

THE BIBLE DEFENDED

FROM

RELIGIOUS UNBELIEF.


A REVIEW

OF

FOUR LECTURES

*Delivered in 'St. Mary's' Church, Nottingham, by four Church of England
Clergymen, viz.,*

MR. SYMES, MR. RICHARDSON, MR. WILSON AND MR. BAYNES.

The Review of the first two lectures by Mr. H. SULLEY, of Nottingham,
and of the last two lectures by 

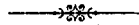
MR. J. J. ANDREW, OF LONDON,

(Author of "Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.")

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ERRATA.—PAGE 14, line 37, for "page 73" read *page 11* ; PAGE 15, line 11, read the full stop after "sense" and not after "originally;" PAGE 21, half way down, instead of "cannot search and find God," read *cannot by searching find out God*.

INTRODUCTORY.

FOUR Lectures were recently delivered in "St. Mary's" Church, Nottingham, the first on December 2nd, by the "Rev." Professor Symes, M.A.; the second on December 16th, by the "Rev." John Richardson, M.A.; the third on December 23rd, by the "Rev." J. M. Wilson, head master of Clifton College; and the fourth on December 30th, by the "Rev." A. H. Baynes, curate of St. Mary's. The subjects of those lectures were as follows:—1st, "GOD;" 2nd, "THE BIBLE, WHAT IT TEACHES AND WHAT IT DOES NOT TEACH;" 3rd, "MIRACLES;" 4th, "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

The respective meetings were convened in the afternoon by posters inviting "believers and unbelievers"—and arrangements were made for public discussion in the evening following each lecture.

A number of Bible believers attended these lectures in the hope of hearing some explanation of the difficulties of belief, which present themselves even to some of those who accept the Scriptures as divine. It was, therefore, a matter of surprise that no attempt was made to realise this hope, the addresses being to secularists alone, although not so announced upon the posters. Doubtlessly this mistake was due to confusion of idea as to the different classes of unbelievers. For a common impression does exist that all those who reject the popular doctrines of Christianity and of the Church of England are "infidels" or "secularists," and sometimes this idea is "nursed" by the clergy. We do not say it is so in this case.

It was also a matter of surprise to some who attended these lectures, that the speakers, instead of defending the Bible against secularism, conceded *much that secularists contend for*, so much so, that one secularist said in the discussion which followed Mr. Symes' lecture, "that he had never been more pleased with Mr. Bradlaugh, or Mr. Geo. J. Holyoake than with Mr. Symes. Still he had avoided a definition of his God." Another speaker also said: "If all Christians were noble characters like Professor Symes, secularism would have *won the day*, and they would never have to fight against Christianity." And many statements of a similar character followed in the course of the other discussions.

The remarkable utterances of the four clergymen (one of whom said Buddha and Bradlaugh were inspired of God), and the new doctrine contained in their lectures caused the community to which the two writers belong to review

INTRODUCTORY.

those lectures; for when the professed friends of the Bible discredit it, when infidelity with its poisoned shafts is found in the folds of the Church of England, when it is professed that Christianity is to blame for much of the unbelief that exists, it is but a reasonable and righteous thing to raise the voice like a trumpet on behalf of revealed truth.

This review, then, is not associated with secularism or secularist doctrines in any way. Its origin is attributable to a simple conception of duty. It is the conviction of the writers that much of the infidelity of the present age is due to incorrect views of Bible teaching; that the recent lectures are calculated rather to increase disbelief in the Bible than diminish it; that the Church of England is not free from infidelity itself, and that many within its pale, both lay and clerical, like the four gentlemen who have commenced a crusade avowedly against secularism, favour "naturalistic" religion. If so, how is the mote to be cast out of the secularist eye?

A review of the four lectures was first delivered in the Christadelphian Lecture Hall, Shakespere Street, Nottingham, on January 6th and 13th, 1884, in two discourses. The following pages are, for the most part, the substance of what was then said.

It is necessary to note that the quotations from the respective speakers are from verbatim short-hand notes of the lectures, and from the printed reports of the discussion which appeared in the local papers.

For convenience, the review is divided into four sections to correspond with the four discourses which are reviewed.

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THE BIBLE DEFENDED

FROM
RELIGIOUS UNBELIEF.

SECTION I.—“GOD.”

Reply to Mr. Symes.

Mr. Symes' remarks may be classed under two heads:—First, those expressly stating or implying that the Bible is unreliable as a divine revelation. Secondly, those which teach a doctrine contrary to the Bible.

In answer to a question, Mr. Symes said, “That he did not believe the Old Testament to be the word of God. He believed the writers of the Old Testament were inspired, but that inspiration was not of a kind to preserve them from the possibility of erring.” Such an opinion, of course, is a complete retreat from the position which a believer in the Bible ought to maintain, and paves the way for such an incorrect theory as the following:—“Physical laws may or may not be the result of *chance*, of *blind force* acting upon dead matter, but the moral laws imply a living force,” &c.

Now, a reference to Genesis, chapter i., verses 1-10, will show that the commencement of the creative work is stated to be the result of “God's spirit moving on the face of the deep” by reason of God saying let this and that be done. No chance, no blind force. But INTELLIGENCE at work, in the very beginning. A further reference to Psalm xxxiii. 6-7, tells us the same thing, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.” “He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap: he layeth up the depth in the store-houses.”—(v. 9), “For he SPAKE, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.”

Intelligence, intelligence, NO BLIND FORCE OR CHANCE.

Of course, it would be idle to say God created all things, and yet did not establish the laws, by which the physical universe, both animate and inanimate, are governed, or sustained. So we find in the Bible the following (Isa. xlv. 11-12), “Tis I (*The God of Israel*), have made the earth and created man upon it: I, my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and *all their hosts have I commanded*,” i.e., fixed the laws by which they move and continue.

To say, then, that physical laws *may or may not* be the result of chance, of blind force, acting on dead matter, is to express an opinion out of harmony with the Bible, and to cast a doubt upon the reliability of Moses, David, and Isaiah. Not only so, such an one ought to doubt the wisdom of Christ, or deny it, for he commanded men to *believe Moses and the prophets*. “They

have Moses and the prophets, let them HEAR THEM" (Luke xvi. 29). So it is not merely a question of the prophets being wrong. It is not only that Moses is denied, that David is doubted, or Isaiah disregarded. The man who speaks lightly of Moses and the prophets puts himself in opposition to the teaching of Christ. For he endorsed their writing, not only in the words quoted, but in many ways. He spake of their references to himself as an attestation to his divine mission (John v. 46, 47). He repeated, in his discourses, many things written in the prophets. Surely their testimony of him, and his use of their utterances, are of little value if their writings are open to error. Unquestionably, also, he was a better judge of what they said than any modern human teacher can be. The choice, then, is between theories merely human and the prophets, Moses, and Christ.

But in saying "physical laws may or may not be the result of chance, of blind force acting on dead matter," and then adding "but the moral law implies a living force with a will making for righteousness; in short, they imply a living personal God." Mr. Symes is against himself, for the existence of physical law proves a living personal God just as much as the moral law proves the existence of a lawgiver. The one rests upon the same basis of reason as the other. You cannot subtract from *nothing*. Neither can nothingness add to itself. A state of nothingness cannot evolve a state of existence. Ten thousand ciphers will not add to each other a single fraction, no, not a ten millionth part. On this same principle, wisdom only is capable of evolving wisdom, intelligence only can evolve intelligence, nor can there be life without pre-existent life. Men stumble at the facts of nature as seen by their limited vision. Yet his gaze is bent upon but an infinitesimal part of the unseen. And, forsooth, because all he sees has had a commencement, he concludes everything in the universe must also have had a beginning; and when told that a cause must exist for everything, he blandly turns round and asks, "But what caused God?" apparently a very wise question, and one which appears to many difficult of answer; put the question, however, in its true light, and its foolishness is more clearly shown. There must be a cause for everything. Then what caused the first cause? A question equal to asking the cause of A CAUSE, i.e., THE CAUSE. Surely a self-evidently absurd query.

If you say, nevertheless, "I cannot understand the matter," then it is observable that to believe all things came out of *nothing* is a *greater* mystery than to believe that all things came of *something*.

It remains a glorious truth, however, that the primary cause of all things is a wise, powerful, self-existent, ever-living Father, as the Bible declares.

In some respects, the gospel set forth by Mr. Symes and his co-lecturers, is a new one. It chiefly rests on three propositions:—

- 1st.—That good works will save men, whatever their belief and opinions.
- 2nd.—That good works are the result of a moral force working in men — "a not themselves making for righteousness."
- 3rd.—That God is this moral influence (both personal and yet impersonal). Unchangeable in Himself—not understood by those who

serve Him—presenting a different aspect to different men—differing according to a man's opinions of Him at different times of life, and at different periods of the history of mankind.

As to the first of these, Mr. Symes said, "A man's life is more important than his opinions." He also disparaged the classification of men by doctrinal definitions, and said:—"The most fundamental distinction of all is between those who are striving, and those who are not striving, to be of use in the world, and to keep their own hands unstained by impurity, selfishness, &c." Again, in his final exhortation to secularists, he said:—"Try to be just, charitable, and humble-minded and pure, and do not doubt that He in whom I believe will lead you unto Himself, if *not by our way*, YET by His."

Any person acquainted with the Scriptures ought to see the incorrectness of these ideas. Not only by Old Testament teaching, but by hundreds of passages in the New. A glance at a few illustrations will suffice.

"Without *faith* it is impossible to please God, for *he that cometh to God* must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently *seek HIM*," (Heb. xi. 6). "There is none other name, under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). In these quotations the leading idea must be observed. Note, for instance, the word *must* used by Peter. Not "can," "might," or "may"—but *must be saved*," &c. We are distinctly told that men can *only* be saved by the name of Christ. Also note the words *faith* and *belief* in Paul's testimony—men cannot come to God without *faith* and *belief* IN GOD. Evidently then *God's way* of salvation is by faith, and belief in Him through the name of His own appointment, whatever the churches' way of salvation may be. Again, if good works save men, why does Paul say (Rom. i. 16), "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the *power of God* unto *salvation* to every one that BELIEVETH"? "Oh!" we are told, "the gospel of Christ is a gospel of good works." Is it? Read carefully the fifteenth chapter of Paul's letter (1st) to the Corinthians, which clearly shows the gospel to be "good news" concerning certain doctrinal aspects of God's purpose among men. And add to that those beautiful accounts of the Acts of the Apostles, in which alone a complete refutation of the idea will be found.

But to be particular. If good works can save a man, why did an angel appear to "just" Cornelius, and instruct him to send for Peter, "who should tell him words whereby he and all his house shall be saved?" (Acts xi. 14). Evidently because without belief in the gospel, even *just* Cornelius could not be saved. Moreover, the words of Peter, uttered on the occasion, prove conclusively that men require something beyond good works, something which good works cannot give. To him (*i.e.*, Jesus) Peter said, give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever *believeth* in him shall *receive remission of sins* (Acts x. 43). Now here is an important fact. Men need remission from sins known and unknown, in spite of anything a wicked world may say to the contrary. God remits sins but only in His own appointed way—*i.e.*, through Christ. And without remission of sins men perish.—If otherwise, why so much in the Bible about "justification," by faith and belief, as found, for instance, in the following texts which are but a few of those to be culled from the Bible:—

- Rom. v. 1.—“Justified by FAITH, we have peace with God THROUGH Jesus Christ.”
- „ iv. 24.—“It (righteousness) shall be imputed to us, IF WE BELIEVE in him (GOD) that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.”
- „ iii. 26.—“The justifier of him which BELIEVETH in Jesus.”
- „ „ 22.—“The righteousness of God, by faith of Jesus Christ, UNTO ALL AND UPON ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE.”
- „ „ 25.—“Jesus Christ, hath God set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.”
- John iii. 15.—“Whosoever BELIEVETH in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

These, with many others, prove that men cannot be saved without intelligently submitting themselves to God's way of deliverance. Men may set up a standard of righteousness of their own, but in “going about to establish their own righteousness” miss “the righteousness of God” (Rom. x. 3). And even if no other passage proved men to be out of the way of salvation who disbelieve in God, the following is sufficient: “This is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (John xvii. 3). So if men do not *know* God and Jesus Christ they *cannot* have eternal life or be saved. To teach otherwise is to abandon the teaching of the Scriptures and put something in the place of it, though such teaching may appear to be supported by isolated texts, yet a consensus of all bearing upon the subject will infallibly prove the truth to the candid mind. Mr. Symes merely turns the teaching of the Bible upside down when he says, “If a man will be faithful to *what seems to him to be the highest*, our faith and hope must be strong. If a man will do the will of God, he shall know, not perhaps at once, but soon or later, what is the truth.” This is equal to telling the secularist that if he act conscientiously up to his imagination, he will be all right in the end. Mr. Symes mistakes a man's ideas of goodness for God (as we shall see, when we consider the next point), and offers a false comfort by quoting part of some words Jesus said, under totally different circumstances. The words of Jesus are true in their proper place, but are not to be used as oil to the bones of the man, who casts the word of God behind his back. The words Jesus spoke are found in John vii. 17, “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” Jesus here offered proof of his divine mission—but he spoke to men who *recognised God*, who were, indeed, the custodians of the divine oracles (Rom. iii. 2). They were in a position to know—and could know—what the will of God was, if obedient men. The test Jesus applied was simple and clear in their case. “If ye do, or are disposed to do, the things commanded by God, ye shall know.” But to say to a man who *disregards God*, “Act up to your own imagination of goodness, and ye shall know,” is quite a different matter, a turning of the Scripture teaching upside down. If men do not seek God as commanded in the Scriptures, they can never know the way of light. The test can be applied, but not as Mr. Symes applies it. He may, however, lay

stress on the word "any." But the "any" in this case is *any man who hears the word* and does not apply to those who do not hear it. We find then that the doctrine, "good works save men, whatever their belief and opinions," is a doctrine out of harmony with the Bible—against Christ, against Paul. If the former speak the truth, the latter cannot.

Then how is the Church affected thereby? Is the doctrine of Mr. Symes the doctrine of the Church? If so, their position is equally equivocal. God only saves men in the way He has appointed. The Church knows the way, or it does not. If they know it, then the Churches' way is God's way, and will save those who enter it, and those rejecting the way will not be saved. So to tell secularists that if they do not accept "our" (i.e., the Churches' way), but that if they do good, God will lead them to Himself at last, either applies a false comfort, or proclaims the Church impotent to save. For if the Churches' way is God's way, it can save; if not God's way, it has no salvation for itself, nor those who trust in it.

But how does the Church really stand in relation to God's salvation? Let the answer be in the form of the answer of Jesus to the disciples of John.

