

ROGER'S REASONS

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ROGER'S REASONS

*Or, The BIBLE
and SCIENCE*

BY

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NUMBER ONE

MY DEAR GRAHAM: — I got your note, and you would have had an earlier reply had you been more reasonable. But what a task to burden a busy man with—to tell you “the whole” of that Sunday’s talk in Norway! My dear man, have you no conscience left?

Well, I suppose I had better buckle-to and do my best; but you must take it as it comes. We were five, and were at times a “merry party.” You know Brown and myself well enough, and I may spare my descriptive powers till I come to the others. But let me say, in passing, that Brown has developed into a Broad Churchman. I fancy this is due to the stay at Göttingen, with which he rounded off his student days and perfected his German, an accomplishment which occasionally served us well during our journey. Colquhoun is a shrewd Scotch lawyer, whose main idea of a holiday appears to be that it is a time for the exercise of a sometimes caustic, yet always kindly, humor. I suppose he is accustomed to take things so seriously in business that he cannot, or will not, take them seriously out of it. The fact of three ministers being in our party seemed to present too broad a target for him not to have a fling at it. Many a story and many a remark we had, that were plainly meant to rub “the cloth” the wrong way. I think there was general satisfaction when Brown quieted him for at least five minutes in the following fashion:

“Colquhoun,” he asked, “did you ever hear the story about the lawyer and the sovereign?”

“I cannot say I have,” said Colquhoun, looking at his questioner with eyes that sparkled behind his glasses.

"Well, it is a very simple affair. A lawyer swallowed a sovereign. They rushed for a stomach-pump, and applied it immediately and vigorously; but all that they could get up was 13s. and 4d."

Our enjoyment of that joke was a little keener than Colquhoun's.

Colville is a man whom all respect and love, and he was naturally a great addition to our party. He has a wide knowledge of literature. A literary man once told me that he had made a special study of Leigh Hunt's writings, and had tracked him through one magazine after another. He happened to get on to the subject in conversation with Colville, and he was amazed to discover that Colville knew more about it than he himself. But, alas, there is always some little "but" in the description of the best of characters. There is a strain of poetry and of mysticism in Colville which hates definiteness, and which makes him hover in a most tantalizing fashion midway between Brown and Roger. He inclines to both, and sides with neither. I was often reminded of the indiscriminate lover of the last generation, whose feelings have been embalmed in the lines:—

"How happy could I be with either,
Were t'other dear charmer away."

Roger, about whom I shall have most to say, impressed us all as an original and clear thinker. So clear a thinker, indeed, is he that he sometimes treats one in a summary, and even contemptuous, fashion that is trying. Not that he is unkind or ungentlemanly, but he sees, almost intuitively, the essential weakness of a position, and the uselessness, and even the wrongness, of any attempt to maintain it; and he is too honest to conceal his judgment. His reading has also been wide and thorough, but it has been along special lines; and his conversation convinces you that he not only has opinions, but that he has also a right to hold them.

We had had a splendid run. Colville had planned our journey, and took us along a comparatively untravelled route. We landed at Christiansund, in the South of Norway, and then took boat to Arendal and Langesund.

From Langesund we ran right up into the country, and made our way through the Thelemarken. Two scenes I shall never forget. We sailed for hours between mountain ranges, which seemed to have been sawn across to let the Fiord pass in, along whose placid bosom our little steamer glided in the bright sunshine. The ends of the mountains rose up on either side two thousand, three thousand, four thousand, feet high; and so perfect was the reflection in the clear, still water, that it was impossible to say from the vessel's deck where the hillside ceased and the water began. At one point a small cannon was fired, and the echoes reverberated among the mountains, as if we were being answered by one or two royal salutes. The other was a view from an over-hanging mountain precipice, right down 2,000 feet into the valley below. Midway, a huge bird was swimming lazily through the air. Beneath us, a river ran down to the Fiord. It looked like an inch-broad ribbon. Peeled fir-trees were being floated down to be formed into rafts in the Fiord, and these trees were like straws. We had got up to Haukelid Sæter on the Saturday night. We rested the Sabbath Day, "according to the commandment." But there was no church near, and each was left to his own devices till dinner-time. After that not very inviting feast (for things were somewhat rough at the Sæter), we strolled out together about a mile, and sat down in a hollow where we could enjoy the sunshine without the accompaniment of the cold mountain wind. Colquhoun seemed to think the occasion particularly suitable for his favorite pastime. We had a number of stories—one of them about a Scotsman, who declared to a guest that he might cheat, and tell lies, etc., but "you'll no' whistle in ma hoose on the Sawbath!" I tried to quiet him by saying that I was afraid we should have to call him "the profane member" of the party. But it was of no use—he would rush upon his fate.

He expressed his delight (but I imagine the delight lay in the effect that his words were sure to have upon one, at least, of his auditory) in the tremendous change which had come upon public opinion. He remembered the time when you could not put a question about Jonah without being thrown into the deep sea beside him. And now

mistakes in the Bible were freely admitted! In fact, the Bible was looked upon more as mere Jewish literature, which had been put together in such a poor fashion that we had to keep a host of highly-paid theological professors in our colleges doing little else than trying to get it into some decent order. The Bible, it now appears, was just like other so-called sacred books—not any worse, but not much better.

By this time Roger was looking straight at him with kindling eyes. "When I see you and the rest," he said, "showing any anxiety to spread the other 'sacred books,' or even to read them, I shall conclude that you and they really believe what you say. How much will you give, Colquhoun, to translate the Koran, the Hindoo Shasters, or the Zendavesta, into Chinese?"

"Well, now, between ourselves, *you* don't hold the old views? You admit that there are *some* mistakes in the Bible?"

"What? *I* admit mistakes in the Bible!" exclaimed Roger, with vehemence. "Why, man, the Book grows more wonderful, and more glorious, and more precious to me every day. It is the one and only Book that is entirely and eternally true!"

"Well, you amaze me," replied Colquhoun, with evident enjoyment. "Let me ask you to try your teeth on some of 'The Mistakes of Moses.' What do you say to the Creation history in the first chapter of Genesis, and to that gem of the collection—light before, and seemingly without, the sun?"

"I don't think you can make much of that," interposed Colville, in his quiet, judicial way. "I do not expect to find Theology in a scientific text-book; and it does not trouble me not to find Science in a theological one. The Bible was never intended to teach Science: it was meant to teach us something better, and much more necessary."

This seemed to rouse the lawyer in Colquhoun. "I have heard that before," he replied, "but somehow it does not remove the trouble. A theological text-book does not usually come from God; but, if it did, it could not possibly contain blunders on any subject. Though the Book was not meant to teach Science, its Author, knowing all

things, would not, and could not, write down what was scientifically erroneous. I think, Mr. Colville—if you will excuse my saying it—when you make a statement of that kind, you throw your case away. For, if you admit scientific blunders, then, certainly, to that extent, the Bible could not be from God.”

