
A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

Peter, and His dwelling for a time must have been with the disembodied who await the Resurrection and the fulness of their glory. Thus the mind is invaded by entangling questions of the topography of the unseen world, as if it were a wide region with frontiers and barricades, within which each soul according to its deserts is confined. Jesus, it is argued, could not have meant that the dying man would that day be with Him in the Heaven of God, because He Himself would not yet be there and the thief would not be ready. Accordingly, on the one side, the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy represents Jesus as saying that the thief would go *before* Him into Paradise—a doubtful comfort to a man who, in every fibre of his being, knew his unfitness to enter there unless Jesus took him. And on the other side, Dr. Zahn, with equal excess of prose, alters the punctuation, and makes Jesus say: 'To-day I tell you, that you shall be with me (sometime) in Paradise.' That kills the promise, for it would drive the poor wretch back into the vagueness of a remote 'some day.' Throughout His ministry Jesus made much of the floodtides of emotion in those He met. Men came to Him protesting their desire to follow Him, only there was this or that to be attended to first: 'I must go home to my father till he dies, and then I will come,' said one, and got the answer, 'Come now, or you will never come!' For the tide runs back, and there will be no depth of water to carry you over the bar. The outburst of the sinful woman at His feet might easily have been suspected as hysterical, but Jesus took her at the flood and steered her out on to the wide ocean of God's peace. To displace the word 'to-day,' as Zahn does, in the interest of a theory about the life in the unseen, is to misunderstand Christ's way with human souls and to rob His promise to this desperate believer of its noble aptness and its power.

These discussions and distinctions had a certain interest for old-fashioned scholastic theologians, and in altered forms they appeal to many of the moderns. John Weiss suggests that the originator of this story could not have had clearly in his mind the narrative of the Resurrection and Ascension, as it implies that for a time Christ was not in Paradise. Such argumentation seems to me to suffer from a twofold irrelevance: it is irrelevant to any worthy conception of Christ and God, and it is supremely irrelevant to the human situation exhibited in the story. Are we really to suppose that because He was preaching to the spirits in prison, Christ could not be in the very presence of the King? The universe in which He lives is not broken up by frontier walls, so that when He is here He must necessarily be absent from other regions. 'It is not by journeying that one comes to God,' says Augustine, 'it is by loving,' and these prosaic topographical distinctions are merely obscuring. Still more glaring is the irrelevance to the human situation described. Here is a desperate creature who has never had a life in thought, on whom anything evasive or subtle must be thrown away, and to him Jesus is bound to speak in the language he can apprehend. Wellhausen does justice to the plainness of the promise, but hesitates about extending it from this one individual to any of our race: others may have longer roads to travel, but for this man the way home must be straight. I doubt if even this distinction is required, for the promise is—'Thou shalt be *with me*.' '*Ubi Christus*,' says Ambrose, '*ibi vita, ibi regnum*'—where Christ is there is life, and there is the Kingdom. 'The kingdom cometh not with outward show,' said Jesus (Lk $17^{21.\ 22}$), 'and men shall not say, Lo, here it is! or Lo, there! for the kingdom of God is in your midst'; and He said again to all who follow Him—Where I am, there shall also My servant be.

Old-fashioned evangelical preachers were fond of the saying: 'One dying thief was saved that no man should despair, but only one that no man should presume.' And at this we may leave the matter.

Natural Law and Miracles.

By the Reverend J. H. Morrison, M.A., Bucksburn, Aberdeen.

The controversy about miracles and natural law is, in its acute form, of modern origin. Men in former times were untroubled by it. To them the world was a place of mystery whose wonders were unexplored. There was, therefore, ample room for the unprecedented, and when it occurred it might excite wonder but not incredulity. It was readily accepted as part of the mystery of things. There were practically no limits to belief.

Modern science, however, has bred a very

different mentality. Science may be represented as a determined effort to clear up the mystery of things, an effort which, superficially at least, has been attended with marvellous success. Masses of superstition have been cleared away, and light has been let into many dark places. Things have been arranged in order and classified, laws have been discovered regulating the sequence of events, and, above all, there has grown up in men's minds an irresistible conviction of the entire orderliness of Nature. This great movement was doubtless accompanied with a certain pride of achievement which led to grave error. A strong tendency arose to deny reality to anything that could not be classified and brought under law. Miracles became an especial rock of offence. They were out of order and must be relegated to the lower limbo where ancient superstitions impotently gnash their teeth. Spinoza opened the modern attack on miracles as violations of the order of Nature, and Matthew Arnold exemplified the amazing cocksureness of nineteenth-century science in his fatuous remark, 'Miracles do not happen.'

