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686TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER, ON MONDAY, MARCH 15TH, 1926, AT 4.30 P.M.

SIR GEORGE KING, M.A. (HON. TREASURER), IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed, and the following Elections were announced:—As Associates: George Phare, Esq., the Rev. Lewis Foster, and John Ashworth, Esq.

The CHAIRMAN then called on the Rev. Canon V. F. Storr, M.A., to read his paper on "Revelation."

"REVELATION."

By the Rev. Canon V. F. STORR, M.A., Canon of Westminster.

THE religious history of mankind is proof that the vast majority of men have always believed in the possibility of revelation, for the story of religion cannot be reduced to the story of man's search for God. It is true that man has been searching for God since the earliest ages, but it is also true that he has been convinced that his search has been met by an answering movement on the part of God. The medicine-man, the priest, the wizard, the oracle, witness to a belief that it is possible for man through the appropriate means to come into active relationship with the mysterious power behind phenomena which we call God; and that God makes a disclosure of Himself and His purposes in greater or less degree, though that disclosure may vary considerably in its methods. We are to discuss therefore something which is of world-wide import.

Revelation sends us back at once to the Revealer; and before we can profitably discuss the problems connected with revelation, we must spend a few moments in thinking about the nature of God. We must banish at once from our minds any thought of arbitrary action on God's part. All the Divine activities must flow from the Divine character and be an expression of God's essential nature. Hence, if He reveals Himself to men, it must be because it is His nature so to do, and because to reveal Himself is part of His purpose for the world. Can we now reasonably infer anything as to the nature of God as a self-revealing Being from a study of His works, among which must be included man? Evolutionary science unfolds for us a story of development in which, by the very constitution of our minds, we cannot help seeing purpose.

The history of this planet is the history of a succession of changes, which are not mere changes, but changes directed to an end. Stage succeeds stage in orderly evolution, and each stage prepares the way for the next. Nor is this all. In the process of development there is the constant emergence of what is new. New kinds appear, richer in quality, which cannot be explained by what went before them, but call for their own principles of interpretation. Thus, life cannot be explained in terms of non-living matter, nor can consciousness be reduced to movements of particles in the brain. The whole development viewed broadly, and with due regard paid to the fact of retrogressions, has converged on the production of man. Personality is the goal of the process. To make man seems to be the purpose of evolution, a purpose only as yet partially realized, for man has surely not reached the full measure of his growth, even on this planet!

Now, if we are prepared to grant the existence of God, we must view this evolutionary process as a revelation of Himself. The term "revelation" is, of course, being used here in a wide meaning; but it is the right term to use, because God does disclose Himself to us, at any rate in part, through creation. To create is to reveal. It is so with ourselves. The picture reveals the artist; the book reveals the author's mind. In the popular mind God's creative activity is usually construed as the power of making something out of nothing. But the important fact about creation is that it is the mode of the Divine self-expression or self-revelation. The evolutionary view of the world has forced me to think of God as essentially a Being

whose nature it is to reveal Himself in ascending degree. A stone tells you something about God ; a flower tells you more ; man, moral and spiritual, tells you yet more ; and as a Christian, I add that the Perfect Person, Jesus Christ, crowns and completes all the earlier and less perfect revelations. It is the ascending scale in Nature which is the important point, because if it be true (and it is true) that a development should be judged by its end, not by its beginning, by what it becomes, not by what it began with, then in order to discover the meaning of our planet's evolution you must look at man, the goal and end of the whole process.

And when you look at man, what do you find ? In man at his best (and it is by his best that he is to be judged) you find a spiritual being, haunted by ideals, with a measure of free creative power, with a sense of God and a desire to know God. He is a growing being, whose " reach exceeds his grasp " ; his achievements never keep pace with his possibilities. In character and knowledge you feel that there are higher levels which he is capable of reaching. Now if in the purpose of God the long process of evolution has resulted in the production of such a being, it is a fair inference that the Power behind the process is interested in persons. Having made them, having given them this desire for God, this reaching out after a beyond, will not God want to reveal Himself to them, according to their capacity at any stage to grasp such a revelation ? To bring man upon the scene, and then to deny him all knowledge of what he wants most to know, seems to me to be procedure which amounts almost to irrationality. The nature of God then, as inferred from the structure and history of this earth, leads me to believe that He will reveal Himself to man. I am assuming, of course, that religion is not to be explained away as merely a man-made thing. The battle is raging to-day between the psychology which would treat religion as simply a product of deep-seated tendencies and instincts, coming down from a long past, within the man himself, and having no objective reference ; and the theism which grounds religion in objective reality, and sees in it the product of two factors—man's search for God, and God's touch upon the human soul. Once grant the existence of a Supreme will and mind behind the visible scene, and revelation takes its place as the natural unfolding of God to men who, in some degree, share His nature.

The Christian conception of God as Love emphasizes the truth that it is God's nature to reveal Himself, because love is an energy which flows out in blessing upon others. Human love proves itself to be love only by giving of itself to others. That is the law of its life—that it cannot keep itself within a self-contained circle, but must overflow in ever-widening activities. Love is essentially a self-revealing power.

Let us go on now to consider our subject more in detail. The first point for discussion is the nature of the difference between revelation in its wider meaning and revelation in the narrower meaning, which we more usually attach to the word. In its larger significance, revelation covers all the divine activities in Nature and history; they are all a manifestation of God and His purposes. In its narrower significance, revelation relates to what we believe to have been a special activity of God in relation to the Hebrew race, and in relation to the coming of Jesus Christ. These two views of revelation correspond to the old distinction between natural and revealed religion. Natural religion, so it was once taught, included all those truths about God which man, by the unaided use of his reason, could discover through a study of Nature and his own constitution. By this road he reached (I am stating it roughly) the conception of a Creator and Ruler and Designer of the Universe, who possessed moral character, and was interested in the moral development of man. But can we to-day press the antithesis between natural and revealed religion so rigidly as it was once pressed? I do not think that we can, and for the following reasons:—In the first place, man can discover nothing which God does not choose to reveal; hence, even natural religion is really a revelation. Secondly, when this contrast between natural and revealed religion was in the ascendant, the study of comparative religion had hardly begun. Since then comparative religion has grown to be an important science. A vast mass of material is to hand about the various religions of the world, and a study of this shows that it is extremely difficult to maintain that there is a body of beliefs which can be called natural religion. If you take the beliefs which are common to all religions, you will find they are very few. I am, therefore, of opinion that we must get rid of the distinction between natural and revealed religion as it was once set forth, and adopt a different method of approaching the subject. We shall be on a more fruitful line of inquiry if we keep in mind the

conception of degrees of revelation, and think of God as never having left Himself without witness among any tribe of men, but of the witness as varying in clearness to an almost indefinite degree. The development of religion is due to the interaction of two factors—a human factor and a divine factor. The crudities and superstitions which attach to religious beliefs, more markedly in their earlier growth, are due to man; yet the fact that there has been an advance in religion, that animism and polytheism have given place to monotheism, and that monotheism has become more ethical, is indication that there has been Divine control of the whole movement. Such at least is the conclusion drawn by the theist.

Now this conception of degrees of revelation leads us to another problem which presents great difficulties. What explanation are we to give of Hebrew religion? The fact which we have to explain is the existence among the Hebrews of a religious experience and of a conception of God without parallel among contemporary peoples, or indeed among any peoples uninfluenced by the Bible. How was it that this one nation reached in their prophets a conception of God which is the basis of all our modern theism? Why did they have this rich and living experience of God, recorded in a literature which has power to "find" men, as Coleridge put it, in the very depths of their souls? There can be no doubt about the answer which their own writers give to these questions. They assert that this knowledge of God came to them through revelation; it was not their own discovery; it was something given to them, impressed upon their souls by God Himself.

The Old Testament, it has been said, pictures God as coming down from above upon human life. Everywhere the priority is attributed to Him. He selects Israel in love, trains the nation, illumines the minds of their teachers. Now we must discover a cause adequate to produce so remarkable an effect, and revelation is the right word to use in this connection. But is our reason satisfied if we say that God, who endowed the Greeks with their artistic powers, gave to this people a remarkably rich religious endowment? Or have we to postulate, in addition to this original endowment, a specific activity of God upon the souls of the religious teachers of the race? And if we have to postulate the latter, are we dealing with a difference in kind or only in degree? When does a difference in degree

become a difference in kind ? This last question I do not think we can answer, nor does that matter for our present purpose. With regard to the other problem, whether you can explain the religious outlook of the Hebrews by saying that it followed from their original endowment, or whether you have to assume the existence of a specific Divine activity, I question if the alternatives are really valid. Because we surely cannot think of God as a Being altogether external to man ; we cannot think of Him as having made the Hebrew race with a certain constitution, as a carpenter may make a chest. The carpenter is outside his creation. But God, though He is not His creation, is not outside it in external fashion. "In Him we live and move and have our being." He is the animating principle of the whole, always creating, always sustaining, ever bringing the new out of the old. So that the religious endowment of the Hebrews, which was nothing static, but was pre-eminently active and alive, was really God at work. Who can say where the human ends and the Divine begins ? When high thoughts come to us or conscience warns, is it not the Spirit of God moving within us ? Special endowment and special activity seem to me to come ultimately to much the same thing. The point is that these Hebrews reached such spiritual heights, that you can explain their achievement only by saying that God gave them a revelation of Himself incomparably richer than He gave to any other nation.