“You astonish me, both of you,” said Roger; “where did you get your Science from? You talk as if light were dependent upon the sun, and you are not aware that it is you, and not the Bible, that are behind the times! Why, that theory has been exploded half-a-century ago! And yet you, and ever so many more, set yourselves up as scientific authorities, and begin forthwith to chastise and to put down the Bible! It is now acknowledged, and has long been acknowledged, that Newton was entirely wrong in his theory of light. Light is the result of force causing the waves of the ether to vibrate with an almost infinite rapidity. How great that force is we can measure by the fact that light travels round the earth eight times in a single second. Now, Colquhoun, how will you explain this? Some scientific men have been struck with a thing which you and I have read a hundred times in the second verse of the Bible, and have seen nothing in it. It is the statement that the first thing that was done with the chaotic mass of the primeval waters, was that ‘the Spirit of God *moved* upon the face of the waters’ (Gen. 1: 2). The word used is the continuative form of the verb, and means not only ‘moved,’ but also ‘kept moving.’ It was the introduction and continuation of *force*. And then comes the result of force—light. I say some scientific men have been struck with that: how does it strike you?

“You see that, when you get Science enough, you begin to understand the Bible, and to feel yourself and all your knowledge conquered by it. But that is not all. The ignorance which makes it an objection to the Bible, that it speaks of light before the sun, is simply unpardonable. Sir John Herschell, in his *Familiar Lectures on Scientific Subjects*, tells us that since the invention of photography the views of scientists regarding light have been revolutionized. The action of light on those delicate sensitized plates showed that it was one of the greatest forces in the

universe. Its action was necessary to prepare the way of all life, and he declares that the outcome of these discoveries is our knowledge of the fact that light is the most ancient of all things. Proctor, in his *Flowers of the Sky*, speaks in the same strain, and declares that light is 'the first of all that exists in the universe.' That is one of the biggest discoveries which Science has made in the closing years of the nineteenth century. But the Bible taught it thirty-four centuries ago. Where did the Bible get it? You may not see it; but that cannot prevent me from confessing that the Mind which placed that among the first words of the Bible was the Mind of God."

We were all astonished and impressed by this outburst. Even Colquhoun had grown serious. Brown was the first to speak. "That is, no doubt, striking. But one swallow does not make a summer; and you must admit, what everybody does admit now-a-days, 'that the existence of scientific mistakes in the Bible cannot be denied.' Is fact, even on your own ground of full inspiration, scientific blundering is a necessity. If God did talk to men in ancient times, He must have spoken to them in language which they could understand. For, if the communication had been made in accordance with the ideas of the nineteenth century, how would men in barbaric times have understood it?"

"Well, Brown," responded Roger, "I have often wondered how you and others keep yourselves so safe and snug in your rationalistic nests. But I think I understand it now. Where plainer folks would tumble out and come to the ground, you are so padded round about with every sort of philosophic device, that you are in no danger of getting down to ordinary common sense. Excuse me; I must be plain. Your argument would prove that God could never communicate truth, simply because men's ideas are steeped in error; that is to say, truth could not be spoken to them, just when they needed it most. Is that what you mean?"

"Hardly. A father has to talk down to his little boy."

"Yes; but to talk down to him he does not need to say anything which the boy will afterwards discover to be

wrong, and so lose faith in his father's reliability. I should say a father would be specially desirous to avoid that; and surely God would avoid it more than man! But what is the use of stating or attacking theory? Where are the blunders? Let us not begin to account for them till we have ascertained their existence."

"That matter is soon settled, then," said Brown. "Take the coney and the hare. They are both set down in Leviticus 11: 5, 6, as unclean animals, which chew the cud. But Science has placed it beyond doubt that this is certainly to be numbered among 'The Mistakes of Moses.' Neither one nor the other of these is a ruminating animal, and, therefore, cannot chew the cud."

"Now, Brown, if you had only applied in the right way your own illustration of the father talking down to his boy, that 'Mistake of Moses' would have vanished like a puff of steam. It is quite true that the ruminants generally have four stomachs, and that these two animals have only one. But they have the same jaw motions as the animals which chew the cud. The Israelite went no farther than that jaw motion; and, looking at that, he might judge the animal to be clean. 'No,' says the Law; 'it chews the cud, indeed, but it does not part the hoof.' But you must now alter the title of this famous difficulty, for this alleged 'Mistake of Moses' is now a confessed 'Mistake of Science.' An Englishman told Renan that this 'error of the Bible,' in making the hare a ruminant, had turned him into an infidel; and now Professor Rüttimeyer of Basel, one of our great authorities in these matters, says: 'It is no news to me that the hare is a ruminant!' Long ago, too, Bruce, the famous and observant Abyssinian traveller, put on record his conviction that the coney chews the cud.

"And, now that we touch upon this matter, does it not strike you as strange, that the distinction between clean and unclean animals should have involved some of the very latest discoveries of our century? Ours is the era of 'the microbe,' and of all his kin. But the very animals and fishes which, in the Mosaic Law, are forbidden to be eaten, are just those which feed on garbage and decaying animal matter, and which are, therefore, veritable maga-

zines of those deadly foes to human health and existence. How can you explain it, that the division of classes in the Mosaic Law should run along the very lines indicated by twentieth-century science?"

Colquhoun once more intervened. The attack was becoming discredited, and victory was evidently inclining to the side of orthodoxy. It was necessary to open fire on another part of the orthodox bulwarks. "You cannot deny, at any rate," said he, "that the Bible teaches the flatness of the earth. We left Rome to fight that battle out with Galileo, but we have to own that there, at least, Rome had the Bible on its side."

"Where does the Bible teach that the earth is flat?"

"You astonish me! Won't you admit even that? I think that any reader of the Bible would have the impression that it represents the earth as a big plain, variegated with seas and mountains. And doesn't it talk about 'the ends of the earth?'"

"Yes; and we talk about 'the ends of the earth' to-day in exactly similar circumstances as those in which the Bible uses the phrase and in no other. If I wanted to say now that some folks had come from the back of Tartary to the King's Coronation, could I express that in better twentieth-century English than by saying they had come 'from the ends of the earth' to do that thing?"

"There are other expressions. however," interposed Brown. "The Scripture speaks of 'the foundations,' and 'the pillars,' as well as of 'the ends' of the earth. It is also said to be 'established for ever.' I fear it is hopeless, Roger, to attempt to explain all these away. A thing that is established on foundations and pillars seems, to my mind, to be something very different from the revolving and racing planet which we now know the earth to be."