This formidable assault has been met in two different ways, which may be expressed as defiance and surrender. Some religious people, of whom the Fundamentalists may be taken as typical, simply defy science and ignore its findings. Relying on religious conviction, they refuse to believe that God can be hampered in His working, and the more incomprehensible a miracle is the more they glory in it as manifestly Divine. Science must not be suffered with profane feet to tread on holy ground. Other religious people, of whom we may take the Modernist as typical, have made a more or less abject surrender to science, and in deference to its demands have given up their belief in miracles, or at least physical miracles. Now, like blinded captives grinding in the mills of the Philistines, they labour to show that everything of spiritual value is conserved, that the Christian faith suffers no loss when relieved of this incubus.

Neither of these positions can be regarded as satisfactory or as holding out any promise of settled peace between science and religion. On the one hand to defy science is not only hopeless but irreligious. For all truth is of God and must be welcomed from whatever quarter, even though it may seem to contradict some cherished belief. On the other hand it may be taken for certain that religion will never consent to cringe to science and speak only what science permits. 'Men of science tell us' is but a pitiful substitute for 'Thus saith the Lord.' It has been significantly pointed out that Modernism, which yesterday rejected the healing miracles of Jesus at the bidding of science, to-day accepts them because science now concedes the possibility of psycho-therapy.[1] The Christian faith, unless doomed to perish, must sooner or later burst this servile bond.

Surely some middle path of reconciliation can be found. The question naturally suggests itself. 'Why should there be any conflict between science and religion?' To the religious mind at least it must be axiomatic that whatever is true in science or religion must be one harmonious whole, and that nothing that is not true can be vital to either. To this the scientist also would cordially assent. Must it not appear, then, that some element of misunderstanding has crept in, which, as so often happens, leads the one side to deny what the other side never meant to affirm? In such cases a patient and sympathetic study of what is really believed and affirmed on both sides usually helps to clear the air of misunderstandings and point the way of reconciliation.

Professor Whitehead [2] has taught us impressively the need for closely questioning the presuppositions of an argument. What everybody takes for granted becomes the lurking-place of error. It is by such questioning of presuppositions that the revolution of the new physics has been brought about. Now in the case before us the thing which is taken for granted on both sides is a certain conception of natural law. The matter in dispute is whether or not miracles can be reconciled with natural law, and the question is rarely asked, 'What exactly is meant by natural law?' But that is a question which needs very urgently to be asked. For, obviously, until we have precisely defined what we mean by natural law, we are not in a position to say what would constitute a violation of it, or whether it could in any case be violated.

I. Natural Law

It will be found that a deep confusion of thought has arisen in many minds with regard to natural law and the uniformity of Nature, so that an important distinction is lost sight of, and two things, in themselves very different, are not clearly discriminated in our thinking. The distinction referred to is the distinction between ***reality*** and ***perceived reality***, between Nature in itself and Nature as known to us.

(1) The phrase 'the uniformity of Nature'

[1] D. S. Cairns, *The Faith that Rebels*, 39.
[2] *Science and the Modern World*, 36.

expresses the idea that the universe is an orderly whole, a cosmos, a rational system with nothing freakish or chaotic about it. In accordance with this we must conceive that there are laws of Nature, whether known or unknown to us, which are the necessary embodiment and expression of this essential rationality of the universe. This, be it observed, is a matter of faith. Science has not yet proved that the world is an orderly whole. There might be a realm of chaos beyond our ken. Not till we had searched to the outmost bounds and to the inmost depths could we have proof that Nature is uniform. Nevertheless faith in the uniformity of Nature completely possesses every scientific mind. It is the first article of the scientific creed. To ask the man of science to renounce it is to ask him to abjure his religion. He will reply with utter and passionate conviction that it is unthinkable.

With this faith in the uniformity of Nature Christianity can have no quarrel, for, rightly understood, it is an essential element in the Christian faith. Whitehead has pointed out[1] that 'the inexpugnable belief' in the rationality of Nature which inspires modern science is derived 'from the medieval insistence on the rationality of God.' St. Paul gives expression to the magnificent faith that the universe is a realm of love. 'Neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God.' This assertion goes far beyond experience, yet it must of necessity be held, unless all the Apostle's knowledge of the love of God in Christ was to be thrown into utter confusion. With equal conviction he would have held that the universe is a realm of reason, for faith in the uniformity of Nature ultimately rests on this, that there is one God and Nature is His handiwork.

