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A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

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1930

733RD ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1., ON MONDAY, MARCH 17TH, 1930,
AT 4.30 P.M.

LIEUT.-COL. F. A. MOLONY, O.B.E., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the following elections were announced :—Lieut.-Col. T. C. Skinner, Member, from Associate; and Mrs. N. F. Ruthven Smith as a Member.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced the Rev. Charles Gardner, M.A., to read his paper on "How far do the Apologetics of Bacon, Butler, and Paley hold good for Present Use?"

*HOW FAR DO THE APOLOGETICS OF BACON, BUTLER
AND PALEY HOLD GOOD FOR PRESENT USE?*

By THE REV. CHARLES GARDNER, M.A.

I.

BACON is the great name of a man who was great in brain rather than in character, and it is a name that makes one realize how fallible the man of brain may be. He was three years older than Galileo. Just when Galileo was compelling men to give due weight to the neglected speculations of Copernicus, and was busy dislodging the earth from its supposed position in the centre of the universe, Bacon used his massive authority to oppose Galileo and maintain the old cosmogony.

The modern world has not yet recovered from the shock that Galileo gave the earth. We hear constantly that the new cosmogony has dislodged not only the old earth, but also the old

faith ; and those who speak thus proceed to a process of re-fashioning the faith during which the faith is diluted till it loses all shape and substance. The outlook on the universe was revolutionary. Was the faith really shattered ? Surely not. In some ways it is strengthened. For example, Christianity teaches that man is not his own centre. So long as he believed that the earth was the centre of the universe it was difficult to resist the conclusion that man was the centre of the earth, round whom all things in the universe revolved. He was a very lordly man ! Gradually the new cosmogony has been forcing man to realize that he is not his own centre. As the earth revolves round its central sun, so the Christian may say with scientific authority that man revolves round his central Sun. Is not this a vindication of the central place which the whole Scriptures accord to the Christ ?

II.

The permanent value of Bacon, apart from his superb mastery over the English language, is his exposition of the great principle of inductive reasoning in his *Novum Organum*. His attempts to apply the principle are generally failures, and his physics are almost as out of date as Aristotle's. Nor was he the first to call men back to the direct study of nature. Copernicus, whom he opposed, preceded him, and so did the fantastic Paracelsus. Both these men opposed the current fashion of reaching conclusions in science and medicine by weighing the old authorities. They turned to the immediate study of nature. Galileo enormously accelerated the process by inventing the telescope. Bacon brought the movement to a philosophic head when he taught the modern world to study nature at first hand, to amass particulars, and then by an orderly process of inductive reasoning to arrive at general principles.

Is the great method of induction of value for Christian Apologetic ? We are now in a position to say Yes, although its importance may easily be exaggerated. Professors James, Starbuck and Pratt have all respectively worked in the field of religious experience. Starbuck has concentrated on conversion, James on varieties of religious experience, Pratt on the more recondite psychological states of religious people. James, the greatest of the three, reached the conclusion that there is a large common ground to all religions ; that the same experiences are known in all ages and all countries, and that therefore they

stand for some sort of approximate Reality. This conclusion, if unsatisfactory, is not without some value. It has taught the modern world to respect religious experience, but it has also taught it to make experience the basis of the Christian life. Here I would protest. Human experience, like human tradition and human merit, may be of rich and high value, but none of them is a foundation. Human experience at its best is the experience of men and women who have fallen short of the glory of God. The experience of Christ might possibly be treated as a foundation, since it was the complete experience of a complete Man. But Christ Jesus is the Revelation to us of God, not only by His experience, but also by His words and deeds, His miracles, and by His supernatural acts of rising from the dead and ascending into heaven. And therefore we may continue to say as our forefathers said that the Christian Life and Religion is grounded, not in the experience of man, but the Revelation of God.

III.

