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1911.

THE 516TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

WAS HELD IN

THE LECTURE HALL OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF
ARTS, BY KIND PERMISSION, ON MONDAY, 3RD APRIL,
1911, AT 4.30 P.M.

THE VENERABLE THE ARCHDEACON OF LONDON TOOK THE
CHAIR.

The Minutes of the preceding meeting were read and confirmed. The names of two Associates, Major Henry Pelham Burn and Wilson Edwards Leslie, Esq., elected by the Council this day, were announced.

The Rev. Canon Girdlestone was then invited to read his paper.

INDICATIONS OF A SCHEME IN THE UNIVERSE.

By the Rev. Canon R. B. GIRDLESTONE, M.A.

THE universe is practically infinite and eternal. To know it you must study things material and immaterial; things past, present, and future; things below and above; things good and evil. If a philosopher could live a million years and were in a position to estimate all movements physical and spiritual, and if he understood the bearing of each part on the whole, he would have taken a step in the direction of the scheme of the universe; but he would have even then to say, Who is sufficient for these things? Meanwhile undeterred by difficulties, astronomers are photographing the heavens and studying the ways of some hundreds of thousands of stars; physicists are forming theories to account for the *minutiae* of material existence; and biologists are probing the beginnings of life, animal and vegetable. These students of nature meet together (*e.g.*, in the British Association) and go over the border into one another's domains; they compare results, detect analogies, and as a consequence they proclaim with one voice the Unity of Nature.

This is something. It testifies to the power of the human mind to detect oneness of principle beneath the manifold presentations of sense, and to get above the transient into the sphere of the permanent—or at least the comparatively permanent.

It is evidently an attribute of man to speculate, to observe, and to draw conclusions. If you pay a visit to the Zoological Gardens you will notice the anxious and careworn faces of apes. They look as if the problems of existence were too much for them. But it is all facial; nothing comes of it. It is not so, however, with man. If he has not innate ideas he certainly has innate tendencies and capacities reaching far beyond the struggle for daily existence, pushing backwards and forwards in time, and onwards and upwards in space. Some men are born explorers; they do pioneer work in Africa or New Guinea, in Mars or Sirius, or perhaps they devote a lifetime to the habits of a particular beetle, microbe, or element. Every phenomenon has a history. What led up to it? and what follows after it? The answer never completely satisfies us, but it stimulates us to further research, and then, when we seem nearer our goal than ever before, we have to hand on our torch to others, and we die.

To put it shortly (as Mr. George de Tunzelmann says in his late work on the *Problem of the Universe*, chap. xxiv), mind is always unifying nature. Every man has a vested interest in the world and a share in the universe. He is not a mere lump of organised matter, but is gifted with energy, will, intelligence, purposive action, which put him *en rapport* with the First Cause of nature. Man is God's prime minister upon earth. It may be true that the protoplasm of a mushroom is physically indistinguishable from the protoplasm of a man, but there is that mind-stuff in the man associated with the brain cell—but not secreted by it (as Haeckel vainly teaches)—which is intended to fit him for his high office. The passage from moneron to man is a very extended one, and an unseen hand has been engaged on it all the way up. Evolution is meaningless without Elevation. It is God who lifts up at every step and stage, and He has not finished yet. His Word stands for the expression of His mind and purpose, and the processes of nature are the letters which spell out the Divine message, and it is our business to decipher these letters. For a late and full development of this thought let me refer to Dr. Wallace's last and best book, *The World of Life*, in which, after forty years of reflection, he has advanced to the position that the elements, the cells, the processes of germination, growth and variation, the cosmic changes which contribute to variation of species—all imply an infinite and absolute Creator of all that exists or can exist. All is planned by His mind and effected (primarily) by His *fiat*.

Of course all this sounds anthropomorphic. When we talk of a scheme we are importing the idea of mind into the universe, whilst to talk of chance is to import mindlessness. If variations which are casual, *i.e.*, unintentional to the creature which embodies them, prove to be important links in a long chain leading up to a fixed species, then as we look upon such species we say there is mind here, only not the mind of the clay, but of the potter. We hear much of town-planning at present, but there is universe-planning also—many mansions, but one house. In warfare a good general leaves nothing to chance. He has his objective, and everything must lead up to its completion. So it must be in the work of the Divine Commander. A little girl imagines life in a doll because she detects signs of life within and around herself. Her mistake is that she (unconsciously) argues from the greater to the less. But a grown up man argues from the less to the greater. He says, "Every building is made by some one. He that built all things is God." He sees and feels the marks of variety, order, progression, vitality, persistence; and above all he detects a harmony between the inner and the outer world, and recognises that whilst his body is of earth his mind is of heaven, and he—the mystic self—is the bond of union between the two.

