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

VOL. LXII.



LONDON:

Published by the Institute, 1, Central Buildings, Westminster, S.W.1.

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1930

732ND ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, MARCH 3RD, 1930,
AT 4.30 P.M.

DR. JAMES W. THIRTLE, M.R.A.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the CHAIRMAN called on Lieut.-Col. T. C. Skinner to read his paper on "The Significance of the Old Testament Scriptures to our Lord Jesus Christ."

*THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
SCRIPTURES TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.*

By LIEUT.-COL. T. C. SKINNER, R.E. (ret.).

THE task before me to-day is difficult. Already this year we have had a very valuable paper on "Christ and the Scriptures"; a paper of such merit that the Council, rightly as I think, adjudged it worthy of award under the Gunning Trust, and where it may be thought that the last word has been spoken, my task is to go over much the same ground, opening up another line of study altogether; one, moreover, that the earlier paper may be thought to have closed for good and all. Anything like controversy over the things that are most surely believed among us concerning the Deity of our Blessed Lord is to be deprecated, and in offering my thesis, I desire to do so with the utmost sympathy and respect for those who hold another and perhaps more conservative view. My task is

indeed most difficult, and to assist me, as you alone can, I ask you to follow the line of thought closely and sympathetically as it is developed, suspending judgment till presentation is complete, while on my part I give you at the outset clearest assurance that you will not have to abate one iota of conviction of the Deity of Christ, but rather, as I hope, your trust in Him and in the sacred Scriptures to which He has for ever set His seal will be immeasurably strengthened.

One other matter I will refer to here, the very common belief that because a truth is veiled or hidden, it is beyond our power or our province to understand it; a formula into which we are all quick to retreat when asked to face up to a reasoned disturbance of our cherished opinion, but one that, as I submit, represents a mistaken attitude altogether. Our Lord plainly taught His disciples that when the Spirit of Truth had come, He would guide them into all Truth, and where He does not definitely draw a line, we should not draw one for ourselves or for others. It is well also to remind ourselves now and again that no one individual or association of men, however spiritually minded, has a monopoly of Truth. With these observations I will now proceed.

Our subject being "The Significance of the Old Testament Scriptures to our Lord Jesus Christ," we may properly approach it in the first instance from the Old Testament. The eleventh chapter of Isaiah opens with this prophecy, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

The testimony here is clearly of Jesus, the rod of the stem of Jesse, and examining it reverently we learn that the Spirit of the LORD was to rest upon Him in fullness, and was to make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD. The marginal reading for "understanding" (which, I take it, gives the

effect of the Hebrew) is "scent or smell"; He was thus to be quick-scented in the fear of the LORD by the operation of the Holy Spirit, that is quick to discern, instant to apprehend, the mind and will of God the Father, and, as the direct outcome, infallible in judgment among men.

Turning now to the New Testament for fulfilment of the prophecy, let us read first the word of the Angel to the Virgin Mary as given to us by St. Luke in chapter one, v. 35, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," for us a very sheet-anchor of fundamental truth, assuring us of the Deity and sinless perfection of the Christ.

Then in Luke ii, 40, we read, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the Grace of God was upon Him," while from verse 47 we learn that, as a boy of twelve, in the Temple, His understanding and answers were such that all who heard Him were astonished. Yet, again in verse 52 we are told that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and" (most amazing fact) "in favour with God and man."

We have thus a perfect picture of the Divine-human child, advancing from birth, through the tender years of infancy and growing boyhood, towards manhood's estate. We are told that at Jerusalem, at the age of twelve, He showed such marked mental and spiritual intuition as to excite wonder among the teachers of the Law; yet is it abundantly clear that His intellectual development, though phenomenally rapid, was as natural as His physical growth; He grew in wisdom and stature. Commenting on this visit to the Temple, Dr. Graham Scroggie says (S.U. notes, July 31st, 1929): "In His thirteenth year He became a 'son of the law,' and, for the first time, He went with His parents to 'the feast.' Read verses 43-47: Jesus had been brought up to love the Word of God, and the House of God. He was not teaching in the Temple, but *learning*"; and further commenting on verse 49 ("*Knew ye not that I must be in the things of My Father?*") (Gr.) Dr. Scroggie adds, "This verse (49) shows that Jesus at thirteen had a consciousness of His Divine Sonship, and it also points to a great moulding purpose on His part."

Thus does St. Luke record fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy in the development of the boy Jesus, quick-scented in the fear of the LORD.

If this picture of His development be true—and if we accredit St. Luke at all, we must, I submit, accept it as it stands—it presents at once to the devout mind three questions, all legitimate: Did Jesus bring with Him from the Glory the Divine knowledge of which St. Luke here gives us the first hints, but which later, in His brief public life, shone out in such matchless splendour? “Never man spake like this man.” If not, then at what stage in His human experience did this knowledge come? And third, by what means, or through what channels did He learn? But before taking these up and reverently seeking answers, it is necessary first to clear the ground of that spurious doctrine of the higher critical school styled the *kenosis* theory.

I take the following extracts from an article on the theory which appeared in “Practical Christianity” (journal of the Officers’ Christian Union) in April, 1923:—

“ . . . That He so divested Himself of His Godhead as to be merely imbued with the ideas current at the time among the Jews, and in fact that He often stated what was not the real truth. It is with this latter contention that it is proposed to deal particularly in this article. It may be said to rest firstly on an incorrect interpretation of Phil. ii, 7, of which the Authorised Version is as follows: ‘(Christ Jesus) took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.’ From this it is made out that our Lord humbled Himself to such an extent as to become empty of all Divine knowledge and insight. Hence the term ‘Kenosis’ (classical Greek for ‘emptiness’) is applied to this theory. . . . This theory amounts ultimately to denying that Christ was Truth as well as the Way and the Life, as He claimed to be in John xiv, 6. This is not an overstatement. . . .

“The following extract from an article by Principal E. Griffith Jones, in Peake’s ‘Commentary’ shows what has been stated above does not misrepresent the theory. ‘We cannot claim infallibility for Him on questions of history, such as the authorship of Old Testament books, or on the problems of science. In these directions, He must be quite frankly considered to have accepted the current notions of His time.’”

So wrote Principal Griffith Jones, and I accept it and the other extract as fairly defining or at least illustrating the *kenosis* theory. With the implications of that theory we can have no parley; we can only repudiate and condemn. Jesus, alone of all men, could say, “Heaven and earth shall pass away

but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. xxiv, 35.) His words were infallible.