Note the following:—Much has been said in the recent lectures as to the need of a "Luther," to proclaim this new "doctrine of good works." What a curious idea! Such a Luther would have to reform Lutherism; for Luther in his day taught "Salvation by faith alone," and at one time Lutherism was inclined to expunge from the Bible the Epistle of James, because inconsistent with the doctrine which he (Luther) propounded. And now these would-be Luthers proclaim "Salvation by works." Moreover, in supporting their opinions, they make light of the Bible, and speak derogatorily of its inspiration. What a contrast! And what a comparison! Surely the truth of the matter lies between both contentions. Doctrine is of importance; so are good works. (See 1 Tim. iv. 13-16; James ii. 17.) Salvation comes by neither alone. A man must first believe the truth proclaimed by Jesus and his apostles. Secondly, he must walk in harmony with Christ's commands if he is to have approval at the judgment seat of Christ. No faith—*no works*. No works—*faith is dead*, being alone. As soon expect a tree to grow without seed as expect salvation without the word of the kingdom heard and believed. As soon expect fruit from a dead tree, as expect salvation if men walk unworthily after belief. The truth of which is well illustrated in a parable of Jesus, contained in the nineteenth of Luke, verses 11-15.

Jesus said, "a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds and said, *occupy till I come*. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded those servants to be called unto him, *to whom he had given the money*, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading." To those who made *good use* of the money committed to their care, he said, "have thou rule over cities;" and to those who did not make "good use," he commanded destruction (verse 27). In this parable then we are taught first that men must become servants to have a future reward, and also must

faithfully serve Him to obtain it (see verse 20). Further by it we may know, that Jesus has gone away, not for ever, but *until* the time appointed for his return (Acts iii. 20-21; ii. 34-35). That he comes again to give reward and punishment (which he is able to do to the uttermost by his power of raising the dead—John v. 29). And that rewards are given not at death, but when Christ returns in the glory of his father (Matt. xvi. 27) at that resurrection (Luke xiv. 14). What think you then will be his verdict respecting men who never put themselves into relation to him as servants? And what think you is the way to become his servant? Is every man born of "Christian" parents a servant of Christ? By no means, else men would not require to manifest faith and obedience in order to be saved. Upon what principle then does God offer men life and reward at the appearing of Christ? Surely the question is not difficult to solve with the Bible in our hands. The writer has long since determined that question. His hopes are centred in that which Christ will bring. He believes that hope would be the hope of many others if men would only give to the sayings of Christ that consideration which such sayings deserve. Let a man hear the question propounded by Him, and never rest till he has found an answer. "WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMETH SHALL HE FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH"? (Luke xviii. 8). In the answer of it, he will discover the truth of the saying of Jesus, "Wisdom is justified of her children."

THE CAUSE OF GOOD WORKS.

We next consider the second phase of the new gospel, under the proposition, "That good works are the result of a moral force working in men"—(not themselves) "making for righteousness,"—a proposition formulated from the following utterances of Mr Symes:—

- 1st.—"The secularist who is doing his best for others is more Christlike than the professing Christian who is selfish, &c." "The former is submitting to the influence of the GOD, in whom he says he does not believe."
 - 2nd.—"The first impression I would try to give to Atheists of what I mean by God is that altogether *impersonal* God which they feel and they know to be the best worth pursuing."
 - 3rd.—"Those who are pursuing truth and justice, and righteousness, those who have compassion on the poor, and are kindly affectionate one toward another, may deny that they believe in God, but *He is certainly speaking to them*, and they are answering His call."
- Adopting Matthew Arnold's proverb—"A (something) not ourselves which makes for righteousness"—Mr. Symes said:—
- 4.—"When we speak of a stream of tendency making for righteousness, it is inevitable that we should ask ourselves, Does this stream flow on unconscious of its own purpose, or does it will that which it achieves?" His answer is, "Moral laws imply a *living force with a will making for righteousness*."
 - 5.—Finally, Mr. Symes said—"Buddha received his noble thoughts from God, just as he held that Christians did." "That God in-

spired Atheists, not only Buddha, but Bradlaugh. Whatever was good in Bradlaugh was inspired by Him, and whether he (Mr. B.) believed in God mattered very little."

What an unfortunate thing if the Scriptures taught such a doctrine! Its logical effect would be destructive. And is. The sceptic says, "If this God of yours does not move me to think rightly it is no fault of mine." "If I am not prompted to good actions equally with other men I cannot help it; it is God's fault." "If He does not act on me for good it is because He will not, or cannot," and some add, "If we bless God for the good, shall we not curse Him for the evil?"

Such a method of accounting for the good thoughts and actions of men will never do. Taken in connection with the theory of a destroyer (of which Mr. Symes gave a hint). It is the old doctrine of a good God and a bad God dressed up in a new form. Something outside a man causing him to act one way or the other. If it be less than this, then the theory breaks down. For if inspiration be not something outside a man—coming to him—if it be merely an impulse, gendered either by natural inclination, or training, or if it be a momentum caused by the impressions due to a man's surroundings acting upon himself, then it is no inspiration at all in the true sense. But a claim is set up for inspiration—a claim referring to another source, *i.e.*, God, all the good emotions of men. Now if the theory were sound, by what line of reasoning could God be shewn to be free from responsibility, when good emotions are absent? Surely, by none. And, in that case, the argument would prove God to be a bad God. But the theory is not sound. And that it is a theory contrary to the Bible there cannot be a doubt. Paul, writing to the Hebrews (ch. i. 1-2), said, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake, in time past, unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by a Son." God spoke to the fathers *through the prophets*. The prophets were inspired—not the Jewish progenitors. So Nehemiah likewise said (ch. ix. 30), "Yea, many years didst thou forbear them (Israel), and testifiedst by thy spirit *in thy prophets*." From this we see it was the prophets, not *Israel*, who had the spirit. The prophets spake as God moved them to speak, so that they told the people what to do—Israel *heard*, and elected to obey or disobey, as the case might be. Their goodness was not, nor is it in the case of any man—"a will in them, and not themselves making for righteousness." Not at all. But their *own will*, acting on evidence. In reality, when the spirit does come upon men, they are helpless to do other than they are moved to do. The case of Balaam well illustrates the fact—a case, moreover, of a *bad* man being moved *against his will* to say good things of Israel (See Numbers xxii., xxxiii., xxiv., xxv.) Thus the holy spirit is represented as coming upon men, not so much for their own guidance as for the benefit of others, of which many illustrations can be adduced.

But, it may be asked, Where do good thoughts come from? And whence do evil desires arise?

Mr. Symes in some sort answers in words (but not by the ideas he has behind his words), when he speaks in this wise. First as to the good:—

"There is a tendency in man to look upward."

"The highest *part of our nature*."

"That which is *best in our nature*."

"The particular forms which this (moral) law takes is largely due to our education and to a heredity."

Then as to the bad. Mr. Symes points to the source of evil desires when he says a man, while giving utterance to noble thoughts and sentiments, may feel "humiliated by the contrast between his words and *something in himself* which connects him with the lowest and most brutal of his kind." True, but Mr. Symes does not apply the facts correctly. The facts are there nevertheless. Men have the power to recognise what is wise and good, and once recognising it, have power to retain the impression either in a latent or active form. They are even subject to heredity impressions—and they also are subject to natural desires, which drag them in a contrary direction. Hence, the mental conflict between two classes of impulses, to which men are subject. Now, the power to discern distinctions cannot be divine, for the same power is exercised by brutes, though less in degree. Nor is the power to discern distinctions in ideals anything different to the power which enables a man to reject food, even though desiring to take it when he perceives its use would not be good. Moreover, an impulse called good, is no evidence in itself, of its own divinity, from the fact that good impulses of all kinds can be produced by training, and even may be transmitted from progenitors. It would be difficult to point to a single desire, good or bad, in any human being of this age, which could not be accounted for, either by heredity tendency, or by cultivation, in some form or other, or by external influences operating on the mind. This fact proves that good impulses do not necessarily come from God, *per se*. It is because mental operations are subtle and difficult to analyse that men get befogged in their consideration, and ascribe their origin to a wrong source. Further, that the good impulses of men cannot be a momentum from God, is proved by the fact that conscience is not infallible in its decrees. For if God is not infallible what and who is He? If conscience, therefore, were His voice speaking to man—if it were divine—it would always tell the same tale, at all times and in all men. Otherwise God must be a God of Babel and confusion. But, as before stated, we are not shut up to such a conclusion. There are tendencies in men which differ. Some inherited, some cultivated. And these tendencies of mankind are mistaken on the one hand as due to the devil, and on the other as due to the spirit of God.

Now, the teaching of the Scriptures is in harmony both with reason and with fact. Such mistaken ideas as those set forth by Mr. Symes could never exist if men were guided by the light contained therein. As to the source of evil desires, James said (ch. i. 14), "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away *of his own lusts* and enticed." So here in the Scriptures we find the counterpart of the idea that in *ourselves* are tendencies to sin. In this Mr. Symes is right. Not so, however, as to the origin of good. Paul supplies the right explanation. But to understand his explanation we must first clearly discern what temptation and sin is. As before stated, "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own desires and enticed." But

are all desires temptations? By no means. What then is a temptation? Simply a desire contrary to that which is commanded. Desire is not in itself *wrong*. A thief desires money, so does a merchant. The one takes it unlawfully, the other may obtain it without sin. A man lawfully desires a wife, the adulterer unlawfully desires another. These desires are exactly the same in their nature, they differ only in their moral relation. Again, put gold within reach of one man, he will be tempted to steal it. Put the same article before another man, he will leave it untouched. Why? Because one man obeys a law, which the other does not. It would be contrary to experience and to fact to deny that both can recognise the distinction between right and wrong. Yet one acts in harmony with his knowledge, the other does not. You may ask, but whence comes the power to discern distinctions? Paul tells us, "I had not known sin *but by the law*, for I had not known lust *except the law had said*, thou shalt not covet" (Rom. vii. 7). There is no mystery about the matter at all. Men's good desires are the result of LAW; of *instruction given in some form or other*. Heredity to a certain extent, if you like, but having their origin in commands and ordinances outside a man and acting on his organism. Paul speaks of the "minding," or "thinking" (see margin) of the flesh. On the one hand (Rom. viii. 7), the end whereof is death; and of serving "the law of God" upon the other hand. A man serving this law "walks after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 4) *without having* the Spirit, as the apostles and prophets had. For the words of God "are spirit and they are life." Now some walk after this law as diluted and coloured by the doctrines of men. The good they get thereby is transitory. Men must walk "after the Spirit" as revealed in "the pure unadulterated milk of the word," if they would have salvation.

The case of Adam fitly illustrates the principles already laid down. He received a commandment not to eat of a particular tree. The tree was good and desirable *in itself*, but forbidden. As soon as the woman brought the fruit thereof to Adam, and offered it as good for food, two opposite impulses existed in the man. He might act in either, but he yielded to the desire of his flesh, and disregarded the law of his mind. How simple and beautiful the record is, and how free from those mystifying profundities of modern theories. Those theories leave the matter in a hopeless mist, as shown by a question put to Mr. Symes by a secularist, here it is: "When I will how am I to tell whether it is God's will or my own?" Mr. Symes said "that he did not think a man could tell, and that he had to judge as best he could."—True, Mr. Symes, true, if your theory be correct.—But your answer proves your inspiration theory is a myth. If a man does not know when God is willing in him to do good, where is *conscience*? Where is the guide? yea, where is God? Truly such a theory gives us no God at all. For if a man cannot know when his God is speaking to him, he is as it were without God. Not so in the case of a man like Adam. He could and did know the right from the wrong. The opposite theory, however, is convenient to some. Men like to put their evil doing on other shoulders. They do not like the healthy tone of the words of Ezekiel (ch. xviii. 20), "The righteousness of the righteous shall be *upon him*, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him; a

doctrine which could not be true if all the good in men were "a not themselves making for righteousness."

The Bible distinctly invites men to develop a character different to *their natural character*, by asking them to follow certain doctrines and commandments. After belief and baptism they are instructed to become "spiritually-minded" (Rom. viii. 6), to see that "Christ dwells in their heart by faith" (Eph. iii. 17), to become "like minded with Christ:" and to be imbued with 'his spirit, or disposition' (Rom. viii. 9). This a man can do by reading the word and obeying it. Such become better than their impulses—even as a man may become, by an opposite cause, worse than his inclinations. The result in either case is a "*character*," which is neither his impulses nor his desires. For he may be better than his worst inclinations. He may be worse than his best impulses. For as the tree falls where it lies, so a man's acts show the character which he manifests; and, being free to choose according to his choice, is responsible to judgment. And what if judgment slumber, yet the truth of the matter is not altered because God shows mercy. Men are free agents, the more by reason of that mercy. They should beware how they trifle with His goodness.

The religious idea of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit is often no less dangerous. One phase of it is illustrated in the utterance of a convert who some time since, too wise for his teachers, gave expression to some such sentence as the following: "I can only say what the Holy Spirit puts into my heart, so if I say what is not right, it is not my fault." Such an idea is by no means an uncommon one, and some men think that no man can be "converted" without the operation of God's Spirit upon the heart. Evidently if that idea were correct, the Holy Spirit must be very scarce or very unwilling to operate, else why so few conversions? And surely an unbeliever can scarcely be blamed for his want of faith when that faith is dependent upon the absent grace of God in his heart. If the Spirit came upon them, then they would believe. If otherwise, they cannot. Yea, also, they would do good, if they could. If the Holy Spirit does not help them, they cannot. So religious men are made spiritually impotent by this doctrine. And, look you, if the theory be correct, upon what principle can you deny its application to Buddha and Bradlaugh? Surely upon none. If the Spirit must move you to goodness, why not them? Ah, it is a false theory which has led men astray here. Adopt the Scripture doctrine, and the difficulty ceases. As already pointed out on page 73, the bestowal of the Spirit was not intended so much for the instruction of those who receive it, as for others. To what was then said it may be noted. That spiritual gifts were a *sign for others* to note. Not for the use of the possessors of the Spirit (see 1st Cor. xiv.) And it should be observed that when the Spirit was given by the apostles, it was given to believers *after they had believed* (not before), consequent upon the apostles laying their hands upon the *believers*. Evidently, then as belief came first, and the Spirit after, it is a misuse of Scripture teaching to say that men cannot believe without it (see Acts viii. 17, xix. 6, &c.). Even the case of Cornelius, who received the Spirit before baptism, is in harmony with this contention. For Peter had spoken; and while he spoke words (which undoubtedly Cornelius believed)

the Spirit came. Peter said on another occasion, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, *and ye shall receive the Holy Spirit*" (Acts ii. 38). Here again "repentance" first, Spirit afterwards. The Scriptures do not teach such a God-dishonouring doctrine, as that men's "conversion" depends upon their receiving the Spirit. Neither that their "goodness" is the result of that Spirit operating on them. The Spirit speaks to, and educates them in the word. Their obedience or disobedience depends not upon the spirit of God but upon their own will, acting upon evidence given; otherwise how could God justly punish men for their misdeeds? Of course, God is the source of all good, in the remote sense. The word of wisdom came from Him originally in that sense. He is the source of all that is good in men, but not in the immediate and specially active sense some men would have us believe. At least not in these days of the non-bestowal of the Holy Spirit. Men confound those passages in the Bible, which speak of God's goodness in this respect, and apply its teaching to individual cases in a wrong way. But the oracles of God, which we hold in our hands, are sufficient to guide us to all truth, and point out to us the way of salvation (2 Tim. iii. 15). Men who think they have a light within, which transcends in brightness and clearness the written word, may well be invited to pause and consider the words of Jesus, who said, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."