It is the conviction of modern science that all nature was originally invisible. "The things which are seen are not made of things which appeal to the senses" (Heb. xi, 3). They may perhaps be reduced to one imponderable, ethereal, or electrical substance which we could hardly call matter. Whatever it was, there must have been plenty of it disseminated through what seems to us infinite space. Lord Kelvin, writing of the bulk of the universe, suggests that the total amount of matter in the known universe equals a thousand million times the mass of our sun; hence you are to picture to yourselves a thousand million suns disseminated in minute particles or atoms uniformly throughout this gigantic sphere and gradually falling together in nebulous masses. At first the density would be imperceptibly small, and as they shrank together they would take nearly 17,000,000 years to reach a sixth of the density of water (supposing the particles came together with the velocity of light). At length, there would be nebulae—then solar systems—then worlds. Collisions would give rise to heat, and light, which would be radiated away through the ether, the cooling of condensing masses would give solid bodies, collisions between which would yield meteoric stones. Here is the story of creation written by a devotee of physical science and of Biblical

truth. Other writers, *e.g.*, Professor Oliver Lodge, reduce all material existence into electric *ions*, and thus as Mr. Balfour said in his British Association address (Camb., 1904), "Two centuries ago electricity seemed but a scientific toy, now it is deemed to be the reality of which matter is but the sensible expression, each atom being a store of intrinsic energy, and matter itself not so much explained as explained away."

This invisible, inaudible, impalpable, imponderable substance was originally brought into existence by a higher Power in sufficient quantities to people all space with worlds and their inhabitants. To us it seems practically eternal, but it may be the continuous product of mind-force, according to the grand saying, "my Father worketh hitherto and I work"; and consequently it is still theoretically dissoluble. The elements of which the universe is composed may still melt with fervent heat, and as in the beginning God created, so in the end God may destroy. Energy is conserved, but it is also dissipated. The forces of nature may be locked up as if in a box of infinite dimensions, but God has the key, and in Him all things consist.

Our ideas of time and space are evidently at fault here. Geological time and stellar space are as nothing. I must not go into the controversy between Lord Kelvin and Professor Huxley on uniformity in geology, in which the latter protested against the limits laid down by the former, who held that earth was fluid a thousand million years ago. It is more important to affirm in Lord Kelvin's words uttered in 1906, that "Science affirms creative power and makes everyone feel a miracle in himself"; he adds "we are forced by science to believe in a directive power—in an influence other than physical or dynamical or electrical forces."

In all that I have been saying I have been appealing to your mind. But what is mind? Who can tell? Confessedly "two worlds are ours." Our researches into nature are incomplete without an enquiry into the spirit world. Where is it? Wherever there is spiritual personality, human or superhuman. It is vast in some sense, for it includes millions of beings known and unknown to us, but the laws of time and space are not fully applicable to it. To God, whose home it is, darkness is no darkness, distance is no distance, and a day is as 1,000 years; He fills the celestial universe with His presence. All our English prepositions involve locality, and we are obliged to use such words as "up," "down," "within," etc., in reference to the spirit world though only partly applicable. We look up to heaven as Christ did, but this is not absolutely necessary, for

the whisper of our spirit reaches His spirit in a moment. Praise, prayer, love, submission to the dictates of conscience, and all other foundations of true character, belong to the spirit world. God himself is spirit, invisible, impalpable, infinite, eternal, the fountain of all force and goodness. The word "spirit" in most languages is only an illustration drawn either from the movement of the air or wind which are the simplest signs of an unseen force, or from the act of breathing, which is the simplest expression of feeling.

What is the bond of union between these two worlds? It is the human personality, that which is conscious, thinks, feels, strives, and which takes in and gives out energy in two directions, above and below. It floats like a cork on the water; its lower surface in relation to the material world, its upper in relation to the pure air of heaven. Owing to the poverty of human language the word $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$, or soul, has to do duty both for this mysterious personality, and also for its capacity for dealing with things earthly through the agency of brain, nerve and sense, a capacity which we treat now under the words psychology and physiology. But there are (in some persons lying dormant and in others in full activity) energies and inspirations which draw out ourselves, souls, minds and activities in the direction of the spirit world, which is described as "that which is above," as contrasted with that which is of the earth.