"Does it really need to be different?" queried Roger.

"It does not seem to me at all impossible to show that every one of these expressions is in perfect harmony with what we know of the earth. There are internal arrangements, even in a planet, which admit of, and indeed necessitate, foundations and pillars. Some scientists have judged these expressions of the Bible to be marvellously accurate as descriptions of how the solid crust of the earth

has been built up, and of how it is even at this very moment sustained. As a matter of literal fact, the earth has foundations and pillars which are wonderful revelations of the Divine wisdom and skill. Remember that the Bible has told us that the earth's first condition was that of a shapeless mass of chaotic waters, in which nothing could exist, and on whose surface nothing could have found a resting place, and you will see why that work of God in giving us this solid globe should be mentioned and should be rejoiced in.

"But let me show you some other Bible statements, which will take us a bit farther. You say that the phrases of the Bible imply that the earth is flat. There is one statement which I think you will confess does not quite look that way. I see, Brown, you have your Bible with you; you will find it in Job 26: 7. The chapter is a description of the greatness of God, as shown in His works, and this takes its place among the rest: 'He hangeth the earth upon nothing.' When you remember the Hindoo description of the earth, as resting on the backs of four huge elephants, and these again on a huge tortoise which swims in a limitless ocean; or think of the similar notions entertained by the learned—the scientists of those days—among other nations, you will acknowledge the marvel which lies in that description in Job. The earth is upheld by nothing. No support reaches out to it from any side. It is suspended from nothing. And yet it is fixed, mark you, and put in its place! A Divine operation has set it there: 'He hangeth the earth upon nothing.' The astonishment expressed there is the very astonishment felt by scientists at the present moment. We used to talk glibly about 'gravitation.' But we are now learning that 'that blessed word' explains nothing, and that the mystery of the firm placing of the heavenly bodies is as great now as it ever was. It seems to me, too, that the picture before the mind which used these words was just that which we ourselves have seen and marvelled at, when we have looked through a telescope and seen a planet suspended in the depths of the sky, and yet 'hung upon nothing.'

"I do not say that this *proves* that the Scripture teaches the rotundity of the earth. But let it be granted that the

teaching, so far as it goes, is thoroughly true and scientific. Now, let me take you farther yet. Turn to Isaiah 40. The verse I want you to look at is the 22nd. Perhaps you will not object to my showing you a little of Scripture Science on the way. This whole chapter is a wonderful exhibition of the greatness of God, but look at the 12th verse. Every clause might be made the title of a scientific treatise. 'Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand?' The figure is that God scooped up so much water in the hollow of His hand, saw to it that the exact quantity was there, no more and no less, and then placed it in its earthy bed. Science now tells us the same thing. We have the exact quantity we require, no more and no less. Had the water surface been larger, we should have had more rain, and had it been more restricted, we should have had less rain, than is required to make the earth bring forth food for man and beast. Take the next question—'And meted out heaven with the span?' That is, the extent of the atmosphere was measured out by the Creator, and fixed at the height to which it now reaches by His decree. I need not tell you that this is another scientific fact. Had the height of the atmosphere been much less, we could not have breathed without pain, if we could have breathed at all. Had it been much greater, our lives would have been a burden to us. Take the next adjustment—'And comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure?' The soil which lies upon the rocky ribs of the earth, like the flesh upon our bones, has been prepared, as we know, and enough has been given for the earth's fruitfulness and beauty. It was, so to say, 'comprehended in a measure:' and when the measure was filled, it was spread out to prepare the world for the abode of man. Here is the last: 'And weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?' Physical geography cannot tell us everything yet about the relations of mountains and hills to the mass of the earth, and the part which they play in the earth's well-being. But it tells us one thing. The height of the mountains on every coast is in direct proportion to the depth of the sea which beats upon the shore. If the sea is deep, the mountains are high. If the sea is shallow, the

height of the mountains is correspondingly decreased."

"I must thank you," said Colville, "for a bit of genuine and helpful comment. I must make a note of it."

"Perhaps, Mr. Colville, you might afterwards ask Brown to complete the comment by showing how all that twentieth-century Science got packed into a single verse written by 'the second' (or is it the twenty-second?) Isaiah, some 400 years before the Christian era. But we must not forget the correct figure of the earth. The passage which I am really working my way towards is in verse 22. Here we have still the same prolonged description of God in His greatness and majesty. 'It is He who sitteth upon the circle of the earth.' That word *khug*, translated 'circle,' does not mean a circle drawn upon a plane surface. It means an arch or sphere. It occurs in two other places where it refers to the vault of the heaven. This throne of God is an orb, and to the other marvels of this 'second Isaiah,' you have to add this, that it teaches the true form of the earth. Now turn back to Deuteronomy 4: 19. Israel is being warned against the worship of the stars, 'which,' says the Scripture, 'the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.' Here is a passage which it is simply impossible to understand except in the light of the modern scientific theory of the earth. The word translated 'divided' means 'allotted,' 'portioned out.' God has given to all nations under the whole heaven their own portions of the stars. Remember that the earth is a globe, and you grasp at once the meaning of the Scripture. If the earth were a plain, all nations would see the same stars. But, because it is a globe, as we pass along from north to south, or from south to north, we pass to a different sky. Our friends in South Africa have lost sight of the Great Bear and the North Star, but they see the Southern Cross. How did that get into the Bible before travellers had begun to compare notes, and before Copernicus was born?

"You will find my last passage in Luke 17: 34-36. The Revisers leave out the 36th verse, but Scrivener shows that their text is founded in this instance upon copies that have blundered. Let me read the words: 'I tell you that in that night there shall be two men in one

bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field: the one shall be taken, and the other left.' Our Lord is speaking about His second coming. He has warned us not to be deceived by any representations that He has come, and that He is to be found in some secluded spot. When He comes, no man will need to tell another. All will see Him at one and the same moment. 'For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be in His day' (verse 24). Bear all that in mind, and come again to those verses. These three things will all be incidents of that time. *They will happen together.* When are men in bed? In the night. When are the women of the East grinding at the mill? In the early morning, preparing the flour for the day's bread. When are men out together, laboring in the field? In the broad daylight. You see, then, what the grouping of these three scenes means. At one and the same moment it is deep night in one place, early morn in another, and broad day in a third. Behind that representation you have the rotundity of the earth! We know about the Antipodes, and that, when it is midnight here, it is mid-day there, and that the day is breaking mid-way between. But all that was already in this seventeenth chapter of Luke's Gospel. Pardon me if I ask once more my possibly inconvenient question—'*How did it get there?*'"

Colquhoun looked at Brown, but neither seemed ready with an answer. Roger's eye met mine, and he returned the smile with which my face was beaming. I had seldom felt so happy as I did then at the triumphant vindication of that old yet ever new Book.