THE THIRD PROPOSITION.

The third proposition need not be here repeated. It does not require many quotations in addition to what has already been made to demonstrate it as a part of the new Gospel. Neither does it require many arguments to refute it. Referring to quotations already made, first, according to Mr. Symes, "God" is that impersonal ideal "which secularists feel and know to be best worth pursuing," and, according to utterances not yet quoted, He is "the highest ideal" a Christian may form of Him: be careful, said he, *that the God whom you worship is indeed the very highest that your hearts can conceive.* Such and such like are the ideas concerning God set forth by Mr. Symes. What a curious God. A God who varies according to a man's ideal of Him. A God to one man and not to another—in fact an unknown God. Well might Mr. Symes say of his own lucubrations "the idea is still *rather vague*, the God whom reason and conscience reveal seems sometimes very near to us, but at other times far away." And well might he add: "Having put the Bible on one side, I have tried to get my idea of *God from myself.*" "He could not give them a *tangible* God." He said: "They must go to the heathen for that." But the God of the Bible is a tangible God. This either convicts the prophets of propounding heathenish ideas, or Mr. Symes is again proved to be wrong. Yet, surely, Mr. Symes and his coadjutors must be inspired? If Buddha, why not Symes? If Bradlaugh, why not Richardson? Mr. Symes said "We must remember that, to some extent, as the heirs of all the ages, we stand on a vantage ground." Ah, Mr. Symes is wiser than Daniel. His God is not the God of Daniel, nor of the prophets. They speak with no uncertain sound. God is described in their writings, as "The Most High" (power) (Dan. iv. 17).

"As ruling in the kingdoms of men, and setting up over it whomsoever *He will*." As sending *angels* upon missions, various and divine (Dan. ix. 21; Gen. i. 2; Matt. xxviii. 2-3; Heb. i. 14; Rev. xxii. 9). As upholding the universe by His power (Job xxxiv. 14, &c). As creating all things (Isa. xlv. 12.) As having spoken by His spirit to men (2 Peter i. 21). As having sent His Son to save the world. As having raised him from the dead. As purposing to send him again in power and great glory (Acts iv. 10, Matt. xvi. 27); and so on. A volume might be written enumerating His acts, and in making known His purposes. A tangible, definite, definable God he is, whatever learned professors and "divines" may teach to the contrary. Their God is not the God of the Bible, but a God created out of their own mind; a figment of the imagination.

One more point having a practical bearing upon the position claimed by Mr. Symes is worthy of note. Although the God set up for secularist worship is of such an undefinable and indefinite character, he appears to be a reality to his votaries. So much so that Mr. Symes "said" "We find we can get a rest and a strength from throwing ourselves upon what is not a part of ourselves, the unseen, the unrealisable, yet the real and the true." It becomes a question of some moment as to whether a man having false ideas of God CAN throw himself upon that source of power and goodness in the way Mr. Symes describes. The fact that men receive strength from doing certain things is no proof that such help is from God Himself. The miser is comforted by inspecting his hoard of money. Just as a certain banker who, feeling somewhat shaky in his financial position, is said to have soothed his irritated mind by passing his hands through the stored bullion. The worried intellect capable of appreciating the beauties of nature, receives a certain kind of calm by being placed in the midst of grand and rugged scenery. A contemplation of the starry vaults above our heads gives repose to the angry bosom. And the power of resting the mind upon what is believed to be a source of power and help, may be mistaken for another thing altogether. It is possible for men to deceive themselves in the exercise of those higher powers with which they are endowed. No doubt the men who bow down to a stock or a stone feel comfort and solace in their fictitious worship. But is that the only fictitious worship? Is it not possible for men to worship an ideal manufactured out of their own notions? Further, is it not possible for human beings possessing wonderful electrical powers to receive strength from the electrical zone in which we are enswathed without being conscious of the nature of that strength, and thereby be deceived as to its source? A scientific man would be bold who rashly answered—No. The presumption is, that men may be deceived in this matter, when some who deny the Bible talk of "Communion" with a higher power and think that power is God. Let every earnest-minded man give this question his deepest consideration, with certain all-important passages of Scripture before him—passages which shew, that when Christ comes, and before the resurrection of the dead, a "vail is spread over all nations" (Is. xxv. 7, 8; xxvi. 19; Zec. xiii. 4, xiv. 4). That immediately after the days of the apostles a departure from the faith should take place, resulting in almost universal delusion, up to the appearing of Christ (2 Thes. ii. 1-11, and 8). Awake, then, from your slumber and give these questions the all-important consideration which they deserve.

THE BIBLE DEFENDED

FROM
RELIGIOUS UNBELIEF.

SECTION II.—“THE BIBLE.”

Reply to Mr. Richardson.

Mr Richardson's remarks, like those of his predecessor, are dishonouring to the Bible. We may find in them three somewhat astonishing propositions:—

‘The Bible is fallible in its science.’

“We are not concerned to deny that the Bible may be fallible in its history.”

“The revelation of morality (that is, of rules, or theories of right and wrong) which you find in the Bible is a progressive one.”

Respecting the first quotation, Mr. Richardson gives a curious reason for concluding that the Bible is “fallible in its science.” Said he, “each author adopts the scientific ideas, notions, and language of his own age.” Now, surely, Mr. Richardson must be wise beyond learning, or see beyond evidence if he can bring any proof of this statement. If so, no argument can be founded against a truth, because that truth is conveyed in the language of the times when it was made known! In what other language could we expect revelation to come? But Mr. Richardson says—“Each author *adopts* the language of his own age!” Where is the proof? The probabilities lie just the other way. Namely, that God, who inspired the prophets, *caused them* to convey the truth in language which would be understood by their contemporaries. And, therefore, we may conclude that the language used was similar to that current at the time of the revelation. But this is of God, and is just a reasonable thing to expect. It is no argument at all against the truth of what was revealed. We should learn the rather to get to *understand the language of the prophets*, in order that we may see the truth of what they teach, and, instead of expecting to find truth conveyed in exact modern scientific language, be prepared to look below the surface. Further, for the same reason, we may expect to find the word of inspiration conveyed in *diverse language*, without absolutely concluding that the language so used is the language of men merely. Is God able to express His mind only by one method of speech? Is He a being of so little diversity, that He cannot use difference of style in His communications? Why, of course, we must come to quite an opposite conclusion, if we grant that God created the

universe, for the universe is filled with *interminable* variety. And for what reason is variety to be denied to God, in the method of inspiration? We might more reasonably conclude that Messrs. Symes, Richardson, Wilson, and Baynes do not proclaim the truth, because they use different language, and are diverse in style. Mr. Richardson may mean something different to what he says. Probably he means that each writer adopts "*notions*" and ideas peculiar to his own age, *i.e.*, untrue ideas and notions, hence the Bible is fallible in its science.

Now, so far from the Bible being fallible in its science, it has been proved reliable and worthy of our regard by every fair rule of criticism which can be applied to it. True, "the language of the Bible is not scientific," and that "when scientific words occur in it, they are not used in (our modern) exact scientific sense." Still, true science is there. And, while we do not need an evangelist to tell us "that it is not the business of the Bible to teach science," yet it must be admitted that if the Bible is to be worthy of our regard at all, if we are to look upon it as a divine revelation from God, not only must we find nothing in the Bible out of harmony with science, but we reasonably expect that many scientific facts (by scientific facts I mean facts discovered by scientific research) to be mentioned or revealed in the book. All true science must either go to prove the Bible true, or it is not a book written by inspiration. Because the language of the Bible is not scientific, that is not in itself a reason for concluding that no science is there. But it is a reason for looking below the surface of the record to find those scientific facts which are likely to be discovered in it.

Again, because we do not find all scientific facts mentioned in the Bible, we must not cry like children and say that God ought to have told us more. It is sufficient, if the Bible be a revelation from God, to know that in it, according to His wisdom, scientific facts are declared just so far as is necessary for God's purpose. Moreover, the record is brief and concise. Another reason for considering it carefully. There is not in it, however, anything of a "legendary" character. No greater mistake could be made than to suppose, as Mr. Richardson does, "that the story of the creation is a legend." The Bible suffers much from its supposed friends, who simply know the traditional ideas which exist as to the meaning of the records given by Moses. And not only traditional ideas respecting that portion of the book, but respecting other parts. Also, dummy men of straw have been set up for ages past by those who misconceive the teaching of the Bible, these get knocked over. When the dummies are slain, a great outcry is made, that infidelity has scored a point against the holy oracles. Whereas, the fact is that modern scientific research has laid bare facts which have been hidden between the lids of the Bible for generations, though not understood. Than which a greater proof could scarcely be brought of its infallibility. For those facts were not known when the Bible was written, and none but a divine hand could reveal them to the prophets, who mention them.

Of all delusions concerning the teaching of the Bible in its bearing upon facts, perhaps none is greater than the popular notion that the earth and the heavens are said, in Genesis, to be made in six days.—A careful

consideration of the first chapter of Genesis quite upsets such an idea. What it does teach is, that a certain physical transformation took place *when the Adamic era was initiated*. The opening verse of the chapter states that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, but as to when that beginning was, no information is forthcoming. Verse 2 states, "And the earth was without form and void *and darkness was upon the face of the deep*." Thus we are definitely informed by Moses that the earth was already in existence, and that certain conditions circumscribed it, when the work described in the first chapter of Genesis began. The thing stated, *i.e.*, That God created the earth, and that the earth was void, &c., follow each other in sequence, and are a necessary prelude to what afterwards is made known, but the things affirmed are not concurrent, neither were they part of the six days' creative work which God performed at the formation of Adam. Before God's spirit commenced to move upon the scene the earth had been emptied of its former inhabitants (2 Pet. ii. 4). It was covered by water and vapour of such density *that darkness was upon the face of the deep*. A long gap could exist, and did exist, between the things stated in verse 1 and the condition of the earth as stated in verse 2. If countless ages were occupied in the formation of the solar system, as scientists affirm, the Bible provides for it, and nothing in the record is out of harmony with the idea. On the contrary, geological investigation goes to shew that certain strata has been formed under water; and every-day facts go to shew that only a slight change in the atmospheric conditions of this planet are required to totally obscure the sun, moon, and stars from our view, and even to envelop us in Egyptian darkness. So at the very commencement of the record by Moses, we find not only a record in harmony with facts, but evidence from facts proving the record to be true.

Pushing the investigation further, verses 3 to 8 show that certain changes are brought about *in the relations of this planet's substance*—and in the relation of the earth to the solar system. Not a formation of new substance, but *an alteration in that which was already in existence*. These changes are said to be the work of the first and the second day. The discovery of tropical plants and animals, frozen up in ice-bound regions, prove that a sudden alteration has *once* taken place in the movement of the earth on its own axis and in its relation to the sun—and, if once, why not often? So much in proof of the record respecting the first day's work. The results of the second day's work was a division of the waters covering the earth. A portion being lifted up in the form of mist sufficiently dense to prevent the sun, moon, and stars being seen, but not so much so as to prevent light penetrating to the waters beneath, which covered the earth. Thus the record tells of a transformation scene (not a fresh formation of substance) bringing about a division between water and water and the formation of a firmament suitable for the movement of the winged creatures who afterwards were made. Verses 8 to 13 describe how the waters were divided from the earth, so that vegetation could come upon the latter, during the third day, clouds still obscuring the sun, moon, and stars. For it must be noted that the record in Genesis is not a record made in exact scientific language, but is a popular description of the things done, just as though a man stood on a rock.

observing the appearance of the work in the order of its accomplishment. Hence we find mention made of the sun and moon in their natural order as they would appear to such an observer, when the clouds had become sufficiently broken to admit of their being seen. The whole of the chapter can be shown to be in harmony with exact science, and much there is in it little dreamt of by men whose vision is too closely bent on one department of knowledge. To fully enter into the subject would be out of place here. Enough has been said, probably, to show that "usual methods of interpretation" are not the only explanation of the early Bible record, and that the record of the six days' creative work does not include the making of the solar system, even to say nothing of the starry expanse above us. A volume might be filled with careful argument upon that first chapter of Genesis—and its reliability as a divine record unquestionably demonstrated, leaving no room for the idea that there was anything of the "legendary element" in it, as Mr. Richardson supposes. Legend!—nothing of the kind. But truth and fact, and written in such a concise and perfect form that no human writer can equal, or adopt.

Of scientific facts hidden, as it were, in the Bible, and not suspected to be there for ages, a remarkable illustration occurs in the prophet Isaiah—an illustration made still more remarkable from the fact that by a misconception of the meaning of certain other parts of the word, a theory contrary to scientific fact was stoutly upheld by popular religionists some years ago. The theory referred to is the theory once current that the earth was flat and not a sphere. Some superficial Bible readers, seeing that the Bible speaks of the "four corners of the earth," "the four winds of the heavens," unthinkingly came to the conclusion that the earth was flat, like a plain. They did not observe that the Bible largely deals in *figures of speech*. And that in the passages where those sentences occur, that events relating to *political*, not *physical*, matters are referred to. This was the result of what Paul calls dividing the word unskilfully. Yet, so far from the plane theory being supported by the Bible, Isaiah used language respecting the earth, undoubtedly proving it to be a sphere, long before the fact was known by astronomers (Isa. xl. 22). Then there are other facts which modern investigation has demonstrated to be facts, and, behold, the Bible speaks of them in words which have been penned for generations. Electrical phenomena reveals the fact that a subtle fluid, called by scientists "electricity," is everywhere—in the air, in the earth, in all substances, animate and inanimate, and in ourselves. Now, long before these facts were discovered by man, the Bible spoke of something *everywhere present* under the term "*free spirit*"—not HOLY SPIRIT, mark, but "*free spirit*." David said this spirit was in heaven and in earth, *i.e.*, in substance, and in the air (Ps. cxxxix. 7-13; li. 12). It is breathed by all animals, including man (Job xxxiv. 14-15). Still further electrical science proves that a flash of electricity can be passed round the earth in a few seconds, and that by it, the *scratch* of a pin can be *heard* 3,000 miles away. Is there any fact mentioned in the Bible of a similar nature? Yes. The Bible declares that not a sparrow can fall to the ground without the knowledge of the Father. Surely then in electrical discoveries we

touch the means by which God *hears* all things, so that "all things are naked and open before Him." If a man can hear a mere pin scratch 3 000 miles off by the aid of electricity, surely He who dwells in the Heavens and who possesses far higher powers, can hear instantaneously the minutest sound proceeding from any portion of His universe, by either the same element or something like it. For shall not He who made the ear, hear? Shall not He who made the eye, see? (Ps. xciv. 9). By this comparison between the wonderful ever-present element of electricity and free spirit, it must not be supposed that God's free spirit is merely electricity as manifested to the senses of man, but the facts known of electricity point to the existence of an element such as that which is indicated in the passages quoted. Electricity is possibly a less subtle form of the same force. To the above may be added other facts more generally known.

