

of facts that have surpassed the fairy fabric of dreams. This paper has already in some degree dealt with that subject. Yet, in a sentence, there is something more to be said. In 1836 a circulation was claimed in 158 languages, or, if not an actual circulation, hopeful preparation at least was a-making. Then from the committee itself a man was raised up to chastise these figures and to weed the list. Russia and Serampore had furnished most of the lay figures. The list fell to 135. It was a bit of honest work that deserves warm praise. It was not till after the Jubilee, in 1854, that the list of versions came again within measurable distance of the list of 1836. Since then its progress has been alike wonderful for extent, for variety, and for influence. The entire history of the Christian Church may be ransacked to discover a second achievement worthy of being placed side by side with the Bible Society's work for the spread of the Bible.

ART. III.—WONDER-WORKS.

I this infer,
 That many things, having full reference
 To one consent, may work contrariously ;
 As many arrows, loosed several ways,
 Fly to one mark ; as many ways meet in one town ;
 As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea ;
 As many lines close in the dial's centre ;
 So may a thousand actions, once afoot,
 End in one purpose, and be all well borne
 Without defeat.

SHAKESPEARE, *Henry V.*, i. 2.

BY Wonder-Works we mean those signs, powers, miracles which show that, besides the physical, there is a spiritual influence in the world, wherein the unresting activity of God, veiled behind the natural order of things, stands out as initiating new things, in new ways, for special purposes, rendering nature "a fairer and goodlier system than ever floated in airy romance before the eye of genius."

The manifestation of this spiritual influence will be twofold ; one in matter, one in manner. Both will intensify the signification of that variety in nature which exhibits wide and free changes, both in form and substance, for unwonted achievements. These achievements, the actual physical wonders, far transcend the imaginings of poetic minds. The reason of Newton and Galileo took a higher flight than the fancy of Milton or Dante.

The manifestation being twofold, so is the proof. It embraces the world as a whole, and pierces every part in particular ; gives uniformity to variety, and variety to uniformity. Thus, the forms of matter in the universe, the state of beings and existences, the amount of life in planets and stars, change instant by instant ; their path in space, the direction of forces acting on them, varies moment by moment ; out of this infinite

variety is evoked the present natural apparent uniformity. This uniformity is not only a veil over the variety, but the ground for a further and wider system of change. Thus, the substance of all the worlds and of the things contained in them ceaselessly undergo general and special transformation for special adaptive purposes; in new series and cycles of series, in the birth and death of worlds, in the quickening and dying of living creatures. The ascertained state and structure of the universe exhibit a sublimity beyond all that was ever thought of in our unscientific days.

So vast and complex a system which, as if it were an organism or living structure, dies moment by moment and lives again moment by moment, is only possible, so our reason asserts, in two ways :

1. As an everlasting automaton, ever the same, never the same; that is, as a whole invariable, yet every part, relatively, always varying; consequently the whole, as a whole, and the parts everywhere, are continually different. Our understanding is not able to bring such a paradox within the region of mathematics.

2. If we conceive the phenomena of nature as representative of Eternal Power, and the ever-varying forms of substances and of forces as different modes in which that power operates, we have worlds both natural and supernatural at the same time, always and everywhere miraculously natural and naturally miraculous; the intelligible purpose in everything being a miraculous signature of the Eternal's Will.

Whichever view we take, the worlds as a vast self-existent automaton, which is unthinkable, and requires our reason to dispense with faith, and our faith to dispense with reason; or the worlds as created and sustained and renewed ever and ever by the Eternal Strength; we have that system and series of wonder-works which renders possible that which would otherwise be impossible.

For guidance of life and thought we always prefer the more probable, as being the more reasonable, and reject the automaton theory; while we accept creation as a fact—that wonder-work which includes every wonder.

Is this natural miraculousness? and is the infinite variety within the uniform covering caused and maintained by laws which allow no deviation other than that of universal adaptation to infinitely varying exigences? We do not regard things as being so fated. The following are some of our reasons :

1. Natural laws are not real things, nor established statutes, nor creative powers, but our own view as to the modes of order, affinities, operations, movements, positions, concerning worlds and things. The laws of gravity, of motion, of heat,

are merely the observed behaviour of gravity, of motion, of heat. When we try to understand that behaviour, and our best men go further than common mortals, we always come to the inexplicable, which can neither be fathomed nor crossed. The various stages and conditions of the earth's development do not show the same order, or intensity, or rate of progress. We cannot say that the space and things with which we are acquainted accurately and adequately represent all surrounding space and things. We do not know that the present state—rather the contrary—is a likeness of former and future states. The laws, we do know, may not prevail everywhere; or, if they do, probably with such variation as not to be the same laws at all. We cannot think that the present forms of process exist where are no such processes. Laws can only hold good so long as the things to which they refer remain the same.¹ Professor Stuart says: "The relation of a law of nature is very different from what its relation is to the future." Dr. Whewell would teach us that a law of nature is merely that which serves to gather and bind together our view of a particular series of phenomena.