"Brown," said Colquhoun, "he is getting beyond me; I must leave you to tackle him."

"Well, Roger," said Brown, "I must admit that you have made out a fair case so far. But you have a good deal to do yet, if you are going to convince us that the Bible is scientifically infallible. There is the antiquity of man, for instance. Some of those who go with you halt

there. Quatrefages and others agree with the great host of their fellow-scientists that the six or seven thousand years which the Bible chronology allots as the entire span of human existence on the globe, are ridiculously inadequate."

"I know, Brown, that the Bible has been laughed at on that score. But the laugh is turning now against the mistakes of Science. You know that man's arrival was preceded by the great Ice Age. If we knew just when the Ice Age ended, we should know pretty accurately when man first appeared. Sir Charles Lyell gave us a span of 850,000 years. Sir John Lubbock has divided that number by four, and is content with 200,000. Croll and J. Geikie say 80,000 years have passed since the end of the Glacial Period. Sir Joseph Prestwich thinks it cannot be more than 20,000, or 30,000 years at the outside, figures in which the Duke of Argyll seems to agree with him. There is a big difference between 850,000 and 20,000! And yet these are the 'certainties' for which ever so many people have exchanged the teaching of the Bible!

"But there is more than the striking fact that Science is climbing down in this way from its hundreds of thousands of years to meet the Bible. Those numbers are based more or less upon theory. But, where accurate measurement has been employed, the Bible is still more fully vindicated. Our rivers have ploughed out their channels since the ice was cleared away from the surface. Niagara has had to cut through the rocky gorge down which it hurls the huge mass of water which forms the falls. At what rate has Niagara cut its way through those rocks? It has ploughed out seven miles. Lyell estimated that the work was carried on at the rate of one foot a year, and set the whole time down as 35,000 years. But careful observations, made by a New York Commissioner, brought it down to 10,000 years. Mr. Gilbert, of the United States Geological Survey, has since brought it down to 7,000.* Sir J. W. Dawson† believes that even that figure

* See *Journal of Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, vol. 27, p. 41.

† *Modern Science in Bible Lands*, pp. 99-101 (Third Ed.).

has to be reduced, and names a number of similar testimonies; and so we are actually brought down by the latest science to the Bible dates. Is not that strange?"

"I will confess that it is strange," said Colquhoun, "provided that it is a fact. Is it true," he asked, turning to Colville, "that scientific figures have been tumbling down in that wholesale fashion?"

"Well," replied Colville, "I should say that it is true, but there are those who still reserve their judgment in view of certain discoveries of flint implements said to be artificially formed, and which, consequently, must be the work of man. These have been found in several places in the lower strata, the age of which goes back very far indeed beyond the Bible dates."

Colquhoun now turned to Brown with one of those sharp, but amused looks which he wears when a case begins to promise "developments." "Oh, yes, I know," said Roger. "S. Lang, whose works I was glad to see mentioned by a recent geological writer as 'not very trustworthy,'* and Edward Clodd have made the most of these flints. But in every case the evidence has, on enquiry, completely broken down. You know, of course, that the Quarternary is our own geological age. The Tertiary is the next older, and is divided into four sections, the two latest of which are the Pliocene and the Miocene. Well, Dr. Nötling, while geologising in Burmah, came upon some human-shaped flints imbedded in strata about ten feet thick. These lay at a mountain foot, and 4,000 feet of Pliocene strata towered above it. What could be more natural than his conclusion that man must have lived in Miocene times? The discovery made a noise—at least there were many who made a noise about it. That any man should believe in it now shows how true is Moody's saying, that a Lie gets half round the world before Truth can get its boots on. With half a world's distance between them to begin with, it takes time for T. to overtake L. But the two have met, in this instance, long ago. Mr. Oldham, one of the Indian

* *Prehistoric Man and Beast*, by Rev. N. Hutchison, B.A., F. G. S., p. 291.

Geological Survey, got Nötling to show him the spot, and then a second discovery was made. The strata, in which the flints were found, were on a spur which ran out at the hill foot. A flint could easily be swept from the surface on the heights above and get embedded in the conglomerate on the spur. The terraces above were searched, and lo, there were the shaped flints lying in abundance on the surface! A more recent case is that of the flints of Thenay, in France. Those were found in Miocene strata, and the learned Abbés, who made the discovery, were themselves impressed by it. It seemed that here at last lay undeniable evidence under their own priestly eyes of the vast antiquity of man. But, again, when Truth had got its boots on, the whole fabric collapsed and vanished like a dream of the night. They found, on further search, that early excavations had been made to reach the beds of marl which lay underneath, and that the material on the surface, which had been swept to right and left during the operations, had afterwards fallen into the pit, and the Quaternary had thus been buried in the bosom of the Tertiary!"

"I am afraid," said Colquhoun, "we must give up Tertiary man. But what about 'Genesis and Geology?' You can't defend the first chapter of Genesis as scientific."

"Why not?"

"Well, that is good! Do you believe that the world was created in six days?"

"Certainly, but in six of God's days!"

"Oh, ho! that wretched Period theory!" laughed Colquhoun.

"What about the Fourth Commandment?" interposed Brown. "We are told to work six days, and rest on the seventh, because God worked six days and rested on the seventh. Does that not imply that the 'days' are the same in both cases? There is no distinction whatever indicated."

"Well, Brown," replied Roger, "you have only to carry your logic a little farther, and you will answer yourself. Keep to what you have now said, and you will only do one week's work all your life. You will never start again after your first Sunday! God worked one six days; did

He ever work a second six? He rested one Sabbath day; do you read of God's beginning again when the Sabbath was over? We are often called upon to imitate God; but that does not mean that we can equal God. And in the same way our days may be imitations of God's days, without being equal to God's days."

"I think you have him there fast enough," Colquhoun remarked, accompanying the words with a significant nod.

"You see, Colquhoun," added Roger, "that the wretched Period theory is a necessity even there. But the Scriptures make it quite clear that the Seventh Day was a great period. Do you remember our Lord's reply when He was accused of breaking the Sabbath Day by healing? He said, 'My Father worketh hitherto (up till now, till the present moment), and I work' (John 5: 17). What do the words mean? Bishop Ellicott and others believe that they can be explained in only one way. They mean that the Seventh Day—God's consecrated Sabbath—was a period continuing up to the moment when our Lord spoke; and His argument is this: 'God's works of Providence and of Grace do not violate His Sabbath, and, therefore, My healing work, which reveals God's Providence and grace—His mercy, power, and ready help—does not break the Sabbath of the Law.' The two things which are compared are two Sabbaths. But God's Sabbath is one which continues till the present moment."