But is everything in the Old Testament revealed ? No, not unless you adopt a theory of inspiration, which it is surely quite impossible to square with modern knowledge. It is sometimes forgotten that the Hebrews, a branch of the Semites, had an ethnic religion before they became the subjects of Divine guidance. That ethnic religion they did not all at once discard ; indeed, the mass of the people never discarded it, nor has it been discarded to-day in Palestine. From that ethnic religion they derived, for example, the rite of sacrifice, the habit of worship under sacred trees, the habit of erecting pillars of stone or poles of wood for ritual purposes. Their own prophets distinguish clearly enough between the revealed and the non-revealed elements in their religion. Amos, for example, with a splendid daring, faces the ceremonialists of his day with the question, "Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel ?" (v. 25).

Jeremiah states explicitly that sacrifice was no part of the original revelation given to the nation :—"For I spake not unto

your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people " (vii, 22, 23).

What you have in the Old Testament is the story of how God, making use of much of this material of ethnic religion, gradually and progressively led the nation to a truer conception of Himself. But the old rites and the old ways of thinking about God lingered on a long time. The Old Testament is full of these relics of a distant past; they belong to revelation only in the wider meaning of the term, not to revelation in its narrower sense.

I must deal with one other point before passing to the constructive portion of this paper. What is the method of revelation? When a prophet said, " The word of the Lord came to me," what did he mean? How are we to conceive of the psychology of revelation? We cannot, I think, go further than the assertion that revelation meant a quickening or intensifying of the religious consciousness of the prophet. I doubt if we can maintain that any definite proposition was communicated by revelation. If we study the prophetic writings, we shall find that the prophets declare God's will and purpose: they do not propound doctrine, though of course doctrine can be deduced from their utterances. Robertson Smith wrote as follows:— " The essence of true prophecy lies in moral converse with Jehovah. It is in this moral converse that the prophet learns the Divine will, enters into the secrets of Jehovah's purpose, and so by declaring God's word to Israel keeps alive a constant spiritual intercourse between Him and His people." (*Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 249.) That we must so conceive of the manner of revelation seems to me to be indicated by the fact that the prophets preserve in a wonderful way their individuality. Each writes in his own style, uses his own imagery; there is no trace of any mechanical dictation. There is an overmastering sense of spiritual control; there is a vivid consciousness of contact with the living God; but there is no audible voice of God, no loss of self-control in the prophet, except in the case of the trance or ecstasy, which belong to a lower level of prophecy. Revelation, then, is made through personality. We speak of the Bible as an inspired book; we ought to speak of it as the record of the utterances of inspired persons. There is always, as

Dr. Matthews has recently pointed out in his Liverpool Lectures on *The Idea of Revelation*, a tendency to depersonalise revelation: "The record, the book, or the set of doctrines which are believed to enshrine the original revelation, seem, almost inevitably, to usurp the authority of the personal experience, which lies at the root of the religion, and to take its place" (p. 7).

We go on now to consider, and especially as regards their evidential value, some features of revelation in connection with the Old Testament and with Christianity. First, let us think about Messianic prophecy. One of the most valuable results of the newer studies of the Bible is that the scholars have enabled us to understand better the work of the prophet. We see how many-sided that work was. The prophet comes before us as the embodied conscience of the nation. He is social reformer, political adviser to kings, stern critic of the popular religion; he interprets the lessons of the nation's past; he insists that character and not ceremonial is the vital element in religion. All this is the work of the prophet in its wider aspect. But within this larger activity of prophecy is a more special activity, to which we give the name Messianic prophecy. The Hebrew religion put a Golden Age in the past, but it was also a forward-looking religion; and its forward-looking character is seen most clearly in the prophets. Most of them were men inspired with a conviction that God had some great redemptive purpose in store for the nation; that a better time was coming, that God would establish a Kingdom of truth and peace and equity. When or how this Kingdom would come they knew not. Each draws his picture of it in his own colours. At times they think of the coming of the Kingdom as imminent. In a political crisis, in the advent of an invading host, in the incidence of pestilence or earthquake, they see signs that the "Day of the Lord" is at hand. So conscious are they of the reality of the living God that they shorten their perspective. In the pictures which some of them draw is a central Figure, a Prince or King, who shall inaugurate the coming of the perfect Kingdom; or a King-Priest, who shall offer for his people the true worship. One of them, the greatest, whom we call Second Isaiah, draws a picture of a Suffering Servant, who by his sufferings for his people is to redeem them. It probably is true that the Servant is the purified nation, or the faithful nucleus of the nation, yet does not an individual Figure show itself on the canvas? I cannot

feel that the prophet had any clear vision of Christ, but I think he had a vision, however dim, of a personal Redeemer. The Messianic movement reaches its climax in the portraiture of the Suffering Servant, and here is the last word of the Old Testament upon the problem of suffering.

The centuries pass by. Prophecy proper dies; its place is taken by apocalyptic. The hope of Divine redemptive action remains intensively alive, but it takes a new form. Despairing of redemption coming through the ordinary secular processes of history, the apocalyptic writers look for some sudden, catastrophic intervention on the part of God, who either Himself, or through some chosen Messiah, shall free Israel from its foes and establish a new Kingdom. What happens? A Babe is born at Bethlehem, grows to manhood, proclaims Himself the World's Saviour, dies on a Cross, rises again, and passes to the exercise of a spiritual sovereignty which has no parallel. We, as we look back upon the earlier movement of prophecy, and see the amazing fulfilment which it received in the Person and work of Christ, are compelled to say, " Here is Divine design. Here is a directed Spiritual movement." It is often impossible to read clearly purpose in history, because the scale of movement is so vast and complex. But surely there is purpose here! Jesus, at any rate, claimed to be the fulfilment of this earlier movement. He adopted for Himself the rôle of the Suffering Servant. He saw in the Old Testament Scriptures a witness to Himself. I have always thought that the movement of prophecy with the fulfilment which it received in Christ presents peculiar difficulties for the sceptic; because, though there was in the past a tendency towards Christ, there was no tendency to produce Him. His fulfilments of prophecy were so unique and original, the inner spirit of prophecy received in Him such a wonderful interpretation, so many lines from the past were proved by the event to converge on Him, that any other explanation save that of Divine design is excluded.

If it is a true principle for interpreting a development that you should look to the end rather than to the beginning for the discovery of the meaning of the development, then, as I have already said, it is a fair inference from the facts before us that the meaning of the evolution of our planet has to do with persons. The evolution has resulted in the production of persons, and appears to have been directed to that end. And we judge that

the Power behind the evolution is interested in persons. This consideration gives us a kind of general philosophical background for our approach to the problem of the Person of Christ. If the key to the meaning of evolution is to be found in personality, if it is God's purpose in creating to call into existence a society of free human spirits made in His image, who shall live in fellowship together under the principles of love and moral goodness, then it becomes less incredible that at some point or other in the evolution the Perfect Person should appear to set the standard for the growth of personality, and provide new motive power for the attainment of that standard. Now a common objection which is raised to the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is that in an evolution you would naturally expect the final stage of the process to be the most perfect. If Nature has been slowly climbing towards personality, why should the Perfect Person appear at some point midway in the process, instead of at the end of the process ? The objection may hold good for a naturalistic philosophy, which regards evolution as a self-contained process, in which what was latent in the beginning gradually becomes explicit. But for a theist the objection ceases to be formidable ; for he can never think of evolution apart from the creative power which works in and through it. The new, as I have said, is always emerging in the course of the evolution ; and to-day a school of able writers is emphasizing this conception of " emergent evolution," and is interpreting evolution in spiritual, though not necessarily in theistic, terms. At any rate, they have moved far away from the older materialism, and give to the universe a spiritual significance. Once we grant the existence of a Creative Will behind phenomena, and see in the laws of Nature that will in operation, we must allow to God the possibility of introducing a new factor at any moment into the evolutionary scheme. This the Christian believes that He did when Jesus Christ appeared. Nor is it simply a case of a Perfect Man appearing. Christianity reposes on the belief that God Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ revealed Himself to humanity. In Jesus we are to see the perfect revelation of the character and purpose of God, so far as that purpose and character were capable of being manifested through a truly human personality. The Christian's answer to the question, " What is God like ? " is that " He is like Jesus Christ." Revelation, as we have seen, is made through persons. In the Person of Christ we have revelation at its best and completest.