The order of human nature seems to be first the physical, cosmic or psychical, then the spiritual or hyper-cosmic; and the nomenclature of the first has to do duty by way of illustration to the second. Which of the two is final, permanent and supreme? Can there be any doubt? We appreciate physical excellence, but we pine for moral perfection, and above all—in our best moments—for union with the Author of our existence. The physical, which practically means psychical, is the scaffolding, but moral and spiritual character is the real building, with a view to which the scaffolding is erected. Scaffolding is costly; it takes a long time to prepare; it is all arranged for a definite purpose; and when that purpose is attained it is taken down, though marks and indications of it may sometimes be detected on the surface of the completed structure. The things of time and space are not useless; they supply working models and types, but after all the things which are seen are temporary, the things which are not seen are permanent.

It is believed that the embryos of all animals (and plants?) pass

in a few days or weeks through stages corresponding with the whole presumed course of ancestral evolution, and this is supposed to have needed millions of years. I sometimes wonder whether all these millions were really necessary for the production, say, of the first man. I also wonder whether shorter stages of existence between an ovum and an infant could be devised by a professor of embryology which should be simpler and should have no reference to the supposed line of ancestry from an amœba. At any rate, the physical universe has been built up in slow stages, and while pronounced very good it may be regarded as incomplete at present, but it is making its way towards completeness.

We should all accept some such scheme as is thus indicated if all went well with the human race; but it does not. Evil mars the divine handiwork and frustrates the divine purpose. It is simply appalling in character and extent. We have not only to face hardship—that might be good for character—but we find ourselves a prey to godlessness, selfishness, lust, cruelty, and a thousand other vices, all branches of one tree which the Bible characterises as sin, *i.e.*, failure or a missing of the mark. We did not personally invent this evil thing. The tendency or proneness to it is an inheritance, and we trace it back to an early catastrophe described clearly in Gen. iii in language which every child can understand.

Let us not spend much time in wondering who the enemy was who sowed tares in the divine field, but rather let us ask whether the Being who brought all things into existence has recognised the failure of His plan, and has taken any steps to bring order out of disorder, to restore the lost, to liberate the captive, and to renew man's adoring love for his Creator.

With this end it would be vain to look to such ethical and social teachers as Buddha and Confucius, to such an analyst as Aristotle, or to such an idealist as Plato. We find ourselves compelled to look to the smallest of all lands, Canaan, and to the most stubborn of all peoples—Israel. We have to study their sacred books which are so candid and yet so hopeful, and then to concentrate our attention on one Being. His character, His teaching, and His beneficent labours do more to give us an idea of God than we can get in any other way. But His public and unmerited death, when only thirty-three, is a shock to our moral sense, until we learn that it was submitted to—tasted—for a reason, and was immediately followed by a risen and glorified life, which has brought light, life, and hope to the door of every human heart.

Now, no religion commends itself to our reason and conscience which does not deal victoriously with evil. We could not dictate time or means, but we ought to be able to recognize the Conqueror if He came, and to appreciate His work when it is finished. Only God could send Him, or shall I say, lend Him, and appoint the programme.

The Christian believes and knows that God gives us the victory over evil through Jesus Christ. It is true, we do not yet see all things put under His feet. Quite the contrary. But we see a beginning made in the life, death and resurrection of Christ? We see that He is practically now saving men, helping them by the gift of His Spirit to live a pure unselfish life, bringing them to God, to self-respect, to hope. Thus we have got a scientific test of the mission of Christ.* We have a glimpse of the purpose of God in a reclaimed human race. We have a prospect not of *no* heaven and earth, but of a *new* heaven and earth. A spiritual Kingdom is already set up amidst physical and debased surroundings. The senses tell us of these, but the God-sent Spirit gives us a share in the other. Time and space, history, Providence, prayer, praise, conflict, suffering, are all turned to account. Spiritual stones are being fashioned for a spiritual Temple, and the problem of the universe is, to the Christian, an open secret. It is described by those who ought to know as "the bringing of many sons unto glory" (Heb. ii, 10), or in other words, their being conformed to the mind and character of Christ, "that He might be the first born among many brethren" (Rom. viii, 29).