But having said this much, we need to remind ourselves that no heresy could stand for twenty-four hours if it contained no single element of truth, for the supreme danger of a heresy lies in the misuse and exploitation of some fragment of truth that, in its appropriate connection, should be unhesitatingly received. And such is the effect of the *kenosis* theory; it claims for support the passage in Philippians already quoted, but more correctly rendered in the Revised Version, "but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant" (or bond servant), and argues therefrom that Jesus laid aside His Divine attributes, and came to us as any other man, of human parentage on both sides, fallible, and hence failing, subject to human limitations in knowledge and understanding, and hence often mistaken in His pronouncements.

As to this I fearlessly affirm that it is not possible for God to divest Himself of Deity. There are some things that even Almighty God cannot do. But that there was an emptying in some sort the Scriptures assure us. I say "Scriptures" (plural) advisedly, since it is only as we compare Scripture with Scripture that we can rightly divide the Word of Truth.

In what, then, did the emptying consist? The passage in Philippians pictures to us a progressive emptying that reached its climax in the death on the Cross; but it is with an early phase, only, that we are here immediately concerned; and here, with utmost reverence for those who hold another view, let me state it as my own conviction that when Jesus, born of Mary, came a little babe to Bethlehem, He came in all helplessness and simplicity as any other new-born child, dependent in the first instance on His mother and His foster-father for care and development of body and mind; a perfectly natural child developing along natural lines, as St. Luke so plainly shows.

Let me put it this way: When God gave His Son to us, He gave Him absolutely. That the infant Jesus had in Him a consciousness of the Divine, one may well believe. Indeed it is scarcely possible to conceive of any moment of His human experience when there was not in Him something of response to the Father in Heaven, the Spirit bearing witness with His Spirit that He was the Son of God. And yet surely it would be such response as might be predicated of a newly-born child, rather than that of a grown man, and the suggestion that, as

He lay in His manger-cradle, His infant mind was charged with the knowledge of eternity past and to come, is to me—let me say it in all humility—*impossible* and *repellant*.

In answer, then, to the first question, I state my humble conviction that Jesus did not bring with Him, as a new-born babe, the knowledge and understanding He had with His Father in the Glory; and to any who would join issue with me here, I again plead for patience to follow through to the end.

If not inherent at birth, then at what stage of His early life did the knowledge come? To this I reply, "Line upon line, precept upon precept," as it was Divinely and suitably presented to His ever-developing mind. Jesus "increased in wisdom" as well as stature (Luke ii, 52). This brings us to the third question: by what means or through what channels did He learn? Surely the answer is, Through the same means as were open to other Jewish children of faithful, God-fearing, God-loving parents. Let us briefly review these. First, can we doubt that His mother taught Him to fold His baby hands in prayer? or that, later, as He was of age to receive it, she may have disclosed to Him some of the deep things long hidden in her heart—the Angel visitation; the Shepherds; the Magi; the prophecies that went before on Him? Would not Joseph have taught Him to read, as no doubt later he would have taught Him his trade? Would He not have attended the village school, there to acquire such learning as was imparted to other Jewish children of His own age? If, as we are told, we go to school "to learn how to learn," such early tuition of His day, though meagre, would not be without its formative value even to the boy Jesus. Then there was for Him, as for all who trust and obey, the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit (subjective); and yet again—if indeed it be possible to differentiate—there was the Father's voice from Heaven; though not till He was about to enter upon His public ministry are we told that God thus spoke to Him direct from Heaven. The circumstances, too, of His daily life, and His intercourse with others, all doubtless played their part in training mind and heart. But yet another source of inexhaustible truth and teaching lay open to Him, through hearing, and later, reading, for Himself the Word of God in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament; and it is to this, chiefly, the immeasurable significance, to Him, of these Old Testament Scriptures, that I will presently direct your

attention, after that I have asked, and endeavoured to answer, a fourth question.

If it be true that Jesus, Son of God unique, learned through the same channels as are open to all who are children of God by faith, wherein did He differ from these? Was it not in this that, being sinless—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"—there was in Him no impediment, no faintest obstacle whatever, to immediate, perfect apprehension of the mind and will of God the Father; through all these differing means, and especially, in our immediate reference, through His study of the Scriptures. Let us, from now onward, concentrate our thoughts on the significance of the Scriptures to His growing mind.

Picture the boy Jesus as He hears these read, or Himself reads in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms; quick-scented, by the Spirit, in the fear of the LORD, would they not flash to mind and heart instantly with meanings far beyond the discernment of the most spiritually minded men of His own or of any time? Was it not this, his marvellous intuition, that caused the doctors of the Law to marvel?

Consider next what it was He would have learned as He read, taking only a few illustrations out of literally thousands available, for time presses. Consider Gen. iii, 15, the promised seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head; consider Deut. xviii, 15, the prophet to come, like unto Moses, and of their brethren, but speaking with Divine authority; Jer. v, 1, the one man whom God was seeking, whose righteousness should save Jerusalem; 2 Chron. xvi, 9, the eyes of the LORD searching the whole earth for the perfect heart; Isa. xi, 1, etc., the rod of the stem of Jesse; Isa. lxi, 1-3, which He appropriated to Himself in the Synagogue at Nazareth; Num. xxi, 8, 9, the serpent of brass, cited in John iii, 14, 15; Isa. liii, that wondrous chapter that speaks of Christ in every line. In all these and in countless others He would infallibly identify God's requirement of One who should fulfil all His will.

Take a few more: Gen. xxii, Abraham offering up His son Isaac; Gen. xxxvii, Joseph betrayed by his brethren and sold into Egypt, to become their prince and saviour; 2 Sam. xv, etc., David the King rejected; Exod. xii, etc., the passover lamb; the sprinkling of the blood; all the marvellous symbolism of the tabernacle and its services, etc., etc.

These types, figures and prophecies innumerable, when

interpreted to us, do indeed strengthen our own belief immeasurably that all was of God from the beginning, but inasmuch as we have, in the New Testament, the *fact* of Christ Himself, the question must often have arisen in our minds, "Was that the only, or even the chief, reason for their having been written beforehand?" As a first answer we will probably reflect that to train the Jewish mind and heart were they written, "To make ready a people prepared for the Lord." And yet, judged by results, even this explanation seems but partial and incomplete, leaving us to seek for something still deeper, fuller, and more satisfying; Ps. xl. furnishes the key; I read in the Revised Version, with marginal renderings, verses 6 to 8.

"Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in;
 Mine ears hast thou bored;
 Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required;
 "Then said I, Lo, I am come;
 In the roll of the book it is prescribed to me;
 "I delight to do thy will, O my God;
 Yea, thy law is within my heart."