Let me end this paper by some general considerations bearing on the problem of Christ's Person in relation to our central thought of revelation.

(*a*) We must at the outset make clear to ourselves the true dimensions of the problem. The problem of Christ's Person is far wider than the questions which inevitably arise when we try to think out what we mean when we call Him God. How could He be God and man at the same time? How are we to define the relation of the Two Natures in His undivided Personality? Thought is peculiarly active upon these questions at the present time. But they are only part of the problem of His Person. If we would judge of Christ aright we must take into account His work and influence, what He is doing now, as well as what He did two thousand years ago in Palestine. In the Christian scheme of thought the Person of Christ has an eternal significance. He is represented as now alive, continuing the redemptive work which He began on earth. He is represented as the spiritual centre of humanity, a source of life and energy for the world. And quite certainly Christian experience is an experience of Christ's power. You may try to explain it away, as much modern psychology does, as an illusion born of self-suggestion, but no one can deny that from the Epistles of St. Paul onwards there has been a continuous stream of experience which looks to Christ as a living, active Personality.

As evidence that there was a revelation of God in Jesus Christ the continuous testimony of the Christian consciousness seems to me of great value. If it is an illusion born of self-suggestion that the Christian receives life from Christ, it is strange that this illusion operates in ways quite unlike those in which ordinary illusions operate. Illusions, as a rule, are short-lived, or, if permanent, are confined to a few individuals who are reckoned insane or unbalanced. Illusions weaken and disintegrate personality, unfit the man who has them for his place in common life. But the illusion of Christian experience, if such it be, is continuous through the centuries, does not disintegrate or weaken personality, but on the contrary invigorates it. Is a judge any the worse judge for being a Christian? And there is this remarkable fact about Christian experience, which marks it off from the ordinary working of illusion, that it runs into the same mould wherever it occurs. The first century and the twentieth; the Chinaman and the Englishman; the peasant and the philosopher—the experience of all of these has the same content,

of a sense of sin, of forgiveness, of peace with God, of power coming into the soul from a source other than the man himself. All this points to an objective reality as the ground and cause of the experience. I argue, therefore, that the work of Christ is a very real part of the problem of the Person of Christ, and that the influence of Christ through the centuries is a material factor in a Christian apologetic which concerns itself with the idea of Revelation.

(*b*) A century or a century and a half ago miracle was regarded as of high evidential value. The miracles recorded of Jesus were adduced as testimony to His divinity. To-day the Christian's first line of defence is certainly not miracle. At the same time, the Resurrection remains as one of the foundation-stones of the Christian Faith. The Church arose on the belief that Jesus rose from the dead. The Resurrection helps to bridge the gap between Jesus the prophet of Nazareth, and the Christ, whom St. Paul in his earliest epistle "brackets" with God. The apologist for Christianity to-day would, I think, begin with the character and consciousness of Jesus as the main evidence that in Him God was in special manner revealing Himself to the world. From that position he would pass on to suggest that miracle was a natural accompaniment of such a Personality. This is surely the line taken by the writer of the Fourth Gospel. His word for miracle is "sign." He does not emphasize the element of the strange or marvellous in miracle, but rather regards miracle as a sign pointing to the Person, and intended to wake enquiry as to the nature of that Person. Much of our difficulty about the miraculous arises from our failure to define what we mean by miracle. To-day, I think, we are interested in the religious significance of a miraculous act, rather than in its aspect of wonder. And, after all, an event which occurs in the course of what we call natural law may have a deep religious significance. For example, if the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites was made possible by the occurrence of an exceptionally low tide and strong wind, the fact that that combination of circumstances happened when it did is in a real sense to be called miraculous.

Now, when we study the consciousness of Jesus we realize how difficult it is, if we are to do justice to all the facts, to interpret Him solely in terms of manhood. Unlike all other men, He betrays no consciousness of sin or defect in Himself; He even claims to forgive the sins of others. He betrays no hesita-

tion in His spiritual announcements, never has to retrace His steps or own to a mistake. His consciousness of His Father is unclouded. He is aware of a unique relationship between Himself and God. He speaks with authority, claims the unswerving allegiance of mankind, offers life to men, offers rest and peace to the burdened; and the event has justified this claim. The generations of mankind have found in Him the rest they crave and the satisfaction of their deepest spiritual needs. Unquestionably in Christian experience He has had the value of God. The problem is whether behind the value is a fact which corresponds to it. The framers of our Creeds in the long-drawn Christological controversies of the early centuries were concerned to conserve in their theological definition of Christ's Person the redemptive values which Christ had for experience. They could do this only by calling Him God; and they meant that He was God; because they saw that there was all the difference in the world between the belief that God selected a man to be the world's Redeemer, and the belief that God Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ came to earth as the Redeemer. You have taken the heart out of the Cross, for example, if you do not see in it the eternal love of God stooping to the very extreme of self-sacrifice. I think it true to say that at times in the official theology of the Church the deity of Christ has been allowed to overpower the humanity, and that full value is still not being given to the doctrine of His real manhood. One of the pressing problems of the moment is to re-think the relation of the humanity to the deity in His Person. But I am certain that we shall never be satisfied with an interpretation of Christ in terms of manhood alone. We shall always be compelled to find some metaphysical equivalent for the religious value which Christ has as God in Christian experience.

Discussion.

The Chairman (Sir George King, M.A.), in opening the Discussion, said: This Institute is a philosophical society, but it includes among its members some, perhaps, besides its Treasurer, who are far from being trained philosophers. It is, of course, possible that one day the experience of M. Jourdain may be ours, and we may discover

that we have in fact been philosophers from our earliest days; but it is a little unfortunate that the Secretary should have placed one of us in the Chair to-day, and so compelled him to commence the discussion of Canon Storr's paper. It is, however, the privilege of the Chairman to propose a vote of thanks to the reader of the paper, and this I certainly can do *ex animo*, even though I seem to detect towards the foot of p. 118 an example of something with which my daily duties make me familiar—the adduction of an authority in a form which is correct but incomplete. As, however, I studied this afternoon's paper I came across one phrase which appears to me to be amply illustrated by the paper itself. It is on p. 114: "The book reveals the author's mind." For whatever difficulties some of us may feel about the earlier pages of the paper, the three closing pages show what is, or rather Who is, supreme in that mind. And I am persuaded that the author speaks, not only out of his own heart, but also to the heart of every member of this Institute, when he says: "You have taken the heart out of the Cross if you do not see in it the eternal love of God stooping to the very extreme of self-sacrifice." For while the whole adventure of the earthly Life revealed a self-sacrificing love beyond all our imagining, that one oblation of Himself once offered is as much the crowning exhibition of the love of God's plan of Redemption as the Resurrection and Ascension are of its entire efficacy.

(The vote of thanks having been cordially passed, discussion proceeded.)

Mr. PERCY O. RUOFF said: The argument from Nature and the supposed evolution of man set forth in the paper amounts to very little, and gives no revelation of the nature, attributes and character, of God, beyond "His eternal power and Godhead." The claim that man at his best has "a sense of God and a desire to know God" may be an academic view, but such a kind of person does not exist apart from the work of God's Spirit, as his powers have been vitiated by sin.

It is to be regretted that the construction of the argument of the paper introduces Christ as a link in the development of evolution. For whatever theory of evolution is put forward, He stands apart from mankind in the essential of being without sin.

Canon Storr has stated that the Hebrews derived from their ethnic religion the rite of sacrifice. Where is the historic evidence for such a statement? On p. 119, in the second paragraph, the lecturer gives a complete travesty of the facts. He says: "What you have in the Old Testament is the story of how God, making use of much of this material of ethnic religion, gradually and progressively led the nation to a truer conception of Himself."

The plain fact is that everywhere in the Old Testament the only religion or religious rites which are sanctioned are those which have been revealed as the will of God, and all other rites, sacrifices, and practices whatsoever are unreservedly condemned as being offensive to God.

The paper also ignores the facts of the case (p. 119, para. 3) in asserting that "revelation meant a quickening or intensifying of the religious consciousness of the prophet. I doubt if we can maintain that any definite proposition was communicated by revelation." This is begging the question. The prophets, in thousands of instances, claimed to speak with the authority of "Thus saith the Lord." And it is an unfair deduction, and indeed a setting aside of plain facts, to impose this interpretation on their writings and speech. To affirm that "there is no audible voice," places the person so arguing out of court. If revelation is supernatural, why may not its mode be also?

