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JOURNAL OF  
THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF  
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OR,  
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GENERAL SECRETARY:  
E. J. SEWELL.

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LECTURE SECRETARY:  
E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S.

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## 590TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, ON MONDAY, MAY 7TH, 1917,  
AT 4.30 P.M.

THE REV. H. J. R. MARSTON, M.A., TOOK THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the preceding Meeting were read and confirmed.

The SECRETARY announced the election of Arthur K. Grimdsdale, Esq., as an Associate of the Institute.

The CHAIRMAN said: It now becomes my duty, and is my pleasure, to invite a very dear friend and distinguished thinker to read a paper entitled "The Pre-Requisites of a Christian Philosophy." Dr. Whately is a real and accepted master of this very difficult and rather abstruse subject, and everything that he says deserves, and I have no doubt will receive, the most careful attention.

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### *THE PRE-REQUISITES OF A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.*

By the Rev. A. R. WHATELY, M.A., D.D.

A FEW years ago I had the privilege of reading a paper before the Victoria Institute on "The Demand for a Christian Philosophy." This present paper is, as requested, a sort of sequel to it, and I hope to suggest briefly what seems to me the orientation of mind required from the Christian Philosopher if he is to do real justice to his subject-matter. As it will be necessary to deal chiefly with the *ideas* that point to the importance and possibility of such philosophy, and to indicate how it should proceed, it might perhaps have been as well if the title of this paper had contained the word "Pre-suppositions" instead of "Pre-requisites." But the latter word, on the other hand, includes the whole equipment necessary, and this is not merely intellectual.

The justification of a Christian Philosophy and the exposition of its fundamental axioms are aspects of the same task. Let us begin, therefore, by answering the question, "What is Philosophy?" That answer should justify Philosophy in the best and only true way—by showing what it really is. And, at the same time, we are inevitably led to discuss its connection with Religion.

Philosophy, in the restricted sense in which the term is now applied, is nothing else than Thought carried as far as it will go—Thought seeking for its own basis and its own limits. Those who object to it as merely cloudy speculation that tries to

comprehend the incomprehensible are, in raising this objection, only doing what the philosopher does, namely, making an assertion about the boundaries of human knowledge. The main difference is that the philosopher makes his assertions with reflection, the objector without reflection. If he does reflect he becomes thereby a philosopher, however bad a one, and therefore cannot consistently attack philosophy as such. Philosophy, then, is simply Thought. We all reflect upon our naïve impressions, more or less, and the philosopher simply reflects upon *this* reflection. He thinks about Thought. If he were to announce the discovery that Thought—or Being, which is its object—could not as such be understood by reflecting upon it, he would—like Herbert Spencer—be making an assertion about that which he has declared unknowable.

So much for our first question about Philosophy. Now let us ask: "What is its Procedure?" Certainly, if it understands its quest, and walks with a firm tread, it will not proceed by vague surmise and nebulous hypothesis, but by careful analysis of our fundamental ideas; and the object of this analysis is the *Unification of Thought*. To understand is to bring ideas into relation with one another. To understand a writing in a foreign language is to be able to relate the particular combination of letters before us with the corresponding combinations in our own language, and with the particular objects and principles that they refer to.

Some of us come to find Philosophy a necessity of our being, because, without our asking, it has already begun its analytic work, its disintegration of our naïve assumptions, its scrutiny of our working-hypotheses: and we cannot allow it to stop halfway; we cannot allow it to leave us stranded on scepticism, or to show us mere distant visions of the higher level without guiding us up the path, both steep and winding, that leads there. I call it the higher level, for such it is for all who need to seek it. Simple religious faith, with or without Philosophy, is the highest level upon which our feet can rest; and reflection upon first principles has its dangers and weaknesses as well as its strength and resources. But at least it must be admitted that chaos and scepticism at the very root of our thoughts cannot be safely cured by an attempted return to the old naïveté: we must work through to the other side.

So this unification of which I have spoken is simply the re-ordering of our thoughts when the discrepancies and incoherences they contain become no longer latent and unconscious, but really threaten our faith in the ground of things. Perhaps

it is better to speak of a "deeper" rather than a "higher" level. The quest of this deeper intellectual foundation may not always be the result of pressure from within. Many men, I believe, who have done good work in Philosophy have—without this pressure—courted the disorganization for the sake of ultimate intellectual gain. The Moral Science Tripos has no doubt made, as well as attracted, philosophers. Let it not be assumed that this sense of intellectual *necessity*, however valuable, is a wholly indispensable qualification. But, looking at the matter broadly, I am sure that Philosophy rests on, and responds to, a radical need of cultured human society, and that without it, in any form, our principles would become dead dogmas and our watchwords shibboleths.

Some minds require to think closely and connectedly and to get back to first principles. The mental worlds of other people may hang together without that, but not theirs. It is no use telling them to settle their doubts by "common sense." That only means bluff. Common sense was given to us for our dealings in the common things of life, and not to intrude upon Philosophy any more than upon Geology or Physics.

Now let us ask our third question: "What is the Material of Philosophy and the nature of its task?" What is that range of ideas that it must order and unify? Clearly, the broadest and most comprehensive, such as Life, Spirit, Personality, Cause, the Universe, Matter, Necessity, Freedom, and so forth. Such ideas are full of difficulties and apparent contradictions when we *begin* to scrutinize them: for instance, there is the well-known antithesis of Freedom and Law; there are the apparently rival claims of Reason and Intuition, and of Soul and Body. And there are countless more, when we dig deeper.