The bored ear, as in Exod. xxi, 5, 6; seal of the perpetual, willing service of surrender to the will of God. "Lo, I am come; in the roll of the book it is prescribed to me;" Divine prescription for the Divine Son, written hundreds, yea thousands, of years before, that when He should come in fashion as man, made like unto his brethren, He might find there these excellent things in counsels and knowledge, and might know the certainty of the words of truth, verifying them in His own experience by a trust that never failed. *The Hebrew Bible was His book.* Little as they themselves knew it, the holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, in testifying beforehand the sufferings unto Christ, and the glories that should follow, spake and wrote, for Him, that in His holy childhood, His boyhood, and His young manhood, He might be perfected in knowledge, thoroughly furnished in all the will of God.

Is it a thing incredible with you that God, who could choose a humble Jewish maiden to be the mother of our Lord, should have prepared, in anticipation, this sacred Word to be matrix of His mind? Is it not rather what we should expect of the God Whose glory it is to conceal a thing that kings may search it out? (Prov. xxv, 2).

In the light of this thought let us now consider more in detail Gen. xxii, verses 12 and 15-18 (read these). You recall the first promise, of seed "as the dust of the earth," and the second, of seed in number as the stars (ch. xiii, 16, and xv, 5), first the natural, and afterwards the spiritual; and now as He brings these together, with precedence to the spiritual, can we not hear Heaven's arches ring with the outburst of exultant joy, "By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply . . . because thou hast obeyed my voice." Why? Surely because that self-same day, through the obedient faith of this simple-hearted "friend of God," there was laid a tried foundation for the future education of God's own dear Son.

Is this in doubt? Then contrast the Divine displeasure with Moses (Num. xx, 7-12) who, when enjoined to "speak" to the rock once-smitten, as in Exod. xvii, 6, smote a second time, to the destruction of the parable, leaving to God no alternative but to severely censure His unfaithful servant that thereafter he who ran might read.

After childhood, boyhood; after boyhood, manhood; but of Jesus' early manhood we are told nothing. Yet we can surely picture this time as a time of intensive preparation for the years to follow, most momentous in all human history. How, especially, He would store mind and heart with the Scriptures of Truth, saying, like Jeremiah of old, "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O LORD, God of hosts," or with Job, "I have esteemed the word of His mouth more than my necessary food," or with the writer of the 119th Psalm, "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. . . . I rejoice at thy word as one that findeth great spoil."

And as the time of His baptism drew near, how precious to Him would be those words of the 2nd Psalm, "The LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," while, at the baptism, St. Luke tells us it was *when He was praying* that the Heaven was opened, and with the descent of the Holy Ghost came the voice of God, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." Do we then reverently inquire what

was the burden of that prayer? Let the wondrous answer speak. Was it not for confirmation of the faithful Word on which He was staking all the issues of life, death, time, and eternity, and for enduement with power for what lay before?

Mark what follows with almost breathless rapidity: "Straightway the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness," there to endure for forty awful days and nights the cumulative temptation of the devil. And what was the nature of the temptation? Was it to satisfy hunger by a miracle? Was it to make spectacular appeal to Israel? There is an element of vulgarity about these that, notwithstanding our Lord's distress, must have foredoomed them to failure even in Satan's eyes, and I conclude he only employed them to mask the real attack upon our Lord's unquestioning confidence in the Word of His Father. "*If thou be the Son of God . . .*"; *if, if*; mark the subtlety, only to be defeated by rapier-thrusts from the same unfailling Word.

Recoiling from his flank attack, Satan next comes into the open and boldly offers Jesus a short cut to His promised inheritance, but at cost of His allegiance to God. Foiled here as elsewhere, the devil, as St. Luke tells us, "departed from Him for a season," "and Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." Thereafter, throughout His earthly ministry, seeking God continually in prayer, He both taught and wrought in the power of the Holy Ghost, "For God was with Him" (Acts x, 38).

Stage by stage, too, was He Divinely helped and strengthened. In the wilderness angels ministered to Him (Matt. iv, 11). At the Transfiguration there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Yet again St. John tells of a voice from Heaven, in answer to Our Lord's prayer, "Father, glorify Thy name;" all enabling Him to endure the contradiction of sinners, and even of His own loved disciples who would have turned Him back from the way of the Cross. Again, in dark Gethsemane there appeared unto Him an angel from Heaven, strengthening Him for the final assault, when, having secured His crucifixion and certain death, they reviled Him, saying, "*If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.*"

When men are about to make a desperate "push" to reach some desired objective, be it the Pole, the battle front, or the mountain top, they first do all that is humanly possible, by

preparation of forward depots, caches of food, etc., to prolong endurance and ensure success. Picture to yourselves the infinite refreshment to our blessed Lord in His dying agony as His eyes surveyed the scene below the Cross and He remembered, "They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots." It is written ; it is written.

One more scene : Jesus, our sin-bearer, had uttered that cry of inexpressible anguish, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ?" but all three synoptists unite in recording yet another loud cry, with which St. Luke associates the prayer, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." How should we understand this prayer ? Was it the last whisper of unbroken communion breathed through dying lips ? Rather, as I read it, communion already broken, this was itself the last loud cry, triumphant shout of unquenchable faith—"Father"—ere He passed into the outer darkness. "Truly this man was the Son of God."

"It is finished," and three days later, Jesus, author and perfecter of faith, declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, draws near to two broken-hearted disciples as they walk. What does He talk with them about ? "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures *the things concerning Himself*." No wonder their hearts burned within them while He opened to them the Scriptures ; His own book, who should know them as He ?

Later, appearing in the midst of the disciples, Jesus . . . said unto them, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day : and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations . . ."

May God open our eyes to behold wondrous things out of His Law ; and to such as rush in to criticize the Word, trespassers all, we will say, Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the very ground whereon thou standest is holy.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Dr. Thirtle) said : It is with sincere pleasure that I listened to the paper read by Colonel Skinner. We shall acquiesce, I doubt not, in his own utterance, that such studies can only be conducted with profit if inspired by reverence to the Lord Jesus, and submission to the teachings of Holy Scripture. From the first age of the Church, as we do well to remember, men have lost their way in speculation as to the nature of Christ and the implicates of the Incarnation. We shall, however, agree that Colonel Skinner has exercised good judgment in his treatment of a very difficult theme.

With commendable prudence, the Colonel has—with the exception of a single paragraph—avoided convictions of an order that might be described as *exclusive*. For example, while maintaining that, as He “increased in wisdom,” the Lord gathered light from the writings of the prophets, he did not go on to suggest that the Lord was wholly confined, or in His experience limited, to such a single source or channel of instruction and wisdom. Such a position, quite manifestly, would have involved very serious problems, and would have neutralized the plea that the study was complementary rather than contradictory.