2. All asserted laws are not equally probable. Of those we regard as most fixed, the expression of regularity may at any moment change to irregularity. Indeed, no law explains all the phenomena which it is said to formulate; possibly, therefore, no one is altogether true. Some of the regular coincidences attributed to fixed laws are probably due to accidental conjunctions which have attracted our attention. Only infinite experience can prove universal and eternal uniformity. Even the theory of gravity, which explains nearly all facts in the solar system, does not show why some substances are imponderable, nor why the law of the diffusion of gases is an exception, and not the only one. Gravity does not indicate that the earth cannot stop. If the earth were to stop, it would prove that the law of gravity does not sufficiently account for all the attributed phenomena. At present physical science knows little more than the rudiments of motion, and magnitude, and number.

Suppose things continue the same, and in the same surroundings, would natural laws always produce the same effects?

1. Things never do continue precisely the same, nor with identical surroundings. We know that in the far-off and near, throughout the universe and in everything, there is incessant change as to substances and forces, their positions

¹ Thomson, "On a Universal Tendency in Nature to Dissipation of Energy," Proc. R.S.E., 1852.

and relations. Whithersoever our observation extends, the physical energy of the universe is passing from higher to lower forms. No two series of events are ever precisely the same. However conservative laws may seem, they are really the untiring agents of change. Every scientific man knows this.

2. Were uniformity universal—that is, if things and their surroundings always continued the same—there could not, so far as physical science ascertains, be any creation or dissolution of worlds. We know, however, that the present state of things began, and not less surely that it will pass away. It is certain that now, and in the past, uniformity is the stage on which the most surprising changes are prepared. Some very different substances are apparently identical in their arrangement of particles and in the number of particles. Where laws and circumstances seem the same, there also are obtained results wholly different. No sooner do we go beyond the surface than we come face to face with mystery; every natural process leads to that which is beyond the natural. Then we are in presence of the Unknown, the Eternal, the Absolute, the Infinite. What is done then? Every man of science, of philosophy, of religion, of common-sense, says, “The Unknown made Himself known; the Eternal brought Himself into relation with time; the Absolute allied Himself with things by creation; the Infinite made matter, force, life, express realities of which He is the Essence. The intelligibility of any physical event is a mental marvel, and the explanation of that marvel is a moral miracle, which gives to every atom universal influence, and to every event a prolonging that is infinite.

3. Those who assert “the existing natural uniformity is never broken,” must be answered with the fact, “Natural uniformity is always broken.” Behind the face and frame of the worlds, even as behind the face and within the frame of a man, are those varieties of working, that continual change of substance, which reveal an ever-advancing process. From the synthesis of life in man until the analysis by death, and from the time that the materials of the worlds began to differentiate into their present order unto the universal diffusion of matter and force, there has been no process of human thought, no combination of atoms, no wind to move a leaf or to raise a ripple, that has not been due to departure from uniformity. Who would have thought such mighty consequences could emerge by that apparently slight deviation, the mere inclination of a line to a plane? It gives rise to the beneficent round of the seasons, that goodly procession in the heavens, at every footstep of which so many precious

influences in the way of delight and utility are shed upon our world. Holy Scripture contains no event so startling, nor any such great departure from usual order, as physical science shows to have happened in the past and as liable to occur in the future. Once there was no corn in the earth, nor any juice of the grape; the multiplying of bread in the hands of Christ, and His change of water into wine, are works of less wonder than those which brought that corn and that juice of the grape out of the ground. Once there was not a man to till the earth; the creation of that man, of which we know, is not an inferior marvel to the resurrection of that man, for which we hope. Nature, the great miracle, is a wonderful compendium of every conceivable miracle. One condition is the fruitful germ of a thousand beneficial effects, and a thousand events are necessary for the production of one condition.

Despite all this, answer is made, and a fairly good answer it is: "Amidst all natural changes such great inflexibility prevails in the onward march of things, and in administration of law, that there is no turning aside for sinner nor show of favour to a saint. Nothing can happen which opposes universal laws, nor can there be anything which is not a result and an effect of those laws."

The answer, though it seems good, and obtains acceptance from some scientific men, is not satisfactory, as we now prove.

1. The Miracles of Scripture. Nations most capable as to intellect, most pure in morals, most scientific with regard to investigation, accept those miracles—accept them because verified, in various infallible ways, by persons competent to judge, and in circumstances most conducive to effective examination; accept them also because those miracles were made, at the time of their performance, by the persons beholding them, the origin of national institutions, customs, morals, sacred rites, laws, classifications of society, and apportionment of land. They became the basis of prophecy; and so constitute the history of a people, and so explain the origin and facts of Christianity, that neither can the history of that people, nor the birth and progress of Christianity be understood or explained apart from those miracles.