The statement made by the Canon, that the prophet had not any clear vision of Christ, seems to be dispelled by such passages of Scripture as John xii, 41, and 1 Peter i, 11, 12. From the apologetic, inferential and uncertain position of revelation as developed in this paper, one turns to the sublime revelation as presented in the Scriptures with the authoritative "Thus saith the Lord." The Scriptural revelation has this supreme attestation, that Christ, who, as Canon Storr has truly remarked, "unquestionably in Christian experience has the value of God," referred to the Old Testament revelation as "the Word of God which cannot be broken." It is in this revelation that the Christian reposes his trust.

The Rev. A. H. FINN said: Is it accurate to say that God reveals Himself (p. 114) in His works and in the evolutionary process? The artist and the author reveal something about themselves in their works but do not, can not, fully reveal themselves. In the same

way we may learn something about God, His Power and Wisdom, from the study of His works, but what we learn will depend on human inferences. That these are precarious appears from the fact that different minds have drawn different conclusions from the same data. From the facts of Nature, some deduce that God is good; others can only see a fierce Nature, "red in tooth and claw." To call this "Revelation" is to use the word in a sense different from the meaning usually accepted. The Biblical words, Hebrew and Greek, convey the idea of uncovering that which was hidden—secrets, mysteries, the unknown future. The main idea of Revelation in the ordinary sense is that God has been pleased to make known to man what man unaided could never have discovered—God's Nature, Being, Will and purpose.

Is it true to say "man can discover nothing which God does not choose to reveal" (p. 116)? Man has discovered how to make (and use terribly) poison gas. Did God choose to reveal that? Is it not rather true that God has left it possible for man to discover evil things as well as good, but has not revealed them to man.

Is it true to affirm that "there has been an advance in religion, that animism and polytheism have given place to monotheism, and that monotheism has become more ethical" (p. 117)? There seem to be indications that the early religions (Egyptian, Assyrian) were largely monotheistic, and that animism and polytheism were later corruptions. Where have animism and polytheism given place to monotheism, except where the influence of the Bible has been felt?

To the unanswered question, "When does a difference in degree become a difference in kind?" I would venture to answer, "Never." You may make a ladder as long as you please, but the highest degrees will still be rungs, and not change into steps of a staircase. Is it correct to say that the Hebrews "had an ethnic religion before they became the subjects of Divine guidance" (p. 118)? The Hebrews were descendants of Abraham, and were not a nation till the Exodus. There is no trace of "worship under sacred trees" or of "erecting pillars of stone or poles of wood for ritual purposes" till after they entered into Canaan. The practices have not "been discarded to-day in Palestine." True; but amongst what people? Not Hebrews, but the peasant population (*Fellahin*), and there is good reason for believing these to be descendants of the Canaanites.

Can we go no further than " the assertion that revelation meant a quickening or intensifying of the religious consciousness of the prophet" (p. 119)? Is that more than an *a priori* conclusion from what we conceive would be or ought to be God's procedure? At any rate the prophets seem to be of a different opinion when they assert, " The Lord said unto me," and when they are reluctant to comply with their mission (as were Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel).

The paper asserts: " There is no audible voice of God," but the Bible says there was—in Eden, at Sinai, when " the Lord spake unto Moses face to face," to Samuel, to Elijah on Horeb, and when Isaiah says, " I heard the voice of the Lord " (vi, 8). Also in the New Testament there was the Voice at our Lord's Baptism; again at the visit of the Greeks; and St. Paul not only heard a voice, but specifies that it spoke " in the Hebrew tongue " (Acts xxvi, 14).

The difficulty, " If Nature has been slowly climbing towards personality, why should the Perfect Person appear at some point midway in the process? " (p. 122), simply assumes that the production of the Perfect Person was the ultimate end and aim of the process. But if the coming of the Perfect Person was for the redemption of mankind, it could not be delayed till " the end of the process." Is it adequate to say, " In Jesus we are to see the perfect revelation of the character and purpose of God " (p. 122)? Is it quite the same as to confess that He was God?

St. John's " word for miracle is ' sign ' " (p. 124). Not the only one, for he also speaks of " the works," and in one place couples signs with " wonders." What are the chief " signs " recorded by him? The turning of water into wine, the feeding of five thousand, the opening of the eyes of one born blind, the raising of Lazarus. Not one of these can be called " an event which occurs in the course of what we call natural law." What did the " signs " signify? What was their purpose? " Signs," in the Old Testament as well as the New, were given to attest the Person working them, not merely " to wake inquiry " (p. 124). If it be true (I venture to doubt it) that " in the official theology of the Church the Deity of Christ has been allowed to overpower the humanity " (p. 125), that, I submit, is far less dangerous than the modern tendency

to allow the humanity to overpower, obscure, and even altogether deny the Deity.

Lieut.-Colonel G. MACKINLAY agreed with the lecturer in the statement that divine revelation is progressive, and culminates in the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He proceeded: If sacrifice (p. 118) is only a relic of ancient ethnic religion, we must cut out parts of at least twelve Books of the Old Testament where sacrifice is commanded by God, as well as those parts of the New Testament which speak of the Sacrifice of Christ—in the Gospels, the Book of Acts, and Epistles, especially in that to the Hebrews, where the Old Testament sacrifices are spoken of as foreshadowing the death of Christ. I cannot see in Jer. vii, 22, 23, any forbidding of sacrifice; rather, *obedience* is demanded in the first place, the outward act of sacrifice not being accepted unless there is an obedient heart.

The paper might, more correctly, have been described as on Evolution, as that word, or some equivalent, occurs at least fourteen times, with the assumption that it is a *science*. The lecturer speaks of our Lord's redemptive work as having *begun* on earth and as continued afterwards; but our Lord Himself spoke of such work as finished on the Cross (John xix, 30). To my mind, the paper is dangerous, being a mixture of truth and fancy. Many a careless reader may approve what is good in the lecture and yet fail to detect the error which may be unconsciously imbibed along with the truth expounded.

Mr. THEODORE ROBERTS said: The paper seems to me a dangerous one and somewhat superficial in character. For instance, it ignores the fall of man and the need for expiation of sin. On p. 118 the lecturer, in saying that he cannot think of God as a Being altogether external to man, seems to deny His transcendence. On the same page he speaks of the "rite of sacrifice" as belonging to the ethnic religion of the Semites (of whom the Hebrews formed a part), and claims that "Jeremiah states explicitly that sacrifice was no part of the original revelation given to the nation."* I would point out

* I add, what I communicated to the lecturer at the close of the meeting, the explanation which many commentators have given, from Jerome in the fifth century to the *Speaker's Commentary* in 1875, that God did not

to him that all the Four Gospels bear witness to our Lord's statement that Moses gave the Law to Israel in the wilderness, and in this He included the law of sacrifice, as is proved by the incident of the cleansing of the leper related in each of the first three Gospels—for our Lord told the leper to go and show himself to the priest, adding: "Offer for thy cleansing the things that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them" (Mark i, 44). This was an unmistakable reference to the "law of the leper in the day of his cleansing" (Lev. xiv, 1–9), where we get two birds, one slain and the other set free, to typify the death and Resurrection of our Lord. It is interesting to find that this particular law lay unused for some fourteen centuries (for apparently the only leper cleansed was a Syrian who would not go to Jerusalem at all) awaiting the Coming of Christ, in order that there should be a testimony at Jerusalem by each leper whom He cleansed, of His divine work in Galilee.

Do I understand that the lecturer denies the truth of this testimony of the Lord to the fact that Moses gave to Israel a law concerning sacrifice, and is not afraid to say that Christ was not the Truth in all He said? I regret the suggestion, on p. 124, that there was any gap between Jesus the prophet of Nazareth and the Christ whom Paul "bracketed" with God, which needed the Resurrection as a help to "bridge." Surely our Lord, in all He said and did in His Galilean ministry, displayed His full Godhead as much as in His being raised from the dead.

Mr. H. O. WELLER welcomed the paper as a good attempt to solve the problem of harmonizing Revelation and Evolution. There was little to be afraid of in the term Evolution; it was a term to which many meanings were attached, and sanctioned by common use. It could include Creation. He appealed to members who, like himself, might be labelled as conservative Evangelicals, to have patience with men who claim to believe as Evangelicals do, though they speak in different terms.

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institute sacrifices for Israel until after they had broken His law at Sinai by making the golden calf. As Paul says of the law, "It was added because of transgressions" (Gal. iii, 19). Jeremiah was therefore perfectly accurate in saying that "in the *day* that I brought them out of the land of Egypt" God spake not nor commanded "concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices" (vii, 22).

Though the paper was good, there were nevertheless bad points in it. He drew special attention to the author's hesitating treatment, at the foot of p. 120, of a passage which Christ had read as definitely referring to Himself. There was no question possible in the unique circumstances: the "Servant" in the passage was our Lord, not in any sense "the purified nation" or "the faithful nucleus."

He suggested that active fighting against such Modernism as that of the author is a mistake, "for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught." Let such Modernism, upholding in deliberate terms the Deity of Christ, be put to the test of bearing fruit: so far it seemed barren enough, but time would show.