Science theoretically resolves all things to one primary source. The Bible supports the theory by declaring that there is one source *out of whom are all things* (1st Cor. viii. 6).

Science finds that life cannot spring forth without pre-existent life. The Bible reveals the fact that a mighty living being is the cause of all things (1st Tim. i. 17; vi. 16).

Science, by teaching, cannot find out God. Its votaries pursue their investigations up to a certain point, beyond which they cannot pass. They come to what they call "*the unknowable*." The Bible not only proclaims the truth by saying that men cannot search and find God out (Job xi. 7; 1st Cor. ii. 11), but also makes the Unknown One known.

Science cannot find in man's organisation anything different from that of the beasts. The Bible declares the fact; that they have all one breath, that as the one dieth so dieth the other; that they all go into one place, for all are of the dust; for all turn to dust again (Eccles. iii. 18-20). That man and beast are *both* sustained by the free spirit of God (Job xxxiv. 14, 15), and that even man hath not power over the spirit to retain it in death (Eccles. viii. 8).

Lastly, the Bible teaches a resurrection, and science itself demonstrates the possibility of such an event. These, one and all, are matters clearly stated in the Word, and, being in harmony with facts observed by men, ought to induce their fellows to pay more regard to the Scriptures than mankind, as a rule, are disposed to do. The indisposition to study the Bible, amongst the educated, partly arises because man supposes that science is against the Bible, which is a mistake altogether. The mistake arises from confounding scientific *theories* with scientific facts—a very great mistake indeed. Scientific facts are one thing; theories, supposed to be founded on facts, are quite another matter. Mr. Richardson, like many others, pays great respect to human theorising; he said, "I accept modern scientific theories." Which pray? Does he follow Darwin or Professor Owen? Wallace or Huxley? Spencer or Tyndall? Haeckel or Hall? Murchison or the Duke of Argyle? Are scientific men unanimous, not to say infallible? Not only do they never make a mistake, but do they all speak the same tongue? Do they all tell the same tale? No, no, nothing of the kind.

The theories of to-day are destroyed by discovered facts of to-morrow. The chameleon hue of scientific opinion is equalled only by the kaleidoscopic aspect of traditional Christianity. Underneath this murky atmosphere, however, true science may be seen as a handmaid to the Bible. And the truth contained in the Bible will shine out with brilliant light, to men of the Nathaniel type. The fictitious and the true everywhere exists, simply because mankind is not wise and discerning. Scientific men are good in their proper place. The facts they learn and communicate are useful. But the meaning of the facts are sometimes distorted by the theories formulated from them. Many of such are very unscientific, indeed, yet many bow in almost abject worship to what men call "science." And are ready to swallow with avidity almost any theory which is supposed to be scientific, even though they cast away the Bible by its acceptance. If men were only just as eager to accept reasonable explanations of Bible difficulties as they are to adopt theories which appear to make the Bible a lie, less unbelief would exist. Gaping multitudes relish the unsavoury tit bits puffed out of the cavernous minds of the unscientific reasoner. Mr. Richardson does not blow a breeze in the contrary direction, when he says, on behalf of himself and of the Church, "We abandon to science and evolutionists the whole history of man's development, the whole history of those processes by which for hundreds of millions of years the world has been developed, through the action of which it has come to assume its present case. Of course, we demand a divine creator and guidance of all these processes." Now, Mr. Richardson surely must know that evolutionists, *i.e.*, men who believe in the *theory of evolution* do not admit a creator and guider as necessary to their theory, even if they do not deny the existence of such. Moreover, the popular idea concerning evolution is that things now existing have evolved without start or guidance. It is a theory which excludes God as a guide and as a Creator. Mr. Richardson, perhaps unthinkingly, supports this idea when he talks of "abandoning to science and to evolutionists the whole history of man's development," especially since he teaches that "the story of the creation is a legend." If the story is not true, and the evolutionists proclaim the truth, then a point is scored against the Bible as a divine revelation. Not only, however, is the Bible account of the formation of man true, but the facts observed by scientific men prove it so. Yea, even those very facts which are to a certain extent the foundation upon which the theory of evolution is built. There cannot be much of the "legendary" element in the statement *that man was formed from the dust of the ground* (Gen. ii. 7.) That he is dust, and returns to it at death (Gen. iii. 19). But in those statements there is much in harmony with the theory that man and beast came from the same source. As to Darwin's theory concerning the progressive formation of all living organisms, there is nothing in the Bible against it, not even if we believe that the creative (or rather formative) work recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, occupied only six days. The facts which Darwin observed are one thing, the theories some of his followers propound are another, even though those theories are tinged by some of Darwin's speculations. Darwin was too keen an observer, to fall into the

errors of some of his successors. While it is almost certain that the lowest forms of living organisms were made first, and the highest at a later period, yet the *gaps* between each species is just as much a fact to be taken cognisance of! What about the gaps? Evolutionists may theorise, and *think* that things have evolved *themselves* into their present shape, but Darwin could not, neither has any other scientific man discovered a single fact to explain how the gaps were bridged, apart from some other power, working to produce the development of the species. Facts prove, unquestionably, that diverse kinds cannot "evolve" anything but their own kind—a certain variation can be produced, but not a radical one. A fig tree does not bring forth grapes, nor a vine figs. Men can by interchange of pollen produce *varieties* in both kinds of fruit. But not a new species. Let men bring forth a *grape-fig* IF they can, then we may try to believe in spontaneous generation. If men cannot by demonstration prove that which is least, where is the proof of the greater? That mules cannot propagate their kind, and that their issue wherever producible inevitably revert back to the old stock, is of itself a powerful proof against spontaneous evolutionistic theories. But the arguments in a paper like this must necessarily be brief.* And sufficient has been said as a foundation for a reasonable suggestion as to the explanation of the way in which the *gaps were* bridged. It is not a new suggestion, nor is it a private monopoly. Even Mr. Richardson says "of course we demand a divine Creator and guidance of all these processes." But, unfortunately, this "demand" is accompanied on Mr. Richardson's part with the statement, "we abandon to science and evolutionists the *whole history* of man's development," and also by the statement that the Bible account of man's origin "is legendary." These statements nullify the "demand" coupled with them. It becomes an empty thesis. For an "evolutionist" believes things came into their present form by their own innate power to "evolve." More especially is the phrase an empty one if Mr. Richardson's God is the same as the God of Mr. Symes. He would then be like a man just perceiving that there is a divine power, and yet in a complete mist as to what that power is. Because the suggestion as to God bridging the gaps, and being at the root of the development of the species, is not new, some men may be disposed to turn a deaf ear at once, and say "Oh, that is your theory, is it?" Friend, do not so. Look at the suggestion as if it came to you for the first time; and look at it in view of the facts, hereafter to be enumerated, for they tend much to shew the reasonableness of the theory.

The Bible speaks of a *pre-Adamite* race who dwelt upon the earth *before it was brought into the chaotic* state mentioned in the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis. [For proof see Gen. i. 28, where Adam is told to *replenish* the earth: *i.e.*, *refill with inhabitants*, just as Noah was told to do after the flood, the same word *replenish* being used in his case. Also see Peter, 2 Ep. ii. 4-5, who speaks of angels, who sinned, cast down to "Tartarus," in a perfectly natural order, with *other* events of a similar character—

* Some interesting information on this subject will be found in a book called "The Trial," published by Houlston & Sons, Paternoster Row, London, &c., &c.

First, a terrible destruction before the time of Adam. Second, a similar one during the life of Noah. Third, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The difference between the first case and the second is that, in the first case, the catastrophe was greater, and that no human being was preserved out of it so far as we know. The fact that this pre-Adamite race is spoken of under the term "angels," in Peter's epistle, does not affect the argument at all. Besides it can be shewn that the traditional idea of these angels is out of harmony with the word. There are angels and angels—some mortal, some immortal, as all might know if the original were translated uniformly throughout.]

These facts concerning Bible teaching are of importance in the present argument, *i.e.*, that destructive force was manifested before the Adamic era, bringing about chaos. And that the earth had inhabitants before the Adamic era.

Secondly, the Bible speaks of God's power to restore, reconstruct, or resurrect quickly, that which *He constructs* slowly. [For proof, see Gen. chap. i. 1 to 27, where God is said to have produced order out of chaos in *two days*. To have produced a few perfectly diverse kinds of plants and trees (sufficient to generate the innumerable varieties which come from each *kind* by the operation of natural conditions), in one day,—and so on, completing the work in seven. Also, see Jonah iv. 6, where God is said to have caused a shade-giving gourd to grow up in one night; also, the miracles of Jesus, which were, as a rule, simply the doing quickly what is done slowly every day. Also the numerous references to resurrection of the dead.] So much for facts pertaining to proposition number two.

Now let us take these things taught by the Scriptures in our hands, as it were, and examine them in a reasonable way, and let us see whether science does or does not give any ground for believing in them as realities. It has already been pointed out that frozen Flora and Fauna demonstrate that *sudden* changes in the earth have taken place. Why, then, disbelieve in a sudden destruction prior to the Adamic era? The specimens discovered in the ice-bound regions of Siberia are specimens of Flora and Fauna of a pre-historic period, and belong to an age when the *earth did not bear the same relation to the sun as it does to-day*. Mark, also, that the huge species of elephant found in the ice *must* have been frozen *suddenly*, probably by an alteration of the inclination of the axis of the earth to the plane of its orbit. He would be a bold philosopher who denied the bearing of these facts on the question before us. He would not be a wise one if he refused to take them into consideration. If one change in the solar system of a sudden nature, why not many? And, if any, how do such changes come about? Scientific men are powerless to answer the last question, but the Bible does. Further evidence might be enumerated, but we pass on to consider scientific evidence in support of Bible teaching under proposition number two. This is, that God can do quickly what is done slowly every day, and that it is only a question of putting forth the power.

Modern investigation shews that *plants* can be caused to grow more rapidly by subjecting them to the nocturnal rays of the electric light, and even the

plants may be grown without the sun's rays, if only electricity is shone upon them. If man can do this wonder by the aid of a power not themselves, surely then the God of the Bible, who is spoken of as the source of all power, can do greater wonders, and must be equal to cause instantaneous growth. This position proved all the rest follow. Water can be turned into wine instantaneously. God doing, through Jesus, quickly what occurs every day slowly. Bread and fish can be multiplied to an unlimited extent—a making quickly what is made slowly every day. And, lastly, a man can be raised from the dead or be reproduced quickly, instead of coming forth slowly as happens every day.

We take these facts in our hands, as it were, still further, and examine thereby Darwin's observations as to the progressive formation of the species. We concede, without crossing out a word or altering a sentence in Genesis, that men and animals existed on the earth before the Adamic era—and give to scientific men all they can truthfully say of that pre-historic age. But we demand that the whole cosmos was brought to a chaotic state probably by a stoppage of the earth in its revolution on its axis, causing a powerful condensation of its atmosphere, the elements of which can be combined to produce impenetrable darkness and which even the sun's rays on one side could not affect, or in some other way quite within Omnipotent power to accomplish. Fossils, trees, animals, strata, all buried, in water and darkness, under which neither plants nor fish could live. The spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters, and quickly the scene is changed.—Waters are lifted and divided, a firmament formed—the dry made to appear—plants caused to grow—trees spring forth—the proper inclination of the earth's axis is imparted to it, not exactly as it was before, but just a little different, to show what had been done. Its revolution nicely regulated, so that through the attenuated atmosphere, sun, moon, and stars are seen as a vault of glorious beauty demonstrating the Creator's power, and proving to the mind of reasonable men that its Maker is divine. Let Darwin's facts be true. God is not proved a liar thereby; on the contrary, in giving God the glory of the facts, we explain what Darwin could not explain—*i.e.*, why *only just those organisms*, which were required for use in the Adamic era, were reproduced.—If the evolutionistic theory were sound, that the species have evolved themselves and that survival of the fittest is the cause of a higher, and higher development, then the lowest organisms ought not now to be found. Yet they are found now as ever. Recognise God's power in the matter, read between the facts by seeing the power of God there. All is easy of comprehension, and a reasonable explanation of the facts is found. God supplies the missing link between each of the species by *intelligently causing* the development. He is at work in each stage, and His hand alone is stamped upon what men call the products of "nature." Let men who believe in the resurrection from the dead also consider that manifestation of the power of God—a power of reproducing quickly what had been produced slowly. That fact, placed side by side with scientific investigation, tends to show, in beautiful harmony, observed phenomena and Bible truth. Further, it may be noted for the sake of those who are weak in faith, and who may doubt whether God would produce such stupendous changes as those recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, in six literal days, "that with God one day is as a thousand years,

and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter iii. 8). The six days *may* have been six thousand years, albeit the writer sees many reasons for a contrary conclusion.

Finally, the theory of the gradual formation of species proves the probability of the creation of a new race as taught in the Scriptures, if it proves anything. If progress in development has taken place from the lowest to the highest why not a still higher race than man? A race, powerful, incorruptible, never dying, and glorious, such as the Bible declares will be "evolved" in the resurrection at the appearing of Christ (Dan. xii. 2; Luke xx. 35-37; 2 Tim. iv. 1). A race, moreover, developed by "selection." Not natural selection. But intelligent and wise selection at the judgment seat of Christ, who has been specially fitted for the work "and is able to transform this vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (John v. 21-22; Rom. ii. 16; Phil. iii. 20-21).

BIBLE HISTORY.

The Bible, historically considered, by no means deserves to be spoken of in the doubtful way in which Mr. Richardson speaks of it when he says, "We are not concerned to deny that the Bible may be fallible in its history." The archaeological and historical evidences confirming the Bible records are too numerous to mention. The former, rather than the latter, is the most striking, although evidence of the latter kind is not to be despised. Of archaeological evidence much has been discovered from time to time. Yea, in some instances, carping objectors have been silenced by discovered facts. Excavations at Nineveh, Babylon, Jerusalem, and other parts of Palestine, demonstrate the truth of certain Bible records; once doubted, but afterwards proved by inscriptions found in brick and stone. Yea, in one instance, where profane history appeared to reasonably deny the Bible, the subsequent discovery of an inscription supplied the missing link and both records were proved to be in harmony. These things have occurred, do occur, and will, no doubt, occur again. Unfortunately, they are not written in brass and iron for the benefit of this sceptical age, so, shortly after publication, they are almost forgotten. They may be found in certain publications, but as a rule the kernel of truth is so immersed in extraneous matter that the facts are difficult of access even in this literary age. But the enemies of the Bible are constantly reiterating their stock objections. Yea, even after being fairly met and answered, on they go, pounding away at the edifice as though they would destroy it by the mere force of clamour. The effect of saying over and over again the same thing is shewn by the results of pertinacious advertising and the success of infidelity, may partly be accounted for by the persistence of its votaries. It behoves the children of light to copy their example. For if a more complete and continued proclamation of the truth were ensured, the adversary would have less chance of working evil.