The prophets, as we know, gathered guidance from the writings of their predecessors, at least in some cases ; all the same, as we must recognize, they were borne along with heavenly light that was ministered to them individually. Beyond question, then, the Son of God could not be denied a corresponding initiative, a like equipment with a divine source of illumination—if not a still more intimate command of the will and thought, and word of His heavenly Father.

In regard to Himself, His nature and dignity, and likewise His teaching, Christ claimed to speak the words of God, and therefore could not have been confined to things that were learned from writings of a past day. With this the Colonel would, I suppose, in large measure, agree. Certain it is that Christ knew the Scriptures, but whether those Scriptures formed the warp or the woof—the framework, or the superstructure—of His knowledge, we

may not be careful to inquire, much less to decide. All the time, we must allow that He had access to wisdom which was beyond the reach of other men, whether prophets or priests or kings in the chosen nation of Israel.

The subject before us has its psychological bearings, and if psychology is beset with difficulties when applied to the human creature, what shall we say when we find it applied to One who was at the same time human and divine? It is conceivable that the prophetic consciousness in a prophet was stimulated by the reading of the books of earlier prophets; but dare we assert the conclusion that, in the case of Christ the Messianic consciousness was excited, or awakened by the writings of men who themselves were without the Messianic faculty? All the same, we may be allowed to reason that, in the providence of God, the Messianic consciousness of our Lord, as He grew in wisdom and knowledge, may have been confirmed and encouraged by the God-implanted hope voiced by prophets, which showed that in due time God would visit and redeem His people by His only-begotten Son.

Whatever may have been the case of the Lord as a learner from Holy Scripture—and it is largely with that that Colonel Skinner has dealt—we are assuredly on strong and inconvertible ground when we contemplate the place of our Lord as a divinely qualified exponent of the Word. This was made clear by Colonel Skinner in the last page of his paper, in which, in helpful fashion, we were reminded of the occasion when, in presence of His disciples, the Lord “expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Whatever may be doubtful, this is beyond question, and serves as a demonstration of “the significance of the Old Testament Scriptures to our Lord,” and that in part answers to the title of the paper which has been read this afternoon.

The extent to which the Lord was a learner may be in doubt, at least in some degree; but the certainty that He was a teacher, an instructor thoroughly furnished, speaking with authority, and as for God himself, should supply the groundwork of a study, making for complete confidence in regard to revealed truth as we have it in Holy Scripture—the Word of God, who spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, but at the end

of these days spoke unto us in His Son, the appointed heir of all things.

[The Chairman moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer, and the same was carried with acclamation.]

Mr. G. WILSON HEATH said: I regret that I am unable to agree with the lecturer. In fact, I definitely disagree with the paper—if I have understood it—from first to last, except alone the last paragraph, which is a prayer and a warning with which we must all agree.

That the old Kenosis theory and its implications is one with which “we can have no parley” I agree, but the lecturer substitutes a new Kenosis theory, which I for myself repudiate and condemn as heartily. This theory is sought to be upheld by references to daily notes and “Scripture Union” portions of July, 1929, and February, 1930, by Dr. W. G. Scroggie, a servant of the Lord whom the lecturer introduces to us as “well known to be orthodox.” I can only say that the orthodox of to-day may be the unorthodox of to-morrow, and that our faith alone should be in Christ and His word. The thought of our Lord as “helpless,” “impotent,” “innocent” and “ignorant,” merely a “new factor entering into human history” causes me a shuddering shock. I am aware it is not new—I remember that some thirty years ago a well-known teacher and writer made similar references to our Lord, and that under the general protest he withdrew the offending words and substituted others which distinctly affirmed, that although babyhood in itself did not express Deity, yet He who was the Almighty God was pleased also to dwell in the Babe of Bethlehem. It is all a mystery, far beyond our finite comprehension. I wish to ask the lecturer to reply to four questions, to enable us exactly to appreciate what he means:—

1st.—Are we to understand that Jesus the Son of Mary, was actually and perfectly a MAN. Not a fallen and sinful man, but a MAN, a perfect transcript of the mind of God for man originally? or

2nd.—Are we to understand that Jesus, the Son of Mary, was a development of a fallen race, with all the weakness, ineffectiveness, and defects of this race, but sin apart?

3rd.—Was Jesus from birth to death GOD TABERNACLED in grace in a human, yet sinless, and holy body, and yet at any, and at all, times capable of manifesting Himself as God, God incarnate in flesh ?

4th.—Was not the Lord Jesus, whilst seen outwardly by the natural eye, to be in all the conditions of human life, from His babyhood to manhood, really all the time THE ALMIGHTY GOD and THE DIVINE WISDOM and this in *all* His earthly pathway, that is from the cradle to the grave ?

Rev. F. W. PITT said : If Jesus was God He was always God, both before and after the Incarnation. It is inconceivable that He should be God without knowing it. The Jesus presented to us in this paper is one who only differed from other men in that He was sinless. He “did not bring with Him the knowledge and understanding He had with His Father in Glory” (p. 139). Then what did He bring ? Apparently nothing ! His Godhood was merely knowledge acquired from outside sources. It was by degrees He came to know that He was God. This was not the manifestation of God in the flesh. It was the training and adaptation of a sinless human being to the Office of Deity. In that case, as no man comprehended the Son but the Father, the Son did not comprehend Himself. How could He do so if it depended on His “learning like other Jewish children ?”

Jesus said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” Who told Him that He saw that wonder ? And did He remember that He had seen it when He was told ? Jesus said “Glorify me with the glory I had with Thee before the world was.” Who taught Him that, and did He remember what the glory was when He was told about it ?

From Colonel Skinner’s paper I glean that Mary had the tremendous responsibility of telling a man that He was God, or of informing God that He was God. Truly she had been told that that Holy thing which should be born in her should be called the Son of God. “But she kept all these sayings in her heart,” and yet at twelve years old Jesus knew He was the Son of God, and Mary’s words to Him showed that she had not told Him the secret. She apparently thought He did not at that time know who He

was; for she said, "THY FATHER and I have sought Thee sorrowing," and Jesus replied, "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about *my Father's* business?" He knew though Mary had not told Him.

The only warrant given in this paper for the ever-developing mind of Jesus is the statement in Luke ii, 52, "that He increased in wisdom and stature"; but the R.V., in spite of its Unitarian bias, alters the word "increased" to "advanced," which is quite another thing, and does not clash with the statement in verse 40, "that the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, *filled* with wisdom."

After careful and repeated reading of the essay, I find no difference on the main point between Colonel Skinner's view and the Kenosis theory. The Kenosis says Jesus emptied Himself of His knowledge, and Colonel Skinner says He did not know.