The Rev. MORRIS MORRIS said: This paper is an exposition of the main idea in modern theology, namely, that Christianity was not revealed from Heaven, but evolved from barbarism. Although the author entitled his paper "Revelation," he only means that evolution is the revelation of God; and he regards it as the only revelation. In taking this standpoint, theologians have followed E. B. Tylor, who, in his famous book, *Primitive Culture*, first published fifty-five years ago, begins by assuming that all culture (in which he included religion) is a product of evolution; and he looks to the "animism" of the Stone Age for the beginnings of the process.

There is much in Judaism, which Moses inherited from the simpler faith of the Patriarchs, and much in Christianity, which Christ inherited from Judaism. But there is something else besides. Moses not only inherited an old Faith, but transformed it by revealing something new; and so also did Christ. Those revealed elements are the very qualities which made them distinctive. In Christianity they constitute the backbone of the Gospel. Take them away and the Gospel disappears. But Tylor regards them as products of evolution, or, as Canon Storrs calls it, "revelation," and he directs theologians to value them accordingly.

The death of Christ in the New Testament is treated as the antitype of the sacrifices of the Tabernacle which Moses instituted in obedience to a revelation received in the Holy Mount. But Tylor and his followers repudiate all this. They deny that such ideas were ever revealed either to Christ or Moses, and insist on regarding them as survivals of savagery which ought to be abolished.

Is there any ground for assuming that religion could not have been

revealed and must have been evolved? Evolution accounts for some things, but why assume that it ought to account for everything? It explains, under God, the development of species, but why conclude that it ought to explain their origin as well? "Evolution," said the late Lord Morley, "is the most overworked word in all the language of the hour." The Doctrine of Descent may be interpreted in two ways, namely:—(1) Evolution during Descent; (2) Creation during Descent. Tylor and his followers take their stand on the first. But although the Doctrine of Descent itself stands firm, all the evidence overthrows the evolutionary version of it, and establishes the other version—Creation during Descent. If the first version were true, there would have been a gradual transition from the Faith of the Patriarchs into Judaism, and from Judaism into Christianity; whereas we find a hiatus! Similarly, there would have been a transition from the Old into the New Stone Age, whereas there was an hiatus. All writers recognize it, and evolutionists admit that it should not be there. They call it an "apparent" hiatus, a "so-called" hiatus, "the hiatus problem," and so on, which is only explaining the facts by explaining them away. But the other version (Creation during Descent) would lead us to *expect* the hiatus! Evolution does its own proper work, but evolutionists, under the influence of Materialism, want it to take the place of Creation and Revelation as well; and that is where they err.

The Lecturer's Reply.

When the hour arrived for the meeting to close, several gentlemen who wished to be heard had not been called upon. Summaries of the remarks which they intended to make are given below along with Written Communications. On the discussion as he followed it, the Lecturer has supplied the following rejoinder, hoping thereby to clear up misunderstandings:—

I divide what I have to say into two parts.

(1) *A brief statement of my own position.*

(*a*) I accept the general view of the Bible known as the Higher Criticism. This does not mean that I necessarily accept all the conclusions reached by scholars, many of which may be open to revision. But I accept the general way of

looking at the Bible, which is the result of the scholarship of the last two centuries, and which is now taught in practically all the universities and theological colleges. Such teaching has for me greatly enhanced the spiritual message of the Bible.

(*b*) I accept, in common with practically all scientists, the evolutionary theory. This, again, does not mean that I accept all the conclusions as to the *method* by which evolution takes place. Scientists themselves are not agreed on these matters. The fact of evolution is one thing: the method by which it proceeds is another.

(*c*) In theological belief I am an orthodox Liberal Evangelical. Vague charges of various unorthodox views were brought against me by various speakers. I must refer them to my published works for refutation.

(*d*) One charge only I will refer to, viz., that I am a *Modernist*. I am, if by that word you mean one who tries to present the unchanging truth of the Gospel in modern terms, suitable to the thought of the present age. There are many kinds of Modernists. The epithet is a convenient missile to hurl. But before the word is used of anyone it should, in fairness, be defined.

(2) *The main purport of my paper.*

Nothing, I think, in my paper, if it is carefully studied, lends any evidence to the charge that I am either a pantheist, or deny the transcendence of God, or substitute evolution for God, or deny miracle, or the Deity of our Lord. In the paper I tried to show :—

(*a*) That it was God's nature to reveal Himself.

(*b*) That He did so in an ascending scale, the revelation culminating in personality, and supremely in the Person of Jesus. In other words, man at his best is the truest index to the Nature of God.

(*c*) That the old distinction between " natural " and " revealed " religion broke down ; that it was better to speak of *degrees of revelation*.

(*d*) That with regard to revelation in the narrower sense, one had to recognize that while there was a true revelation of God in the Old Testament (and, of course, in the New), it was embodied in a literature which contained many elements which could not be called revealed (in the narrower sense). Revelation supervened upon an already existing ethnic religion of the Hebrews, and upon an ethnic religion which they in part adopted from the Canaanites. Traces of this ethnic religion abound in the Bible. I said that sacrifice was part of the ethnic religion, it being common to all Semites, and indeed to many races. The amazing thing about the Old Testament is how God was able to use this existing material, purify it, and make it a vehicle of spiritual truth. Thus He enabled the writers of the Creation and Flood narratives, while preserving much of the form and imagery of a Babylonian narrative, to reach spiritual truths far in advance of anything that the Babylonian narratives show.

(*e*) I did not think it could be maintained that there was an audible voice in revelation. It is beside the point to say, as was said, that the Bible says there was an audible voice. That begs the question. What I was asking was—What is meant when a prophet says God spoke to him? Mohammed said God spoke to him. Joan of Arc heard voices of God. Of course, if it is assumed that because a thing is in the Bible it is true, there is no room for argument. But I think that is to dictate to God the manner in which He shall give His revelation.

(*f*) Finally, I tried to show the immense evidential value of Messianic prophecy. But I could not feel that in Isa. liii the writer had any vision of Christ. He saw (as *I* think, in opposition to the prevailing critical opinion) a *personal* figure of a redeemer; but I cannot feel he had any vision of Christ. We, looking back on the fulfilment that prophecy received in Christ, can see that the prophet was "speaking larger than he knew."

My paper and the reception it received is an illustration of how in all discussion what really matters is the *presuppositions* with which

you come to the subject. My whole outlook was obviously quite different from that of my critics. We could not get in touch with each other, because we started from such different positions.

Written Communications.

Dr. R. P. Hadden wrote: As to p. 116, is not the distinction between Natural and Revealed Religion a reasonable and *Scriptural* one? Does not Rom. i, 20, indicate that God's "everlasting power and divinity" can be "perceived through the things that are made"?

As to p. 118, can the writer tell us:—

(1) Is the rite of sacrifice common to all religions?

(2) Is anything known certainly, apart from the Bible, as to its origin?

(3) When the writer speaks of an "ethnic" derivation, does he mean to rule out *Revelation?*

(4) Is it not possible (if not probable) that the rite of sacrifice is the outcome of a primeval revelation, and that its occurrence in "ethnic" religions is no less a witness to such a primeval revelation than the sacrifices of Noah, and of Cain and Abel, in the Bible?

Mr. W. E. Leslie wrote: This important paper should be considered in its perspective. The thought of the Churches has been increasingly divided into two opposing schools. Recently it has been contended that these divergencies are not essential, and that the best elements of both schools can be combined. Canon Storr writes from this point of view, and his subject is fundamental to the whole discussion. His *a priori* introduction is valuable despite one or two technical blemishes. He then turns to inquire how, in fact, Revelation has been transacted in history. His history, however, is not that of the Old Testament as it stands, but as reconstructed in conformity with theories of Revelation similar to his own. This is, of course, a *petitio principii* which invalidates his argument. But there is a graver matter. The difference between the traditional Old Testament and the "critical" concepts of God's self-revealing activities involves moral values. The Lord Jesus Christ always assumed the traditional Old Testament scheme, in which He regarded Himself and His work as pivotal. This is no

question of His attitude to this or that incident or document. Was He ignorant of His Heavenly Father's mind? If the "critical" reconstruction is correct, then His spiritual intuitions were at fault. I venture, therefore, to suggest that the position of the author is illogical, and that it contains implications that are fundamentally inconsistent with the Christian faith.

Mr. AVARY H. FORBES, M.A., wrote: To me the Canon's language is so tentative and vague that more than one interpretation can be put on nearly all his positions. The word "Evolution," for instance, which occurs all through the paper, is nowhere defined. I suppose, however, one may take it in the usual Darwinian sense of progressive improvement from a lower to a higher species. This seems frankly assumed all through the paper.