Mr. Richardson was not very explicit, as to the particulars in which he thought the Bible was historically defective. Had

he been so, a different side could be shewn no doubt. The bulk of adverse Bible criticism, under this head, is utterly unreasonable. And even if tenable, the truth of the Bible would not be adversely affected thereby. We may, profitably, ask this question. Is it necessary for matters *purely* historical to be the word of inspiration? Not at all. God might have caused men to proclaim *His mind* to the people, by His spirit, without touching matters of pure history, and yet history be found united with the records of the Spirit. (By history, of course, the records of national events are referred to.) Nor would the divine character of the inspired word be affected prejudicially in the least, even by errors in the national archives, which also contained copies of inspired communications. We must take care that we do not confound things that differ. Though, as a matter of fact, the Bible records are a wonderful monument of historical accuracy, such as the world cannot shew in any other State documents. Even copyist errors contained in the Bible, of which it must be admitted there are some, do not nullify the word of inspiration; nor mistranslations, nor other supposed defects, in the least, if we only take into consideration the fact that the Bible is a message of God to man, declaring the mind and purpose of God in relation to man's deliverance from death and the grave. The doctrine of the Bible is not destroyed, nor can it be destroyed by a number of *errors* in the text, if there were such, FOR THE TRUTH of the Bible is not contained in one book but in many; not in one chapter but in hundreds; not in one verse but in thousands; and even where copyists' errors do exist, the reliability of the Bible is proved by their existence instead of being disproved by them, for the Bible itself *provides the evidence* which enables men to detect them. Still the Bible is correct, in hundreds of ways, where it is supposed to be defective, and it should be noted that almost as much mistaken opinion exists as to the Bible's historical deficiencies, as to its scientific difficulties.

BIBLE MORALITY.

Mr. Richardson makes a far more serious charge against the Bible, when he says that "the revelation of morality (*i.e.*, of rules, of theories, of right and wrong), which you find in the Bible, is a progressive one." "That it is not the same in the beginning and in the end;" and "that it is in a certain sense accommodative in its morality during the early stages of the history of the Jews." To concede this is to say that God's rules of morality alter, or that the rules of morality contained in the Bible are not God's rules at all. If the rules of morality were human, progression might be characteristic of them, save that facts show human morality does not advance at all. But so far from the moral law of the Bible being progressive, just the opposite is the case. Instead of being "different in the end from the beginning," it is uniform throughout. Nor does it need to be judged by the end instead of the beginning as to its morality. It is necessary, however, to recognise the fact that *the method of teaching morality changes*, although there is no change in the Bible theory of morality.

The moral law of the Bible is *obedience to what God commands*. What He commands is right, what He forbids is wrong, as proved by many Scriptural illustrations, of which a few only can be cited.

After the flood, the descendants of Noah were commanded *not* to kill (Gen. ix. 5. 6). Yet Abraham was commanded to offer up his son as a burnt offering (Gen. xxii. 2). Through Moses God said, "Thou shalt *not* kill," and "thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*" (Deut. v. 17; Lev. xix. 18). Yet God commanded most of the inhabitants of Canaan to be slain (Joshua vi. 2; viii. 1, 2, &c.) Again God said, "children shall *not* be put to death for the fathers" (Deut. xxiv. 16). Yet God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, even unto the fourth generation (Exodus xxxiv. 7). All these illustrate the Bible doctrine, that what God commands is right, what He forbids is wrong; of Him it is written, "I kill, I make alive" (Deut. xxxii. 35). The former being justly the prerogative of Him who can do the latter. When a man kills another for his own reasons, he commits murder, and takes away that which he cannot give. If God commands a man to kill his brother, the act of destruction becomes a just one because he acts under God's orders, and God has a right to take away that which He can restore, seeing He giveth all things. The rule is very simple and very easy to understand. Its recognition explains in the Bible narrative what would otherwise be inexplicable. For instance, why death should come upon Adam and his posterity simply because he partook of a forbidden fruit. The act was a wrong one, because God had forbidden it. And God shews to generations descending from Adam that their father, by one act of disobedience, was precluded from giving to his children the blessing of a sinless state. This, in the mercy of God, afterwards comes through a second Adam. The lesson is severe, but not too much so. God, who is great, wisely required His greatness to be recognised. And in no way conceivable could it be shewn so fully as in the enormous consequences which have followed Adam's sin, coupled as it is with the necessity for men to believe that the "consequences" are not only of God's appointing, but that He is "just" in appointing them. Moreover, in this instance, we have evidence of a most conclusive kind that morality is not a fixed code of rules in itself, or is something men call "good" or "goodness," for the fruit eaten was good, the desire to have it was not *bad*, as it is written, "the tree was good for food and calculated to make one wise." There could be no harm, then, in eating the fruit in itself. But God had forbidden its use. Therefore it was immoral to partake of it. The principle is further illustrated in such cases as those of Cain and Uzzah—men who both transgressed; one of whom died for his transgression and the other did not. According to human rules of morality, Cain ought to have been slain for killing Abel, and Uzzah who only *touched* the ark, ought to have had a very slight punishment, or none at all. How comes it that the Bible records such an apparent outrage "on rules of morality?" Simply because no injustice is there. According to human rules of morality there would be, but not according to God's rules. Cain slew his brother *before any command was given against murder*, and, therefore, was not slain for his offence. Uzzah presumed to touch the ark of God *when the priests were only permitted*

to touch it, hence he was put to death (1st Chron. xiii. 9-10; Numbers iv. 1-15). In the one case there was a command, in the other case no command. So Uzzah was slain for what appeared to be a small offence, and Cain allowed to escape death after committing what appeared to be a greater one. Now the bearing of these facts cannot be mistaken, because they are incidents in which God *directly* acted, and they tend to shew that the law of morality is a law of *obedience*, the same from beginning and to all eternity.

Mr. Richardson misunderstands the facts and misapplies the purpose of the Law of Moses, when he sets its teaching against the teaching of Christ. The morality of the one is the morality of the other. A learned scribe ought to know (notwithstanding any appearance to the contrary) that nowhere is there in the Bible a *command* to "hate one's enemy." When Jesus said (Matt. v. 43), "Ye have heard and it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy," he did not quote a command. He referred to the relative attitude expressed by the elastic word "hate," just as he spake of "hating father and mother" (*i.e.*, loving them less than God). In just the same way the children of Israel were commanded not to seek the peace or welfare of certain inhabitants of the land, their "*neighbours*," viz, the Ammonites and the Moabites. "Because they met you not (Israel) with water, in the way when ye (Israel) came forth out of Israel," &c. By acting adversely to Israel, Moab and Ammon became offensive to God, who had chosen Israel to be His people, therefore the children of Israel were forbidden to bless them. But this was a *national* matter, not an individual one. The fact had no relation to Christ's argument, save to show that all such racial distinctions were, for the time, to cease. The "sermon on the mount" is not different, as a moral code to the law of Moses, so far as it applies to men individually. There is no difference in that respect at all. Both are the same. The law of Christ differs from the law of Moses only in two particulars, not in its moral essence, so to speak—but in the *extent* of its requirements, and in its retributive administration. Jesus himself said, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil," and "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall, in no case, enter into the kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. v. 17-20). Let us prove this still further. Under the law, it was commanded, not only that men should abstain from committing adultery, but that they should not "*desire* their neighbour's wife" (Deut. v. 17-21). Jesus taught the *same* thing—not something new and different. He did make an addition, but it was additional warning and additional danger of retribution. The law provided punishment for the act of adultery, none for lust or desire. But, under the law of Christ, *both* are included. It was said of old time, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath *committed adultery* with her already in his heart." Then, in connection with that sentence we find these words, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out." Why? To avoid "destruction in Gehenna." This shows that a man of unclean mind would, under the law of Christ, be just as much in danger of destruction as a man committing adultery under the law of Moses. And wisely so

Many motives prevented men in the time of Christ from doing wrong, which would never enter into the mind of an Israelite of old. Yea, and it is so to-day. Family ties; the opinion of men; &c., &c., bar the way to transgression, such as in the time of Moses did not exist. Some men, like chained animals "would if they could," or "would if they dare." Such, under the law of Christ, are in danger, and have need to beware. So, also, with regard to murder. It was said, "thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill *shall be in danger of the judgment*, but I say unto you, that whosoever is *angry* with his brother, without a cause, shall be *in danger of the judgment*" (Matt. v. 22). And still further John said that "whosoever *hateth* his brother *is a murderer*" (1st Ep. John iii. 15). The motives, then, which lead to sin, come under judgment in the law of Christ, but not in the law of Moses. Both act and disposition were condemned in the latter, as well as in the former, but the former did not *punish* motive. We conclude, therefore, that the law of Christ is the same as the law of Moses, save that the law of Christ takes hold faster, and has a tighter grip upon the disposition of men than the law of Moses. A sinner under the former, having more light, will be judged for smaller affairs than the latter. And a sinner, under the latter, may be beaten with fewer stripes, because of the limited nature of his knowledge. So much, however, is the "moral law" of Christ like the moral law of Moses and the prophets, that a careful reading of the Scriptures will shew that nearly all Jesus taught is found in their writings. Compare, for instance, Leviticus xix. 17 and 1st Ep. John iii. 15; Matt. v. 22 and 24 and Ps. xv. 1-3, L. 20, &c.

As touching the *difference* between the law of Christ and the law of Moses, viz., its retributive feature. The execution of judgment was placed in the hands of those who received it. In the case of Christ, he is the judge, and he alone will bring judgment at his appearing. For, "vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. xii. 19; Rev. xxii. 12 and 11). But this difference is not a difference in the morality of the Bible, but in the method of administering and teaching the moral law.

Mr. Richardson thinks the morality of the Bible "accommodative" during the early history of the Jews. It certainly was not "accommodative" in the sense of allowing or consenting to wrong things. The truth of which must be instantly seen when it is perceived that whatever God commands is right, and whatever He forbids is wrong. It may be conceded that, as a wise Father, He was accommodative in the sense of not giving commands to men who were in their national childhood without admitting there is anything morally wrong in the Bible. All God's acts of leniency, of which the Bible records many, are done "that He might be justified in His sayings, and might overcome when He is judged" (Rom. iii. 4). Perhaps Mr. Richardson dimly refers to something of the kind.

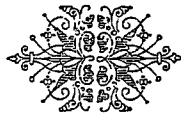
If we take these two facts in our hands (1st, that sin is disobedience of God's command, and 2nd, that mercy is shewn both in the degree of obedience required, and in the forgiveness of sin) and put them in the mental crucible with the divine records, and all difficulty as to the morality of the Bible will vanish like a morning mist, and exhibit beneath those difficulties the pure bright light of divine righteousness.

BIBLE INSPIRATION.

One would have thought that a teacher, admitting the Bible to be defective in its morals, defective in history, and defective in science, could find no more virtue in it. Not so with Mr. Richardson. "What have we left?" said he. Oh! "Inspiration." Now inspiration, which leaves the Bible defective in the three particulars above enumerated, cannot be a very salt-giving essence. According to Mr. Richardson, it is "a thing not to be demonstrated, and not to be proved by process of the understanding." "It is something so subtle, that it baffles all your analysis," and that "the mere fact of inspiration is something spiritual, baffles him." No doubt all those statements may be true of Mr. Richardson's inspiration, but certainly are not true of the Bible inspiration. Mr. Richardson's inspiration is of that kind that he does not "shrink from applying the same idea to many other good books." So Mr. Richardson appears to hint that God has spoken by His spirit in "other books," as well as in the Bible. He is welcome to that idea. It is not the true idea, and much good the Bible would be to us if it were true. Buddha and Bradlaugh, who deny it, would be equally in as good a position as ourselves. What would be the use of inspiration, which is of such a subtle kind that it baffles instead of instructing? That its voice is so uncertain ye cannot know it when ye hear it, or of such an uncertain character that it cannot be demonstrated. What a different thing the inspiration of the Bible is. An inspiration that came upon men in such a manifest way that all present were able to know that something occult had occurred. The very essence of the record is that "the spirit worked with the apostles by signs and wonders, following" (Heb. ii. 1-3). In fact it was a most definite and demonstrable matter. Men spoke as men usually did not, or could not speak without the spirit. Some speaking languages which they had never learned (Acts ii. 1-11). Of one thing there is no doubt, that if any man of this age possessed that spirit as men of old did, or were inspired, he would soon be able to manifest and make known the fact. By this rule we judge the men who speak evilly of the Bible, and conclude that they have not the spirit of God, or they would not brand His word with the epithet "legendary."

Many other strange things Mr. Richardson says; amongst others, "the Bible teaches the spiritual, it does not teach the natural," yet you have been shown that it largely speaks of the "natural" in the creation of man, the sustaining element of the animal creation, the configuration of the earth, &c. He says "The Bible does not teach one single fact to the knowledge of which man's other faculties are capable of leading him." Yet you have been shown that the Bible speaks of an ever-present element in nature, just as scientists do: and that all things are evolved from *one* source, just as scientific men admit (so far as the physical elements are concerned), and just as reasonable men must admit, if they follow the most advanced investigation into the origin of living organisms. Mr. Richardson thinks that science can tell men how the worlds were framed, whereas the profoundest ignorance exists among scientific men upon the subject. They tell us fire and water are elements in the work, they note facts such as those which show that the growth of plants and trees subjected to the superincumbent pressure of deposited strata are elements in the foundation of the coal measures found in the earth, but as to

why or how the several changes which they observe, were caused, they can tell us absolutely NOTHING. They see that in some byegone age trees *did grow* where coal is now found, and such trees were afterwards covered by earth deposits. But as to what or who caused these things, they are self-confessedly ignorant. From them we turn to the light of revealed truth, the word of God, which in spite of all difficulties and in spite of all objections, is capable of lifting the veil from the eyes of the honest seeker after truth. The objections of its detractors will cease to have weight with the man who gets to understand the true teaching of the Bible. And its difficulties will disappear when tested upon their own merits. They are difficulties which can be explained on true lines without either shirking them on the one hand, or drawing upon men's credulity on the other, and still less without pandering to the respectable infidelity of the age, in those shameful "concessions" proclaimed by clergymen from a Church of England pulpit.



THE BIBLE DEFENDED

FROM
RELIGIOUS UNBELIEF.

SECTION III.—"MIRACLES."