We thus arrive at the following conclusions:—

- (1) Judging the unknown by the (comparatively) known, we have every reason to believe that the Universe is One.
- (2) Interpreting the elaborate mechanism of Nature by

* The appeal to Conversion as a proof of the mission of Christ is an ancient one. Thus Origen (born c. A.D. 180) writes, "The whole habitable world contains evidence of the works of Jesus in the existence of these Churches of God which have been founded through Him by those who have been converted from the practice of innumerable sins. The name of Jesus can still remove distractions from the minds of men, and expel demons, and also take away diseases, and produce a marvellous meekness of spirit and complete change of character and a humanity and goodness and gentleness in those who do not feign themselves to be Christians for the sake of subsistence or the supply of any mortal wants, but who have heartily accepted the doctrine concerning God and Christ and the Judgment to come." (Origen, 29, and Celsus, 1, 67.)

- the analogy of human products, the Universe, though apparently working automatically, has intelligent Force and Purpose behind it.
- (3) The alternative view—that nature is the result of Chance and has no Mind at the back of it—is untrue to the dictates of human intelligence and deprives us of the possibility of adoring a Being higher than ourselves.
 - (4) If the gulf between a human inventor and his work is vast, no human being can expect to grasp the height and depth of the Divine Author of the Universe which includes man himself. Yet we find ourselves driven to search for Him.
 - (5) The problem is more severe because while we have instincts in the direction of goodness and righteousness, we find ourselves entangled in a web of evil, physical and moral and all the World cries out, Who shall deliver us?
 - (6) Help has come both for the relief of the speculative mind and for the liberating of the enslaved soul from the very Being whom we regard as the original Author of the Universe. We have life, light, liberty in Christ, the Son and Word of the living God.
 - (7) To sum up. The physical element in the Universe is subservient to the moral and spiritual. Evil cannot form part of the moral scheme in its completeness, but it is being over-ruled to draw out the depths of the divine character, which is infinite love, and which is manifested in the mission of Christ.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN said: I am sure we are all very grateful indeed to the Canon for his very thoughtful paper. I will not attempt to say very much myself about it, but it appears to me that we may regard the Almighty Being from whom everything else proceeded as the summary of all the necessary truths and laws of existence, physical and moral. These laws are necessary. We cannot possibly imagine that this self-existent summary and origin of law is unconscious. If we do so, then we have the terrible alternative of the production of everything by blind chance. There is, therefore,

this omnipotent, omnipresent Being. We must think of Him as having a desire to cause a reflex of Himself so as to be surrounded by beings capable of acknowledging and appreciating Him, but differing from Himself individually. His thought was reflected in the ether or ions. Then began the elementary processes of chemical affinity. The fact that the results of these processes were orderly and progressive, shows that they were not the result of chance, but of plan and law. Here we are confronted of course with the very prominent effects of failure and imperfection in the progress of development. It appears that the Almighty mind would not force perfection, else all would have been perfect but uninteresting. The atoms were allowed to arrange themselves according to laws, principles and ideals—but with freedom and without compulsion. This led to an endless and invaluable variety. This was finally the case with man, no compulsion, but a large amount of freedom, and the result of the conflict of good and evil demonstrates every day of our lives the persistent tendency of good to prevail. We see the grand processes of the universe going on at the present moment. There are the vast nebulae and the clouds of cosmic dust. When some burning star blazes forth it seems to be a world which has come to an end. We recognize that there is much that is mysterious and many difficulties that we can never solve, but there is enough to convince us of a loving and almighty Mind in which we can put our trust.

Mr. HOWARD said: It is most important in considering this valuable paper to note the absolute necessity which there appears to be in the human mind to acknowledge a guiding force in nature. The habit of the human mind of trying to grasp the whole, to rise from the particular to the general is inherent, and there seems no escape from the necessity of viewing the Universe as a whole and governed by intelligence or at least by law. It is quite true that you may go no further than the philosophers who spoke of *ὁ ὅλον* rather than of *τὸ πᾶν*, but the idea of unity you must have.

Now some have thought that evolution might explain creation without a Creator, but we find laws of evolution recognised by the very people who would escape from the idea of first cause. What is a law without a law-giver? And if it is anthropomorphism to speak of an intelligent law-giver is it less so to speak of laws at all? Our whole conception of law is human. And why should we

so dread the accusation of anthropomorphism, if we are made in the image of God in a sense that is not true of the animal, must not that higher intelligence so given be the only means of arriving at any idea of God, however imperfect. Of course, our words and ideas are imperfect, our best expressions are derived from imperfect analogies and necessarily imperfect. And as for the certainty of science, the expressions we use are just equally imperfect and bear etymological analysis even worse than those of Theology. And the ideas they express are incessantly varying. What are atoms, what is ether, what is light, what is force ?