Mr. W. N. DELEIVINGNE said: I have always felt that the words we read in Phil. ii, 7, "(He) emptied Himself," have a deeper meaning than emerges from the expression used in the Authorised Version: "(He) made Himself of no reputation," and that they cannot be adequately explained by regarding them, as some do, as merely another mode of expressing the thought we find in verse 8, "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." They are intended to signify, I would reverently suggest, the mysterious and, to our finite minds, incomprehensible change from Our Lord's existence as God omniscient, omnipotent, co-equal, and one in glory with the Father, prior to His Incarnation, to His existence as man, born in the flesh, and in so far as He was man, subject to the limitations of the human mind and body. Indeed, one aspect of the truth set forth in that wonderful passage in Phil. ii would appear to be that Christ could not manifest Himself in the flesh without laying aside, or veiling, the full glory of the Godhead. This does not mean that, by manifesting Himself in the flesh, He divested Himself of the character and attributes of the Deity. That was impossible. By taking the form of man, however, Christ did not break or diminish His unity with the Father. "I and the Father are one"; "the Father is in Me and I in Him," He said to the Jews; and utterly beyond the reach of our understanding as it is, Our Lord, while living as man on the

earth, was absolutely one with the Father—God. And being One with the Father, He was filled with the Holy Spirit of God, for, as we read in John iii, 34, “God giveth not the Spirit by measure (unto Him).”

But while Jesus was absolutely one with the Father, His position while in the flesh, I humbly and reverently suggest, was one of dependence—I think it may even be said complete dependence—upon the Father. Again and again Our Lord, in speaking to the Jews, used such words as these: “I came not to do mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me;” “as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things;” “I can of Mine own Self do nothing.” And it will be remembered that Our Lord, when about to perform that wonderful miracle, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the multitude which standeth around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me.” The use of these expressions by Our Lord has a deep significance, and is intended to reveal to us that Jesus, while maintaining unbroken communion with the Father during His life on earth, was in a position of dependence upon the Father for that wisdom and knowledge and power that manifested themselves in all His words and works. And it is in His dependence upon the Father that we should seek for light upon those difficult words regarding Our Lord’s Incarnation—“He emptied Himself.” There has been much speculation upon the meaning and import of these words, but, as was remarked by one of our members (Mr. Edwards) when Mr. Pitt read his paper on “Christ and the Scriptures,” mere human speculation on such a subject as the Incarnation is not only of no benefit, but is positively harmful to the soul.

Seeing that these words “He emptied Himself” are used in Scripture, it is not only permitted to us to seek to know their meaning, but it is our duty to give them reverent thought and attention. But the only place where we can legitimately look for light upon them is God’s Word. God, in His love to man, has given us a partial revelation of Himself (in His only-begotten Son) and we can know nothing more than what He has chosen to reveal in His Word. If we go outside that Word and resort to

speculation in the quest for further knowledge, we shall, sooner or later, fall into grievous error.

Mr. WILLIAM C. EDWARDS said: The mysterious connection between the Divine and the human in the person of our Lord is a subject upon which I almost tremble to discourse. This is holy ground upon which, as we might well say, angels fear to tread. It belongs to things which they "desire to look into" (1 Pet. i, 12); fathomless mysteries that may well challenge their reverence and adoration, and ours too, in ages yet to come. Yet some daring mortals, like Nestorius and Arius, have presumed to meddle with them, to the confusion if not disaster of the organized Church.

Some would now suggest that Christ the Eternal Son at Bethlehem not only laid aside His throne—His glory—His very Godhead, but also his memory, when He entered into the body prepared for His Incarnation, and that He came into that body with a blank mind, *tabula rasa*, or like an ordinary babe. That He who thought and prayed concerning the glory which He had with the Father "before the world was": He who said "I and My Father are one"—"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; that He—the Lamb of God—the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world: the second party to the Eternal Covenant of Grace, forgot all and everything. It is suggested that this "forgotten all" came back like a dream or a revelation when at His mother's knee He knelt in prayer, or learnt at school to read a book—the Old Testament. Is it possible? For me it is absolutely unthinkable—unthinkable that He of whose Incarnation it is written, "It pleased (the Father) that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Col. i, 19) and should thus enter our sublunary life.

If we read Eph. i, ii and iii, and Col. i, and correlated passage of the New Testament, I think we shall find this to be an incredible theory. We believe in the revelation of the Trinity and Unity of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We cannot explain it, but we can experimentally prove its truth. The adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father"; the Lord Jesus with us, and within us, the Hope of Glory; and the Holy Spirit indwelling and bringing forth the fruits of Christian experience in life and character. The difficulty with some seems to be to harmonize IMMANENCE

with local manifestations—in other words, Omnipresence with any Theophany. To such I will address myself. Shall we start with the Burning bush? God was *there*, the Omnipresent Triune God—the God of patience, speaking perhaps for hours with Moses. *There* behind the mountain alone with a hopeless shepherd, and yet, He was at the same time Omnipresent throughout the universe beyond the wings of the morning. Or turn to Sinai, all aflame with the descending Deity, proclaiming His Holy Law for a fallen race and a chosen people. The Omnipresent Deity was *there*, for more than 40 days and seen in glory by the elders of Israel (Exod. xxiv, 11), as Christ was seen upon the Mountain of Transfiguration by the disciples or by the Apostle John in Patmos. And all the time He was *reigning* in heaven and throughout boundless infinite space.

I claim the same for the manifestation of Christ for more than thirty years as the Babe of Bethlehem, the Boy of Nazareth, the Carpenter, the Son of Man—as for the 40 days and more of Sinai or the Shekinah for centuries—and in saying that, I do not forget that awful moment when for the first and only time He cried, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”

From the moment of incarnation as a Babe on to His Ascension, Christ was always God, the Eternal Son, in constant intercourse with the Eternal Father and the Eternal Spirit. I rejoice to read the ancient prophecy of that wondrous Babe. “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulders and His name shall be called WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE” (Isa. ix, 6)—a passage that is only understandable by those who, taught of God the Holy Ghost, rejoice in the appreciation of the Eternal mystery of the ever-blessed Trinity and the Holy Incarnation.

Lastly, let us think for a moment of our Lord’s Ascension. He said in parting, “Lo, I am with you always.” Although this is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, and the Son of Man is upon His Heavenly Throne, His glorified body being there, as described by the Apostle John, yet by His Omnipresence He is still *with us*. In the same way, and at the same time, He was universally Omnipresent when the body of His Incarnation was laid as a babe in a manger, or as a boy He went to the school and

the synagogue, to Jerusalem and the Temple, or as the culminating prophet of Israel as He "went about doing good." He was indeed EMMANUEL, which being interpreted is "GOD WITH US."

