

Church Reports on Religious Doctrine

EVOLUTION, "GOD" AREN'T FAR APART

LONDON, Jan. 14. (U.P.)—A commission of the Church of England, reporting after a 15-year study of church problems, asserted today that there was no clash between the story of creation as told in the book of Genesis and the theory of the evolution of man as worked out by modern scientists.

Divides on Others.

But as to the birth of Christ to a virgin, and as to the authenticity of miracles, the commission divided.

The archbishop of York, second highest personage of the church; two bishops and a number of other dignitaries were named members of the commission in 1922 by the archbishop of Canterbury, spiritual head of the church.

Of the theory of evolution, the report said:

"It is to be recognized that the Christian doctrine of evolution as generally stated leaves abundant room for a variety of theories as to evolution of the world. There is in any case a sense in which, in the Christian view, the creative activity of God must be regarded as continuous.

"No objection to the theory of evolution can be drawn from the creation narratives in Genesis I and II, since it is generally agreed among educated Christians that these are mythological in origin and that their value for us is symbolic rather than historical."

As regards the virgin birth the commission was divided. Some members held that full belief in the historical incarnation, the divine origin of Christ, was "more consistent with the supposition that our Lord's birth took place under normal conditions of human creation."

BISHOP IS ALARMED AT ENGLISH CHURCH ACTION

LONDON, Feb. 25 (P)—Rt. Rev. Bernard O. F. Heywood, Bishop of Ely, expressed alarm today at the refusal of the House of Bishops of the Church of England to give the reassurance that historical parts of the creed, such as the virgin birth of Christ and his resurrection after the third day, mean what they say and nothing else.

"If these events did not occur," he wrote in the March issue of *The Ely Diocesan Gazette*, "the whole foundation of Christianity is imperilled."

He warned that his loyalty to the province of Canterbury was "strained almost to the breaking point."

Bible Interpretation and Science Among Anglican Topics

London, Jan. 14. —(P)—Controversy swirled today over an Anglican church commission's 292-page report on religious doctrine, which sets forth that one may reconcile the biblical account of the world's creation with evolutionary theories, and that the Bible need not be taken as the judge of historical or scientific investigation in any field.

Twenty prominent leaders of the Church of England took 15 years to complete the report dealing with fundamental questions of the virgin birth, angels, demons, evolution and the resurrection.

Speedy reaction came first from the Church Association, through its secretary, Rev. E. C. Bowring, who said today:

"The commission has incubated a report which is merely an addled

ostrich egg, for they disclaim the idea of defining what doctrine is permissible in the Church of England. According to the archbishop's commission, you can think what you like and still be Christian."

The Church Association was founded by evangelical churchmen who favor simplified forms of worship and oppose ritual of the high church section.

Here are some of the findings by the commission:

Papal Claims—The Church of England is still bound to resist claims of papacy but "some of us" envisage a reunion of Christendom under leadership such as "a papacy which renounced some of its present claims." Other members of the commission hoped for a reunion "by a more federal type of constitution which would have no need" for such leadership.

Miracles—The commission members were divided on whether they occur, but agreed that God "could do" them if he "would."

Angels and Demons—"It is legitimate to suspend judgment" or treat them "symbolically."

Resurrection—Jesus' rising from the dead "however explained" is to be understood to have been an event as real and concrete as the crucifixion itself and an "act by God wholly unique in human history."

Baptism—A vital ordinance of the New Testament.

The Future—"We shall have means of recognizing each other in future life."

The Bible—"Its authority must not be taken as prejudicing conclusions of historical, critical or scientific investigation in any field."

Virgin Birth—Historical evidence is "inconclusive," but this was one of the many things the members split on, with the Archbishop of York, who headed the commission, reporting that he accepted as historical fact the Lord's birth from a virgin mother and his physical resurrection from the tomb.

Evolution—The Christian doctrine of creation "leaves abundant room for a variety of theories as to the evolution of the world," and the universe "depends upon the creative will of God."

Under the marriage heading the commission avoided a flat statement on divorce issues but urged appointment of a further commission to clarify the situation.