Mr. MARTIN ROUSE, B.A., said : Blind nature is represented by one of its greatest forces ; the ocean, although at work for ages, produces no organism or mechanism, but only a few rounded stones ; a single man by his intellect thinks out and builds up a clock. A tree is a machine far excelling a clock, in that every year it winds itself up and makes fresh wheels, in the shape of leaves, flowers, and fruit in and by means of which its sap is drawn up and rotates ; so a tree must have taken a far superior intellect to design and construct it. How infinitely superior, then, must have been the intellect which has stored within every such machine a large number of like machines, ready after a few years to do the same work, and within each of those machines a large number more, and so onward to a thousand generations.

At the completion of the house in which God's glory was to abide, Solomon exclaimed, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth ? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." Yet in the same prayer he appealed to Jehovah for both present and future help in the words, "Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and when thou hearest forgive and do." It is clear, then, that the Heavenly Father is said to be everywhere, because His knowledge of all that goes on in His universe is perfect, and His power perfect to deal with all, but that there is one part of the universe remote from us in which He sits to control every part. And His attendant spirits do not, as some men imagine, move from one part to another with the rapidity of thought ; for Gabriel, whose usual station is before His throne,* being commanded "at the beginning" of Daniel's long prayer and confession to bring comfort

* Cf. Luke i, 19.

to the prophet, and being "caused to fly swiftly," touched him "at the time of the evening sacrifice,"* evidently a good while later. With the rapidity of light is a far likelier estimate of an angel's progress; and perhaps we may venture to think that of God's own movements.†

It has been suggested by Mr. R. W. Newell, the American preacher, on the strength of several allusions in Holy Writ, that God's dwelling-place lies within the circle of the pole stars, to which the earth's axis always points, slowly rotating around it in 26,000 years: he cites Ezekiel i, 4, where the glory of God with its attendant cherubim is seen coming from the north; he also cites Psalm lxxv, 6, where we read, "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, but God is the judge; He putteth down one and setteth up another"; and he cites Isaiah xiv, 13 (R.V.), where to Lucifer the inward thought is ascribed, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; And I will sit upon the mount of congregation in the uttermost parts of the north." And to these evidences one may perhaps add from Job xxxvii, 22 (R.V.), "Out of the north cometh golden splendour; with God is terrible majesty."

Whence comes the present day aversion to anthropomorphism? In Genesis i we read that the triune God said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness," and this could hardly have referred to the intellect of man, since not to speak of its finite character it did not include the knowledge of good and evil which God possessed; and again in the description of Jehovah's glory, given in Ezekiel i, we read, that above the cherubim and their crystal canopy was "the likeness as the appearance of a man" seated upon a throne.

After the melting points of rocks had been ascertained Lord Kelvin reduced his estimate of the earth's age to twenty-four million years.

Lieut.-Colonel MACKINLAY said: I am sure we all unite heartily with our Chairman in thanking Canon Girdlestone for his excellent and suggestive paper.

The reign of law seen in nature is also to be recognised in the political world. A kingdom grows in power until it becomes

* Dan. ix, 21, 23.

† Cf. Matt. xxiv, 27.

paramount for some time in all the earth, but after a while it waxes old, as does the individual, and another takes its place. Laws have ruled these changes.

But the history of the Jews is a standing marvel; long dispossessed of their land they have remained a scattered people, many of them endowed with very great powers of intellect in statesmanship, business, arts, and sciences. Who can doubt that they have a great future? But why are they thus preserved? In the Bible we are told that they were divinely selected, and their present condition was long ago prophesied.

In the Scriptures we meet with grand unities. All creation and rule is ascribed to one God. No local god, or gods of the different forces of nature are recognised. In its spiritual teaching also a grand unity pervades the Book, written as it was in different ages; for instance, it is explained in the Epistle to the Hebrews that the arrangements of the ancient Tabernacle refer again and again to the Lord Jesus Christ. Consistently throughout the Bible it is taught that all men have sinned, that one Saviour died for us, one Mediator between man and God is pointed to throughout. A grand unity pervades the whole.

In Heb. i, 2 and 3, the One by whom the worlds were made is spoken of as the One who made purification for our sins. A grand Unity, supreme in both the physical and spiritual spheres.