All these terms clearly have a close bearing upon Religion. And here we can see how Philosophy, so far from properly resting on abstractions, has before it the task of abolishing them *as* abstractions: the task of uniting them together in their true unity. Theistic Philosophy has to maintain that mechanism without Will behind it is a meaningless abstraction: that so is Spirit or Will without Personality, as against various forms of quasi-Theism. Berkeley attacked the Materialists by seeking to prove that Matter is an empty fiction, and that Spirit is the sole reality. He partly failed, because he went too far, but he has shown the fallacy of confusing Matter with Material. If, instead of denying the reality of Matter, and regarding sensations *per se* as the stuff of material objects, he had set out to prove that Matter is but an abstract idea, real only as an element in our analysis of the

concrete visible world, he would have rendered a greater service. But the main point is that, as he clearly saw, Religion does not rest upon an abstract philosophy, but upon one that exposes the emptiness of abstract ideas except in their proper subordination to those larger and higher ideas that involve them.

Philosophy, then, has to free us from abstractions, not to bind us to them. It has to seek the concrete. Even the philosophy of Hegel was devoted to that search, however unsuccessfully pursued. But do we need to be freed from abstractions? Does not the ordinary unsophisticated mind, whatever its failings, live and move in a solid world and pay unreserved homage to hard fact? Now if all minds were unsophisticated: if we all lived by plain common sense on the one hand and simple faith on the other, there might be no more to be said. But, as we have already seen, Philosophy often enters at the back-door uninvited, and when it has entered, we can never be the same as before. We try our old catch-words, we work our working-hypotheses for all they are worth, and we find that the old instruments break and bend against the new material. So especially when questions arise about the truth of our religious beliefs. Let us take one prominent example.

Paley, like many others, set out to prove that the world exhibits many marks of design, and must therefore have an intelligent Creator. This was a simple—hardly even philosophical—argument, and it has served—and in some form will no doubt continue to serve—an important purpose as against various forms of unbelief. But the controversy was bound to become more complex. The Nineteenth Century saw the rise of Evolutionism, which entered the human mind in Europe just as philosophical ideas enter individual minds—by the back-door. By this I mean that we are greatly mistaken when we speak of Evolution as a mere theory, something that as it were presented itself definitely to thinking men of the century for acceptance or rejection. It was a deep-lying tendency of thought which made itself felt when the time was ripe. The theory of Darwin was undoubtedly based on definite data, and very wide data indeed, but even as a scientific proposition its discovery was due, surely not by chance, to two independent investigators at the same time. And it was preceded by the comprehensive philosophical Evolutionism of Hegel.

Behind all the theories and investigations there was the great movement of the human mind towards *continuity*. As we become more conscious of the laws of our own minds, and the dependence of our ideas upon one another, we are the more compelled to demand an ordered universe, a universe which, however

little we know of it, is at least bound together by certain great principles recognizable even by our finite minds.

Indeed, the Philosophy of the Eighteenth Century had gone further than to proclaim the close reciprocity of Thought and Being. Passing over Berkeley and Hume, let us note how Kant explicitly maintained that the object must conform to the subject, and also that the subject, the thinking mind, draws the multiplicity of objects into its own unity, the unity of self-consciousness.

If this is a little too obscure and technical for the present occasion, it will suffice to glance at the main point upon which, as I think, it throws light. The doctrine of Evolution—taking this term in a wide sense—entered by way of Philosophy, not only by way of scientific investigation. It had become a necessity of thought. It satisfied in part that demand for the unity of the universe as known to us, a unity answering to that unity of our own self-consciousness which, as Kant rightly taught, is behind all our mental processes.

Well, this new doctrine had an inevitable effect upon the old Teleological Argument, commonly known as the Argument from Design. I need not pause to explain how it was criticized by Kant himself, for we are dealing with a broad tendency of thought rather than with individual thinkers. Clearly it was no longer possible to rest upon the *prima facie* evidence of design, that is to say, the coincidence between the effects in Nature and the effects visibly following from the efforts of human intelligence. The weakness of Huxley's reply to Paley's celebrated argument about the watch may even tend to blind us to the greatness of the mental revolution which divided these two writers. But indeed the very fact that the Evolutionists had their own way of accounting for design made the Paleyan position, for the time being at least, no longer so much a defence as a point to be defended. It might be successfully defended, but it had to be defended. Plenty of apparent designs are the result of chance, and, given an indefinite material of variations, an indefinite time, and the operation of a principle to eliminate the irrelevant and obstructive elements, what need to postulate a directing Will? It is true (let me remark parenthetically) that not Chance, but Necessity, or Law, is the general watchword of the anti-teleologists. But I believe it can be shown that, as against intelligent free-will, blind Necessity and blind Chance are not contradictories, but the same principle viewed from different sides.

However, let us return to Philosophy. Let us note how much

more satisfying Evolutionism appears, than the old Paleyan, or Thomasian, position. The latter bids us regard the Almighty as the supreme Mechanic. So far, quite allowably; for if skillful mechanism is an element in perfection, and if all perfections are summed up in God, then we must count it among His attributes. But if we rest in such a conception we place ourselves at a great disadvantage in face of Modern Thought—the Modern Thought, I mean, not only that is around us, but that stirs, whether we will or no, in our own breasts. A mechanic is alien from his material: he is not, except in a very relative sense, a creator. We have to pass beyond mechanism to that view of a God in Whom His universe lives and moves and has its being, the Creator Whose power dwells in the deepest roots of the being of His creatures—that modern view of God which so transcends mechanism that it almost seems to contradict it.

