

sophical considerations and by the light it introduces into the otherwise confused data of human history, the fact of its application leading to conclusions that may seem beforehand to be undesirable would not in itself be a valid objection. On the other hand the prophetic estimate of the fundamental elements of religion is too important a fact to be overlooked. But if we bear in mind that development and progress are two quite different things and that the field which comes within the range of our observation is only a limited portion of human history, it will readily appear that there need not be any conflict between these two positions. Further, if, as I continue to believe, we may accept the child in his development as best reflecting the history of the race, we seem to have a solution of this difficulty at hand. Monotheism would seem to be, from a psychological point of view, the earliest form of conception of God of which the race was capable, but it is a far cry from this unreasoned form of monotheism of man's childhood and that other form which the long experience of the race would enable humanity ultimately to entertain.

When we look on the other side of the account, that is the practical advantage with which our new theological disciplines will equip the Christian, we will be further persuaded to extend a welcome to the new-comers. As one who has had experience in the mission field, I can readily appreciate the immense advantage one is at in dealing with non-Christian peoples if he is able to regard those religious systems which have been held dear by multitudes of reverent souls as steps in the process of the self-revelation of God, which find their true explanation in the universal religion toward which they are feeling their way, rather than as monstrous systems of delusion and error. But within the Christian Church I think they have a service no less important which they can render. If the ultimate goal of Christian experience is to arrive at a consciousness of God, and an ever-deepening consciousness of God, everywhere, in all things, then the service which will be rendered by the interpretation of things given by this method of study becomes obvious.

In defining my subject, "Voices out of the Past," by the additional phrase "Supernatural Selection a Key to the History of Religion," I mean to convey that as one examines the milestones in the history of religion he will find great events transpiring in human history and in the unfolding of the conceptions of the race that require for their explanation the hypothesis of the prophet, that is of the direct revelation of God to those men of outstanding spiritual genius who have been endowed with this special capacity to commune with and to understand the Divine mind. In other words, as religion has been the indispensable instrument in the development of civilization so has the prophet been the indispensable agent of religion. This, I think,