Butler and Paley may be studied together. They were in the same movement, and took much the same standpoint. Butler stands by his famous *Analogy*. He argues that the difficulties of Revelation are not greater than the admitted difficulties to be found in nature. Huxley, in the following century, so far agreed. It was not the difficulty of the Christian doctrines, but insufficient evidence for them that deterred him. Butler's argument and Huxley's assent still deserve close consideration. Butler proceeds to build experience on Revelation; prior to Revelation he finds Natural Religion. His order is Natural Religion, Revelation, Experience.

Modernists to-day put Experience first, and having diluted Revelation and Natural Religion into one, they set the solution on experience; if by experience they meant the complete experience of the Christ, we should have no great objection. But they have changed the meaning of Revelation by making it into an unveiling of experience. By the process Revelation ceases to be supernatural, and instead of Butler's august trinity of Natural Religion, Revelation and Experience, we are practically allowed only Experience.

Butler's method enables him to retain the full force of the supernatural. He finds in Romans I a splendid testimony to Natural Religion, and on it he proceeds to build the supernatural

structure. All this, which is the strength of Butler, fell into disrepute with the naturalists of the nineteenth century. It is equally despised by the Monists to-day. But there are many signs that (*pace* the Dean of St. Paul's) the supernatural is about to be re-instated; and it is likely that with it Butler's great Apologetic will again have great value.

Turning to Paley, we immediately think of his famous watch on the heath. For many years the watch seemed to be an unanswerable argument from design for the existence of God. It was rudely shaken by Darwin's principle of Natural Selection. But Darwin's principle has, in its turn, succumbed to the passage of time. Eddington and Jeans are leading another way, and Paley, like Butler, remains standing. Not that we would state the argument from design in the same terms as Paley. The watch is immediately related to the watchmaker. We find between design in nature and God other intermediate things. But to become engrossed with the intermediates till we lose sight of God is one of the heights of modern human folly, and the substance of the old argument from design, that is, the teleological argument, remains intact.

IV.

Paley's other great argument in his *Evidences* also withstands the modern attack, even from the psychological quarter. Stated briefly, it is this. The Apostles of the Lord all forsook Him in His last hour of need. They showed themselves all too human, and even Peter, with all his protestations of faithfulness, had more care for his skin than his courage. Yet a few weeks later the same men were filled with holy boldness; they witnessed for Christ in the most difficult circumstances; they suffered for their testimony even unto death. How account for their change of heart and mind? The only answer that fits the case is that given in the Scriptures. They were witnessing to the Truth, and they were doing so in the power of the Holy Ghost, who was given to them according to the sure promise of Jesus Christ. Their preaching turned on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. If the Jews could have brought the smallest evidence that Jesus did not rise again, the witness of the disciples would have been immediately squashed.

Paley's treatment of the miraculous is less satisfactory to our changed standpoint. He argues that the Gospel is true because it was witnessed to by miracles and fulfilled prophecy. We

are less impressed by the alleged fulfilment of prophecy, because it seems to many of us that St. Matthew stretches the letter of the prophets in order to convince the Jews by setting Jesus in a framework of Jewish prophecy. We should state the matter differently from Paley, somewhat like this:—The prophets revealed fragments of the truth which was hidden from their contemporaries. This truth is more and more fully revealed till the revelation is completed by Christ. Further, the prophets at their highest were lifted out of themselves by the Holy Spirit and spoke of things that they could never have known without the supernatural aid. These things were fulfilled by Christ, and they may again be fulfilled by the individual members of His Body.

V.

The other point, that the Gospel is true because it was witnessed to by miracles, we should put the other way round. We accept the miracles because we believe the Gospel. Actually, in dealing with prophecy, Paley keeps mainly to Isaiah liii. Here he is on rock ground. Jewish commentators have given over eighty different interpretations of this wonderful chapter. It was written two-and-a-half thousand years ago. It has been attacked, twisted, explained away, misapplied. Still it stands, meaningless apart from Jesus Christ, the key to the profoundest mystery of life if, like Philip, we see its complete fulfilment in the life, death and resurrection of Our Lord. The greatest of the Old Testament prophets was certainly lifted out of himself when he penned these sublime words—words that transcend anything he could have known in his own experience. Again, under the heading of the miraculous, Paley includes healing and several other happenings, which modernists are inclined to attribute to a heightened natural process. It is impossible to decide in all instances. When Christ walked on the water, was that a supernatural walk, or an instance of levitation, of which the modern world knows something? When He calmed the sea, did He merely concentrate a process of nature into a few moments? Did He only give of His overflowing vitality to the sick? We cannot always answer these questions. But there are certain miracles of Christ that can in no way be brought under a natural category: the turning of the water into wine, the feeding of the five thousand, the raising of the dead. These were either supernatural acts or they did not happen. I conclude