Most assuredly this revised Teleology, as I have just stated it, is itself one-sided. But it is at least philosophical, and it makes an appeal to the sense of continuity, the demand for an organically unified world of Thought and Being, from which we shall never escape.

We *must*, therefore, restate our doctrine of the Being and Attributes of God, so as to settle its relations with Modern Thought. A mere polemic against Modernism as such would at least be a confession that the old defences, if not the old expositions, are not sufficient. But a mere polemic is futile. It places us between the horns of a dilemma. If our polemic is unsympathetic, it cannot possibly show that Modernism does not meet deep-lying needs of our nature and answer to a really progressive movement of human mind—cannot show this because we do not try to penetrate into its true inwardness and appreciate its ideals. On the other hand, if sympathetic, it becomes in spirit modern itself—that is to say, liberal—and aims to adjust the old and the new together. But then it is practically transformed from mere polemic. In adjusting the old to the new, intelligently and adequately, it cannot but also adjust the new to the old. This need not mean mere compromise. True Evangelical Liberalism seeks, under the wholesome pressure of new ideas, not to tamper with the definiteness of its faith in a personal God and an historic revelation, but to find and intensify the focus of its faith. If it discards some old formulas, that is not because the enemy has captured outposts, but because an invigorated vitality has of itself shed the encumbrances.

We must, then, in this sense, restate our doctrine of God:

not confessionally, I mean, but intellectually. From what has been said it should now appear that the Argument from Design, or (to give it its positive character) the Doctrine of Design, needs such restatement.

For consider how the whole intellectual situation is transformed, even if we try to meet unbelieving Evolutionism with a direct attack. I do not refer to controversy that is primarily scientific. This must be unsatisfying, for, as I have tried to show, Evolutionism is more than a scientific theory.\* But if we tackle it, as we ought to do, on the basis of its major premiss—its application—we shall find that we are plunged into the heart of Philosophy—that we are led into regions where, having gone so far, we cannot hold back without an arbitrary arrest of thought.

This is not to say that we have not a strong and clear position. Let us take stock of it as briefly as possible. We can reply that, whatever Science has or has not proved, it cannot in any case account, either for the origin of variations at large, or for the broad fact of a mutually adaptive universe. We can thus take our stand upon order, as an essential aspect of the universe: we can maintain that rationality is implied in a state of things that has issued in the production of rational beings, and that responds to their interpretative efforts. We can assert that “mechanism,” the very term that is used against Teleology, implies a mind behind it and a purpose in front. But our reply is different from that which prevailed against the old materialists. The old Design Argument was essentially cumulative. It dealt with the contrivances of Nature as separate events. Evolutionism reduced them all to one principle: in the hands of the materialist it was aimed at the major rather than the minor premiss of the Design argument. Apparent designs might be piled mountains high upon one another by the teleologist. It made no difference: the facts belonged to both theories alike; they were indeed all one great fact. The evolutionist could go even further than the old-fashioned theist, on the theist’s own principles: he could demand order and coherence, so bridging all possible interstices that the separate instances

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\* “That the different species were bred one from the other is not merely a deduction based on a few facts, for facts can be either disputed or interpreted differently, but a conception which imposes itself on our mind as the only acceptable one, as soon as we reject the doctrine of a supernatural act of creation.” Delage and Goldsmith, *The Theories of Evolution*, p. 8.

became separate no longer, and the unity of the Divine action—for those who held it to be Divine—was vindicated beyond the dreams of the apologist.

But the modern theist's assertion of the rationality of Nature is essentially philosophical, and therefore links up, directly or indirectly, with the whole range of Philosophy. The simple empiricism of Paley's argument is left behind—I do not say wholly and forever, but certainly to be resumed only under new conditions and in a larger context of thought. The question of the one ordered universe, and whether or no we are obliged to think of it as rational at the core, and what this further implies as to personality, purpose, love, redemption, and revelation—all this takes us into a different region of thought.

When the Neo-Darwinian emphasizes the elimination of the unfit and the Neo-Lamarckian the direct effect of the environment upon the organism, it is obvious that, however we *can* meet them, we *cannot* meet them by any facile argument—any that has not indefinite implications in many directions. Even if the reply is scientific, this must surely be so. But I have tried to suggest that a merely scientific reply, even if possible, is unsatisfactory. The mind that *must* come to an understanding, if not *of*, at least *with*, first principles, will always ask itself if anti-theistic Evolutionism not merely happens to be untrue, but is unthinkable.

When the new theistic philosopher takes the place of the old apologist, he abandons the empirical argument from coincidence, expressed or implied by the other, I mean the coincidence between the products of Nature and the products of human art. Rather he sees in both the different stages of one great creative principle, which, as it produces man, so produces through man.

