh-incarnate. I find it distasteful to hear people ask, "When did our Lord realize His Deity?" He never ceased to know it, and when I say that, I do not forget the mysterious moment when He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" As a babe He was all that perfect babe should be. As a boy, a perfect boy. As a youth His Father's business was His life's work. He grew in stature, and showed wisdom suitable to His age and did not assume more than was suitable to His age, but was meek and lowly all His life. As a man, He was all that perfect wisdom made Him. He took upon Himself the bodily limitations of His incarnation, and that without ceasing to be the One upon whose shoulders was the government of the Universe. All speculation about the Union of the divine and the human are beyond us. Why should we injure ourselves in our vain attempts to solve that mystery of mysteries? Let the tragedy of Arius be a warning. Let us wait for its explanation in Eternity. To-day let us rejoice in the fact that for our sakes, and our Salvation He, the Eternal Son, became man, the Incarnate God.

Mr. PERCY O. RUOFF said : From the point of view of the title of the paper, Mr. Pitt has presented a cogent and lucid argument. It is proper to speak with caution on the profound matters arising in the lecture. On p. 47 reference is made to the supposed repetition of Ps. xxii on the Cross, and it is said that the first words were uttered with a loud voice, while the last words " It is finished " were scarcely breathed. A comparison of the recorded descriptions given in Matthew, Mark and Luke, with John's account, seems to indicate that the words " It is finished " were uttered with a loud voice, as a great triumphant shout. On p. 48 Mr. Pitt says that Jesus committed God to the Scriptures, and quotes in support of this view the sentence, " The Word, which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me." This is scarcely accurate, as the quotation refers, not to the Scriptures, but to the utterances which were then being made by Christ.

In approaching the difficult words of Mark xiii, 32, we are faced with the mystery of the God-man, and the words which Christ spoke should ever be recollected in this connection, namely, " No man knoweth the Son save the Father " (Matt. xi, 27). Many theologians have stumbled and fallen because they have endeavoured to compass the Person of Christ, Who is beyond the mind of man fully to explain as the last quoted words clearly show. It is, however, enlightening to compare what the Lord Jesus said in Acts i, 7, after His resurrection, " It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." The argument used by the Lecturer in his illustration of the watch appears to me to considerably weaken his case, although the rest of the argument about the things Christ declared He did know is very forceful.

Mr. Pitt raises the question, in conclusion, of the Lord " in His Mother's womb " a subject on which the Scripture is silent. But there is light given on the Incarnation in the Messianic Psalm, which says :—" But Thou art He that took Me out of the womb. Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my Mother's breasts. I was cast upon Thee from the womb. Thou art My God from My mother's belly " (Ps. xxii, 9, 10).

Mr. HOSTE said : While thanking Mr. Pitt most heartily for his valuable paper, I venture to suggest, with reference to the much-

discussed verse, Mark xiii, 32, which seemed to be a favourite verse of those who desired to belittle our Saviour, that our Lord, in including even Himself among those who did not know the exact hour of His coming in glory, was not contrasting Himself with God, for He was Himself in the Unity of the Godhead, and still less was He speaking as some Human Christ, bereft of His Deity, as if such a condition could exist in the experience of a Divine Person, but as the Son, the Second Personal Subsistence in the Godhead, and contrasting what belonged to Him as such, in functions undertaken and exercised, with those of the Father. No one can deny that such differences exist in Divine Relations. The Father does what is proper to Himself, He fore-ordains, predestinates, chooses, determines the "times and seasons," and the hour at which His purposes shall be carried out. He sends forth the Son to carry them out, and He in His turn does so by the agency and power of the Holy Spirit. These functions cannot be interchanged or reversed.

Even after the resurrection, when the apostles enquired "Wilt Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" the Lord did not undertake to satisfy their desire for information, but assured them that the Father had the matter in hand. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts i, 7), and it is His prerogative to settle such. Would not the fact that the Holy Spirit is not excepted here and must be included in the phrase, "No one knoweth," prove that the verse has nothing to do with some hypothetical "kenosis" imposed on the Lord as the result of Incarnation? Certainly one has never heard the omniscience of the Holy Spirit impugned from this verse, which ought logically to be, were the premise correct. As this is a unique case of our Lord's confessing a lack of knowledge, to argue from it in favour of His being emptied of his omniscience would be like saying that a successful climber of Mt. Everest had failed to take the last half dozen steps because since coming to India he had become a victim of *locomotor ataxia*.

As for the Philippian passage, the teaching is not primarily doctrinal, but ethical. What Christ did is binding on us, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (v. 5). If the words "He emptied Himself" or "He made Himself of no reputation" (v. 7) meant that He lost what He knew and became void of

His Divine knowledge and power, for that is how His critics insist on understanding the passage for Him, why do they not do the same ?

Have we ever heard of their trying to become weak and ignorant ? Do they even lay aside the letters after their names ? I never heard of it. Rather they appear to attach much importance to these credentials of scholarship, even though sometimes honorary. Really the whole conception is a misunderstanding of the passage and of what the position of servant entails. A servant does not forget all her recipes and skill in order to serve, but uses them for her mistress. Otherwise she would get notice speedily. Surely the passage only means that as the Lord laid aside the outward insignia of His glory, and took the position of a servant of the Father in the likeness of a simple man, so we, if we have, or fancy we have, any claims to consideration or preferential treatment on the score of learning, wealth, title, or birth, should take a humble place and let others find it out, if they care to.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

Very little that has been said does anything but support my arguments, and I am therefore in the happy position of having only to thank those who have spoken. I think, however, the Chairman is mistaken in contending that there is no difference between knowing and believing. Paul's words, which he quoted, do not help him, for the apostle says : " I *know* whom I *have* believed." Surely Paul might have known Him without believing Him, and he might have believed Him without knowing Him. If a man told me he had a five-pound note in his pocket, he would know and I must believe. But if he told me I had a five-pound note in my pocket I should know I hadn't, and whether he believed or not he would not know.

Some of my arguments may seem rather ineffective owing to abridgment. The essay in its entirety is three times as long as the paper which I read.