that we may not always drive a sharp line between the so-called natural and supernatural acts of Christ, yet we may remain convinced that He performed certain supernatural acts since they cannot be placed under any other heading.

VI.

Again, in dealing with the miraculous, Paley groups together the miraculous acts of Christ and the supernatural events in His life, such as the Virgin-birth, the Resurrection and the Ascension. We, for the most part, have separated them. The modernist may explain the acts as a heightening of a natural process, but we cannot affirm this of the events. Hence, he takes another course. The Virgin-birth, the Resurrection and the Ascension are not true literally; they are symbols of the truth. What truth? we ask. And we are told that these doctrines set forth symbolically certain truths that man may know by experience. The first is his experience of the new birth, when he is born, not by a natural generation, but of God. The next is his experience of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; the last is his experience of growing wings, and rising above all his sins and limitations if he remains faithful to the end. Those who treat the doctrines in this way proceed to explain the Divine Trinity as an enhancement of the trinity man finds in himself, and the whole of the Christian Faith may be treated in this way. Modernists who retain the name Christian do not, I think, follow their method to its logical conclusion. This was done in the early nineteenth century by Feuerbach. He showed the astonishing agreement between the Christian Faith and man's constitution, and he drew the conclusion that not only is man's experience the foundation of the Faith, but that he has created the faith to meet his inward need. Hence God is no longer the Alpha and Omega; Man is the Alpha, and God is dismissed.

We can admit the argument on which Feuerbach insisted, and be as logical as himself. If the Christian doctrines have this perfect correspondence with man's nature and his needs, we may argue just as cogently that that is because God is the author of our Faith. He remains the Alpha and the Omega. Between the two letters we may place as much human experience as we please. Indeed, we shall place more than the modernist, for we shall insert the experience of the dying, rising and ascending

of the Incarnate Son of God, and in so doing the natural will be raised to the supernatural, the human to the Divine.

VII.

That, of course, is to admit frankly the supernatural, and means a return to Paley, Butler and St. Thomas Aquinas. In a final criticism of their Apologetics, I suppose most of us would say that they draw too sharp a line between the natural and the supernatural. We have seen that the separating line is zigzag and has worn very thin in places. We may also insist that to draw too tight a line will involve us in an inadmissible dualism. But the solution of the difficulty does not lie in a simplified monism. The natural and supernatural are ultimately one. That will be when we are no longer girt about by time and space, but are wholly in eternity. Meanwhile let us keep our distinctions. We are to live as creatures of time and eternity, to perform our natural dues and our supernatural. If we attempt to wash out the difference, prematurely to force the unity, it will be to our loss and peril.

Paley and Butler were fully aware of the Unity that lies at the basis of all things. But by a wise recognition of the nature of things, by refusing to shut their eyes to the persistent distinctions in the universe, they were able to put forth an Apologetic which survived the naturalism of the nineteenth century, and will probably survive the pantheistic attack of our own time.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Lieut.-Col. F. A. Molony) said: It is to be hoped that Mr. Gardner's short but interesting paper will send us back to the study of Butler and Paley. I agree heartily with our author in thinking that their apologetic will survive the pantheistic attack of our own time. We must acknowledge that they sometimes are a trifle verbose, but at other times they put a point extremely well. Take an instance from Butler. Reasoning from the passage in praise of Wisdom in the first chapter of Proverbs, he says: "And the whole passage is so equally applicable to what we experience in the present world, concerning the consequences of men's