Certainly all depends upon the form Evolutionism takes. But that is most certainly not a mere question for science. Obviously the form harmonious with Christian Theism is that called Epigenesis, or the creation of the new on the basis of the old. That is not Evolution according to the etymology of the word, but it is Evolution in a sense that answers to that craving for the unification of thought to which I have already referred. Now it should certainly be clear that Epigenesis cannot be refuted by science. We may accept the Transformist doctrine of the origin of species; yet new species are none the less new. To assert the opposite—to affirm that Evolution is literally the unfolding of the previously existent—is not science but a particularly transcendental philosophy. This is the doctrine which Bergson describes by the formula "Tout est

donné." And, as he justly points out, this formula applies even to the materialists, for, to them—virtually, if not admittedly—the true realities are mass and energy, not their subsequent combinations as such. But that an electron should be more real than a horse is surely a *philosophical* paradox, not a scientific. To the creationist this is not so; and that, not because he has found evidence of gaps in the geological evidences of Evolution—though he may find them—but because his universe has Mind behind it and a goal in front, and, in between, the presence of a Divine Love that is interested in all its creatures.

Metaphysics, in short, lies behind Evolution as a theory of origins—whether the scientific sceptic likes it or not. And it cannot therefore be met without Metaphysics,—whether the apologist likes it or not. Again, Metaphysics—or Philosophy—cannot possibly be only negative and defensive. All its denials are also affirmations, and affirmations that involve us in further affirmations indefinitely.

This is one side of what I have to say respecting the pre-requisites of a Christian Philosophy. Taken alone, it would be disheartening and also misleading. But it is not to be taken alone; and I hope, when we have briefly reviewed the ground we have reached, to conclude with a few words on the complementary truth.

Heraclitus and Parmenides stood for the two opposite sides of a truth which Plato and subsequent philosophers have endeavoured to discover in its completeness. The one said "All is flux"; the other, "All is one eternal and stable Reality." We have so far followed, as it were, the Heraclitean path. The old familiar saying, "Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis," here claims our attention, and claims it particularly in the second clause, which we must not, as so often, pass lightly over. *We* change in and with the times. We might try our best to be conservative—and there is a right way of so doing—but a mere resistance to new ideas because they cannot at once be fitted into old formulas—this means intellectual, and perhaps even spiritual, torpor. And in the long run the human mind does and will move—conservatives and progressives alike. In other words—to repeat what I have said more than once before—Philosophy enters at the back-door. Our modes of thinking change while we think: old ideas, once welded into the continuity of our thought, are left high and dry: a new sensitiveness to aspects of truth once unimpressive, develops unsuspected within us. If reflexion is but half-awakened, it

must awaken fully. We must meet the contemporary mind in the spirit that seeks to penetrate to its inwardness. We cannot merely attack Modernism, for to handle it effectually we must understand it, and to understand it is to be modern.

One supreme pre-requisite, therefore, of the Christian philosopher is that his mind should go forth to meet the mind of his age: that he should seek not only to keep up with it but even to help its advance: that he should take an interest in many of its problems, even apart from their bearings on religion: that in religion itself he should so hold on to the old that he need fear no flood of light from the new.

This last remark brings us to the other side of the matter: we pass from Heraclitus to Parmenides. So far our main point has been almost a commonplace, though I have tried to set it in a new light and to illustrate the law of mental progress by a definite example. But the complementary proposition provokes more subtle questions, because we are now faced with the need of adjusting it to the former. If we pursued this topic, it would of course take us over a wide field. All balanced religious thinkers admit, in some form or another, that there is a principle of stability to be set against the principle of flux. Even the strange theory that religion is concerned only with feeling implies that there are certain steady currents of feeling underlying the changes, and expressive of what is highest and most lasting in man. Others again—the rationalists in the strict sense—for whom religion is essentially based on philosophical ideas, would admit, or even press, the authority of certain supreme axioms of thought as eternal truths.

But we need more than all this. If religion is, as the Christian holds, not mere theory, or feeling, or moral rules, but the citizenship of the Heavenly City—a sphere of life and thought, a point of vantage from which the world can be surveyed with all its aims, its ideas, its meaning, in the light of God—if so, then the Christian must think as such. He must hold, with a grip that is not merely intellectual, but moral, spiritual, vital in the deepest biological sense, those great realities for which he lives. He must *know* those realities, and to know means not merely to feel but, in some measure, to understand.

But to understand means to bring into relation with our ideas in general. How can this be done if our creed is not to run the risk of being caught—as it is with so many—in the flux, and drifting helpless down stream, perhaps even to be wrecked in the cataract? Now to answer his question, let us begin with an affirmation which to me, I confess, is axiomatic. Religious

knowledge is, at the root, experiential. Even the religious man may not always recognize this : for even our moments of direct contact with reality so often elude us when we attempt introspection ; but he must come to recognize it if he is to be a sound Christian philosopher. The truth that he must accept is that to know about God we must know God.

But this is not, of course, a complete answer to the question. How shall we bridge the gap between direct knowledge—acquaintance—and theoretical, or doctrinal, knowledge ? How can we express the inwardness of our communion with God in human language, even to ourselves, and, if we cannot, how can we put it into the form of ideas and bring these ideas into connexion with our ideas in general ?

We shall get near the answer to this question if we consider the relation of our thoughts to our feelings. Not that I admit that intuition is mere feeling, but we can call it so for the present. Now let us apply this statement of the problem directly to religion. What is the relation of our theology to our worship, of our doctrines about God to our sense of His reality, presence, and dealings with us ? Surely the one feeds the other. Surely the worship of a Christian differs as such from that of a Pantheist. Surely the shocks our theology receive, however wholesome in the end, are at the time harmful to our devotions ; and does not fresh light upon Divine truth make more vivid the Divine presence ?