"Evolution" rests on two great pillars—(*a*) physical development, and (*b*) moral and intellectual development. The scientific world has practically confined itself to (*a*) and ignored (*b*). They stand or fall together, but it is with the latter alone that I shall deal, and I shall content myself with citing two authorities, which can scarcely be contradicted.

The first relates to intellectual development, and is from Mr. Winston Churchill, who does not write as a partisan, and whose testimony on this matter is at first hand. After telling us that the four years of the Great War were but the "prelude" to the fifth, he informs us that the fifth (which was never fought) would have launched destruction on a scale never before dreamt of: "Poison gas of incredible malignity, against which only a secret mask was proof, would have stifled resistance and paralyzed the life on the hostile front subjected to it." Since then weapons even more wholesale in their destructiveness have been and are being prepared. "A study of disease, of pestilences methodically prepared and deliberately launched upon man and beast, is certainly being pursued in the laboratories of more than one great country. Blight to destroy crops, anthrax to slay horses and cattle, plague to poison, not armies only, but whole districts: such are the lines along which military science is remorselessly advancing. Mankind has never been in this position before. Without having improved appreciably in virtue, or enjoying wiser guides, it has got into its hands, for the first time, the tools by which it can unfailingly accomplish *its own*

extermination. Death stands at attention, obedient, ready to shear away the peoples *en masse*, ready, if called upon, to pulverize, without hope of repair, what is left of civilization. He awaits only the word of command. That is the point in human destinies to which all the glories and toils of man have at last led us. . . . And the causes of war are in no way removed" (*Nash's Magazine*, September, 1924).

This prospect would not be very terrible if *moral* development had kept pace with scientific. But has it? Never in the history of the world has Evolution had such advantageous opportunities of proving itself a great force for elevation and improvement than during the last hundred years, when science has made so many astounding inventions and discoveries. These inventions will be an untold blessing, or a fearful danger, according as the moral character develops. Alfred R. Wallace, after surveying the whole problem of moral progress in detail, gave his verdict just before the Great War. Here it is :—

"Taking account of these various groups of undoubted facts, many of which are so gross, so terrible, that they cannot be overstated, it is not too much to say that our whole system of society is rotten from top to bottom, and the social environment as a whole, in relation to our possibilities and our claims, is the worst that the world has ever seen." (*Social Environment and Moral Progress*, p. 153.)

Of course all Evolutionists take refuge in the *future*. Darwin did. Wallace did. Sir Oliver Lodge does. Their logic would be amusing, were not the issues so tragic. Here it is: Under the highest triumphs of science man's moral character is admittedly going from bad to worse with headlong speed: therefore the future progress and happiness of mankind is assured!

Mr. WILLIAM C. EDWARDS wrote: It is distressing to learn from the lecturer that had he not adopted the views expounded he would have become an atheist. Upon that subject I will only make one observation, namely, that these views have made many people agnostics, and not a few out-and-out atheists.

The paper bristles with points for debate. I refer to two or three. The ethnic (tribal) religion of the Hebrews—what was it? It was the *true* religion, and that of Moses, Joseph, Jacob (Israel), Isaac,

Abraham, Melchizedek, Noah and Enoch *who walked with God.* To the lecturer it is a sort of embryo or amœba, out of which Judaism and Christianity have "evolved." He assumes that the process was animism, via polytheism, to monotheism. So far as my observations go, this is not correct. The farther we go back, the surer we are to find monotheism. Our lecturer says "there is no audible voice of God." That is surely "giving the lie" to many passages of Holy Scripture, *e.g.* Moses, Elijah and Isaiah in the Old Testament, and our Blessed Lord in the New, as well as Saul upon the way to Damascus.

Concerning the Messianic prophecies, I am content to rest upon our Lord's own words—Luke xxiv, 25–27. The lecturer quotes Amos v, 25, but I dispute the deduction. Any way, with it he must accept the forty years in the wilderness and all its corollaries. The passage seems to mean, having for forty years sacrificed to the true God, they are now going to Moloch. We might apply it to many to-day, and ask: Have the holiest and best of your men been burned at Smithfield, Oxford and Gloucester for the truths of the Bible, and will you now make the Roman Moloch your god?

Lastly the lecturer quotes Jer. vii, 22, 23, but a very casual perusal of the passage shows that it means that in Exod. xx–xxiii no details of sacrifice are given, for the simple reason that the Tabernacle is not yet set up. Exod. xl shows the Tabernacle erected, and Lev. i–viii then gives details of the sacrifices.

Mr. F. C. Wood wrote: As a boy I spent seven and a-quarter years as a chorister in Westminster Abbey, in the time of Dean Trench and Dean Stanley. In those far-off days I remember hearing with great delight Archdeacon (afterwards Bishop) Wordsworth preach a course of evidential sermons on the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy. It was in the Abbey that I heard four chapters or more of Scripture read every day, and I took my part in the chanting of the Psalms right through every month. In that way I became familiar with the *letter* of the Word, and about five years later, at my conversion, began to know the *spirit* of it, partly, I believe, through frequently saying as a boy a heartfelt "Amen" to the daily prayer, "Granting us in this world the knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting."

I do not like the constant use of the word "Evolution" in connection with our subject. As applied to "Revelation" I much prefer the word "progressive." I cannot agree with Canon Storr, in his paragraph on p. 119, as to how and in what measure "Revelation" came to the Prophets. That long paragraph seems open to grave exception. I do not so read my Bible, but I go very much farther. If I did not, "Revelation" would not mean much to me. Neither do I think there is much value in the quotations from Robertson Smith and Dr. Matthews. We need not theorise about "Revelation," because Scripture is so full of definite statements on the subject, and all we need is to give credence to facts stated. I am not impressed with the expressions "no loss of self-control in the prophet," "a lower level of prophecy," "no audible voice," and "that the prophets preserve in a wonderful way their individuality." Surely the Holy Spirit of God could use "personality" even while causing a prophet to write an exact message. If not, what kind of a God have we to do with? Were prophets given visions and spoken to concerning divine truth, only to wake up and write down just what they could remember, or to shape the message in their own language? Surely this was not the way Isa. liii was written. If Jehovah did not speak the actual words recorded, why the constant repetition of "Thus saith Jehovah," "The word of Jehovah came unto me," together with the divine signature at the end of so many of the communications, in the words "Saith Jehovah"? Why also the frequent addition of the solemn divine oath, and the use of the divine personal pronoun throughout the prophets—a thousand times at least in Ezekiel. I never speak of the prophetic writings as what the prophet "thought" or "conceived," but always of what Jehovah made known through them. These men "spake as they were borne along by the Holy Spirit," and apart from that never could have written what they did.

Prior to the order of the Prophets, God spoke to Abraham, Jacob, Balaam, Gideon, Manoah, Samuel and others, and later, very definitely, to Paul the Apostle. And what shall we say of Moses? Let us quote Scripture. "Hear now My words: If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so: with him will I speak *mouth to mouth*, even apparently, and

not in dark speeches; and the similitude of Jehovah shall he behold." Moses therefore both *heard* and *saw*. Again it is stated " When Moses was gone into the Tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he *heard the voice* of One speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat that was upon the ark of testimony from between the two cherubim, and *He spake unto him*." At Sinai, even the people of Israel heard the voice of Jehovah proclaim the Ten Commandments.

About thirty years ago I began to mark a Bible, entirely to show as clearly as I could its claims to " Inspiration " and " Revelation," marking every expression where it is stated or implied to be from God. I am still trying to indicate every passage which refers to a previous scripture; also every passage which shows a previous scripture to have been fulfilled—because fulfilled Scripture is a proof of " Revelation " and " Inspiration." I have been overpowered at times by the quantity and variety of the statements and evidences permeating the whole of Scripture, and showing the books of the Bible to be one organic whole—a " Revelation " of the mind, the will, and the works of the Lord.

Major LEWIS M. DAVIES, R.A., F.G.S., wrote: It seems to me that the theory of Revelation set forth by Canon Storr hardly accords with the actual facts before us—facts regarding the Scriptures and the Jews. Canon Storr would, in conformity with certain modern tendencies, regard the Bible as being a product of the national genius of the Jews, instead of being—as the Bible itself testifies—the Word of the God who first called the Jews to be His witnesses, and then rejected them for their incurable opposition to Himself. To judge of Revelation, we must compare the Books of the Bible with the other literary productions of the Jews. The contrast is, I believe, somewhat striking. So far from the Jews being nationally endowed to produce the Bible, their inveterate tendency as a nation was to obscure and explain away the unpleasant testimony of the Scriptures. From first to last the Jews opposed and slew those who came to them in the Name of Jehovah. Finally they slew the Christ Himself, and they continue as a nation to reject Him to this day. That does not look much like a special endowment.

