

them may confidently trust that he shall be preserved from all dangerous errors on the one side and on the other; and he will learn—while surely established himself in “the faith which was once for all committed to the saints,” and ready, when occasion requires, to contend earnestly for it—to put away “all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking,” and speak the truth in love.

In making these remarks I have been actuated by no unfriendly feeling towards the writer of the sermon to which they refer, but by a deep conviction of the injury done to truth and charity in the Church by the tone he has adopted in it. I the more lament this, because his intellectual power, his eloquence, his earnestness of purpose, and, I may add, his generous impulses, would, if exercised with more self-restraint, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, enable him to render most valuable service in promoting the progress of pure religion, and restraining ungodliness and vice throughout the land. If this Paper come under his eye, and anything I have said in it give him causeless pain, I shall willingly express to him my regret.

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Review.

The Supernatural in Nature; a Verification by Free Use of Science. By JOSEPH WILLIAM REYNOLDS, President of Sion College, and Vicar of St. Stephen's, Spitalfields. Second Edition. London: C. Kegan Paul & Co. 1880.

THIS is a second edition of a book which was published anonymously in the first instance. The demand for a second edition, and the appendage of the author's name to the title-page show that the book has acquired a certain amount of popularity and a not inconsiderable circulation. If the statement be true, that at a recent ordination in the Diocese of London a copy of this work was presented to each one of the candidates, the Bishop of London must be considered to have put the seal of his approval to it, and with a work of such pretensions as this, and of such considerable bulk, it is not to be supposed that he would have adopted this step without careful personal perusal and examination. Yet we have heard of cases where readers have found it impossible to complete the perusal of the book, still less to master its contents. For ourselves we confess to have found it very difficult fairly to appraise its value. At first we were disposed to think very highly of it; then followed a second stage, in which we were equally disposed to lay it down without completing the perusal of it. This weariness arose from its excessive discursiveness, what we may venture to call the garrulousness of its style, and the total want of that *lucidus ordo* which enables a reader clearly to apprehend an author's object, and to follow his process of thought. It is easy enough to read the successive chapters, or studies, as they are called, if the reader be

content to pass lightly on from topic to topic; but if he desires to harmonise what he reads with what goes before and follows after—to know exactly to what the argument points, and to trace its meaning link by link—then to study this book as it needs to be studied is one of the most difficult tasks we can remember to have undertaken. So we laid it down, and then took it up again, and thus entered on a third stage of opinion in regard to it of a more complimentary character. The final conclusion is, that the work contains a large amount of very valuable matter; that it exhibits wide information and considerable ability; but that to make it generally useful, it needs to be sternly condensed, to be, to a great degree, reconstructed, and above all to have its argument drawn more precisely to a point, as a skilful workman takes a blunt and rusty weapon, gives it edge, and makes it fit for the sharp conflict of actual war.

Thus much of the literary character of the book, and of this only. Of the substance of it more needs to be said. The question whether it can be accepted as a safe guide on the points in controversy between so-called science and religion is by no means to be easily answered. It is part of the defects of the book that the precise object and argument of the author must rather be gathered from the title and from reflection on its contents, than from any definite statement of the author himself. In one respect Mr. Reynolds' book resembles the work of Professor Duns, and constitutes an exposition of the grounds on which the Divine authority of the Christian revelation may safely be defended in the face of modern scientific discovery, so that the Christian position may not be weakened by statements which are untenable, and which only lay the apologist open to the charge of ignorance. In this aspect the volume under review contains a great deal well deserving the most serious and careful consideration. This, however, scarcely appears to be the direct and conscious object of the author. He fights under the motto of "*Verbum Dei manet in eternum.*" It is his pious purpose to vindicate the Word of God against the attacks of scientists, and especially against that philosophy which would eliminate the Deity out of His own world, and reduce all the operations of nature to the action of material agents controlled by that blind thing, uniform and invariable law. Pseudo-science labours to get rid of the supernatural in the works of God in order that it may get rid of the supernatural element in His Word. The two must evidently stand together. If the supernatural exists anywhere, it must, in the nature of things, exist everywhere. If there be a God in one part of the world, there must be a God in all parts of it. It is impossible, with any success, to deny the miraculous in revelation so long as the miraculous is admitted to survive in creation and providence. Accordingly, modern scientists deny the supernatural altogether. Mr. Reynolds reverses the argument. He seeks to prove the supernatural to exist in nature—that is, in the creation, constitution, and continued preservation of material things—by showing that nothing less than Divine intelligence and force can explain the marvellous facts which modern physical science has brought within our knowledge. If this be established, the miraculous in revelation is no more than a simple and inevitable corollary of the conclusion which nature teaches.