Then conversely. We shall probably agree that direct devotions stimulate devout thought. But I think that there is more than stimulation : that the personal revelation of God is not merely a glow of light before the eyes of the soul, but an illumination that penetrates within. It may not directly take the form of expressible thought, but it works as it were at the back of our thoughts ; feeds and directs them, enlarges their scope, deepens their insight. It is not easy to express, in a form that will escape criticism, how our gains in worship become intellectual gains, but the main point should not be obscure. It is simply this : that however hard it may be to utilize God's self-revelation to our souls in the form of explicit teaching, or even clear thought, there *is* a passage to and fro between worship on the one hand and theology on the other. This does not, of course, make our theology infallible, but it tends towards truth—the truth that *we* need individuality for ourselves and for our work.

And this consideration both justifies doctrine and helps us to see how it may be kept living and fresh. If it be really true—and

central truth—it must have unfathomable depths. The spiritual life that vitalizes it also needs it. Without it communion with God would dissolve into cosmic ecstasies or sentimental apostrophes of the Infinite. If a specific Atonement is a real fact, we must know the fact as a fact before we can enjoy it as an experience. If Christ indeed is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, we must know the position He holds in relation to man and to the Father.

This may be stated baldly, because we are assuming the essential truths of the Christian religion. And when we do accept it, there need be no timid obscurantism. God's truth is too vigorous, too vital, too rich in resources, to fear the fullest daylight and the strongest pressure. Only if nursed in the darkness does it shrivel and harden.

And, on the other hand, we do no true homage to its intellectual vitality if we cheapen or minimize its specific message: if we reduce it to generalities, however lofty: if we treat its doctrines as mere provisional accommodations to the mental attitude of cultured men at the moment.

If, then, the first great requisite for the effective pursuit of Christian Philosophy is a real appreciation of the movement of the human mind, the second—not second in importance—is the vital adherence to a specific and social confession of belief. Social, both because thought is social and because the Christian religion is social. A private creed is not only contrary to that Church fellowship without which there could be no Gospel of redeemed manhood, but also undervalues the relation between thought and intercourse. Definite thought, before we even intend to express it to others, shapes itself on the lines of common language. Expression, even to ourselves, is only, as it were, suppressed communication. Our very minds, in their inner workings, are not merely private, but elements in the social organism.

This will never, in its application to Christian truth, carry conviction, so long as the Creeds are regarded as mere petrified opinion. But let us be sure there can be no Gospel—in the true sense of that grossly abused word—without a creed. For a Gospel is the announcement of an historical occurrence, and as that occurrence is *ex hypothesi* a Divine and super historical, as well as an historical, event, then we must know its meaning in terms of theology.

Here we see the need of Biblical Study. There is no time, and on this occasion no need, to dwell on this point; but I do not wish to pass it over without allusion, lest it should seem to

be ignored. But of course the study of the Biblical revelation means not only careful reading, criticism, comparison of texts, but reflexion upon the substance of the message in itself. And the result of this reflexion, to my mind, helps us to see how Biblical Study and Philosophy can go hand in hand. For the great feature of the Bible, which gives it its impress of inspiration, is the convergence of different minds and different lines of teaching to the one centre.

Christian doctrine is, I think, essentially one rather than many, and it is just this organic unity which makes it a fruitful subject of philosophical understanding no less than of exegetical study. That is why, in the course of my remarks, I have passed freely between Theism pure and simple and the Christian Faith as a whole. The position maintained by Thomas Aquinas, and accepted officially—or quasi-officially—by the Roman Catholic Church, is that whereas distinctive Christian truth is a matter of special Divine revelation, the doctrine of God is accessible to the natural mind. There is no doubt an element of truth in this, but only an element. We cannot possibly draw this sharp line of demarcation between the doctrine of God and the doctrine of Christ. Theism as such is indefinitely enriched by Christianity. The new revelation of the Father which Christ brought extends into Philosophy itself—such is my conviction. The fact of the Incarnation is not an appendage to Philosophy. When once its truth is accepted, Theism without it is an unfinished structure, a broken pillar, an arrested process of thought. And as to all the main doctrines of the Christian creed, I am prepared to affirm that not one could be excluded without, at the last analysis, destroying the whole structure.

This is the unity of truth that Philosophy itself demands,—the unity of Christian belief within itself, of Christianity with Theism, of Theism with the broad principles of Thought in general. And by unity is here meant more than harmony, more than mutual complement: nothing less than organic wholeness and interpenetration. I cannot think that a really satisfactory Christian Philosophy can arise without at least the recognition of this as the ideal.

Yet we must not blink the fact that we are up against a most difficult question, made indeed more acute, on the face of it, by the claims here made for Christian Philosophy. What is the relation of general truth to historic truth? Is not the coming of Christ, whatever else it may be, an empirical occurrence, involved in an historical context, committed to certain conclusions

—however sure *as* historical conclusions—which depend on inductive study? Does that not dislocate this neat structure of unified truth, resting ultimately on direct experience, for which I have pleaded?

If there were the necessary time at our disposal I should be prepared to deal somewhat fully with this question. There are certain things to be said about it which, I think, remove the difficulty so far as it can be called an objection. And we need to face it, because it is used, and logically so, not only against Christian Philosophy but against Christianity. It is really one form of the fallacious assumption, which I have criticized before this Society on a previous occasion, that the eternal cannot enter time-conditions.