2. If it be said: "The improbability of a miracle is so great that no amount of historic evidence can afford sufficient proof," we answer: Historical evidence generally weakens with lapse of time; but the evidence for these works of wonder is strengthened from age to age, by new facts, which furnish new arguments. Investigations amongst ancient ruins, philosophical researches as to memorial inscriptions, the collation of antique manuscripts, have been carried so far that thoughtful theolo-

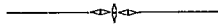
gians are well aware that the most reliable commentators are not those who doubt most, but those whose exercised faculties discern the prevalence of Spiritual Power. In law cases, citations of former confirmed decisions are accepted as conclusive. It is dangerous for any ordinary mind to assume the attitude of unbelief for the further confirmation of faith, or to put faith in solution for the satisfaction of its reconstruction. We do not well, but suffer loss, if we cast refined gold again and again into the crucible for trial by fire. The Creeds, Sacraments, Scriptures, have been verified, and are verifiable by a larger, more varied and reliable evidence than attests any other history, any other events whatsoever. The Christian faith of men like Newton and Boyle stands forth in beautiful and effective contrast with the infidelity of later and lesser men. Soundest philosophy is at home with soundest faith.

3. Not only so, it is known by scientific men, notwithstanding the opposition of a few, that it is impossible by means of science to give demonstrative evidence that the statements in Holy Scripture concerning miracles are untrue. Astronomy begins to furnish proof as to the origin, progress and decline of worlds. Geology finds cataclysms varying cosmic uniformity. Modern physiology discovers parallels for recorded supernatural events; laws rise above laws; chemistry is supernatural in its process if compared with mechanics. Organic forces not less marvellously control chemical. All laws and all forces so mingle that we know not where one ends, nor where another begins. System after system of unbelief goes down before the fact that life—one long patience—and time—much longer—demonstrate that nature, as a whole, is a universal wonder-work of which every part is miraculous. Take a bird, a quadruped, a vegetable. What large use and meaning in every one! Take the whole of things, the universe, that stupendous production of which as yet, with all our seeing, we see so small a part. We are lost in its immensity, and the infinite diversity of its relations. Probably this contrivance of beauty and far-reaching results is but one of many possible forms in the mind of God.

Finally: Miracles show that the earth is subject to cycles of intermittent changes. These are in accord with our own nature which is now held in check, and anon advances by higher adjustment. One day mind and body are incapable; another day the whole man is new. We are conscious of rebellion; within and without all things are against us; a power enters, and our experience gladly discerns that all things work together for our good. These mental and physical processes have their counterpart in other men, and in nature at large. We are curiously relative to the worlds, and the worlds

to us. There is speciality in everything, and this proves that purpose is not less true in the least than in the most majestic. The inside and the outside work everywhere into one splendid construction. Science, only achieving accuracy during the last three hundred years, is beginning to set the strophes of earthly melodies to the rhythm and music of the spheres. We are still in some doubt concerning the fundamental notes; nevertheless, we know somewhat as to the higher science of harmony; and the far-reaching concords gather into one dominant of glory far off. Some of us talk of things coming, and being interfered with by a non-natural causality. It is not so: the natural and the supernatural are two sides to one piece; the seen and the unseen, are products of one factor. The working essence, which we do not see, and the product, part of which we do see, are the grand total. "This hath God done." We are infants, both in science and faith, but manhood is coming. Our best thoughts, our best works, transcend former ideals. Our capacity discerns that we are only at the beginning of what God will do in us, for us, by us; and the coming glory will exceed all that the world has ever dreamed.

JOSEPH W. REYNOLDS.



ART. IV.—ALEXANDER KNOX.

MUCH speculation and controversy have arisen as to the effect exercised by the writings of Alexander Knox on the Church movement in England since 1831. It cannot be doubted that their influence has been more or less felt; but the following short sketch of the life and writings of this remarkable man does not enter into this question. It has been undertaken entirely on account of the pleasure afforded by the contemplation and study of the character of one whose letters and conversation dwelt continually on the study of God's Word and the Liturgy of the Church of England, which he believed was divinely directed in its compilation. There is no attempt at criticising his numerous writings, but it is hoped that these few notices of this good man and his immediate friends, which have afforded so much satisfaction to the writer, may induce others to examine them with the same experience.

In the beginning of the present century Alexander Knox resided in lodgings in Dawson Street, Dublin. Here he courted retirement, but as a theologian, philosopher, and scholar his society was much sought after. He was visited by religious people of various schools of thought, upon whom his conversation and writings left strong and permanent impressions.