actions, and to what religion teaches us is to be expected in another, that it may be questioned which of the two was principally intended" (*Analogy of Religion*, Part i, ch. 2). This is the argument from analogy of Natural and Revealed religion in a nutshell. Or take a case from Paley. He is talking about the now common contention that by "The Suffering Servant of Jehovah," Isaiah, in his famous 53rd chapter, intended to indicate the loyal remnant of the Jewish people. Paley writes: "The application which the Jews contend for, appears to me to labour under insuperable difficulties; in particular, it may be demanded of them to explain, in *whose* name or person, if the Jewish people be the sufferer, does the prophet speak when he says "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (*Evidences*, Part ii, ch. 1). Paley's question seems to be unanswerable.

Mr. Gardner reminds us, on p. 168, that Paley, in arguing from prophecy, keeps mainly to Isaiah liii. But Paley had a particular reason for this, which was that the arguments from prophecy had been "disposed in order, and distinctly explained, in Bishop Chandler's treatise on the subject." Hence it is clear that the amount of stress which Paley intends to lay on this branch of apologetics, is not to be inferred from the space which he devotes to it. If we want properly to appreciate Butler and Paley's apologetic position, we must include Chandler's excellent work with theirs.

Mr. Gardner remarked that "It seems to many of us that St. Matthew stretches the letter of the prophets in order to convince the Jews by setting Jesus in a framework of Jewish prophecy." Bishop Chandler deals with this point pretty fully. He thinks that St. Matthew's idea was rather to illustrate than to prove. Chandler has some very interesting remarks about Matt. ii, 23. Most students fail to find the saying in any prophet. Chandler holds that it is in Isa. xi, 1. Here the Hebrew word for "Branch" is *Netzer*, "which," says Chandler, "signifies, first a branch, flower, or bud, and from thence passed by translation into the proper name of a place, which was so denominated, from its fruitfulness, as much as to say, the garden, the flower of Galilee." In Syriac, *Netzer* became *Natsrath*.

Now as "The Branch" was a well-known name for the expected

Messiah, the Jew who said "Jesus of Nazareth" practically said "Jesus of the Branch," or, "Jesus the Messiah." This seems to be a thoroughly satisfactory solution of the difficulty, but I remember reading modern authors who knew nothing about it.

Permit me to give an illustration of the importance of sometimes re-reading these older apologists. Just nine years ago, you did me the honour of listening to a paper of mine on "Predictions and Expectation of the First Coming of Christ." In that paper I laid stress on the importance of proving expectation, as well as prediction and fulfilment. In so doing, I imagined that I was taking a novel line, but now I find that the same thing was done by both Butler and Chandler. Butler says, though not quite accurately, "The ancient Jews applied the prophecies to a Messiah, before His coming, in much the same manner as Christians do now." And in another passage: "This was foretold in such a manner as raised a general expectation of such a person in the nation, as appears from the New Testament, and is an acknowledged fact; an expectation of His coming at such a particular time, before anyone appeared claiming to be that person, and when there was no ground for such an expectation but from the prophecies, which expectation, therefore, must in all reason be presumed to be explanatory of these prophecies" (*Analogy of Religion*, Part ii, ch. 7).

Chandler writes: (1) "There was a general expectation of a Messiah to come at the time that our Lord Jesus Christ appeared, which was the tradition of their ancestors, from the ages before that, up to the age next to the prophets themselves; (2) to support this expectation, there were in their scriptures, express literal prophecies, that singly concerned the Messias; (3) they had also typical prophecies to the same effect, the literal meaning of which was intended to be applied to the Messias."

Butler teaches us that, if we want to prove any such matter as Christianity, the soundest method may be, first to show that it is not incredible, then to show that it is credible; and, having laid this double foundation, to proceed lastly to the direct proof. This is the principle which leads him to start with analogy. Butler writes: "By the general prevalence of propitiatory sacrifices over the heathen world, this notion, of repentance alone being sufficient to expiate guilt, appears to be contrary to the general sense of

mankind" (*Ibid.*, Part ii, ch. 5). I suppose that most of us have been tempted to fancy that the central truth of our most holy faith may have been evolved by natural processes from this universally felt intuition. It is well, therefore, for us to remember that, if mankind had not this intuition about the necessity for sacrifice, the argument from the analogy of natural and revealed religion would break down at this point. It was, however, surely a case of revelation when Abraham said, "The Lord will provide"; that is, I take it, the great sacrifice to which the lesser ones point.