Here I would simply say that, in the form in which I have brought it forward to-day, it is, to my mind, a question which we must each settle for ourselves. The historical and critical liabilities of the Gospel are of much wider range in the opinion of some than in that of others: we dispute about “the seat of authority in religion.” But however this may be, the man who has personal experience of access to God through Christ has actual empirical evidence of the truth of his faith which he can set against empirical difficulties raised by his studies. He is so far not hit by the objection, so often pressed, that inductive research is not to be prejudiced by mere *a priori* considerations. The faith of the devout Christian does not rest upon a mere *a priori* but upon experience. Evidence for evidence.

And when we have added that, if he is a thinker also, his experience is the germ of a new view of self and life and the universe, we have gone far to reconcile the elements of empiricism with those of *a priori* in the Christian creed.

In conclusion, one thing stands out when we view the subject as I have viewed it throughout this paper. Christian Philosophy, though it may be Metaphysics, is not speculation. It is the effort of certain minds to adjust themselves to the larger reality that looms around them, to save the very coherence of thought, to give to their faith the mastery of a mass of material, otherwise alien, instead of leaving it to be overwhelmed. “This is the victory that overcometh the world”—the world of rival thought as well as the world of rival pleasures and ambitions—“even our faith.” Yet, if our Philosophy is truly Christian, it does not claim the exclusive privilege of a true ground of assurance. For it appeals to the same ultimate criterion as the faith of the simplest believer, the response of God Himself to the soul that diligently seeks Him.

## DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN: The Lecture to which we have listened, with profound attention and indisputable profit, is now open for discussion. I should prefer to reserve my remarks for a later stage, because I do not wish to abridge the discussion. The first three speakers may be allowed six minutes each, and subsequent speakers five minutes each.

Mr. M. L. ROUSE, B.A., B.L.: I am heartily in agreement with the last part—and in a measure with the whole—of the paper, which I think admirable; but I do not see that we are bound to accept Evolution in order to perceive an ordered creation. I would say that Evolutionism is not necessary in order to prove that all created things live and move and have their being in God. Surely Reproduction is enough for that. If Paley found the watch, or a savage finds the watch, he says: “If this has been made by some wonderful being, with all its interlocking checks and balances, and so on, how much more wonderful must be the God who created that being!” Yes, but God has not only created a tree, but put in the tree a seed, which contains within itself another, and that another, for ten thousand generations. How would it then be with the watch if within it was another, and within that another, and so on? Here we see the living and moving of God in Creation, namely, in the reproducing, the putting of reproductive life into that first tree.

Again I would say—to take the old argument—you have one animal made for another, and that one for another, and so on. The tarantula kills the humming-bird, a kind of lizard kills and eats the tarantula, a larger bird kills and eats the lizard, and so on. These creatures were meant to be preyed upon by one another. I do not hold with the prevalent idea—which I do not believe prevails much among scientific people—that when death entered the world to Adam there was not previously death, or a devouring of one animal by another. We distinctly read in the Psalms that “the young lions seek their meat from God,” and therefore that must have been the case from the beginning.

If ordinary creatures were allowed to multiply freely, they would fill the earth to the exclusion of others. It has been found

by calculation that two pheasants would, by their extraordinary multiplication, fill the earth in ten years; therefore it is an absolute necessity that one animal, say a fox, should devour the pheasant, and a larger animal, in turn, should kill the fox. Again take another view. Supposing the animals did not multiply to such a degree, yet if they die—and if they did not, the earth would again be over-full—then the earth would be filled with their carcasses, which would be exceedingly unwholesome for all other creatures. Therefore, there is in that again an adaptation of the creature to the universe. The contention that Evolutionism has discovered the mutual adaptation of the universe, is not necessarily true.

COLONEL ALVES: In my judgment, the two great pre-requisites of Philosophy are: Knowledge of all the relevant facts, and (if in possession of insufficient or wrong knowledge) a readiness to learn all truth and to renounce all error.

There are two ways of obtaining knowledge, Observation and Revelation. In worldly matters, whilst we should observe all that we can, we are largely dependent on revelation, which is the recorded result of the observations of others.

The same holds good in spiritual matters. The Apostle Paul teaches us that much may be learned of God through Nature, as does also the 19th Psalm. Nature is sufficient to reveal to us that “the wages of sin is [*i.e.*, sin leads to] death”; but Nature cannot tell us that “the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” For that, revelation is necessary; and such revelation we possess in those writings which we call the Bible.

We are dealing with pre-requisites. We cannot force men to receive truth; but we can make them responsible for willing ignorance. A most important pre-requisite is, to my mind, a knowledge of what man is, and what he is not. We can see that, like the lower animate creation, man is male and female, with animal instincts, affections, and passions. But between him and them, the lowest of him, and the highest of them, there is a great gulf fixed. Is this gulf spiritual and moral? or is it bodily and mental? I maintain that it is the latter, not the former.

In Genesis i, 20, 21, 24, 30, and ii, 19, we are told that the lower conscious beings are “living souls” [so in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin] as well as man in Genesis ii, 7. According to Genesis vii, 21, 22, man has, by nature, the same kind of energizing spirit as

have fowl, cattle, beast, and creeping thing. Again, Genesis i, 27 and v, 1, 2, clearly mark out the male as the direct image of God ; and the Apostle Paul teaches the same thing (*see* I Cor. xi, 3 ff.). The same lesson is taught in Genesis iii, man's weakness and disobedience shewing that the likeness to God was not spiritual and moral. That man is a fallen being, Nature tells us ; and Nature tells us also that no degraded race is ever raised without help from outside. St. Paul, moreover, tells us that this depraved inward nature cannot be changed ; and he, and the doctrine of the immaculate conception of our Lord, alike teach us that our depravity comes from our fathers, not from our mothers. Nature tells us, moreover, also that the body can be destroyed.