Mr. SIDNEY COLLETT said: In my judgment the lecturer has failed rightly to interpret the true "Significance of the Old Testament Scriptures to our Lord Jesus Christ," which is the title of his lecture. One gladly recognizes his desire to approach this subject with reverence, and I note his assurance that he has no desire "to abate one iota of conviction of the Deity of Christ." Yet practically all the argument of the lecture tend, however unintentionally on his part, in the opposite direction, viz., toward robbing our Lord, during His earthly life, of some of His Divine attributes. He tells us Christ came "as any other new-born child," although, if we are to believe the Scriptures (Luke i, 35), He came as no other new-born child ever came! And further, the author adds, that "He was a perfectly natural child, developing along natural lines," that "He acquired such learning as was imparted to other Jewish children," and that "His intercourse with others all doubtless played their part in training His heart and mind." He even goes so far as to make the statement that "Jesus did not bring with Him, as a new-born babe, the knowledge and understanding He had with His Father in glory." And that "He had to learn from the Scriptures as other children of God do!"

Those are remarks that pain me, and the replies, which naturally spring to our minds, are these:—

1st.—The Scriptures make it clear that, throughout the whole of His earthly life, although truly man, yet Christ was ever God. For His name, Divinely given in connection with His birth, was Emmanuel—God with us (Matt. i, 23); and at the end of His earthly life, in connection with the Cross, we read that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (1 Cor. v, 19); while, in Acts xx, 28, we read of "the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood." Moreover, His claim to the great name "I AM" (John viii, 58) so frequently made, proves from His own lips; though veiled in flesh yet the Godhead was never for one moment absent.

2nd.—Does it not seem incongruous to suggest that our Lord

should have had to learn from the Scriptures, when those Scriptures were all *inspired by His own Spirit*, so that they are actually called "the Word of Christ" (Col. iii, 16).

3rd.—We recognize to the full the dual nature of our Lord, that He was perfect man and perfect God; but I suggest that the line between His Deity and Humanity is for ever veiled from our view. That ground is too sacred for human feet to tread, and those who dare to venture there, invariably lose their way, and either magnify our blessed Lord's Deity at the expense of His Humanity, or, as in the present case, they lay undue stress upon His Humanity at the expense of His Deity. When human lips venture to use the word "ignorance" in connection with our Divine Lord, as our lecturer has done, I take my stand beside the disciples of old and say: "*Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things*" (John xvi, 30), a statement which our Lord, by His very silence endorsed and approved.

Mr. PERCY O. RUOFF said: There is one Scripture which should govern any contribution made to this awful and mysterious subject of the Person of Christ, viz., "No man knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matt. xi, 27). We are only safe in so far as we keep within the bounds of revelation. All else is speculation and dangerous presumption. Colonel Skinner asks (on p. 139) "Can we doubt that His mother taught Him to fold His baby hands in prayer?" Yes, there is good reason for doubting it, as it is said, as I believe with reference to the Son of God in the Messianic Psalm xxii, 9 and 10: "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." These words delineate a babyhood distinct from every other babyhood. There can be no question that the paper reverently sets forth the Deity of Christ. It is another matter whether other statements of the paper can logically be fitted in with what the lecturer avers.

Lieut.-Col. F. A. MOLONY said: I agree with almost every word of Colonel Skinner's paper, and consider its appearance most timely, because present-day preaching seems to ignore the very important truths which the lecture establishes. If Colonel Skinner

had had the time, he might have gone on from the talk on the Emmaus Road to show how St. Paul and other Apostles frequently used this argument from the predictions of the Old Testament. Yet I have attended a course of lectures on the Prophets, and scarcely heard these Messianic predictions alluded to. When a pious and learned D.D. was asked why these matters are neglected in our days, he replied that our grandfathers rested their arguments from prophecy on unsuitable passages, and would quote Isa. vii, 14: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son." Surely a distinctly unsuitable prediction to quote in argument with unbelievers! But the fact that our grandfathers chose unwisely is no reason why we should abandon the argument from Messianic predictions altogether. Blaise Pascal wrote that "the greatest of the arguments for Jesus Christ are the prophecies."

On p. 139, Colonel Skinner mentions three of the early testimonies treasured by Mary that her son Jesus was the long and generally expected Messiah. He might have added three others—namely, Elizabeth, Simeon, and Anna. In fact, Mary must have been quite convinced on the point, and the words she exchanged with her Son Jesus just before the miracle in Cana of Galilee point to the fact that she had not only told Jesus that He was the Messiah, but also pressed Him to take up Messiah's work. Yet He was content to work at the humble trade of a village carpenter till He was thirty, and then restricted Himself to teaching and healing, so that John the Baptist and others considered that His methods were not drastic enough for setting up that Kingdom which the prophets had foretold as universal. In short, He waited His Heavenly Father's time as regarded the most alluring part of the predictions—the universal Kingdom. This surely argues marvellous humility and self-restraint.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Lieut.-Col. L. M. DAVIES, R.A., F.G.S., wrote: I entirely agree with Colonel Skinner. If I understand him aright, the views he holds are precisely those which I have held for years. I believe, with the utmost conviction, in the Deity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and yet I also believe, upon Scripture warrant,

that He emptied himself of knowledge in order to become a true human child in that as in other respects. Isa. vii, 14-17, which prophesies the Virgin Birth of our Lord, also clearly anticipates His coming simplicity as a new-born human infant. Luke ii, 52, speaks of our Lord's gradual growth in wisdom, as a true human child, subject to human limitations.

Yet, from the first, our Lord was unique in being perfectly Holy—from the first He was announced as that HOLY thing which was to be born of Mary (Luke i, 35). Even from His human mother's womb, that Holy One was cast upon the Father (Ps. xxii, 9, 10). Hence He was *perfectly guided from the first*. Note the remarkable prophecy about the Christ which was given by Moses (Deut. xviii, 15-19); to whom our Lord appealed, as we read in St. John's Gospel (John v, 46). And also note the striking fulfilment of this prophecy in the case of our Lord Himself, as John also records. For no one else, either in the Old Testament or in the New, ever claimed that Moses had written of *him*; nor do we ever find, in the case of any other prophet sent by God, that remarkable insistence, which we find reiterated in the case of our Lord, upon the fact that the words which He spoke were *not His own* (human) words, but words put directly into His mouth *by the Father Himself* (John v, 19; viii, 38; xii, 49; xiv, 10, 24; xvii, 6-8, etc.). No one else, before or since our Lord, ever so cast himself upon the Father; no one else ever so spoke, constantly and habitually, the very words of the Father Himself.