Writing of the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice of Himself, Butler says, "How, and in what particular way it had this efficacy, there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain, but I do not find that the Scripture has explained it" (*Ibid.*, Part ii, ch. 5).

Here is another proof of Bishop Butler's wisdom. Bear in mind that this was written prior to 1736, when our possessions overseas consisted of fifteen colonies on the east coast of North America, a few small islands, and four trading stations in India. Butler writes: "We shall see this happy tendency of virtue, by imagining . . . a kingdom or society of men upon it, perfectly virtuous, for a succession of many ages; to which, if you please, may be given a situation advantageous for universal monarchy. In such a state public determinations would really be the result of the united wisdom of the community (*Ibid.*, Part i, ch. 3); and they would faithfully be executed by the united strength of it. . . . Add the general influence which such a kingdom would have over the face of the earth, by way of example particularly, and the reverence which would be paid it. It would plainly be superior to all others and the world must gradually come under its empire; not by means of lawless violence, but partly by what must be allowed to be just conquest, and partly by other kingdoms submitting themselves voluntarily to it, throughout a course of ages, and claiming its protection, one after another, in successive exigencies."

I am far from contending that our government is, or has always been virtuous, but anyone who has studied history, served abroad, and read Macaulay's comparison of British and Native methods in India, will agree that the vastness of our present Empire is mainly traceable to the soundness of Butler's contention. Only one-third of our vast African Empire can be described as conquered from the

natives, and therefore open to question, all the rest came into our hands as Butler foretold.

Paley, in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, takes St. Paul's Epistles seriatim, and shows that there are obviously undesigned coincidences between them and St. Paul's other Epistles, and the Acts of the Apostles. This, and other arguments, caused Rénan, the French sceptic, to describe the four chief Epistles of St. Paul as "uncontestable and uncontested," and to state his own opinion that several other Epistles are genuine. Since then the argument has been reinforced by Sir Wm. Ramsay's researches in Asia Minor. Other defenders of the faith have built upon Paley's excellent foundation, by showing that the fact of the Resurrection of Christ can be proved from the uncontested Epistles alone.

In conclusion, I wish to resume by a simile the main subject of my remarks, which is the Messianic predictions. In the days of close fighting, combatants used to try to knock the weapons out of their opponents' hands. The argument from Messianic predictions and types was used from the days of the Apostles till we ourselves were boys, but we hardly ever hear that argument brought forward now. Can it be truthfully said that this effective weapon has been knocked from our hands? I think it would be more exact to say, that these arguments have been so cleverly belittled by Jews and other unbelievers that Christian preachers have come to look upon them as unsound, whereas they actually only need a little polishing up.

The first part of the Old Testament is full of salvation stories, the latter part of Messianic predictions; and we may well ask, "How came they there?" The Modernist Theologian explains away one and another, but Butler, Paley, and Chandler well maintained that these originated in Divine Revelation. If we look at the matter broadly and as a whole, we can but regard these older theologians as being in the right, and the sooner our preachers return to their views, the better. Our lecturer has asked the question "How far?" To that I would reply, in the case of Butler, and of Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, "Very far." But I agree that Paley's argument from miracles, though sound and valid, is better abbreviated, to make room for what has become more important matter.

The Chairman concluded by moving a hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer, which was carried by acclamation.

Mr. W. C. EDWARDS said : I have never regarded Bacon as a great Christian apologist. It is true that he has said many things that are helpful, *e.g.* that he would rather believe all the absurdities of the Koran than believe that this world made itself.