Reply to Mr. Wilson.

In the lecture on miracles, Mr. Wilson said that he took the subject of miracles because Secularists are in the habit of rejecting them, and also because Christian Apologists dealt with them in a confused and unconvincing way. From the latter statement, we should conclude that Mr. W. was about to deal with the subject in a more convincing way than had been previously done. Whether he did so or not, I must leave you to judge at the close of this review.

Proceeding to the main point, he said—Paul wrote letters to the Corinthians, Romans, Galatians, &c. ; that these people were known to him, and he knew them.

The letters have stood the test of the most sweeping criticism, and, therefore, may be accepted as genuine. He wrote, for instance, this passage, in the 1st Epistle Corinthians, 12th chapter, verses 7 to 9—"But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given, by the spirit, the word of wisdom ; to another, the word of knowledge, by the same spirit ; to another, faith, by the same spirit ; to another, the gift of healing, by the same spirit ;" to another the working of miracles. He wrote, also, in the 2nd Epistle Corinthians, 12th chapter, 12th verse, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."

The truth of these statements, continues Mr. W., cannot be disputed ; they are written in a simple natural way to eyewitnesses ; the incidental manner in which they are introduced, shows that there was neither illusion nor deception. Thus far in the argument we are able to agree with Mr. W.

Proceeding further, he says : "Paul's statement proved the existence of some unusual phenomena, which the eye-witnesses called miraculous. This phenomena resulted in a highly exalted spiritual condition, such as an extraordinary gift of wisdom, or extraordinary physical powers, as manifested in the healing of certain diseases. The explanation of this phenomena is beyond our power ; it consisted of the action of mind on mind or mind on body, and the conditions plainly were a highly spiritual condition in both agent and patient ; this phenomena is obscure, and of the details we are ignorant. It

cannot be regarded as miraculous. Paul's healing power must be referred to a large class of mental and physical phenomena, constantly reappearing in one shape or another. Paul possessed marvellous powers over the people. He exerted exceptional influences over their bodies, he produced a spiritual condition, and this proved that he possessed it in the first instance; he had a clear insight into man's spiritual nature. Paul was to Christ as pupil to teacher: the gifts he possessed appeared trifling to him and only as witnesses of his apostleship; therefore Christ possessed far more astonishing spiritual gifts, and the power of physical healing in a far more exalted degree. Christ was the most unique spiritual power the world has ever seen. The moral miracle of Christ rising from the grave (what a clergyman of the Church of England can mean in calling Christ's rising from the grave a "moral miracle" is difficult to understand), was the most supremely important one: sooner or later every discussion leads to this. The spiritual life of our nature makes us differ from the beasts; the ordinary laws of inorganic matter are interfered with by organic life, and the laws of life and matter by the presence of a highly exalted spiritual state. "I cannot imagine," continues Mr. Wilson, "a demonstration that miracles are worked by divine power; all I can imagine is that there is such a concurrency of action that immeasurably surpasses those faculties in their perfection, and that spiritual power, we call God." (That is a statement which I apprehend could be made by a considerable number of those who delight to call themselves Secularists). Resuming our summary, we find Mr. Wilson saying that the spiritual power in Christ, which we can in some humble degree test by comparison with ourselves, is akin to our "noblest and best powers," but was, in him, immeasurably superior. "The Spirit of God dwells in us in fragments, but in Christ in all its fulness." The nature of Christ's resurrection we do not understand; it would seem to have been effected partly in the spiritual and partly in the physical world, and for it we can have no parallel, and can have no explanation. It was the natural termination of such a life on earth. Spiritual life is conscience, devotion, faith, love, a capacity for eternal life, and aspiration for something better and holier.

You have now, in brief, the arguments of Mr. W., in regard to miracles. He attributes them, you see, to a spiritual condition; that spiritual condition, he says, distinguishes man from the beasts; Paul manifested his miracles through its possession, and the recipients were also endowed with it, for he says this highly-exalted spiritual condition must exist in both agent and patient. The superiority of Christ's miracles, over those of the apostles, is attributed to his infinitely higher spiritual condition. If this reasoning be sound, we ought to follow it out to its logical conclusion without finding a flaw.

In the epistle to the Corinthians reference is made several times to miraculous gifts. The two passages which Mr. W. quoted are illustrations. It is quite clear that the Corinthians possessed, in some measure, those gifts. On Mr. W.'s theory, that was the result of their spiritual condition. What do these Epistles say? Were the Corinthians spiritually minded? Let us read the 1st Epistle, 3rd chapter, 1st verse: "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." Their carnal condition is described in chapter I. 11. "It hath been

declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you." Also in chapter iii. 3: "For ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" the very reverse of a spiritual mind. Chapter v. verse 2: "Ye are puffed up and have not rather mourned." Chapter xiv. verse 12: "Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts" (they evidently desired them) "seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church;" then follows a number of directions as to how they were to use these gifts, from which it is evident that they were misusing them—they were using the gifts of tongues for the purposes of display, instead of for the enlightenment of those who listened. Hence the apostolic injunction that when one spake in an unknown, a foreign, tongue, they should wait for its interpretation by another, so that all might understand and be edified. In view of these testimonies, the argument of Mr. Wilson that the Corinthians worked miracles through a spiritual condition of mind, falls to the ground. If this test be applied to the Galatians and Romans, we arrive at the same result. Galatians iii. 1, "O, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" Chapter v. 1, "Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." To one section of the Romish Church the apostle says, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you" (Rom. ii. 24). Thus the three epistles referred to by Mr. W. all contain evidence of the absence of a spiritual condition of mind.

Let us proceed further. If miracles are caused by a spiritual condition, their display necessarily proves the existence of such a spiritual mind, and as like causes produce like effects, where such a spiritual mind exists, there must necessarily be miracles; where there are no miracles, there can be no spiritual condition. From this process of reasoning, it would follow that the following men of God, because they performed no miracle, were not spiritually minded, viz.:—Abel, Enoch, Abraham, the father of the faithful (held up as a model for the disciples of Christ to follow); Job, the man of patience, who passed through a fiery trial, and was approved by God; David, the man after God's own heart, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and, lastly, the prophet who had no superior, John the Baptist, of whom it is stated "John did no miracle" (Jno. x. 41). Was John the Baptist spiritually-minded or not? If he was, he ought, according to Mr. W.'s argument, to have worked miracles. The fact that he did not, proves, according to Mr. Wilson, that the forerunner of Jesus Christ was deficient in spiritual condition of mind!! During the last 1,300 years there is no record of any reliable miracle. By the same process of reasoning there have been no spiritually-minded men during that long period. This is an extraordinary conclusion for a clerical member of a church, which claims, through its bishops and archbishops, to possess the power of imparting the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands! The self-styled successors of the apostles are in the habit of looking back on the last eighteen or nineteen centuries as inferior to the present age. We are the heirs, say they, of all the preceding ages, have the benefit of all which has gone before, and the accumulated knowledge, experience, and discoveries of 40 or more generations; have the word of God in its most complete form, accessible to every one. If

so, how is it that there are no spiritually-minded men in the present day who can work miracles? Let us take another instance. We have a record of two prophets in the Old Testament—Elijah and Elisha—the latter of whom possessed a double portion of miraculous gift. Was it because of a doubly-spiritual state of mind? Mr. Wilson's argument is, that because Christ was far more spiritually-minded than Paul, his miraculous manifestation was greater. Can we apply the same to Elijah and Elisha? The sacred history gives a very simple explanation: Elisha besought Elijah to let a double portion of his spirit rest upon him, to which Elijah replied, "If thou see me when I am taken from thee it shall be so unto thee, but if not, it shall not be so" (2 Kings ii. 9, 10). Elisha witnessed the departure of Elijah, and hence the greater miraculous power which he displayed. We now pass to another phase of the subject.

All miracles have not been wrought through human agency. There are some which have been wrought totally independent of man. What is Mr. W.'s explanation of such manifestations? He gives none. To have made any reference to them would have introduced a difficulty which he would have found impossible to surmount. Take, as illustrations of miracles wrought independent of man, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the giving of manna, the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire which led the Israelites through the wilderness, the miraculous begetting of Jesus Christ, the liberation, by an angel, of Peter from prison, and, going back to one of the earliest instances, the confusion of tongues at Babel. In the latter, especially, what human agency was there? It was a signal act of God, against the desires of the whole of the people at that time. To make a name for themselves, they built a great tower. God confounded their tongues, and thus they were scattered over the earth. No human agency was employed. Therefore, the cause could not be the spiritual condition of any man. God worked in a direct manner. On this may be based the following proposition:—If God is the author of miracles when there is no human being, they must be from God, when manifested by a human being, whether he be in a spiritual condition or not. The means make no difference to the Creator; the variety of His power is exhibited in Nature; and the variety of His miraculous power is exhibited in the things which are recorded in the Old and New Testaments. The one is as divine as the other. What explanation does the Bible give of miracles? Did any of those who worked miracles attribute them to a spiritual mind? Not one. Then whose testimony are we to take, Mr. W.'s or the writers of the Scriptures? Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, says in the 1st epistle 2 chapter 4 verse, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power." To the Romans, 15th chapter 18th and 19th verses, he writes "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem and round and about unto Illyricum I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ." There is no mistaking his language. "Not by my spiritual state of mind, but by the spirit of God," says Paul. In like manner the writer of the

Acts of the Apostles, chap. 2, verse 4, says, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance." In the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 2, verse 4, in reference to Christ and the Apostles, we read, "God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will." Also Peter, in Acts, 2nd chapter 22nd verse, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you as ye yourselves know." It was not his spiritual condition which enabled him to work miracles. God worked through him, as he himself says in John xiv. 10, "The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works."

In the face of such testimony as this, what room is there for Mr. Wilson's assumption. Absolutely none. Such explanations as his are simply devices for pandering to the minds of men without faith, and those who so act certainly cannot claim, like Paul, to have declared the whole counsel of God.

Let us now pass to a more interesting aspect of the subject. Some affirm that miracles are contrary to the laws of nature. Others that they are a suspension of those laws. Neither of those definitions can be accepted as correct. A more correct definition would be, "That they are a departure from the established course of nature, as visible to human eyes; and that they are effected by the action of an unknown law, or by the unknown action of a known law, the author being God through His Spirit." On this principle, a miracle is the result of the ascendancy for the time being of one law over the other. This may be illustrated by matters physiological facts. There are the two laws of gravitation and centrifugal force; gravitation draws, centrifugal force dispels. According to the relative power of these laws over nature is each element thereof attracted or driven away. The motion of a planet is an illustration of this. Its orbit results from the combined operation of centrifugal force and the attractive power of the sun. If greater speed were imparted to it, its orbit would be extended, and if made to move more slowly its orbit would be diminished. In neither case would any law be suspended, or even any new force introduced. Existing laws would simply become, for the time being, more powerful in their operation. Of the law of gravitation, the tendency of man to cling to the earth is an illustration; if temporarily raised, the force of this law causes him to fall: but he may for a time overrule its power by the use of gas in a balloon. He does not thereby suspend the law of gravitation, neither does he act contrary to the laws of nature; he simply makes use of a natural law, not inherent in himself, by which, for the time being, the law of gravitation in relation to him is inoperative. A bird possesses that power within itself, in the ability to fly; but, if wounded or killed, that inherent power is taken away, the law of gravitation re-asserts itself, and the bird falls to the ground."

A moral illustration of one law overruling another is to be found in the book of Esther. A decree was issued that all the Jews, on a certain day, should be slain; between the time of that decree being issued and its execution, a change took place in the King's views, resulting in a desire for the non-fulfilment of the decree; but, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, the decree could not be rescinded. How was the difficulty met?

Another decree was issued, which had the effect of counteracting it; the Jews were authorised to fight and destroy their enemies. The first decree, which was devised for the destruction of the Jews, was overruled by one which carried destruction to their enemies.

Upon a somewhat similar principle men cure disease. Medicine is given to counteract the injurious influence which has obtained a lodgment in one or more organs of the human frame. According to the strength of the disease, and the skill of the operator, does success or failure attend the effort. Restoration to health, under these conditions, is generally a slow process. Shall we, therefore, presume to say that the same result cannot be attained instantaneously, by means of which we are ignorant? Shall we deny that God, who created us, can do quickly what men perform in a gradual way? By studying the human frame men have wrought wonders in regard to it; and it is not too much to say that some achievements of medical science of the present day would, in former ages, have been looked upon as partaking of the miraculous. If, therefore, finite wisdom and skill, in a comparatively high degree of development, can astonish mortals less proficient, surely Infinite Power and Perfect Wisdom—the Creator and Controller of all things—can produce results of a far more marvellous character. To admit this is humiliating to the pride of human scepticism, for “vain man would be wiser though man be born like a wild ass’s colt” (Job xi. 12). It is doubtless to the unpalatable nature of such an admission that we may attribute the wide-spreading unbelief of the present day. Man, though a creature of the dust, believes himself to be immortal; it is but an easy step from this to another fiction, which represents him as inherently good by nature, instead of the reverse: the refusal to recognise man’s evil disposition finds its appropriate sequel in the denial of sin against God. Not satisfied with this negative position, another retrograde leap is made; the Bible, to such a state of mentality, is an inconvenient and disagreeable book; therefore, it must be disposed of; but how can this be done, seeing that it is attested by miracles, and is itself a miracle? Deny the possibility of miracles, say they are contrary to experience, subversive of the laws of nature, and, therefore, cannot be; but, God is All-powerful. His works are fathomless, His ways manifold, and surely He, who hath created nature, can perform a miracle; then, deny the existence of God. Thus the unbeliever, by whatever name called, passes through the various stages of denial until he reaches the final one of absolute negation. Mr. Wilson makes an attempt to rouse him from his moral lethargy; but, instead of a healthy stimulant, he administers a poisonous narcotic, which can have no other effect than that of intensifying the sleep of unbelief.

A miracle to be such must necessarily be above human power. Nothing can be recognised as a miracle which man can perform unaided by the power of God. The avowed and obvious object of miracles was to attest the divine Authority of some person or utterance to shew that a message entrusted to a prophet or an apostle was not of human, but of divine, origin. If they were the natural result of something already implanted in man by nature, how would they confirm the utterance of any one whom God had selected for a certain purpose? They would be utterly futile. They would merely testify to the degree of spiritual development to which the operator had attained.

Thus does Mr. Wilson compromise an elementary scriptural truth and yield to the sceptic the foundation on which he professes to be based.

In the so-called ecclesiastical miracles of the mediæval ages, we have nothing which at all compares with those recorded in the Bible. They will not stand the test which can with safety be applied to the miracles of the Old and New Testaments. The miracles of Moses were performed publicly before two nations, to convince a people, who preferred to stop where they were, that God had appointed Moses to lead them out of bondage into the land of promise. Though the Israelites disbelieved the mission of Moses in the first instance, the marvellous display of miraculous power ultimately convinced them that his mission was of God. The miracles of Christ and his apostles were generally performed publicly or when there were strangers present; indeed, oftentimes in the presence of enemies, who sharply criticised everything that was done. How did his fiercest enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees, explain them? They recognised their reality; they could not deny their existence; they certainly did not attribute them to a spiritual state of mind, but they said he worked them by Beelzebub. Their testimony is useful as to the existence of miraculous power; but, like Mr. Wilson, they attributed it to a wrong cause.