It is really a grand argument, not simply defensive, but aggressive in its own nature. It retorts the attack of science back upon itself, and carries the war into the chosen strongholds of the opponent. To this purpose, after certain preliminary discussions, the author proceeds to consider the Mosaic account of the creation in the light of modern science, not as the Mosaic history has been ignorantly interpreted by jealous but ill-informed apologists, but as the author considers that it ought to be interpreted, and as known facts require us to interpret it. From this point of view he reviews the various stages of the Mosaic narrative in their orders:—the

original condition of the globe, without form and void; the Creative Word that called it into order and beauty; the creative days; light, the firmament, the habitation of life, the creation of plants, the sun, fishes, reptiles and birds, creeping things, and man himself. In the course of these discussions we find—on the side turned towards modern unbelief—a great deal of acute and vigorous argument, and a vast array of scientific facts of the highest imaginable interest. As a repertory of information on the subjects named in their scientific relations, Mr. Reynolds' work is of great value, and a rich storehouse of information for those who are incompetent to enter, for themselves, into the specialities of modern physical discovery. We know not how any devout mind can arise from the perusal of these chapters—as, for instance, the chapter on Light—without grander ideas than he possessed before of the majesty, power, and wisdom of God. It is from the minuteness of His creative operations, more signally than from their magnitude, that these attributes of God's working are most wonderfully brought within the comprehension of the human mind. When, for instance, we are told such facts as these, in regard to light—that no less than 458,000,000,000,000 vibrations of ether in a second are necessary in order to give us the consciousness of the lowest or red light, and 727,000,000,000,000 vibrations the consciousness of violet light; that the splendour of Sirius "is brought to us by medium of atomic shivers maintained during the past twenty-two years at the average rate of six hundred millions of millions of vibrations the second;" that the waves constituting light are so small that from forty to fifty thousand are required to occupy the breadth of an inch, and that trillions enter the eye in a few seconds; or, in regard to sound, that vibrations of ether, occurring between 16,000 and 30,000 times a minute, act on the ear as musical sounds; vibrations above 30,000 and below 458,000,000,000,000, act on the sense of heating as heat; and that vibrations from 458,000,000,000,000 up to 727,000,000,000,000 affect us as light;—the mind is oppressed with the vision opened to it of the wisdom and glory of God, and of the energy, unity, and diversity that equally characterise all His works.

There are speculations opened to the mind by these facts, so wonderful in their corroboration of the promises of God, that we are unwilling to pass them over altogether without a brief reference. The author does not speak of them, but that he is not insensible to them we should judge from the following words: "What a manifold undeveloped system of signs and images we have within us! We cannot but think that these wonderful potentialities are prophecy of a coming richness and fulness." It is most true. The human eye and ear, like the other organs of the body, are simply mechanical instruments and no more, by means of which the living spirit within is brought into contact with the material outside world; they are, moreover, instruments made to act within a strictly limited range. The ear can only catch vibrations which range from 16 to 30,000 in a second. The eye only receives undulations varying from 458,000,000,000,000 to 727,000,000,000,000. But can any one suppose, for a moment, that there are not vibrations below and above these limits?—but they overpass the mechanical capacity of the ear and the eye. The fact suggests the possibility of there being sights and sounds on every side of us, such as the Bible actually declares to be the case in the angelic beings who minister to us below, and yet the ear cannot hear nor the eye see them, not because they are themselves beyond the natural possibilities of sound and sight, but solely because of the mechanical limitations that at present restrict the action of our senses. Suppose that, in another and a higher state, these limitations should be removed, what a world would break upon our knowledge in an instant!—strange, but magnificent as the sights and sounds revealed to the Apostle in the Apocalypse! Such thoughts rebuke the false spirituality that would despise the body and would omit

its redeemed and resurrection power from its calculations of the world to come.

Our readers will now understand the meaning of our reference to the deeply interesting facts which this book places within the reach of the non-scientific reader. But another question remains to be answered. How far is the position of the author himself a safe one, not only towards science but, what is infinitely more important, towards revelation. Can his views be accepted as to the interpretation of the Mosaic record and as to the laws of its reconciliation with the conclusions of modern physical science? If they are not safe, the official circulation of the work amongst young clergymen is a very serious matter. To this vital question we found it exceedingly difficult to give an answer, simply because we find it difficult to ascertain what precise position is maintained by the author. Here, where the utmost accuracy of statement is required, we find great ambiguity. His propositions are not formulated, and therefore remain obscure. We are not prepared to say that his teaching is safe, neither are we prepared to say that it is unsafe, because we are not sure what his meaning is, and we might do him great injustice by unconscious misrepresentation. For instance, as to the six days of the Mosaic creation, Mr. Reynolds argues at considerable length that they cannot mean the literal days of twenty-four hours each. But all this elaborate argument is surplusage. We do not know any writer of recent times who has maintained such a view. It has been given up long since under the irrefragable force of facts. Nor do we know any one who maintains that the various strata of the earth were made all at once, so that the organic remains of which they are full were created also just as they are—the mere sham and pretence of life that never had existence. It is needless to argue against a notion so highly dishonourable to God. But the principal question on which we should be glad to have an enlightened view is, whether the six days are to be considered simply as optical days—parts of a vision in which the process of creation was divinely revealed to the mental eye of Moses—or whether they are to be regarded as vast geological periods, immeasurable to us in their duration, and definite only in the order of their sequence. Either of these views, or both—for they are entirely consistent with each other—maintains the idea of successive creative acts in all its fulness and integrity. But such a series of acts the author appears to us, we hope inaccurately, to give up as inconsistent with science. Thus he writes:—