Bishop Butler was a greater man, and one to whom many of us owe much. He was born a Presbyterian, but became an Episcopalian. He lived a life of irreproachable piety amidst almost universal apostasy. Even in the Church of the 39 Articles there were *then* found few who were not more or less *tainted* with Socinianism. A preacher the other day aroused some interest in the City by declaring that the responsibility of the present irreligion should be placed upon the parsons themselves. At no period of our history could that be more truly said than in Butler's day. The parsons were then, and I fear often now, the pioneers of scepticism and infidelity. They spent time in their studies imbibing doubts, and then in their pulpits they preached unbelief instead of faith. Butler's misfortune was that he had missed that spiritual experience which we call conversion. Wesley preached the New Birth and Butler tried to prevent him preaching in his diocese. It was only a few hours before his death that he entered into the sweet assurance of salvation. In his last illness he said to his faithful chaplain : " I have tried to avoid sin, and live so as to please God, but I am still afraid to die." Pointed to the Saviour, he asked, " How can I know that He is a Saviour for me ? "

His chaplain quoted, " Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." " True," exclaimed the dying Bishop Butler, " I am surprised that though I have read that Scripture a thousand times over, I never felt its virtue till this moment, and now I die happy." Conversion is a glorious doubt-killing experience, and that Butler missed until long after his great work was written.

Paley stands a majestic figure in my eyes. I read *Horæ Paulinæ* with delight before I was out of my teens, but I meet many who have never opened its pages. It is never too late to mend, or begin ! Froude tells us that when he went to Oxford he found people quite satisfied with Paley. Newman shocked many by

dismissing Paley, and almost siding with Hume, and then telling them to trust the Church! I cannot follow the lecturer in saying that Darwin ever really rudely shook the famous argument of the watch. It is beyond that. I think that the most insidious attack was that of Chambers in *Vestiges of Creation*. Darwin has avowed that he brought out his theory of evolution "through the survival of the fittest," in order to get rid of Design in Creation. Grant Allen did much to popularize Darwinism. I once had correspondence with him that led to his inviting me to spend a night at Hindhead and talk things over. As I was using an argument analogous to Paley's Watch—they are endless, railways, ships, houses, etc., he said, "That is really Paley's old argument of the watch." I replied, "An argument that is sound is sound for time and eternity, and none the worse for being old." I suggested that we should take the watch, and Paley's eight points.

"Oh," he exclaimed, "I was reading a book the other day and the writer dealt with it, and proved in a couple of pages that the watch made itself." "What do you call that?" I asked. "A piece of brilliant reasoning," he replied. "Reasoning," I exclaimed, "there can be no reason in it." The conclusion being demonstrably wrong, all that goes before is so much nonsense. "Did you not feel all the time that you were being fooled?" After the "Watch argument" pray read Paley on the eye. In a recent book, *A Legal Man and the Bible*, the lawyer that wrote it speaks in the highest terms of Paley, and quotes this as unanswerable. On p. 168, line 2, we have a more serious matter. Our lecturer writes: "it seems to many of us that St. Matthew stretches the letter of the Prophets." If he were addressing a gathering composed of men like Dean Inge and Dr. Barnes, this might pass, but I can assure him that in addressing the Victoria Institute it will not. Many of us—I trust all of us—would shudder to utter the words. Was the Evangelist inspired by the Holy Spirit? or was he a deluded and mistaken reader of the Holy Prophets? I have the Berean habit of testing what I hear from ministers, according to Isa. viii, 20, "To the Law and the Prophets," and I have made a list of all the Old Testament passages I could find in the Gospel, and I strongly oppose the lecturer's suggestion. I will venture to think that the Evangelist understood the prophets and their pro-

phesies far better than I and even the lecturer. The Evangelists, I believe, used the prophecies as our Lord used them to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, and according to Luke xxiv, 45, "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Is it too late to pray that the Lord may do the same for many so-called ministers of religion to-day; they are doing much to destroy the faith of many. The Evangelists used the Holy Scriptures as the Apostle Paul used them in Rome with the representatives of the Jews.

