

Symons Gold Medal Award for 1938 to Dr Dobson

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The Symons Gold Medal for 1938 was awarded to Dr. G. M. B. DOBSON, F.R.S., Reader in meteorology in the University of Oxford. The following particulars, which had been circulated to the Council when they were considering the award, were read :

"Dr. Dobson's earliest contribution to meteorology was an analysis of pilot balloon ascents which he carried out at Upavon during 1913 (*Quart. J. R. Met. Soc.*, 40, p. 123) and a discussion of the wind and temperature gradients in the stratosphere (*Quart. J. R. Met. Soc.*, 46, p. 54). In a paper written in collaboration with F. A. Lindemann entitled ' A theory of meteors and the density and temperature of the outer atmosphere ' in *Proc. Roy. Soc.*, A, 102, Dr. Dobson gave the first reasoned evidence of the existence of high temperatures in the layers above 50 km. This subject was further discussed by him in a paper in *Quart. J. R. Met. Soc.*, 49, p. 152 on ' The characteristics of the atmosphere up to 200 km., as indicated by the observations of meteors.' In 1923 Dr. Dobson began his researches on the absorption of ultra-violet radiation in the upper atmosphere (*Proc. Roy. Soc.*, A, **104**). Later he developed a photographic method of observation and by distributing instruments to suitable observers in different countries was able to collect information which fixed the nature of the annual and latitude variations of the amount of ozone in the upper atmosphere, finally showing that this amount bore a striking relationship to surface meteorological phenomena. This work, which was carried out with different collaborators, is described in *Proc. Roy. Soc.*, A, 110, 1926; **114**, 1927; **122**, 1929; **129**, 1930. Dr. Dobson was author in collaboration with Griffith and Harrison, of a book on ' Photographic photometry' (Oxford University Press). In *Proc. Phys. Soc.*, **43**, 1931, Dr. Dobson describes a photoelectric spectrophotometer for measuring the amount of atmospheric ozone, which makes it possible to obtain measurements of atmospheric ozone in a few minutes. Dr. Dobson has applied the ideas of Fabry to obtain systematic observations of ozone. His work has revealed the connection between ozone and surface phenomena and has firmly established the nature of the variation of ozone with latitude."

"In 1936 Dr. Dobson organized an international conference on atmospheric ozone which was held at Oxford in September."

"Dr. Dobson has just been elected to the Advisory Council to the Committee of the Privy Council for Scientific and Industrial Research."

The PRESIDENT, in presenting the medal, said what great personal pleasure the award gave to him. Dr. Dobson's association with meteorology was of about the same length as his own. Dr. Dobson had begun his work at Kew by the study of atmospheric electricity. His next work, at Upavon, with pilot balloons, had a very great significance in the development of the theory of air movements and Prof. G. I. Taylor's theory of turbulence was built on Dr. Dobson's foundation. In later years he had carried on those researches with which his name was always associated, on meteors and then on ozone. Those who had had the privilege of visiting Dr. Dobson in his own laboratory would realise the ingenuity and the well-ordered thought and the engineering ability which he exercised in his work. He himself had had the honour to sit on the Atmospheric Pollution Committee under Dr. Dobson as Chairman, and he had had an opportunity to realise Dr. Dobson's skill in explaining technical matters to laymen. He was sure that when the Council considered giving effect to the proposals made for more popular lectures, Dr. Dobson's name would be one of the first of which they would think.

Dr. G. M. B. DOBSON said that one had only to look through the list of past recipients of the Medal to see what a great honour the Society had done him, and he wished to thank the Council and the Fellows very much indeed. The President had referred to his more recent work on atmospheric ozone and he would like to point out that although this work had been centralised in Oxford, it had only been made possible by the co-operation of numerous helpers in other parts of the world. Not a little of the interest of this work was the fact that it brought one in touch with so many men of science in other countries.