“This difficulty, fairly met, establishes the verity of the symbolism. The word ‘day’ is not used in two different senses. As the day of toil to man, so is the day of rest; and as the day of work to God, so is the day of repose. The true difficulty is—creation is continuous, no break exists anywhere; processes now in operation perpetuate the primeval operation, ‘Deus operatur semper, et quietus est.’ God’s life is all Sabbath and no Sabbath. The Mosaic account implies a cessation and change in world-development, there not having been any such change; consequently Gen. ii. 23 is only *ἀνθρώπινος λόγος*, adapted to early unphilosophical conceptions. Human labour in producing is a symbol of the Divine act in creating; man’s repose is a figure of Godly rest. How long did it take God to create the world? Not so long, in the Divine lifetime, as a week is in man’s lifetime. Grand as is the universe, vast as are its operations, many and various the inhabitants, the whole must be regarded by man as not so great a task to God as a week’s work to himself. The days are all the same and are all symbolical. Suppose that Moses meant for six successive Divine days, in which moments are years, God’s hand worked; on the seventh Divine day—not yet concluded (Heb. v. 3-9)—He began to rest. Let all holy men as made in God’s image, observe God’s rule. Would not such a meaning

add greatly to the force of the Divine command? It is a moral measure for all time, and the keynote of Providential arrangements. It is a peculiar majesty, specially suited to the grandeur of a creation revealed by the growth of science; and the withholding of a true interpretation until now, affords proof of original inspiration. The sanctity and safety of the Sabbath are not shaken, but assured; built on truthful, not erroneous interpretation." (Pp. 149-150.)

We have quoted freely, that our readers may see both the author's strength and his weakness. He is firm and distinct in the truth he desires to maintain, such as the perpetual authority of the Lord's day, but obscure as to the grounds on which he bases it. What are we to understand by the assertions "creation is continuous—no break occurs anywhere?" "the Mosaic account implies a cessation and change in world-development, there not having been any such change." The words appear to us to assert the principle maintained by Professor Bonney, in the "Manual of Geology" prepared for the Christian Knowledge Society, and which excited just alarm among the members of that body. We do not say that Mr. Reynolds is unsound; we only say that, if he is sound, he has not expressed his meaning with sufficient clearness and accuracy. The same uncertainty hangs over all his views of creation, amid much that is of high value. Creation, in the popular sense of the word, he appears to repudiate, and to substitute evolution in its place. "Science represents this operation as an evolution, in accordance with discernible physical laws," but Scripture reveals that these laws exist and act by a "Divine power, inherent in the cosmos." Even so, the idea of true creation is not got rid of. If all things have been developed by inherent power from an original monad, who made that monad and endowed it with its wonderful capacity of development? We are justly told that the original germ of all life in its form of protoplasm or bioplasm is the same in all cases, but is differentiated in the process of development into plants, irrational animals, and man. What energy is it that acts with such wondrous unity of plan, and yet such an endless diversity of detail? It is God, and He alone. This is the reply of the author, and he makes it and reiterates it over and over again. We delight to do him the fullest justice here. We think that he is often obscure in his reasoning, but here there is no uncertainty, no obscurity, no hesitation. From end to end of this volume the Divine name echoes like a voice from heaven. The name of God resounds from every page, as the great primal all-pervading Will and force from which all things proceed, and on which they depend. We wish that we had space to quote some of the eloquent passages in which Mr. Reynolds devoutly reiterates and emphasises this great conclusion. But we must be content with giving the following brief extract:—

"We would know how matter, if created, was created, unless by Deity; and if not created, how the eternity of its existence is more comprehensible than the Christian's belief—that matter, and all other phenomena, are manifestations of the great Unknown? If the many thousand impulses of energy do not proceed from hidden energy, science belies its own teaching." (P. 258.)

C O R R I G E N D A .

Article *Veni Creator* in CHURCHMAN, No. 11—August.

Page 359, line 7 from bottom of the page,
for "O highest gift, O God most High,"
read "O highest gift of God most High."

Page 361, line 4, for "Eternal of Spirit," read "Eternal Spirit."