This subject is a very large one, and much more time could be profitably occupied with it. Before concluding, a few observations are called for in regard to the most important of all miracles, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Mr. Wilson says that he does not understand it, and cannot explain it; a candid confession, quite in harmony with his misconception as to the cause of miracles. If God be left out of account, the resurrection of Christ is not only inexplicable but incredible. Mr. Wilson says that it was "the natural termination of such a life on earth." Passing by the confusion of idea involved in describing a miracle as "natural," the statement suggests the question, by whom was it effected? Mr. Wilson does not actually affirm, but his theory suggests the inference, that Christ raised himself; for, if the miracles wrought during the Saviour's life were caused by his highly developed spiritual condition, must not his resurrection be attributed to the same? It has been shown that Mr. Wilson's theory will not stand the test of Scripture evidence; from the same source the inference to which it gives rise is refuted:—Acts ii. 24, "Whom God hath raised up;" Acts x. 40, "Him God raised up the third day;" 1 Cor. vi. 14, "God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power." The last passage refers to a future miracle—the resurrection of Christ's brethren—and attributes it to the same cause as that of Jesus Christ, namely, the power of God. How Mr. Wilson would consistently account for it, is a problem to tax severely the most ingenious mind. Perhaps, like some others of his class, Mr. W. has virtually expunged it from his theological creed. Certainly, it does not occupy therein such a vital position as in the creed of the Apostle Paul. The latter says, "If the dead rise not . . . they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. xv. 16-18). To these words, a believer in the immortality of the soul and translation to heaven at death, cannot give an intelligent and whole-hearted assent. On this ground Mr. Wilson may be indifferent as to the proof of the future resurrection. If Christ

worked miracles through possessing a superlatively spiritual mind, and rose from the dead as "the natural termination of such a life," how is the resurrection of the less spiritually-minded to be accounted for? Difficult as this question is from such a stand-point, it becomes immeasurably more so when applied to the predicted resurrection of the "unjust" (Acts xxiv. 15). These are points which cannot be ignored in discussing the question of miracles. The plain teaching of the Bible is beset with no such insuperable obstacles: all miracles have been performed by God, sometimes in a direct, and at others in an indirect way, through men. God raised Jesus Christ from the dead; therefore He will raise (through His son) "both just and unjust."

It is readily admitted that a belief of this teaching is dependent on the proof of Christ's resurrection: if there be no evidence of that fact, there is none as to the reality of miracles. There are various ways of demonstrating it, but on this occasion it must be confined to prophecy. Of this class of writing the Bible is largely composed, and some portions are so plain that no one who takes language in its ordinary sense can for a moment dispute their meaning. Many of them were written centuries before the events to which they relate took place, and in some cases testimony as to their truthfulness has been given, (it may be unwittingly) by those who refused to acknowledge the divine origin of the Bible. Jesus Christ was amongst those who predicted future events, and some of his predictions came to pass after his life on earth. He could not have conceived them simply from the appearance of things; He must have had divine knowledge. Moses did likewise. He predicted the appearance of the Messiah, and Jesus Christ spoke of Moses as a trustworthy authority; the divine mission of the one cannot logically be recognised without that of the other: if one be rejected, both must be. The link which connects them cannot be severed. This may be seen in parallel utterances concerning the dispersion of the Jews (Deuteronomy xxviii. 63-64). "And it shall come to pass that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone." This prediction, together with others uttered by Moses, has been realised. We have, therefore, in the record of history, evidence of their truthfulness, and this, in its turn, furnishes a powerful argument for the miracles attributed to the same prophet. Let us now see what Christ has said. In Luke's gospel (xxi. 6), speaking of a magnificent structure, to which his attention was called by the admiring apostles, he declared that it should be levelled to the ground, and he subsequently added, "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation is nigh. Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out, and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For then be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (v. 20-22). "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the

Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (v. 24). There was no likelihood, according to the appearance of things, when Jesus spake those words that Jerusalem would be encompassed with armies and its temple be destroyed. Where they not under the protecting wing of the Romans—the most powerful existing Government? How came it to pass? The Jews rebelled against the Romans, who sent their armies to bring Jerusalem again under their subjection; but so strong was the resistance of the Jews, that the Romans were unable to take the city without reducing it to ruins, and almost annihilating its inhabitants. The remaining Jews were dispersed in all nations, and Jerusalem, notwithstanding attempts since made to resuscitate it, has remained a desolate city from that day to the present. Its condition is a standing testimony of the truthfulness of Jesus Christ's prediction.

In connection with the dispersion of the Jews, the prophet Jeremiah utters a prediction which may be viewed in connection with those quoted from Moses and Jesus Christ. Jer. xxx. chap., 11 verse, "Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished." Is it not a remarkable fact that the Jews for eighteen centuries have existed as a nation in the midst of nations, known everywhere, and yet estranged from all with whom they have lived? Why is this? Jeremiah's prediction that they should be specially preserved by God is the answer. Other nations, once wealthy and powerful, have ceased to be. Where is the Assyrian Power, which brought the ten tribes under its sway? or the Babylonian, which carried the two tribes into captivity? Visit the land of Mesopotamia, and you will find nothing but a heap of ruins where their chief cities once stood. Search for the nation who once lived there, and your labour will be in vain. Yet the Jewish nation still lives, and is seen in our midst as a living witness of the truth of prophecy, and of the divine authorship of the Bible. The book which gives these and other predictions, the truthfulness of which can be tested by everyone at the present day, also records various miracles. If the miracles never took place, how is it that the predictions have been fulfilled? On the other hand, the predictions being true, how can the miracles recorded by the same writer be logically rejected? Some disbelieve miracles because they have never seen one; it is not necessary that they should. We have, in the fulfilment of prophecy, which is in itself a miracle, sufficient evidence of miracles having been performed by some of God's servants who delineated the future. The miracles wrought through them testified to their contemporaries the divine character of their utterance, and the impression produced has, in various degrees, been transmitted to subsequent generations. The extent to which their words have come to pass, proves that they were what they claim to have been—inspired by God; and it further proves the reality of the miracles recorded of them. Eighteen centuries have elapsed since the last inspired man lived. During that long period, God has made no further revelation. The occasion which existed in the first century for appealing to the outward senses has not recurred. This is an answer to the question, Why are there no miracles now?

The resurrection of Christ was predicted in various ways—long before and immediately preceding its occurrence. We will take an illustration of the latter:—Matt. xvii. 22, "The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again." These words were spoken by Jesus Christ within a short time of his prediction concerning Jerusalem and the Jews, already dwelt upon. Does not the truth of the latter give evidence as to the reliability of the former? The one cannot consistently be accepted and the other rejected. The divine teaching which enabled Jesus Christ to see the future of his own nation, imparted to him the knowledge as to his death and resurrection.

Proceeding a step further, we will look at a prediction from Christ since he was raised from the dead. It was given, after his ascent to heaven, to the apostle John. It is described as "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John" (Rev. i. 1). He who wrote these words says, in chap. i. 18, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." This is another way of saying that he had been raised from the dead. Does the book contain any internal evidence of the truth of this affirmation? It predicts events which have since come to pass. Perhaps it does, say some, but in such extraordinary language that it cannot be comprehended. This is true respecting those who give no attention to it, but false in regard to the servants of God, who "hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein" (ch. i. 3).

It is possible, even, for others to ascertain, to some extent, what this book means. We will take a point, presented in a very striking light, about which there can be the least possible dispute. In the 17th chapter, we read that John "saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, and I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration" (v. 3-6).

That seems very incomprehensible at first to those who have not considered it, but the same chapter contains some explanations, which constitute a clue to its meaning. "The seven heads are the seven mountains on which the woman sitteth" (v. 9). "And there are seven kings, five are fallen and one is, and the other is not yet come" (v. 10). "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet" (v. 12). "The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth are peoples and and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (v. 15). "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (v. 18). The last quotation suggests the question: What city in the days of John reigned over the kings of the earth? The only answer is, Rome. The seven heads of the symbolic beast are described as seven mountains, and this is

a further identification of Rome, which, as is well-known, is called the seven-hilled city. There is yet another parallel in the seven kings or seven successive forms of government which find a place in Roman history. Five had passed away before John's time, the sixth then existed, and afterwards came the seventh. When the fall of that mighty Empire came, it was divided into ten smaller kingdoms which find their counterpart in the ten horns of the symbolic beast. The combined testimony of these four parallels cannot leave any doubt as to the city of which this prophecy speaks. When the apostle John lived, Rome was pagan. This chapter sets forth the result of a great revolution in the Roman Empire, which transformed its religion from paganism to papalism. There was nothing in John's day to show to the human eye that such a radical change would take place. Rome continued pagan for two centuries after John's death, and two or three more centuries elapsed before the papal system was fully established. How could such events be predicted excepting by a power superior to man? John could not do it, John does not claim to have done it; John testifies that he received the prophecy from Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ affirms in giving it to John that he was once dead but was alive again. Therefore the development of the apostasy, with Rome for its centre, being the fulfilment of a prediction given centuries previously, and constitutes evidence that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. This argument would not, of course, be recognised by Papists, but Protestants should have no difficulty in endorsing it, and it may not be without its effect on some secularists. It is capable of considerable extension in other historical directions, if there were time to expound them. I hope that sufficient has been said to show that miracles cannot be treated in the unsatisfactory way in which Mr. Wilson has dealt with them; that God is the Author of them; that they are not improbable or unreasonable; and that the fulfilment of prophecy proves the record of them to be true.



THE BIBLE DEFENDED

FROM
RELIGIOUS UNBELIEF.

SECTION IV.—“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”

Reply to Mr. Baynes.

To those who are already convinced of the truth of the Bible and love it, this is perhaps a more interesting subject than that of miracles. Mr. Baynes was the lecturer on this occasion, and he said that “the kingdom of Heaven was the centre of Christ’s discourses, that Christianity is the kingdom of Heaven, and that Christ called it the Gospel of the kingdom. This kingdom is now, in the present life, a society of people here upon earth, a kingdom actually established in the time of John the Baptist. It cannot be heaven, because Christ described it as containing good and bad seed. Jesus came to save men not from hell in the future life, but from sin in the present. This kingdom is like heaven, and by degrees it is to influence the whole world, which is to be ruled not from a visible throne, but from an invisible one, the kingdom of heaven conquering without outward arms. The kingdom of heaven is within you; it is a righteous kingdom of unselfishness and love, comprising the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers, &c., and its test of membership is not words or the profession of faith in creeds, but acts. Not everyone that saith ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter it. Its king is Christ. Plato, in his Republic, has sketched an ideal state, but he says it can never be realised until a true philosopher, a perfectly good man, shall arise. Christ is present by his Spirit throughout the kingdom, and this constitutes a bond of union, and also the strength, the motive, and the guide of all its members. Salvation does not need future rewards; to do good is its own reward; in this respect the next life will be simply a continuation of the present. Among the benefits conferred by it on humanity are the brotherhood of man, and the sacredness of human life. The prophecy of Daniel, chap. 2, v. 44, gives a brief description of the kingdom of Heaven now in existence on the earth.”

The Scriptures compel us to take a direct issue in regard to this contention. The kingdom of Heaven is synonymous with the kingdom of God. Passages could be adduced to prove this, but Mr. Baynes acknowledges it. In some cases, we read of the kingdom of God, in others, of the kingdom of Heaven, and also of the kingdom of Christ, but these phrases represent precisely the same thing. The first point to be proved is that this kingdom is not the Church. Mr. Baynes says it is, and he adduces as evidence the existence of good and bad seed. Mr. Baynes is quite correct in saying that on this ground the kingdom is not in Heaven, but he makes a serious mistake when he attempts to identify it. There are many passages which

shew that the kingdom of God is not the Church. Thus in Matthew, 6th chapter, 33rd verse, we find Jesus saying to his disciples, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Mr. Baynes says that the kingdom of God was within these disciples. What need then had they to seek for it? People do not usually seek for that which they have. Whether they were in the kingdom, or the kingdom was in them, it would be quite superfluous for them to seek it. Christ's exhortation shews that they occupied no such relationship to it. On another occasion, Jesus said, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom, and you yourselves thrust out" (Luke xiii. 28). When is that to be? At the resurrection and judgment, when Christ receives the righteous, and rejects the unrighteous. Is that evidence of a present kingdom? Again we read, "And as they heard these things he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke xix. 11). On this occasion, Christ spoke for the express purpose of shewing that the kingdom of God was not immediately to appear, and yet Mr. Baynes comes before us, and says that the kingdom of God had already been established by John the Baptist. In Acts xiv. 22, it is written of Christ's disciples, "That we must through tribulation enter the kingdom of God." If they had been already in it there would have been no need for such an affirmation as this. Mr. Baynes says that the kingdom consists both of good and bad, but the Apostle Paul declares that "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6-9). Mr. Baynes has made a mistake in regard to Christ's parables; when Christ said that his kingdom was like unto so and so, he was speaking of it in different aspects, at one time describing its preliminary preparation process, and at another its full fruition.

The "word of the Kingdom" (Matt. xiii. 19) is the gospel, or glad tidings of the kingdom of God, good news of the establishment of that kingdom at a future day. In the minds of some, this truth brings forth fruit, but in the minds of others the reverse. The two classes are represented by wheat and tares, good and bad fish, &c. While holding fast to "the hope of the gospel" (Col. i. 23)—and there is but "one hope" (Eph. iv. 4) by which to be "saved" (Rom. viii. 24)—they are simply "heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him" (Jas. ii. 5). Heirship necessarily precedes inheritance; the two cannot co-exist; when inheritance commences heirship terminates. The heirs look forward to the enjoyment of the promised inheritance, but the realisation of it depends on their behaviour during probation. They have to pass through a sifting process, which will separate the righteous from the unrighteous; "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34). Previous to entering on this inheritance they are "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. xv. 51, 50).