Note, too, that such slaying and such rejection were themselves foretold in the Scriptures; as also the penalties which were to come

upon the Jews for the same. The *fact* of fulfilled prophecy—prophecies undoubtedly fulfilled to the letter hundreds of years after the last possible date for their promulgation—is utterly inexplicable upon any theory of "endowment." It is, in fact, a standing challenge to all who adopt any theory of Revelation but that of the Bible itself. And the force of the challenge is felt. The strangest ideas are propounded to belittle the facts. One of the crudest of these suggestions, perhaps, is the one which would refer the "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah to the Jewish nation, or even to a "faithful nucleus" of the same. Even Philip's Ethiopian had the critical sense to notice that the passage speaks of a single individual only, for he asked if it referred to the writer himself. Canon Storr asks (p. 120), "does not an individual Figure show itself on the canvas?" Unfortunately for the critics, nothing shows itself except an individual Figure.

Note one or two of the facts recorded about our Lord hundreds of years before His birth. He was to be of the family of David, to be born in Bethlehem, to appear before the second destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, to be rejected of the Jews, and yet sought of the Gentiles. All this came about. The greatest Jew who ever lived did appear as a descendant of David, born at Bethlehem. In spite of the superhuman beauty of His character He did suffer rejection and death at the hands of His own nation. Shortly afterwards the Temple and city of Jerusalem were destroyed for the second time by pagan hosts, and not long after that the extraordinary sight was seen of pagan creeds tottering to their fall before the rising Gentile faith in the rejected JEW. If anyone likes to pretend that such prophecies and such fulfilments are to be explained upon a basis of a national endowment of the Jews, he has something of a task before him. No adequate attempt to make good such a claim has, I submit, been offered by Canon Storr.

When we turn from considering the actual fact of Revelation, Canon Storr seems to ignore all testimony as to its method. He apparently assumes, in conformity with his theory, that when a prophet says: "The word of the Lord came to me," we are to understand nothing more definite than happens in our own everyday experience; allowing, of course, for the difference in national "endowment." He doubts (p. 119) if we can maintain that any definite proposition was communicated by revelation. It is hardly necessary

to point out that this is entirely opposed to the whole testimony of the prophets themselves, by whom the coming of the word of the Lord is invariably treated as being definitely objective to and wholly independent of themselves. And the " proposition " they quote as coming to them is generally definite to the last degree. That which came to Jonah was sufficiently definite and sufficiently foreign to his Jewish prejudices to cause his flight. Remember, too, the experience of the child Samuel; the objectiveness of the call, the unwelcome nature of the message, the exact forecast of the future. The fact that, the sense of the message having been imprinted upon Samuel's mind, the child might be allowed to pass it on in his own words, can afford no argument against the purely objective nature of the revelation. The visions of Daniel were so wholly objective that he could seldom understand them without a special interpretation, and his last revelations were not interpreted to him at all, on the grounds that they were not meant for him but for those who should live in the last days, who alone would understand them. The " still small voice " which came to Elijah was objective, and so were the thunderings on Sinai. Sometimes an objective vision was given to one party and its interpretation to another; reference may be made to the handwriting on the wall, seen by Belshazzar and all his company, which could be interpreted by Daniel alone. When the exact method by which the word came is not mentioned, the implication always is that the coming was definitely objective, nevertheless.

How are we to accept Canon Storr's statement that " there is no audible voice of God. . . except in the case of trance or ecstasy " (p. 119)? Was the child Samuel in a state of ecstasy when he ran to ask Eli if he had called him? Was Moses in a state of trance when addressed from the burning bush? Or Joshua, or Manoah and his wife, or the women at our Lord's sepulchre when addressed by the angels of God? The message in each case was definite enough, and if the experience was a trance it was a trance which simultaneously affected all present—rather an unconventional feature in a trance—while leaving them in complete possession of all their normal faculties. We repeatedly read of a voice from Heaven being heard by saints and sinners alike, and St. Paul owed his own conversion to an objective experience which struck him blind.

It seems clear that we must either regard all such stories as elaborate fiction, or we must accept belief in the direct interventions of God in the past to reveal His will to men in a manner as objective as when one man communicates with another.

I am glad to see that Canon Storr apparently believes in the Resurrection of our Lord. I hope that he uses the word "Resurrection" in the sense which involves an empty tomb. I regret that he declares sacrifice to have been no part of the original Revelation to the Jews. From beginning to end the testimony of Scripture is to the contrary, and the two texts which he quotes to prove his contention are overburdened by the construction he puts upon them. Amos was repudiating sacrifices to Moloch and Chiun (v, 26), and Jeremiah's words certainly cannot be taken as denying the institution of the Passover. The Book of Genesis teems with the record of sacrifices, both before and after the call of Abraham. The whole emphasis of Scripture is upon the BLOOD, without which is no remission of sins. It was as the sacrificial *Lamb* of God that the Baptist announced the Christ; the Son of Man came for the express purpose of giving His life as a *ransom* for many, and it is as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world that He appears before us in the last Book of the Bible.

The Rev. JOHN TUCKWELL, M.R.A.S., wrote: Canon Storr has presented the moderate Modernist view of the subject, which we can regard as authoritative. He has shown us how the theory of Evolution is applied to its exposition with the least possible intrusion of the supernatural. Intelligent and thoughtful persons find the solution of some of the difficulties presented without the use of any such materialistic lodestar.

I wish to point out that neither Nature nor Revelation can be accounted for without an unequivocal acknowledgment of the supernatural. The kosmos had a "beginning," and that "beginning" must have been due to an antecedent supernatural Almighty Power of Supreme Intelligence and with purposeful design.

Again, it appears to have been settled by undeniable scientific facts that all life, as we know it, is biogenetic. If that be so, then life cannot be accounted for by any theory of an evolution operating within the material elements of the world, and the conception of

an " emergent evolution " (p. 122) strikes one as a sort of backstairs way of escaping from the necessity of predicating the supernatural.

Again, whilst " His eternal power and Godhead " may, according to Rom. i, be deduced from the " things which are made," it is plainly manifest that only in the Volume of Inspiration have we an adequately full revelation of His character, will and purpose, in relation to His creature, man. In both spheres this revelation has been His own act and deed. In the Volume of Inspiration His revelation of Himself as our Creator is presented to us as the ground of His claim upon our obedience, service and love. Had He not revealed Himself thus, man could never have solved the mystery of his own origin, and it is upon this ground that the moral law, which is primitive and not Jewish, has been given.

Further, this fuller revelation has been necessary to solve the enigma of the remission of sins. The enigma was not in man's original condition, but came up with the entrance of sin. It is strange that the Canon should pass over the awful subject of sin with so little notice, and yet it is in that subject that the *raison d'être* for Scripture revelation exists. The " Plan of Salvation " cannot be found in evolution. Only God Himself, by the revelation of His own purpose and will, could tell us how He could be " just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Whatever an evolutionary process could be supposed to reveal to the whole race by slow degrees, it could not reveal to the individuals of a small minority of the race the whole body of truth contained in God's method of salvation—that the woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head; that the Second Person of the Eternal Trinity should become incarnate in human form; should by an amazing death meet the requirements of law and justice; should forgive the sins of him who believes, apart from his good works; should to the believer impart His Spirit to secure his final perseverance in the faith; should at death admit him to the everlasting fellowship of the Eternal and All-Holy God, and should one day rehabilitate the human spirit in a resurrected and glorified body. I say, these things could never have been known by an inquisitive search into the created universe by the flickering torchlight of an uncertain process to which, to conceal our ignorance, we give the name of ' Evolution."

The Canon's attempt to bring Jesus Christ under the evolution theory is halting, dubious and uncertain. He averts his eyes from the fact that our Lord's personal claim is hostile to it. He claims to be an extra-kosmic Person when He declares "I am come forth from the Father, and am come into the kosmos: again I leave the kosmos and go to the Father" (John xvi, 28).

It is strange also that, with so much learning, the Canon should fail to understand, that Jeremiah, in vii, 22 and 23, is adopting the Hebrew method of emphasizing the matter which is of superlative importance by ignoring the secondary, when he says (p. 119): 'For I spake not unto your fathers . . . concerning burnt offerings . . . saying, Hearken unto My voice, etc." What had God said? What commands were they to obey? "Obey My voice and I will be your God and ye shall be My people." When David said, in Ps. li, 4: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned," did he think, after his blazing indignation against the rich man in Nathan's parable, that he had done no wrong in his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah the Hittite? When our Lord said (John ix, 3): "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents," did He mean that absolutely or only relatively to the man's blindness? Or again, in John xii, 44: "Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me," did He mean that if we believe on Him we do not believe on Him? Similarly, Jeremiah was not stultifying himself in his rebukes of the "priests" and them "that handle the law," and denying the old Mosaic economy. How can a man be a priest who has no "sacrifices" to offer and no law to obey and teach?