I must take exception to two other points. First, on p. 168, "When Christ walked on the water, was that a supernatural walk, or an instance of levitation of which the modern world knows something?" Does the modern world know of anything comparable? If so, when? Where? I have a habit of asking these questions but can never get any proper satisfaction. It happened "some when," "some where," always abroad. Just like the Mahatmas of Tibet! Go to the borders, or into, Tibet, and they know nothing about them. Thank God I have faith, but I have no credulity. Let them come and do it at high tide near London Bridge, and invite us to do what Peter did, lifeboats and crews being in attendance, of course. Are these conjuring tricks of jugglers and spiritualists to be compared with the miracles of our Blessed Lord?

Again, on the same page, the lecturer asks: "When He calmed the sea, did He *merely (sic)* concentrate a process of nature into a few moments?" What does that mean? A storm that takes hours to calm down He calmed in a second, "merely a concentration of the process of nature!" Words fail me for comment upon such a sentence.

In conclusion, will the lecturer kindly tell me how I may find these people who can perform levitations that I may arrange for a demonstration at London Bridge at an early date.

Lieut.-Col. SKINNER said: The lecturer has given us a veritable feast of good things this afternoon, and my present feeling is one of desire to go home and digest it. Two questions arise, however, on which more light seems desirable, and perhaps may be forthcoming. One has already been alluded to, with mention made

of the prophecy of "Rachel weeping for her children." But are not all prophecies, or most at any rate, capable of two or more fulfilments? Witness the classic instance of our Lord's reference to John the Baptist as Elijah, though Elijah's return as forerunner was then, and is still, future.

Again, with regard to the words in John x, 18, "I have power to lay it (my life) down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." Is not the reference here less, if at all, to His physical death and resurrection than to His life with the Father in the Glory? Was it not as though Jesus, having voluntarily surrendered that life in order to become man, such was the perfection of understanding between Father and Son, that the Divine command or commission left Him entirely free to return up where He was before at any stage of the journey, should He elect to do so; that He was at any time free, either to go forward to Calvary, or to refrain from going and, with perfect propriety return to the bosom of the Father? Not that there was any likelihood of His exercising his prerogative, any more than of His calling for twelve legions of angels to deliver Him; but my thought is that here there is no necessary reference to His resurrection, and I incline to think that, having surrendered Himself fully to the death of the Cross, it was by the power of God through the Holy Spirit that He was raised from the dead, rather than by a supernatural act on His own part. Perhaps the lecturer would consider this; but we are deeply indebted to him for his paper, so reassuring with regard to old defenders of the faith.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION.

Rev. J. J. B. COLES writes: The apologetic of Paley and Butler is of far greater value than the writings of Modernists, and will survive their downgrade movement. Holy Scripture is an impregnable rock.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

The Author, in reply, said that with his deafness he was unable to catch a great many of the remarks that were made on his paper; and therefore he would deal only with two points that had been raised. First, St. Matthew's use of the Old Testament prophecies,

and the special prophecy in Jer. xxxi, 15-17. The whole passage read: "Thus saith the Lord, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not . . . they shall come again from the land of the enemy . . . thy children shall come again to their own border." Rahel or Rachel, of course, stands for the whole people. Rachel weeps because her children, men and women with their families, have been carried into captivity. But she is to hope, because God will bring them back again to their own border. Now St. Matthew says that this prophecy was fulfilled in the massacre of the Innocents, and he shows that he had what is often called the Rabbinical mind. The modern mind is far different, and it cannot accept this kind of exegesis, and therefore it is no longer of any avail to use it for an apologetic of Christianity. Another line of defence must be found. The other point about levitation. The lecturer would not for a moment compare levitation and other happenings with the works that our Lord did "by the finger of God." Levitation is, if you like, a vulgar occurrence. But it occurs. A modern might argue that it is no more wonderful for Christ to walk on the sea than for Homes' body to float out of one window and float in at another. Therefore, an appeal to such a miracle has no weight to-day. Christians to-day believe in the miracles of Christ because they first believe in Him. The last speaker said that he had never seen a case of levitation. That was very likely. It would be necessary for him to frequent séances, and he would certainly give offence to his Christian friends.