"I remarked that," said Colville, "in the Bishop's preface to his Bible Commentary. I thought it remarkably good."

"But you find the same exposition plainly given in Hebrews 4," continued Roger. "There the Seventh Day rest is spoken of as continuing to the time of Joshua and of David, and as still remaining for the people of God. But let us turn to the passage. I think I can show you one verse which makes this remarkably clear. Look at ver. 3: 'As He said, As I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter—that is, they shall not enter—into My rest, *although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*' The plain meaning of this is that it was *not* because the rest was non-existent that these failed

to get it. The rest *was* there. It had been there from the time of the Creation. It is there now. In other words, the Seventh Creation Day is the Seventh *period*. So plain is this that Dean Alford, a man of your own school, declares that it is incontestable. And when you read Genesis 2 again, you find yourself compelled to explain that chapter in the same way. In 2: 4, the whole creative work is spoken of as having taken up only one day. Six periods can easily be looked upon, of course, as one great period. But can you talk of six days of twenty-four hours as being one day of twenty-four hours? The 'wretched Period theory' (forgive me, Colquhoun!) is necessary there again! Go to the third verse, and you will meet something there, too, that you can explain only in the same way. The Seventh Day is introduced, but is not ended. Every other day is completed. It has its evening—the preceding darkness with no promise of the coming glory, and then the morning—the dawning and the meridian splendor. But there is no such full history of the Seventh Day; it has no evening and morning. Why? If the Seventh Day is not a period, I cannot see that there is any explanation of that silence possible. But, if it is a period, the whole is clear. Its story is not yet written, because it is not yet finished. There was first the black night of sin, when darkness covered the nations, and gross darkness the peoples; and then came the morning, whose dawn was the Lord's first coming, and whose mid-day will be His return. Then, after the earth's long, deep peace, will come the ending of God's Sabbath, and the beginning again of God's work, when the new heavens and the new earth will be created, in which dwelleth righteousness. Is it not marvellous to find the Scripture so consistent with itself, and so perfectly in harmony with what is revealed in God's works?"

"That, I must confess," said Brown, "seems strong. But there is one big objection, which is not so easily disposed of. The Bible puts vegetation before animal life, Grass, herb, and fruit-tree are the work of the third day, while animals are not brought into being till the fifth. Geology entirely reverses that order, and contradicts Genesis in other ways as well. The immense vegetation

of the coal measures was long after the introduction of animals. It was a vegetation, too, of a low kind, and there is no trace of fruit-trees till long afterwards. Besides, too, it stands to reason that there was no use for vegetation till there was higher life to feed upon it."

"Now, Brown," said Roger, "your Science is once more out of date! I know that *was* a difficulty; but it is a difficulty no longer. Geologists began to remember that down among the azoic rocks—the strata in which there are no traces of life—there was a something called graphite. Your lead pencil is made of it! It has long been used for black-lead, and for plumbago. It is found everywhere in thicker or thinner beds. Like the other strata to which it belongs, it has been changed by intense heat. But what was it before it was changed? Vegetable matter! Our graphite is compressed and calcined coal! It is now known, too, that the huge ironstone beds of the Laurentian rocks equally imply the existence of an immense primeval vegetation. If Genesis had said what Geology used to say, and had stated that animals were first, and that vegetation came after, you, perhaps, or the Brown of the second generation (for these things seem to take a long time to get generally known) would put the question, How could the statement of Genesis be reconciled with the existence of the Laurentian ironstone and the graphite? But, here the Bible was right when Geology was wrong, and the Bible taught us the correct history of life while Geology was blundering over its own records! Is not that queer?"

"And I imagine that you are equally at sea in your other objection. How long would you have had the animals to wait for a meal if vegetation had not come first? I think the usual way, if you purchase a horse, for example, is to have both your stable ready and your fodder in before the animal arrives! Besides, there were two other good reasons why vegetation should have gone before. A soil had to be prepared which would be rich enough to produce abundance for God's expected guests. That soil had to be largely made out of the debris of millions of plants, which had to live and die that the work might be done. And the air, which the animals were to breathe, had to be prepared as well. The air holds about

four parts in 10,000 of carbonic acid. I suppose it needs as much as that for vegetable life; but four per cent of carbonic acid in the air is enough to kill all the warm-blooded animals on the face of the earth. The atmosphere had to be permanently deprived of its surplus carbonic acid, and that must have been a work of enormous time; and it was work, too, that vegetation, which absorbs that element of the atmosphere, could alone do. Remember this necessity for reducing the carbonic acid of the air, and the necessity for preparing a soil which would bear a vegetation rich enough to support animal life, and you will begin to see a new reasonableness and a new glory even in the statement in this despised Genesis that vegetation was introduced on the third day, and animals only on the fifth."

"I begin to think," remarked Colquhoun, with a smile, as he looked over to Colville, "that it is going to take us a long while to lick this man into shape. When you think you have him fast, you find that it is your own fingers that are pinched. But what," said he, turning to Roger, "can you say to the Flood? The Bible says plainly enough—if I know how to read documents—that the Deluge was universal. You are not, surely, going to say that you believe *that*?"

"My dear Colquhoun," said Roger instantly. "I count it my highest privilege to believe fully and heartily whatever the Bible says; for, like the Psalmist, I can say, as I look at the blunders of the best of men, and at the changes in the best of Sciences, that God, through the Bible, makes me wiser than all my teachers. But what, pray, is your difficulty about the Deluge?"

"Did you ever!" exclaimed Colquhoun with a hearty laugh, as his spectacles swept round the little circle. "This sweet innocent asks me what my difficulty is about the Deluge! Why, sir, my difficulty is as big as the Deluge itself; it is universal! First of all, the Flood never happened. It is a myth, and not a fact. There are big floods every now and again in one country or another; and each nation—the Jewish among the rest—has got up a flood story of its own. And, secondly, it never could have happened. It is a physical impossibility.

There is not as much water in all the seas as would cover the whole earth."

"Thank you very much for your very lawyer-like statement," said Roger. "It puts the matter in a nut-shell. You have never been down in what are quite the deepest parts of the sea, and so you must be excused. You are not aware that, in some parts, the sea is six miles deep! Perhaps, also, you failed to notice the statement made by Dr. John Murray, of the Challenger Expedition, that, if the surface of the earth were made level, there is as much water in the seas as would cover the whole earth at one and the same time to a uniform depth of two miles! Please remember that the Scripture says that the depth of the waters above the high hills was only 15 cubits, or between 20 or 30 feet.