May I, finally, remind the Canon that there can be no Christian experience without a previous knowledge of Christian Truth, and that the Modernist attempt to exalt Christian experience above the Scriptures is as dangerous to faith as it is essentially illogical.

The Rev. WILLIAM FISHER, M.A., wrote: On p. 118 of his paper Canon Storr says: "Jeremiah states explicitly that sacrifice was no part of the original revelation given to the nation." May I point out that, from the same evidence and by the same argument and ruling, the Ten Commandments were no part of that revelation? The words "Hearken unto My voice" do not occur in the

story of Sinai. Are they not a keynote or summary of God's purpose in the Mosaic dispensation? They include as naturally and of consequence the ceremonial as well as the moral institution. Whether commandment or sacrifice, the whole value was in obedience. In his quotation Canon Storr stops short of the words "And walk ye *in all the ways* that I have commanded." And what of the Passover?

Mr. W. HOSTE, B.A., wrote: I am sure Canon Storr has placed the Institute under a debt of gratitude by so kindly consenting to read his paper amid his many calls. As an *alumnus* of his old school, I started to read his thesis with a sympathy and interest he will readily understand. I venture a few remarks.

With all admiration for the lucid style and exposition of the author, I felt a little like Mahomet's coffin when I had read the paper, for while the substructure of the closing pages seems fairly solid, it gets less so as you go back, and at last seems to vanish altogether. But to start with the more substantial parts, on pp. 123 and 124, I question whether it would be wise to set aside miracles as a first line of defence, in favour of subjective experiences (p. 123), which are personal, or even "the character and consciousness of Jesus" (p. 124), which can be suppressed as easily as the miracles, if the record may be challenged, when convenient. Certainly miracles *per se* prove nothing, for the Antichrist will perform such (Rev. xiii). But our Lord could not have been the Messiah without them, as His appeal to Isa. lxi, in the Synagogue of Nazareth, shows. John expressly cites the "signs" our Lord performed to prove that He was "the Christ, the Son of God" (chap. xx, 30), and our Lord Himself frequently refers to His works as His prime credentials to the world (*e.g.* John x, 37; xiv, 11).

I am afraid an attempt to explain the miraculous in the Bible as a miraculous coincidence of natural circumstances is a "sop to Cerberus" which will satisfy neither Modernist nor Conservative. I find it difficult to accept as adequate the lecturer's definition of the prophetic ministry (on p. 119) as merely "a quickening of the religious consciousness of the prophets." Does this exhaust such words as "Men spake from God, moved by the Holy Ghost"? Why then did they need, as Peter tells us, to search and enquire diligently

as to the meaning of their own prophecies ? I think we may affirm without controversy that the prophets themselves took their ministry far more seriously (see *e.g.* Isa. vii, Jer. xxiii). I cannot suppress a feeling of surprise at the Canon's challenge on p. 119 : "I doubt," he writes, "if we can maintain that any definite proposition was communicated by revelation " (*i.e.* to a prophet). I fancy it would not be difficult to cite a score of such off-hand, and Keith, in his well-known work on Prophecy, quotes, I should think, hundreds. Only the day after reading this statement I happened on Isa. xxxix, where the prophet definitely foretells the Babylonish captivity, at that moment an undreamt-of contingency, as Assyria was the national enemy—and that a full century before the events took place to the very letter. Our Lord, too, says of Moses : " He wrote of Me " (*see* Deut. xviii, 15), where he definitely foretells the raising up of the Lord as a prophet ; and even the supposed " holy forger," of the Deuteronomy of the critics, must have had some prophetic gift, as Peter quotes this passage as referring to our Lord. Sir George Adam Smith writes in his *Book of Isaiah* (p. 267) : " What none but prejudiced Jews have ever denied, this great prophecy, known as the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, was fulfilled in one Person, Jesus of Nazareth, and achieved in all its details by Him alone."

But it is on p. 115 that the substructure seems to fade away into mist, namely, where the lecturer assumes the Hegelian theory of the evolution of the religious idea—from animism to polytheism, and thence to monotheism. But are not the reasons for such a theory more subjective than real ? Where in all the world have animists or polytheists been found evolving, apart from the Gospel, into true monotheists ? Is not the tendency rather for polytheism to merge into pantheism ? Indeed, the Word of God seems implicitly to deny that such a thing as Hegel's theory supposes has ever occurred, *e.g.* " Consider diligently and see if there be such a thing: Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods ? " (Jer. ii, 10, 11). But Israel changed her God into idols, and this is how, as we learn from Rom. i, idolatry came about. I think it would be as true to the facts to exhibit a tramp's rags as the original sartorial idea as to quote animism as the original religious idea. And the curious thing is that even the degraded fetishists of Central Africa

all believe, in theory, without any evolving, in a supreme God, a rag, one might say, of a primitive monotheism.

If man was made in the image of God and in communion with Him, but lost touch through sin, we at any rate know where we are ; but if the Hegelian hypothesis be true, then logically we must adopt a brand-new religion, and that is exactly what many are doing. As a Modernist writer in the *Christian Century* of January 17th, 1924, puts it : " Two world-views, two moral ideals, two sets of personal attitude have clashed, and it is a case of ostrich-like intelligence blindly to deny and evade the searching and serious character of the issue. Christianity according to Fundamentalism is one religion, Christianity according to Modernism is another religion." This witness is true. They will no more amalgamate than the iron and clay of Nebuchadnezzar's statue ; and I think the paper before us, though written with quite another object and spirit, goes to prove it.

Mr. G. B. MICHELL, O.B.E., wrote : The last five pages of this most interesting paper are very much better, and less questionable, than the earlier part of it. The essay appears to be an effort, laudable, no doubt, in intention, to infuse into the Modernist system the essential truth of Divine Revelation. To my mind, however, it will not succeed in conciliating Fundamentalists.

(1) In p. 114 there appears to be an assumption that any action on God's part not in accordance with " evolutionary science " would be " arbitrary." In p. 118 it is stated that not everything in the Old Testament is inspired " unless you adopt a theory of inspiration which it is surely quite impossible to square with modern knowledge." In p. 117, in speaking of the prophets, it is declared that " each writes in his own style, uses his own imagery ; there is no trace of mechanical dictation." In each of these assertions there is a *petitio principii* which cannot be conceded.

(2) In p. 114, again, it is claimed that " Stage succeeds stage in orderly evolution, and each stage prepares the way for the next," and in p. 115, " It is the ascending scale in Nature which is the important point." Here it is assumed that the varying degrees of complexity in organisms, from the simplest to the most highly organized, form an arithmetical progression in time—a theory which is far from being proved.

(3) In p. 115 an important fallacy is stated thus: "Having made them, having given them this desire for God, this reaching out after a beyond, will not God want to reveal Himself to them according to their capacity at any stage to grasp such a revelation?" Yet in p. 116, *Love* is said to be essentially a self-revealing power. Would it wait to reveal itself until its object had attained, after a very long process of evolution, a certain stage of capacity to grasp it? Such is not the Bible doctrine.

(4) In p. 117 a specious, but erroneous, theory is expressed of the development of religion, viz.: "The crudities and superstitions which attach to religious beliefs, more markedly in their earlier growth, are due to man; yet the fact that there has been an advance in religion, that animism and polytheism have given place to monotheism, and that monotheism has become more ethical, is indication that there has been divine control of the whole movement."

Now crudities and superstitions are by no means characteristic of the *earlier growth* of religion only, or even more markedly. They are as characteristic of the present day as they ever were, and in the highest civilizations.

Nor is there any proof of this supposed advance. Animism and polytheism have not given place to monotheism, nor has monotheism become more ethical. Quite the contrary. Monotheism certainly did not grow out of any less pure source. No heathen philosopher, either Greek, Indian, Egyptian or other, ever conceived a God at all like unto Jehovah. It is not a question of *degree*, but of essential *nature*. The attempt to show that the conception of Jehovah was a gradual growth in Israel is an absolute failure. It was a full and complete *revelation* from the first. The revelation of Jehovah never was either less or more "ethical." It was perfect and uncompromising from the beginning, and other forms of monotheism are either a parody or a poor human attempt at it.

(5) The propositions given in pp. 118 and 119 cannot be conceded for a moment. The truer conception of God in Israel owed nothing to the material of any ethnic religion. The latter certainly led the nation, not gradually and progressively, but promptly and rapidly, into ever-deepening disaster. The whole of this earlier part of

Canon Storr's otherwise valuable paper is vitiated by these unfortunate fallacies. It is to be hoped that some, at least, of the victims of the Modernist deception may be led by the latter part to re-examine with an honest mind the crumbling bases of this system.

In dismissing the assembly, SIR GEORGE KING, exercising his privilege as Chairman, remarked that personally he held the older view with a conviction as deep as that with which the reader of the paper held the newer.