Where the Kenosis theory goes wrong (I hold) is not in stressing the laying aside of His infinite and perfect knowledge by the Incarnate Christ, but in also stressing (against Scripture) the idea that the Christ's recorded statements are therefore fallible. It does not follow. Had our Lord only depended upon His own (human) resources, in the days of His humiliation, He would have been as fallible as ourselves; but that is just what He did not do. He, the long-prophesied perfect mouthpiece of the Father, spoke not His own (human) words but the words of His Father, upon whom He had cast Himself as no one else has ever done, before or since. In other words, although the orthodox Christian sometimes makes the mistake of ignoring Scripture testimony to the perfect humanity of the Babe of Bethlehem, he is always right in

regarding the recorded teachings of our Lord as being those of the Godhead Himself, and absolutely infallible.

Mr. Hoste wrote : While in full sympathy with the spirit which characterizes this paper, I fear I am unable to endorse its main thesis, which seems both speculative and misleading. I always understood that prophecy was "a lamp in a dark place" to serve as an encouragement to God's people, and ultimately as a credential of His Messiahship for the Lord Jesus, to Israel and the world ; but the reader of the paper would have us believe that it was rather to discover Jesus to Himself and to teach Him what was expected of Him in His rôle as Messiah. Of this theory I have not been able to discover in the paper any attempt at proof, but only subjective reasonings. It is put forward in the name of reverent investigation, but this may easily degenerate into irreverent speculation, "intruding into those things which we have not seen." "The things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children," but "the secret things" (such as the hidden mental processes of our Divine Saviour, to the Lord our God. The writer seems to fall into the common mistake of those who make a kind of specialty of the Humanity of Christ, of treating His Deity as a quality or title of which, however true, He could be at least temporarily bereft, whereas it was a Divine Person Who entered into manhood—"The Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." Is it not the safer path for us to believe and adore, rather than attempt to explain the complex Person of Christ, Whom "no man knoweth save the Father?"

That certain unique conditions should exist in our Lord, even as an infant, may seem "impossible and repellent" to some minds, but to others not only natural under the supernatural conditions, but consistent with such passages as Ps. xxii, 9, 10, which could not be true of any other infant. It certainly is noticeable that our Lord as a child is said to have been "filled with wisdom," before "He increased in wisdom." As the late Dr. Handley Moule (in *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, p. 69) truly says, "the increase in wisdom no more implies stages of defective wisdom than the increase of favour with God implies stages of defective favour" (see Luke ii, 40, 52). Colonel Skinner seems no more fortunate

when he undertakes to expound special Scriptures. How he can possibly assert of Abraham's trial, in Gen. xxii, 2, that surely God blessed him "because by his obedient faith . . . *there was laid a tried foundation for the future education of God's own dear Son,*" passes my understanding. As far as I can discover, there is no hint of such a thing either in the chapter itself or in all the references to it in the New Testament. Again, one had always thought that the parting of His garments must have meant one more pang and humiliation to "the Man of Sorrows"; the lecturer assures us it afforded Him "infinite refreshment!" At any rate, our Lord's knowledge of Hebrew would have saved Him from confusing the once found word *râtzâ'*, translated "bore" in Exod. xxi, 6, with the quite distinct word *kârâh* (opened or pierced) of Ps. xl, 6, the opening or digging of the ears is explained in Heb. x as a figure of speech for preparing Him a body. The word "bore" in the lecturer's version of Ps. xl, 6, puzzles. Space permits no more. I will only ask in closing whether it would not be safer to abstain from defining the powers of Him Who remembered a past eternity, "knew all things" in the present, and read the future like a book? (John xvii, 5; xvi, 30; Matt. xxv, 31-46).

Rev. J. J. B. COLES wrote: A very interesting paper dealing with a transcendent subject. Personality is a central point in Philosophy and in Holy Scripture. The human and Divine in the Person of the Son of God is a subject which is *inscrutable*. The highest Archangel would not attempt to fathom the mystery, not even with veiled face and veiled feet. The want of reverence in the writings of the *Lux Mundi* school is sad indeed, and no member of the Modernist school of thought is altogether free from blame in this matter. On p. 142 of the lecture we read, "Of the Lord Jesus' early manhood we are told nothing." Quite so, and the silence of Holy Scripture is golden; the Holy Spirit did not lead St. Luke to write in the way the author of this paper has written.

Mr. A. G. SECRETT wrote: Colonel Skinner accepts the implication of our Lord's own words, "As My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." The Eternal Son of God, enthroned in glory with the Father, before the Incarnation, could not be

taught; for He was omniscient. But His own statement that, in His earthly ministry, He was dependent upon the Father's teaching seems to confirm Colonel Skinner's conviction that "Jesus did not bring with Him, as a new-born babe, the knowledge and understanding He had with the Father in glory." Further confirmation is afforded by the statement in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that our High Priest "was in all points tempted like as we are," with one only qualification, "yet without sin." Could this be true if He had stood before the tempter armed with omniscience? The single qualification is significant. "Yet without sin." It was over a sinless man that the serpent had prevailed in Eden. Therefore sinlessness could not invalidate, as omniscience would have invalidated, the right of the Second Man to represent humanity.

In eternity past the Son of God had declared a war of extermination against evil. This earth is the strategic centre of the awful conflict. The Captain of our Salvation knew the dreadful price to be paid for victory. He must meet and overcome as a Man the prince of darkness. Suspending for a time His divine prerogatives of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, He must rely only upon the mighty weapon forged by His own hand for the use of man when confronted with spiritual wickedness. That weapon is the Word of God. Thus, when the tempter would try to entice Him into a debate on the question of His divine Sonship, the Son of God declined battle on that issue, and reminded the enemy that he was dealing now with a *Man*. "It is written," He said, "*Man* shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

Colonel Skinner has earned the gratitude of many by tracing the way in which the inerrancy of every thought and utterance of God's Perfect Man was ensured, in every stage of His progress from the manger to the Cross. Through all His experiences as the Man of Sorrows, He was still Very God of Very God; and, when the days of humiliation were ended, He reassumed in His own right the divine attributes which He had laid aside for a season for our sakes, and was received again into the glory, scarred with wounds inflicted on earth. When the heavens shall open, and the crowned King of the Universe shall come forth to make an end of

sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, He will be seen to bear the name in which we reverence the Holy Scriptures; for "His name is called THE WORD OF GOD."