"That disposes, I imagine, of your insufficient-water difficulty. Now, Science—you understand I mean recent Science—has been equally unkind to you in another matter. Geology now admits that there has been a Deluge since man appeared upon the earth. Sir Henry Howorth's two books, *The Mammoth and the Flood* and *The Glacial Nightmare*, the Duke of Argyll's papers before scientific bodies, and the progress of discovery, have made an end of the old theories which were substituted for Bible statements. It is now acknowledged in high quarters that the old race of men perished in a huge catastrophe, and that the animals of the time largely perished with them. That flood was in Europe, in America, in India, in China, in the West Indies, in Australia, and New Zealand. Geologists can almost write the Flood story for us. The bones found in caves on hill tops still speak, to the observing eye. Animals of all kinds, and men, too, toiled up the steep ascent, and took refuge in what seemed a friendly shelter; but the pursuing waters rushed up and changed the refuge into a tomb. There is a mountain in a little island of the Mediterranean, which is about a mile in circumference round the base. That mountain is called 'the mountain of bones,' because it is covered with them from top to bottom. The animals evidently fled to it for safety, and were caught as they fled; the flesh was washed off their bones; the bones themselves were broken by the

mighty rush, and driven into the crevices of the rocks. But stay; I ought to have a note about me of Sir Henry Howorth's admissions, which are strange, indeed, to come from a confessed unbeliever in Genesis. Yes; here it is. I took it from his preface to *The Glacial Nightmare*, published in 1893: 'Meanwhile,' he says, 'in Northern Asia and Western Europe, and in North and South America certainly, and probably also in Australia, antediluvian man lived alongside of, and hunted the antediluvian animals...Presently came a tremendous catastrophe'—please mark, not a series of catastrophes!—'the cause of which I have tried to show in *The Geological Magazine* was the rapid and sudden upheaval of some of the largest mountain chains in the world, accompanied probably by great subsidences of land elsewhere. The breaking up of the earth's crust at this time, of which the evidence seems to be overwhelming, necessarily caused great waves of translation to traverse wide continental areas, and these waves of translation as necessarily drowned the great beasts and their companions, including Palæolithic man, and covered them with continuous mantles of loam, clay, gravel, and sand, as we find them drowned and covered.' Does not that sound remarkably like Genesis?"

"Well, you surprise me," said Colquhoun; and he quite looked his astonishment.

"What books did you say he has written?" asked Brown.

"His first work," said Roger, "was *The Mammoth and the Flood*, a thick octavo. In that he masses the proofs from the discovery of mammoth remains, mingled with those of multitudes of other animals and even of birds, that there must have been a huge Deluge since man appeared. In *The Glacial Nightmare*, two volumes octavo, he produced the strictly geological evidence, and shows that the glacial theory cannot account for the facts. But you should also get the paper, read some years ago, before the Victoria Institute, by the late Sir Joseph Prestwich, the President of the Geological Society, and Sir J. W. Dawson's pamphlet on the same subject, published by the Religious Tract Society."

"Thanks, I must get them and look into the matter."

"And when you have looked into the matter," pursued Roger, "I think you will acknowledge that there at least Science is at one with the Bible. But you will now, perhaps, allow me to proceed from defence to attack. We have talked about the first chapter of Genesis. Did you ever notice what is said there about the water and the dry land? 'And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.' Notice, it is not said that the *dry* land was gathered into 'one place,' but that is the statement made about the seas. Everyone is now acquainted with the peculiar fact that, while the dry land is cut up and completely separated, all the seas are connected. I say we know that now, but our knowledge has come through centuries of exploration and of multiplied discoveries. How could any man have known it even in the beginning of the Christian era?"

"Is that really in the first of Genesis?" asked Colquhoun. Roger handed him his Bible, and added: "It certainly is, and you will note another thing. There are to be more than one sea, though the waters are to be gathered into 'one place.' They are called 'seas.' But the whole account is one which has greatly impressed open-minded scientists. Professor Dana, whose name is one of the very biggest in geology, delivered a lecture to the students at Yale University a year or two before he died. His subject was the Creation Story in Genesis, and he declared that Inspiration alone could account for its exact accord with recent discoveries. He also mentioned how the late Professor Guyot, a friend and fellow-scientist, came to the same conclusion. At the outset of his career he was appointed Professor of History in a Swiss University. He resolved to commence with the origin of all things, and got hold of every available book on Biology, Geology, Astronomy, etc. He tabulated his results, and, when his sketch was completed, he found, to his amazement, that his order of events was the very order in the first chapter of Genesis! But even the single fact, that Genesis puts the creation of man last in the series, is enough to show that the record could not have come

from man. Huxley tells us that man is Nature's last-born. But the Bible has proclaimed the same truth for thousands of years before the earth's records were opened, and before the strata was explored. We know how Huxley could make the statement. Geology had taught him the fact. But where did the Bible get it?"

Roger looked at Colquhoun and Brown, and then at Colville and me, as he asked the question; but none of us answered. It was evident, enough, however, that we were all impressed. "If you have no answer to that," Roger went on, "I can not hope much for a reply to my next question. I suppose you have exhausted your stock of objections, and that we have pretty well completed our survey of the supposed scientific blunders of the Bible. Did it ever strike you, Brown, how those supposed scientific blunders were so very few and so very small? You know there is not a single scientific work a century old that is not marred by blunders which no man can by any possibility defend! The books which any scientific man of any lengthened service writes in the beginning of his career, he has to correct or to re-write long before its close. As for the Science of the old world, the notion of defending that is ludicrous. And, when we come to the other ancient religions, the matter is worse. The Hindoos were taught, as I have already said, that the earth is a hemisphere which rests on the backs of four huge elephants. When one of the elephants grows tired and bends its knee, that quarter of the world has an earthquake! The four elephants stand on the hard shelly back of a huge tortoise. The tortoise floats on a universal ocean. When the Hindoo sacred books ventured further into scientific territory, every step was a similar blunder. The sun, they declared, lies much nearer the earth than the moon. Rain comes from the moon, and lightning from some place further distant. A hundred and one arteries proceed from the human heart, and the chief artery passes through the brain. Their theory of digestion is equally wonderful. Flesh is made of corn and other earthly food; water becomes blood, and oil and butter furnish the marrow of the human body; and other coarser parts of these fatty substances make the bones! How is it, Brown, that you

have nothing like that in the Hebrew sacred books? Where all others stumbled and fell, how have these managed to stand erect, and to walk with such sure steps that they compel our admiration even to-day?"

We all turned to Brown, so boldly addressed, and waited breathless for his reply. None of us, I imagine, envied his position at that moment; but he came out of it nobly.

"I confess," said he, "that I have never looked at the matter in that way. You have taught me more to-day, Roger, than I believed it possible to get out of any man in the same time. I suppose, like others who imagine themselves original thinkers, I have been drifting easily with the current, and have taken credit to myself for 'advancing' with the times."