As regards humanity, I submit that the Christian Philosophy—in action—consists in the implanting of a new Divine, immortal, and incorruptible spirit of life, affecting his character here, but not entirely replacing the old tainted animal spirit until death, when the latter is destroyed for ever, and the new spirit in fullness, of which an earnest only is given here, joins the body in resurrection and makes it perfect and glorious through eternity.

I should like to move a vote of thanks to the reader of this paper which I did not discuss in detail, because I thought, the most important thing was a sound basis of Philosophy.

Dr. SCHOFIELD : On page 230 of the paper there is a remark that to know about God we must know God. We must accept the truth ; and to know about God is to know God. This is not true in every sphere of knowledge ; that is to say, to use the word “know” in the Bible sense, in which it is familiar to us. We may know a great deal about any subject or person without being personally acquainted with it or him. With regard to page 231, it seems to me that this personal knowledge of God is one which cannot very well be put into words—that it lies at the back of all our thoughts and influences, the whole character and attitude of our minds. This is, I think, profoundly true, and it is known to be true by everyone who has a personal knowledge of God.

In page 233 the position of Thomas Aquinas seems to be put quite rightly ; and I would suggest that, after all, there is a sharp demarcation between Theism and Christianity, although Theism does not necessarily lead to Christianity. It does not foreshadow the atoning death and resurrection of Christ. Theism in the light of Christianity

means an unfinished product, but I do not think the word is foreign to those who accept a First Cause. God as Creator is a necessity of scientific thought ; but Christianity is a Divine revelation, and must be revealed to the soul by the Spirit of God.

Rev. A. GRAHAM-BARTON: The question arises, "Can you have a Christian Philosophy?" I question very much, when you have to deal with the authorities of the Christian faith, upon which we very much depend, if you can in any way resort to system or even Creed. I think Philosophy stands out separately from some of the Christian truths, and faith or love are surely over and above the ken of any systematization. They are unthinkable, and to talk of a Philosophy of Christianity is to speak of something which must leave out many great central truths which are properly Christian. With regard to Philosophy, then, what is it but a searching after truth, the sense of reality which you cannot reach simply through Philosophy?

Prof. LANGHORNE ORCHARD, M.A., B.Sc.: May I be allowed to second the vote of thanks which has been moved to Dr. Whately for his exceptionally suggestive paper? The subject is, to my mind, one of the most fascinating that can engage human thought. To myself I confess there is no difficulty in accepting the term "Christian Philosophy." By it I should understand a philosophy which is coloured and permeated by Christianity. I am afraid I cannot quite concur in the definition of Philosophy on page 222. Philosophy is simply thought; the philosopher thinks about thought. But on the next page, page 223, Geology and Physics are mentioned as distinguished from Philosophy, which is considered as a science; but surely a man of science has thought, and I should myself prefer to look upon Philosophy as the study of first origins and first principles and causes. Science has to do with those things which are secondary: it investigates the flow and cause of various kinds of thought and of Divine attributes, whereas Philosophy concerns itself rather with the great ocean into which all the rivers of science flow, and which Philosophy itself explains.

With regard to Paley's argument, I confess that the mere fact that Evolution reduces all the separate cases of design in Nature to one principle does not at all seem to invalidate Paley's argument, but rather to strengthen it. The argument of Paley was directed

simply to shewing that the world of Nature had an intelligent Creator, and the argument of Theistic Evolution would rather tend to strengthen that. What does the Evolutionist mean by the principle of the elimination of the unfit? How is it that Nature knows what is unfit and can eliminate it? How is it that Nature is so constituted that it can discriminate between the fit and the unfit? Surely there is a purpose in the elimination of the unfit. I am not an Evolutionist, but Theistic Evolutionism is rather on the side of Paley's argument than against it.

Most cordially do I concur with what the able author says on pages 232 and 233. The first great requisite for the effective pursuit of Christian Philosophy is a real appreciation of the movement of the human mind. He does not say a real agreement with the human mind, and I do not infer that he himself is an Evolutionist, but an appreciator. You must be able to appreciate the thought of the day. That is very important indeed, so as to be quite fair to it in your judgment. The second great requisite, as he well says, is the Creed. It is most important in the pursuit of the investigation of new truths that we should hold fast to the old ones, and not kick away the old rungs of the ladder up which we are climbing until we have proved the new ones to be strong.