Observing then the thread of unity in God's world of nature, we naturally look for a similar harmony in His spiritual revelation, we are not disappointed in our expectation.

The Rev. E. SEELEY said: Both the last speaker and the Canon showed us that Christ's work glorifies the scheme that they see in the Universe. May I suggest that the Scriptures authorize speaking much more confidently than they have spoken.

St. Paul's epistles tell us of "the Eternal Purpose of God" (Eph. i-iii, Col. i, and I Cor. ii, 7).^{*} This assures us that there is "a Scheme in the Universe," Divine and wonderful.

Why did Christ come? was it really to undo a failure of God's Plan, as many think?

Those who so regard it fail to see the grandeur of God's Scheme in the Universe.

^{*} More fully treated by E. Seeley in a volume in the library of the Victoria Institute entitled *The Great Reconciliation*.

When did God plan the Atonement? St. Paul tells us, "Before the foundation of the World." It was before the creation of man, and therefore before and not after the Fall.

The statements correspond with the acts of God: for after the Fall, instead of destroying the pair of sinners and beginning afresh, He let them live a mortal life and become the parents of a fallen race. From this we may infer that He intended that the human race should have the experience and discipline of conflict with evil.

"The Eternal Purpose" that included the creation of man and the incarnation of Christ that He might be the perfect Man and the true "Image of God," and the Saviour to raise up for God a people like Himself; included also Christ's conflict with evil, His sufferings and death, His victory, His atonement for sin, and His glory.

So it seems also necessarily to include the permission of the Fall and the subjection of the human race to "the bondage of corruption," in order that Christ's people may follow Him through suffering and conflict to victory and conformity to the image of Christ, and become sharers with Him in the glory of the perfect world hereafter; being not merely without actual sin like little babes, but experienced in conflict and victors over moral evil.

The recognition of this glorious future as the realisation of "the Scheme in the Universe" according to "the Eternal Purpose of God," may give us much comfort in the consideration of many moral mysteries that can only baffle and distress us if we try to unravel them without the aid of Divine Revelation.

Dr. WITHERS GREEN said: In the history of the creation in Genesis man became a living soul. It is particularly stated that they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. They were more spiritually minded than bodily minded. After the fall their natures were inverted, so that they became predominantly carnal. God's scheme in the universe is to restore man to spiritual excellency. The great means God has used are leaders, judges, and judgments, priests, and prophets, and last of all His eternal Son and the Holy Ghost. Man is tripartite—spirit, soul, and body. The soul or *pysche* is intermediate and does not change its place, being dominated by the uppermost of the trio, be it spirit or body. Education by enlarging the sphere of the *psyche* has militated against the strength of the body. Are not men acknowledging the spirit more in their daily lives. The artist becomes vegetarian,

and even fasts to some extent, in order that the spirit may be keener and less belaboured by the body, so that more of the spirit of the subject is seen in the picture. When Carlyle and Tennyson "had a fine time together," though in silence, was this not spiritual? Folk are wanting more help for seeking advice for their spirits rather than their bodies. The increased leadings of evil spirits is seen in more lunacy, the greater power of good spirits in arbitration *vice* war. Do not these considerations make the promise of accord *instead* of discord in "a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv, 44) less incomprehensible.

Professor ORCHARD said: I am sure we shall all very heartily second the thanks which the Chairman of Council has proposed to our learned and able reader of the paper to which we have listened. A paper thoughtfully suggestive and suggestively thoughtful which had one great demerit, which was that the quantity did not correspond with the quality. It was far too short. The philosophic author has quite proved his point, and shown that there are indications of a scheme in the universe, that indeed the processes of nature are letters of a definite message, and it is our business to decipher that message. Undoubtedly that is so.

On page 164, I think, reference is made to the evolutionist doctrine, that every embryo, to whatever species it may belong, passes in a few days or weeks through stages corresponding with the whole presumed course of ancestral evolution. Darwin himself admits that the picture of the supposed progenitor is more or less obscure. In point of fact it is more obscure than less. Several of the more important works are absent. Von Baer and Huxley both say that embryos are similar to one another, but do not say that they are identical in character. At the International Congress* held at Cambridge a few years ago mention was made of discoveries, by Professors Hill and Hubrecht, of differences in these embryos. There must be differences, because, if they are placed in one and the same environment, a different result occurs. A duck's embryo produces a duck, a hen's embryo produces a hen, though both embryos are hatched by the same bird. The one plausible argument for the evolution theory (besides structural resemblance) is thus destroyed.