Roger was evidently touched, as, indeed, were we all. It was with softer tones and kindlier aspect that he resumed. "I think we must give up," he said, "our talk about 'partial Inspiration' and 'Inspiration of the thought but not of the words.' For unless there had been a guidance which moulded the very form of their statements, I do not see how the writers of the Bible could by any possibility have escaped packing the Scripture with the errors of the time. But I have not done yet. There are some bigger wonders than any I have yet named. Let me show you the best theory of rivers and of rain that I know. In Ecclesiastes (another despised and misunderstood book, by the way) I read (1:7): 'All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full: into the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.' Everyone knows that hundreds of thousands of tons of water are poured into the sea every hour of every day and of every night, and nevertheless the sea is not full. But it is a startling explanation to say that this is because the rivers go back again to the spots from which they started! Who ever saw them go back? What part of the ocean does the Thames or the Clyde go back from, and how can they climb the slopes till they reach the springs which gave them birth? What can the words mean? Well, the Bible generally explains itself, if we only know where to look for the explanation. Turn to Psalm 135: 7—here **are**

the words: 'He causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings for the rain; He bringeth the wind out of His treasures.'

"The meteorology of that Psalm is abreast with, and actually in advance of, our twentieth century Science! The watery vapor is rising from the ocean's breast every moment of the day and night. It is rising in such volume and with such regularity as no pumps ever imagined by man could produce. In the upper sky the cold air gathers it in its mighty fists, and the harvest of the sea is reaped. The watery vapor is condensed, and is changed into a multitude of little globules having air inside and watery vapor outside. The clouds are formed. And what is to be done now? If they are left there they will fall again upon the sea, and the earth's thirst will be left unquenched. But God has made His preparations. The steeds are all ready yonder in His stables! 'He bringeth the winds out of His treasures.' They are yoked to the cloud chariots, and onward these go, borne in silent majesty, or tempest driven, towards the mountain-bound coast. All that is wonderful enough, but here is something which is simply miraculous. How are these clouds to become rain? 'He prepareth lightnings for the rain.' There is one kind of electricity in this cloud, and the opposite kind in that which meets it. The contact begets the lightning flash; the shock masses the globules together; the rain is precipitated; and the waiting earth is refreshed. There is one kind of lightning in the cloud, and there is another in the mountain peak. Again, there is the flash, the shock, and the shower. The streams run down the mountain slope. The torrents foam, and leap, and shout. The springs of the valleys overflow, and the rivers pass out once more from the place of their birth, gather fulness as they flow, and sweep back to the ocean in their old majestic depth and breadth."

"I say, Roger, you are growing quite poetical," Colquhoun broke in.

"I don't mind that," replied Roger, with a smile, "so long as I say what is true. But I once heard Lord Kelvin make a statement in the Natural Philosophy Class Room, in the old Glasgow University, which bears

upon this matter. He was asking some of those, who were working in the laboratory, about experiments which they had been making as to the connection between lightning and rain. After receiving the reports, he turned round to us and remarked, with that earnest solemnity of his, 'I believe there never is rain without lightning!' One day, months afterwards, I was reading this Psalm, and came upon the seventh verse. Immediately the scene in the College Class Room flashed upon me, and I said: 'Why, here is the very discovery towards which the biggest electrician of the time is only now feeling his way!' I had believed in the Bible before. But my belief put on a deeper reverence from that moment."

"That is 'certainly remarkable,'" said Colville, "and I fancy there are other passages where the connection between lightning and rain is hinted."

"Now," Roger went on, "let me show you some other wonderful things. There is a peculiar expression in that same fortieth chapter of Isaiah, which we have already looked at. It is in the apparently simple statement that God has stretched out 'the heavens as a curtain.' That word 'curtain' is a free translation which is eloquent of what the Bible would have been had it proceeded from even the best and most learned of men. Our translators knew well enough that the Hebrew word *dok* does not mean 'curtain.' It means 'thinness.' What could be the meaning of the statement that God had stretched out the heavens like thinness? They imagined that the idea was that they were stretched out like some immense roll of fine cloth, and so they put down the words 'like a curtain.' Other versions found the Hebrew equally trying, Jerome rendered it into Latin by *velut nihilum*, which the Douay Version Englishes by 'as nothing.' Luther translated it *ein dünnes Fell*, 'a thin skin' or 'film.' And all the while there was in that word *dok* an anticipation of one of the biggest discoveries of these last days. I have spoken about the new theory of light. Light is produced by the undulations of the ether, which is the element in which all the heavenly bodies move, and the medium by which they are all connected. No one has ever seen the ether, or weighed it, or proved its presence; and yet

scientists are as assured about its existence as they are about their own. What, then, is the ether? It is matter in so attenuated a form that a cupful of water would make a globe of ether as big as the earth. This is one of the present wonders of Science, and yet to readers of the Bible it is as old as the days of Isaiah! No better description of God's work, in filling the universe with this ether sea, can be had than you find in these words which say that God 'stretched out the heavens as thinness.' "

"Are you quite sure, Roger," I asked, "that this is the meaning of the word, and that it is not a fine kind of cloth, for instance?"

"Perhaps Colville will answer for me," said Roger, looking round at our learned friend.

Colville at once replied: "The word occurs only in that passage, and has, of course, led to a number of guesses. But I believe Roger is right. I looked into the matter quite recently. I happened to take that chapter for exposition. Gesenius says it means 'thinness, fineness,' and suggests that this may lead to the meaning 'thin, fine cloth.' But if the word had ever been used in that sense, it is highly probable that we should have met with it elsewhere."

"Now, let me show you," Roger went on, "something more. Geology is a new Science, is it not? No one would imagine that the Bible could tell us anything of *its* secrets, and yet the very crown and glory of all its discoveries was described 3,000 years ago, and was put in grander words than the most gifted geologist has ever written. You remember those strange, though strangely touching and powerful, verses in the 139th Psalm about man's being wonderfully and fearfully made?"

"I do not know who could forget it," said Colquhoun. "I have often wondered what they mean, and I hope you can enlighten us."

"Everybody, and you and I with the rest, Colquhoun," replied Roger, "have imagined that the 'wonderfully and fearfully made' applies to the structure of the body. But that is not the meaning. The writer has something else in view. He explains what that is. 'My substance,' he says, 'was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and

curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which from day to day were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.' Now, when was David in the lowest parts of the earth? I know there have been interpretations of that which cannot always be quoted, and nobody will lose anything if they are never quoted or heard of again. They are the explanations of men who despaired of getting any sense out of the words. But geology and comparative physiology throw startling light upon the passage. Only, as soon as I mention that, Brown will think he has scored!"