MR. E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S., said that there was one point that had come up to which he would like to refer, viz. the meaning of the term "Evolution." The word covered, in common use, a great number of different ideas, and it was well that they should be kept distinct. We had a paper some time ago by Professor Fowler on "Stellar Evolution," in which it was clear that "Evolution" meant to him and to other astronomers simply the changes in condition and spectrum of a star, consequent upon its decline of temperature. These were parallel to the changes seen in a poker that had been made white hot and then left to cool. The word "Evolution" was used in quite a different sense in speaking of the evolution of a machine—say a bicycle. A hundred years ago it was the fashion for young men to ride upon two wheels with a bar between them—a dandy horse; and little by little that very simple machine was improved until the invention of the motor-bicycle, which was far more powerful and convenient. That development was referred to as the "evolution" of the motor-bicycle. There was also organic or Darwinian Evolution, by which we were given to understand that

once upon a time there were numbers of living cells of the utmost simplicity of structure floating in the ocean. Some of them changed in form and became more and more complex, and so through vast periods of time the forms of life changed in many directions until there resulted the present infinite variety of the living population of this planet. This was a third form of Evolution, which had hardly a single point in common with the other two, and many others might be mentioned if time would permit. Really the only idea common to all the meanings attached to the term "Evolution" was that of change of form in an ordered sequence. We ought to be more precise in our use of a word which is capable of so many applications.

The CHAIRMAN: It now becomes my duty to sum up the applications to which I feel I may venture to give expression before asking Dr. Whately to reply, by putting from the Chair—with my very cordial support—the vote of thanks which has been moved by Colonel Alves and seconded by Professor Orchard. I may say that I concur with Dr. Whately in the paper, and thoroughly agree with the rights of a Christian Philosophy. I think that, for an Institute such as we claim to be, established on Philosophy, it would be an act of suicide, or committing what the Japanese call an "act of despatch," to do anything but welcome such a paper as we have had this afternoon from a distinguished and acknowledged master of Christian Philosophy. Further, I concur in the delineation of the subject which Dr. Whately expressed: "Philosophy is a radical need of cultured human society"; that is to say, he admits that as men grow together in the progress of social change, they are driven back upon the necessity of finding justification in their own reason and common sense, in the things they believe, and why they do or do not do, or prohibit, others from doing, certain things, or urge upon others the necessity of doing other things.

The world looks to teachers, and the teachers look to philosophers. There is really no difference between Socrates and Solomon. The difference lies in the Divine inspiration which rested upon their message; but the men were moved by human impulses, and we claim that just because Philosophy is a real, a human asset, a human necessity, so society must smile upon every genuine philosopher. You must remember St. Peter's great dictum when he

took Cornelius by the hand, and said: "Stand up, I also am a man." Christianity must find a place for human Philosophy. When St. Paul says: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things," he looks into the categories of Christian Philosophy.

The real crux lies in adjusting the relations between Philosophy and Christianity. I think we are fortunate in possessing a sober, safe, and competent guide in Dr. Whately; and although, as he himself confesses, it is not possible for us to lay down what Lord Beaconsfield called "a scientific frontier," or succeed in finding a "scientific frontier," we are sure there is a scientific frontier which is within the realms of that great Governor of all things, Who is known to us, not only as our Judge and Redeemer, but also as the Creator, Whose very last intention it must be that His rational creatures should find their reason playing them false when exercised upon the objects around them, and the consciousness of that inner right to think which is one of the most priceless prerogatives of humanity. With these words I beg to offer to you the vote of thanks to Dr. Whately.

The Resolution was carried unanimously.

#### LECTURER'S REPLY.

Dr. WHATELY: I have to thank Mr. Marston for his remarks, which have their source in his own kind feeling, and also I much appreciate those of the mover and seconder of the Resolution, and the way it has been received. I certainly think the discussion has been full of interesting matter, and it is only necessary for me to touch upon certain points which have direct reference to the paper. As to whether Evolution is necessary for continuity of thought, which is in close connection with what Mr. Maunder said as to being clear about what we mean by Evolution. Whatever we may say about Reproduction, the fact remains that there are changes and divergences. It is that which raises the philosophical question of Evolution; and what I said might be very much more worked out, but it was impossible so to argue it as to give definite expression to all that is in the minds of many of us.

Let me put it in this way. The mind that has been laid hold of by the philosophical tendency of the present day does seek to see God as—to use the now familiar word—“immanent,” and aims to assign to Him as close a connection with His Universe as the old simple believers always assigned to Him, but to carry it out to its full conclusion. When once one has that conception of God, and of all things as having their being in God—of Him as the Creator and Sustainer of His creatures—one must then have some doctrine of the Universe which presents it to one’s mind as a unity answering to one’s sense of the unity of the Divine Being with it. That is really my point. It is not solely a matter of argument, but rather of an intellectual atmosphere in which Evolution in some form or other presses itself upon the mind of the Theist.

Nothing has been said about Epigenesis, and I think this links Creation and Evolution. Professor Ward’s lectures are a great classical work upon the subject. Then I do not think we can regard God as performing a great many separate acts of will, as though He had to think out separate problems separately. That does not coincide with our idea of the Divine Mind. Allusion has been made to what I said about a mutually adapted Universe. I was not thinking of any particular scientific theories. I emphasized the broad fact of a mutually adaptive Universe. That is where it touches Philosophy,—when the many facts become one broad fact. I cannot agree that Christianity is cut off from Philosophy because it is a matter of Divine revelation. The Christian Gospel has to be expressed in human words which involve no end of pre-suppositions. It does not mean that we have to systematize the ideas of faith and love, but rather to bring our thoughts about God and Christianity into relation with our other thoughts. That is all Philosophy means. I think it was Professor Orchard who criticized my definition of Philosophy with reference to first principles. But we must get back to the roots of thought in order to discover what are the facts of reality upon which we first lay hold. It is true that the scientist thinks about thought, but the philosopher thinks about thought as such, and the first principles of all thought and being.

The Meeting adjourned at 6.5 p.m.