How does Mr. Baynes harmonise his theory with these plain testimonies? He does not attempt it. As far as his lecture is concerned, they might as well

have never been written. It is true he refers to one or two passages which appear to conflict with the foregoing. But of what practical value is that? Anyone can do the same. The duty of a professed expounder of the Scriptures, especially one who has all his time available for their study—surely requires that he should present, not a one-sided or distorted view of any subject therein, but a perfect picture, at the same time explaining how each portion is in harmony with the rest. In the absence of this, he cannot be “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. ii. 15). Unfortunately, Mr. Baynes resembles too many of his class; and it is not too much to say that if such defective workmanship were exhibited in any other profession or calling the labourers would soon find their occupation to be gone. In ecclesiastical matters the employers are even more ignorant than the employed; the scholars are, therefore, unable to detect wherein their teachers go astray. The occupants of the Gentile pulpit merit the charge brought against the religious instructors of Israel by the prophet Jeremiah:—“The prophet prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so” (ch. v. 31). The laity, as the non-clerical public are called, have been lulled into a religious sleep, by pleasant fictions and incredible scares, and to the unsatisfactory and contradictory teaching of the clergy may be attributed no small portion of the scepticism which now stalks through the land—not merely in the secularist ranks, but within the borders of both Church and Dissent. Like the Pharisees of old, the religious teachers of this and previous generations have “made the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition” (Matt. xv. 6). God said, through His Son, to the Saviour’s “disciples”—(Matt. v. 1)—“Seek ye first the kingdom of God”—(Matt. vi. 33)—but the clergy say to those who profess to be Christ’s followers, “Ye are now in the kingdom:” hence there is no seeking for it, and the result is widespread ignorance concerning the subject matter of the true Gospel. Verily “they be blind leaders of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matt. xv. 14).

To prove that the kingdom now exists, Mr. Baynes quotes, from Luke 17th chapter, verse 21, wherein Christ said, “Behold the kingdom of God is within you.” How he would harmonize the idea of a kingdom being within men, and their being at the same time in the kingdom is not apparent; sufficient is it to show that neither idea is entertained in this passage. To whom was it addressed? Not to Christ’s disciples, or there might be some ground for saying that the kingdom was within them. It was spoken to the “Pharisees” (see verse 20), of whom Jesus said, “Ye have taken away the key of knowledge” (Luke xi. 52). “Ye shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in” (Matt. xxiii. 13).

Did Christ reign in the hearts of the Scribes and Pharisees?

Mr. Baynes will surely not contend for this. The impartial hearer will, therefore, conclude, and rightly so, that Mr. Baynes’ interpretation of the passage is an egregious mistake.

What is the correct explanation? The kingdom of God was within, or, as the margin gives it, “among” the Pharisees in the sense that Christ, the

centre, the head, the embodiment of all that pertained to the kingdom was among them ; "the royal majesty of God," as some render it, was in their midst, but the Scribes and Pharisees failed to recognise it.

The saying of Jesus Christ in John (xviii. 36), "My kingdom is not of this world," is sometimes quoted to prove that the kingdom can never be on earth. Mr. Baynes is precluded from so using it. He quotes it to show that Christ's kingdom does not pertain to the ways and plans of this world. He says it is within all other kingdoms, but separate from them. If Mr. Baynes had already proved that God's kingdom co-exists with the kingdoms of men, his application of the passage would be quite justifiable ; but having failed to do so, he cannot use Christ's words to illustrate a false theory. He is right in saying that Christ's kingdom is not in harmony with the ways of the world, but wholly wrong as to the time and circumstances of its existence. For the benefit of those who think that Christ was disavowing any claim to a kingdom on the earth, it may be well to point out that the word rendered "world" does not mean this globe, but an arrangement or constitution of things. Christ meant that his kingdom did not pertain to the Mosaic constitution of things, to the Jewish Commonwealth as it existed in his day, it related to a future time when the kingdom of Israel will be re-established on a more perfect and durable basis. After listening to Christ discoursing about the kingdom of God during the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension the disciples put this question, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" That was the same as saying "Wilt thou at this time establish the kingdom of God about which thou hast been speaking?" To this Christ replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his power" (Acts i. 6, 7). An answer which recognised the future restoration of that kingdom, but at the same time intimated that the apostles were not to trouble about the time thereof ; they had to perform a work of a very arduous character—that of proclaiming the glad tidings of the kingdom throughout the Roman Empire—which did not require that knowledge of its times which they desired.

Romans xiv. chap. and 17th verse is a passage often quoted in support of Mr. Baynes' theory ; "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." There is no evidence here that the Church is the Kingdom of God. The restored Kingdom of Israel will be one of righteousness, peace, and joy ; pre-eminently so, to those who will reign with Christ, and in a subordinate sense to the subjects. The apostle's argument is based upon this truth, and he says in substance that the heirs of the kingdom must manifest its characteristics in the present life.

Mr. Baynes lays great stress on the Sermon on the Mount, in support of his theory of the kingdom. That Jesus Christ makes frequent reference to the kingdom is undeniable, but this is no evidence that he does so in the same sense as Mr. Baynes. To test the point, we must look at some of the passages. The Beatitudes contain two ; but in these the kingdom of Heaven is introduced in such a way as to show that it is a future reward. The poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they which hunger and

thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted for righteousness' sake, are but varied expressions for describing the same class. Hence the blessings promised are one, though under different names. From this we learn that the Kingdom of Heaven is a state of comfort, righteousness, and mercy, to be established on the earth, and that they who enter shall "see God" and be called His children. Is Mr. Baynes prepared to say that these blessings are now realised by the members of Christ's church? Until he is, and can prove it, he has no justification for affirming that the Kingdom of Heaven now exists on the earth.

After describing his disciples as "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world," Jesus Christ enjoins them to teach and practice obedience to his commandments if they would be "great in the Kingdom of Heaven," and he enforces it by the following stringent interdict:—"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (v. 19, 20). If, as Mr. Baynes contends, this kingdom was established in the time of John the Baptist, these disciples must have been in it at this time; in which case his words would fall upon their ears as idle tales.

Mr. Baynes refers to the Lord's prayer—so frequently repeated in the service of his Church. But he makes no attempt to show in what way it supports his theory. The reason for this is very simple. The expression, "Thy kingdom come," proves that it had not then been set up, and the next phrase, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"—(Matt. vi. 10)—describes the condition of mankind—not even yet realised—when the petition is granted.

Once, if not oftener, Mr. Baynes quotes the words of Christ, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. vii. 21). Like the Lord's prayer, its plain sense is wholly opposed to his view. Doing the Father's will is the condition; entrance into the kingdom is the reward. The latter is dependent on the former. Some of the members of Christ's Church fail to perform the will of God: therefore, they will never enter the kingdom. And yet Mr. Baynes says that they are in the kingdom in this life. Thus does a professed follower of Christ make void the Word of God by Gentile tradition.

From the words of Christ, Mr. Baynes takes us to those of Daniel. Two better authorities he could not consult on this subject. There can be no contradiction between them, though they vary in the language describing it.

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, in which he saw an image of various metals, gold, silver, brass, and iron, and these metals are interpreted as representing four great empires, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman; and then, after the fourth, there was to be a disintegrated state of things, represented by the feet and the toes of the image.

"In the days of these kings," says Daniel, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall

not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. ii. 44). The earlier phase of this vision we cannot deal with now; the latter portion must suffice. At what period of the world's history does this occur? The phrase, "in the days of these kings," cannot refer to the four great empires, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, or Rome, because they did not exist contemporaneously. We must look, therefore, to a subsequent period, when these empires had mouldered in the dust. What followed the disruption of the Roman Empire? It was divided into kingdoms, which are symbolised by the ten toes of the Image. This occurred at least three hundred years after the days of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and the apostles. During their lives, Cæsar, the representative of the iron power of Rome, was in the ascendant, over the civilised world. Consequently, the symbolic vision foretold the establishment of the kingdom of God—not in the days of the Roman Empire—but after its decline and fall. Only by shutting the eye to plain historical facts, can Mr. Baynes come to the conclusion that this kingdom was set up in the first century of the Christian era. Daniel's description of God's kingdom furnishes equally strong evidence in the same direction. It appears upon the scene, not gradually, but suddenly and with violence. In the vision, Nebuchadnezzar saw a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, smite the image on its feet, and grind it to powder, and Daniel explains this to be the breaking in pieces of the ten kingdoms, by the kingdom of God. Is there, in this, anything analogous to the spread of Christianity during 1,800 years, and its future imaginary growth throughout interminable ages, until all nations are brought within the pale of the Church of England? Mr. Baynes, in effect, answers "Yes," but omits to demonstrate the supposed parallel. "Every scribe instructed into the kingdom of Heaven" well-knows that an attempt to do so would be attended with certain failure. He also knows that Daniel's description relates to a future event, not included in Mr. Baynes's creed, for in the discussion, after his lecture, Mr. Baynes was asked whether he believed in the second coming of Christ, to establish a kingdom on the earth, and he said that "Christ now ruled in the hearts of his believers, and this was his spiritual kingdom."

There is no difficulty in identifying the stone, which smote the image, as Jesus Christ. The next point to be determined is, at what period of his career does he smite? At his first appearing? This question can be answered by asking another. Did he, during his humiliation, smite and grind to powder any kingdoms? History, whether sacred or profane, gives a negative reply. Therefore, he did not then establish God's kingdom. Had he done so, his disciples would have exerted a supreme and irresistible control over the world's affairs from that day to this; for that kingdom would not have been "left to other people," and its numbers would not have been given into the hands of a blaspheming politico-ecclesiastical power, which Daniel predicted should "wear out the saints of the Most High" (Dan. vii. 25).

The kingdom of which Daniel speaks is very different from Mr. Baynes's conception. It is a kingdom which will overturn all other kingdoms. It is not contemporaneous with them; it is not an invisible kingdom, without power, in the midst of unrighteous governments, subject, as the Church

of Christ has been, to the down-treading of its enemies. It consumes all other kingdoms, and therefore supersedes them, realising the prediction in Rev. xi. 15, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." The transforming process will not occupy eighteen centuries and then be as far from realisation as is the conversion of the world to Christianity at this time. A single generation will suffice for its accomplishment. The command to obey God will be accompanied by the threat of punishment, and neglect thereof will incur divine wrath. The proclamation to "every nation, and kindred and tongue, and people," will be, "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. xiv. 6, 7). And to the rulers it will be said, "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Love the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little" (Ps. ii. 10-12). In this way will be realised Isaiah's prediction:—"When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. xxvi. 9). A consideration of these testimonies demonstrates the futility of human efforts to bring the world to God.

There is another flaw in Mr. Baynes' theory not yet noticed. He defines the subjects of God's kingdom to be the disciples of Christ in the present dispensation: whereas the Scriptures describe the latter as the joint-rulers with their Lord and Master. Thus Paul says to Timothy: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. ii. 12). John gives a prophetic picture of the redeemed singing, "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. v. 10); and he afterwards sees them sitting upon thrones, and "reigning with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. xx. 4). These passages are in perfect accord with Christ's words—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. v. 5). It is superfluous to ask Mr. Baynes to prove that the Church of Christ now inherits the earth, and that its members are reigning with Christ. It is also unnecessary to invite him to reconcile the thousand years' reign with his imaginary kingdom, established nearly two thousand years ago. The attempt would result in complete discomfiture. The plain truth is that Mr. Baynes' teaching nullifies that of Christ and the apostles. If Paul were living now he would have much cause for repeating what he said to the Galatians, "Though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 8). Mr. Baynes' teaching concerning the kingdom of heaven is another gospel than that which Paul preached. It transforms the kingdom of Christ into a present kingdom, and thus virtually robs Christ of the glory God has guaranteed him of ruling over the earth, when all present kingdoms have crumbled into dust; and it deprives his brethren of the promised share in that reign, by making them subjects in this life instead of rulers in the next. It scarcely deserves the name of glad tidings; for it substitutes the imperfect present for the perfect future, and leaves man in darkness as to how the woes of this evil world are to be cured.

Very different is the Gospel of the prophets and apostles. What can we have more magnificent than the prospect it presents? When we look at

society to-day, what do we see? Evils on every hand. The best government under the sun is very imperfect, and though constantly striving to ameliorate the troubles which afflict the English nation at home and abroad, we see how futile it is for real and lasting good. These efforts are not always based on righteous principles, and there is a deficiency of the power required to carry out its decrees. Something stronger is needed, and it is only to be found in the kingdom of God. Our legislators recognise the difficulties which beset their labours. The late Sir Robert Peel, after retiring from office in 1844, declared that nothing would induce him again to undertake the task of forming a ministry. The late Lord Beaconsfield would gladly have retired from political leadership after his last Government, if his party would have allowed him; and Mr. Gladstone last year stated in Parliament that the longer he lived the more he found practical legislation to recede from ideal perfection. The impotence of Parliament to perform its functions, in anything like an adequate manner, is one of the most conspicuous defects in the governing powers of a state distinguished for its civil and religious liberty. Ministers introduce only such bills as they think can be carried, but of these seldom more than one-third become law; and the vain efforts of private members to give legislative effect to their reforming zeal—even in non-party directions—are enough to damp the ardour of the greatest enthusiast, and wear out the patience of the most indefatigable philanthropist. And when, after strenuous exertions, private and public, a small modicum of ameliorating legislation is effected, how often do the enactments become merely additional dead letters on the Statute book, or prove, when practically applied, to be insufficient for the object for which they were designed! Mr. Baynes commends Plato for recognising the impossibility of an ideal state without a perfectly good and true philosopher at its head, but he fails to show how the Church of Christ in its weakness supplies this. Truly Jesus Christ realises more than Plato's ideal of wisdom, goodness, and truth. But he has not yet assumed the supreme control of all human affairs. When he does, the arm of the Lord will be displayed in a more signal manner than it has ever yet been, and all nations will be brought to acknowledge the power of God. There have been miracles in times past, but there will be still greater miracles in years to come. The Jews are scattered, and from a human point of view there is nothing to indicate that they will be reconstituted a nation; but the Bible tells us that they are to become the most mighty kingdom upon the face of the earth, and, according to the prophet Isaiah, the nation and kingdom that will not serve them shall perish. The prophet Ezekiel, in describing them as a valley of dry bones, predicts that they shall be covered with sinews, flesh and skin, that breath shall enter into them, and they shall live, and after standing upon their feet they shall become an exceeding great army and be a terror to the Gentiles (Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14; Mic. iv. 13; v. 8). Though politically dead, they are destined to be the subjects of a national resurrection. In a national sense it will be as great a miracle as the raising of the dead. It can only be effected by God. Its realisation will be the establishment of

the kingdom of God. The throne of David will be occupied by Christ, who will extend his power to all the Gentiles. Kings and rulers will be required to give up their sceptres, crowns, and thrones, that others may fill their place. Who are they? The humble, the merciful, the poor, the meek, the pure in heart distinguished for their faith. Like Abraham, they believed God's promises, when to the eyes of unenlightened men there seemed no probability of fulfilment—notwithstanding the incredulity by which they have been surrounded, amid the sneers of secularists on the one hand, and the perversion of God's word by leaders of the apostasy on the other.

Having believed them and obeyed God's commands, Christ, at his coming, will bestow the reward for which they have looked. In accordance with the parable of the talents, he will give to one "five cities," and to another "ten" (Luke xix. 17-19). "Come, ye blessed of my Father," will be the invitation to those on his right hand at the day of judgment, "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34).