"Go ahead," exclaimed Brown, "and never mind me,"

"What I mean is," rejoined Roger, "that it will look like admitting the truth of evolution! But it is not evolution but the truth which underlies it, and which gives it all its plausibleness, but which Darwin, Hæckel, Huxley, and the rest have completely misread. The really great scientists have always seen in creation the onward march of a distinct, comprehensive, and majestic plan. Agassiz points that out, for instance, in the vertebrata. There is, first of all, the fish, with its head on a level with its body. The higher we advance in the various divisions the loftier is the position of that seat of intelligence, till we see it attain its climax in man. There are other arrangements which show that in man the limit of the alterations of which the structure of the vertebrata is capable, so that its fullest powers may be obtained, have been reached in man. The human body exhausts its capabilities, as the abode and the instrument of intelligence. Now that result was fully foreseen from that first, and creation advanced towards it with unswerving steps, Here is a note which I made of statements by the two grandest comparative physiologists we have ever had. Agassiz says that the aim, 'in creating successively all the different types of animals which have passed away was to introduce man upon the surface of our globe. Man is the end towards which all the animal creation has tended from the first appearance of the Palæozoic fishes.' The late Professor Owen makes a statement which takes

us even further than that. He says: 'The recognition of an ideal exemplar for the vertebrated animals proves that the knowledge of such a being as man must have existed before man appeared.'

"All that is certainly striking," said Brown; "but I don't see where the explanation of the Psalm comes in. And it looks, too, suspiciously like Darwinism—your pet abhorrence, Roger, I should say, if you had not so many pet abhorrences—it looks suspiciously like Darwinism, after all!"

"Excuse me, Brown," Roger replied; "you are not doing yourself justice! A mighty plan, fully grasped and laid clearly down from the first, is not chance; and a steady march towards its completion means the successive touches of a creative hand, and not the swaying fortunes of a battle for existence. The two things are completely and essentially distinct. But now for the comment on the Psalm. God had His eye upon man, upon David, upon me, from the time the first life was placed upon the earth or in the seas. God meant me to behold His works, to possess their fulness, and to see His glory. He began a work from which He would not withdraw His hand till man—till I—had crowned that work. The plan of this body of mine was never out of God's thought. Everything was a type and prophecy of me—a herald and a preparation for the coming of the earth's king. Mark what the Psalmist says in those wonderful seeming contradictions. All my members were written in God's book; they were being fashioned in continuance (or from day to day), though as yet there was none of them. They were not existent; they were only in God's book, and yet they were being fashioned! What does it all mean? What if not this that, all in these rocky beds beneath our feet—in the lowest parts of the earth—were showing more and more clearly God's thought and purpose? It was man that was being made in secret, and curiously fashioned in the lowest parts of the earth!"

"I must say, Roger, that while I go with you so far, you do not carry me all the way with you in this." I think we all looked our assent to these words of Colville's. Colquhoun added: "Still it is true that this 'lowest

parts of the earth,' which always puzzled me, gets explained there somehow, and I don't think I shall ever be able to shut out your explanation, Roger, when I read or think of them."

"All your difficulties," said Roger, "are just the difficulty which belongs to the vastness of this truth, and it only proves that this is the meaning of the words. Physiologists see the connection of all life with its climax and goal in man. The Scriptures point to a connection between the rest of the creation and man. Here is the wonder and the love of it all—God had thought of us from the first. It was for us that He planned; it was the formation of ourselves He was hastening towards. Every joy and every power given to life in these lowest parts of the earth was a prophecy of the joy and the power which God meant for me. When I read the past creation in that way, I know its message; I have the comfort of its consolation; and in my adoration of God's wisdom and power the fire of a mighty hope is kindled. If God kept thinking of me for vast millenniums, will He forget me easily? Will He lightly cast me aside? No, no! That 139th Psalm is the oldest treatise on geology, and it is the fullest and the best. But where did the Bible get that clear, full look into the lowest parts of the earth? And where did it get the insight into those things which our mightiest scientists are only beginning to dimly discern in this twentieth century of the Christian era?"

We were all impressed by Roger's last explanation, and there was no answer. Our discussion—if discussion I may call it—had filled us with such a flood of new thoughts, that we were all solemnized, and even Colquhoun was subdued, and had become unusually silent. Roger, after a look round upon us, went on again: "I might remind you that the recognition of the reign of law throughout the entire universe is the highest outcome of our scientific discoveries. But it was the teaching of Scripture before those discoveries began. How can you explain that? Is that a mark of scientific ignorance, or a result of scientific blundering? The fact is, that the Bible is the one Book of all time, and it puts itself in front of our twentieth century Science, just as it has put itself in front of every-

thing pure, and good, and true through all the ages. But I must not give you too much, even of a good thing. Let me just name one thing more. Did you ever think of that exclamation of the 8th Psalm: 'When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest him?' The wonder of modern astronomy is there! When the truth was grasped that this earth was an insignificant planet revolving round our sun, and that the fixed stars were bigger suns with planets moving round them, and that the nebulae were other and more distant universes, this very cry got up and fashioned the infidelity of the time. Our earth was like a little black seed floating in this sea of glory; and we were moving on it and burrowing into it like mites on a cheese, or insects on a cabbage. Was it conceivable, it was asked, that God could concern Himself with the interests of these individual mites, and that their salvation could be a matter to Him for self-sacrifice or even for thought? Who could believe, it was asked, that the Creator would become a mite, and die on Calvary to obtain the forgiveness of the specks of creation? It was this very cry, 'When I consider Thy heavens... what is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him?'"

"But there was another wonder which made answer to this of the insignificance of man when contrasted with the majesty of God. It was that of God's condescension. God *did* remember man, and God *did* come to dwell with him. The old astronomy, to which the heavenly bodies were just what they seemed to be, could never have yielded the knowledge of that mystery. It is only our modern astronomy that has lifted the veil and shown us those inexpressible splendors. But here, again, we see that the Bible is already in front of all our mighty discoveries; and it puts the right word in our lips, and lays the right interpretation of them upon our hearts. This unutterable majesty does not remove God from us; it only reveals the fulness and the lowliness of His love. And where did the Bible get this power of putting itself abreast of all dis-

coveries, and of making itself man's Book throughout all time? A full inspiration will explain it; I know of nothing else that can."

"Thank you, Roger, for a helpful and memorable Sabbath afternoon," said Colville, reaching out his hand and grasping Roger's.

"I have seldom known time go so fast," exclaimed Brown, starting up from his seat on the sod. "Do you know that we have been here four hours?" The words did not say much, but there was a something about Brown and Colquhoun which convinced me that that afternoon's talk had left its mark, and had given a new direction to the thoughts of both of them. For my own part, I shall remember it long, and feel thankful for it to my dying day—and perhaps after. Good-bye!



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