Mr. W. R. ROWLATT-JONES wrote: We are indeed favoured with such a thesis as this, and its unrollment is delightful. Still, where it conforms to the traditional view of the extreme poverty of the family at Nazareth, I must withhold my assent. The theory known as Kenosis is the mainstay of Modernist teaching, and for the past twelvemonth I have specially searched Holy Writ to discover any basis for it. Such basis does not appear, but in the course of my study I find to my surprise that our Saviour's acts of "making Himself of no reputation" and of "humbling Himself" appear to be connected with no inward emptying of His Divine glories and of His Divine prescience, but rather with some, otherwise unrecorded, outward stripping of His earthly possessions when He entered upon His ministry at the legal age of thirty. I am assured that the Greek of Phil. ii, 8, bears this interpretation. We have become so accustomed to the universally received teaching that the Holy Family of Nazareth was straitened in its temporal circumstances—a relic of the Dark Ages—that we seldom stop to inquire whether the passages relied upon to support this idea, may not bear another meaning. The well-known verse in Luke ii, 24, coupled with Lev. xii, 8, appears to prove the popular conception up to the hilt; but I would invite members of the Institute to ask themselves this question—"Was there any need for Joseph and Mary to present a typical lamb when in very truth, they were presenting the anti-type Himself, the very lamb of God?" however dimly they were aware of the fact.

I partly base my belief that both Joseph and Mary were in affluent circumstances on that obscure statement that "Joseph was a just man," which I take to mean both careful to observe the Levitical laws and to maintain his own rights under them; these rights included all the privileges of property under the Mosiac law of the Year of Jubilee. The fact that our Saviour's legal parent and his actual one registered their respective genealogies with the priests, whose duties included the safe-guarding of these lists, entitled them to become perpetual hereditary landlords (*see*

Ezek. xxxvi, 11). We see in Ezra ii, 62, that failure to keep these tables entailed both disgrace and poverty.

At this point my Bible searching led me into entirely new views of the social status of our Saviour's disciples, His friends, and especially of His relatives, and such texts as "Is not this the carpenter's Son?" "How hath this Man letters, having never learned?" viz. matriculated. The jibe, "He is beside Himself," and the sarcastic advice, "Physician, heal Thyself," then take on new meanings. In fact our Divine leader was no mere signpost, but when he exhorted inquirers "to sell all that they had, and give to the poor," He indicated a path of self-denial in which He had Himself led the way.

In these circumstances I record my disagreement with our lecturer's statements that the Christ's legal father "taught him a trade" and "sent him to a village school." Every Jew, however aristocratic, lived in dread of being swept into captivity; therefore every Jew must master some useful handicraft or possibly find himself regarded by his captor as a useless mouth to feed. If anyone inquires as to the actual existence of any property that might have come into our Saviour's possession, I would refer him to the hereditary home of Jesse, the habitation of Chimham (*see* Jer. xii, 17) and to the great caravanserai at Bethlehem, which appear all three to be identical. That there was "no room for Joseph and Mary in the inn" is susceptible of a fascinating (probable) explanation as well as of a striking evangelistic appeal. That all this is indeed "holy ground" should be another reason for not rejecting without due thought and further inquiry the suggestion as to the opportunities for studying the Scriptures afforded to the Nazarene by parents of comparatively easy circumstances.

LECTURER'S REPLY.

My paper of 11 pages has produced 17 pages of discussion, and space to make a full reply is not at my disposal; at most I can only deal with a few of the more important points. Some critics are frankly so hostile that it is clear no useful purpose will be served in seeking to persuade them to another view. They have a common denominator, and one must just recognize that "All men cannot

receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." The belief that our Lord brought His knowledge with Him has already been adequately disposed of in the written communication of Colonel Davies and Mr. Secrett. I will therefore examine in detail a few selected criticisms, mainly by way of illustrating how easy it is for the obvious to be overlooked by minds already made up.

On p. 148 (Rev. F. W. Pitt): "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven" (Luke x, 18). Surely this refers, not to the remote past, but to the immediate occasion when the Seventy, having returned in triumph from exercise of their commission, reported to the Master: "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy Name," and Jesus approving, tells them of Satan's consternation and wrath at their unexpected flank attack (*cf.* Rev. xii, 12), but hastens to reassure them with the promise: "Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Jesus, it may be observed, having already had personal encounter with the prince of the power of the air, was, as we might say, up to his methods and movements.

Again, on p. 144 (same speaker): "Mary's words to Him showed that she had not told Him the secret. She apparently thought He did not at that time know who He was." On the contrary, Jesus' reply to her (Luke ii, 49): "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Words of serious reproof, however construed, show beyond question that *it was common knowledge between them* who He was, and what was to be His *métier*. Hitherto Mary and Joseph had known it by revelation, but already the separating truth was being translated into actual, sorrowful experience, and, as verse 50 shows, it was too much for them at the time. They had taught Him all they knew, but, with His marvellous intuition He had far outstripped His teachers (*cf.* Ps. cxix, 99). As well might Mr. Pitt argue from Mary's words, "Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing" that she thought Joseph was His father.

On p. 151 (Mr. W. C. Edwards): "It is suggested that this 'forgotten all' came back like a dream." The word "forgotten" implies faulty memory, and I have nowhere said or suggested such a thing. Rather did God the Son surrender voluntarily to what

was, even for Very God of Very God, an entirely new experience in being born into the world of a human mother, thereafter to learn, through the channels provided, and especially through the Scriptures, in communion with His Father, all that He should know to fulfil the Father's will. That His knowledge, perfect so far as it extended, was in some degree limited, is demonstrated by His own confession, in Mark xii, 32, and the efforts of some to get away from that unwelcome fact are not edifying. On the other hand, are there not, in that marvellous eighth chapter of Proverbs alone, many flash-lights of the glory that He had with the Father before the world was ?

Mr. Pitt's opening words (p. 148) : " If Jesus was God He was always God, both before and after the Incarnation," imply a unity of experience that conflicts with Scripture truth. As a fact beyond question Christ *became* in the Incarnation what He *had not hitherto been*. Moreover, in the days of His flesh, " though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered, and being made perfect (through sufferings, Heb. ii, 10). He became the author of eternal salvation"—that which He could not have become had He not for a season been made a little lower than the angels. " Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham, wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." What He was before the Incarnation may be gathered from Phil. ii, 6 ; that which He afterwards became appears in Phil. ii, 8, 9. Antecedently He was rich ; later He became poor (2 Cor. viii, 9). In these circumstances Mr. Pitt's words would seem to be misleading.

The same may, in measure, be said of many of the remarks of Messrs. Heath, Collett, Edwards and Hoste, who, if they allow—as they assuredly do allow—that the Christ was manifest in the flesh, their remarks would seem to render untenable any coherent belief that, as a fact, the Lord was " made like unto His brethren," or that He could be tempted in any sense, much less " in all points " " like as we are, yet without sin."