On the third paragraph of page 164 we read of "the failure of God's

* At which the evolutionist, Haeckel, was present, and spoke.

plan." Apparently it ought to read "the apparent failure of His plan." A printer's error, possibly. To suppose that God could fail in anything is, of course, absurd on the face of it. Whatever made Him fail would be greater than He, therefore God would not be God; one greater than He, and more powerful would be God. God's plans may often seem to fail, but do they really fail? Never, they could not fail. Who shall contend with God? Who shall say He shall not do this or that? There is an apparent failure, no doubt; there is the mystery of evil. It is a mystery, and yet we say that evil is, as was pointed out a little while ago, necessary for the perfecting of moral character in man. How could there be love of enemies, how could there be long-suffering and forgiveness, how could there be these things, if there were no such thing as evil? No doubt the devil thought he had gained a wonderful victory when he persuaded men to nail the Prince of Life to the Cross. Yet was it not for this cause that the Saviour came? Satan's victory was apparent only. We may perhaps compare the Divine purpose and plan to some great wheel advancing towards the great goal—the greater glory of God and the blessedness therefore of His creatures. As this wheel goes on towards that goal, the lower portion of it is moving in exactly the opposite direction to that of the wheel as a whole. A part of the wheel is going backwards, but the wheel itself is going straight forward. This backward movement is necessary. Now I think we have here perhaps some illustration of how evil is really being made by God's infinite power, wisdom, and love, to subserve His will. Evil is evil, but evil when God over-rules it, when God takes it in hand, is made to carry out God's grand purpose. We have many instances of this in history, where wicked men become the instruments of Divine judgment. Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to Him be glory for ever! We shall quite agree with the conclusion of the Author, that the law of the universe is that the physical element is subservient to the moral and spiritual. When the wheel reaches its goal, then the backward movement of the lower portion stops. "Evil cannot form part of the moral scheme in its completeness, but it is being over-ruled to draw out the depths of the Divine character, which is infinite LOVE, and which is manifested in the mission of Christ"; and (may we not add?) to produce, in moral and spiritual beings, a character conformed thereto.

Canon GIRDLESTONE, in replying, said: I have to draw your attention to three points which have been mentioned. A suggestion was made by Dr. Withers Green concerning the development of the spiritual over the physical, and it will be an interesting topic to work out. With regard to Lord Kelvin, I believe the passage as I have it on page 161 was taken accurately from a paper in his life (p. 1162). The only other point is Professor Orchard's charitable hope that the word "apparent" was left out of page 164 by the printer. I am afraid I must acknowledge that it was not the printer but the author. Obviously, the word "apparent" should have been put in to show that what seems a failure is not a failure.

The Rev. J. J. B. COLES writes:—The ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς of Ephes. i, 10, gives us, as we know, the Purpose of God with reference to Christ and the Church in connection with the whole created Universe, and is a fuller revelation than that which is contained in those Scriptures, the scope or range of which does not go beyond matters relating to a "New heaven and a new earth." As a single solar system or local star-cluster is but a very small portion of the entire stellar universe or universes—so the scope of those scriptures which relate only to this earth and its immediate heavenly surroundings (and their future renewal) is but a very limited one in comparison with the scope of the later Epistles of St. Paul, which have a range transcending human thought. No philosophy which aims at a unification of knowledge relating to "GOD, Man and the Universe" can ever surpass or even attain to the comprehensiveness of that system of Truth which is revealed by the Spirit of God, in Ephesians and Colossians. The future glory of the Risen and Ascended Christ as "Protokos" of the whole created Universe of God is as difficult to apprehend as are the vastness and sublimity of the realms of space revealed by modern up-to-date telescopes and star maps. By the death of Christ on the Cross God was glorified before the whole created Universe, in all His attributes, both absolute attributes and relative ones, and by that Cross sin was *morally* put out of His Universe, as it will be *actually* before long, both from the "heavenlies" and from this world, by the exercise of Divine Power, Might and Majesty. Christ, by the sacrifice of Himself, accomplished this eternal purpose of God. We, who in the riches of His grace have been redeemed by that finished work of the Cross, are now in possession of a synthetic philosophy which includes the otherwise insoluble problem of moral and spiritual evil, the origin of which is traced back, as we know, to a higher order of created beings than man.