(2) But now we fall into a disastrous error if we go on to assume, as is commonly done, that reality *as perceived by us* is equal to reality in itself, or, in other words, that the laws of Nature as formulated by science express the full and final truth. Professor J. S. Haldane[2] points out that 'for Newton physical reality, as he conceived it, was in actual fact reality.' And he adds, 'most of the modern civilized world has agreed with him in this conclusion, which has thus become to such an extent part of the generally accepted intellectual outfit of modern times that it is only by great effort, and at the risk of being regarded as mere cranks, that we can bring ourselves to question it.' Undoubtedly the idea is widespread that in the realm of science nothing is dealt with but incontrovertible facts, and that when science formulates a law of Nature that law has universal validity and Divine authority, so that to alter it is impossible and to question it is impious. It might seem too brusque were we to say with Professor Whitehead that 'this position on the part of scientists was pure bluff,'[3] but certainly it is a position which requires to be closely scrutinized and not taken for granted.

The so-called 'laws of Nature,' as formulated by science, are simply generalizations of human experience. Now our experience of the physical world comes through the senses, and it should never be forgotten how extremely limited in their range our senses are. They are far from being able to apprehend all that is there in the physical world to be apprehended. We spell out a few vibrations as meaning to us Sound, a few others as Heat, a few more as Light, but beyond these there are countless vibrations passing round us and through us without leaving any impression of which we are conscious. The range of the senses has been immensely increased by the aid of scientific instruments of precision, yet even with such aids an incalculable amount of Nature escapes our observation. Take the case of isotopes. There is a substance which we call lead. It is not a compound, but one of the elements. It cannot be analysed, it answers to every chemical test as lead. Yet all lead is not the same lead. There are certain intra-atomic differences which, if we could only grasp them, would doubtless cause us to revise our definition of lead. Such things suggest the existence of a whole world of sub-atomic activity which goes clean beyond our ken. There is considerable ground for thinking that the nucleus of an atom may be as complex and as thickly populated as the city of London. The wonders of wireless have in recent years helped to bring home to the popular mind the fact that the surrounding ether is no dead vacuum, but is all alive with electrical activity, however little we may perceive it. The world, then, would appear to be a far fuller place than we ordinarily take it to be. There is a subtlety of connexion between things far more intricate and refined than we can discern. Hence, when we venture to make any general statement about the forces and potencies of Nature, however scientific it may seem to us and however useful practically, we must bear in mind that it is based upon a very rough and imperfect knowledge of Nature and is by no means an adequate expression of the complexity of the facts.

[1] *Science and the Modern World*, 18.
[2] *The Sciences and Philosophy*, 5.
[3] *Science and the Modern World*, 277–278.

But this does not complete the story of our limitations. We suffer from a disability even more profound, in respect of the fact that we ourselves are part of Nature and can only view things from our own angle. We are as little able to see the many-sided truth in its fullness as a man looking out at the window is able to see all round the house. It is this necessary limitation of outlook which gives rise to those antinomies which have given so much trouble in the realms of theology and philosophy. In the famous Free Church case Lord Haldane argued with great force and learning that the Westminster Confession taught both Predestination and Free Will, and that both these doctrines were held by the Church, though to our view contradictory. His argument met with but scant success among the law lords, for the legal mind naturally abhors a break in the chain of reasoning. But the fact remains that not in theology alone, but if you take science, if you take the nature of time and space, if you take things of everyday experience, and try to track them out to their ultimate meaning, you find, at every turn, contradiction. As Lord Balfour pointed out in his *Foundations of Belief*, 'the contradictions in theology are not more striking than the contradictions of science.'

This aspect of things has been anew impressed upon us with great force by the recent advances in Physics. It might be said that the most remarkable result of the New Physics has been to unearth a mass of antinomies which science can as yet see no possible means of reconciling. Take the case of light. Two theories have at different times held the field—Newton's theory that light consists in the emission of particles, Huyghens' theory that light consists of ether waves. What is the position to-day? In Whitehead's words it is this: 'The two theories are contradictory. In the eighteenth century Newton's theory was believed, in the nineteenth century Huyghens' theory was believed. To-day there is one large group of phenomena which can be explained only on the wave theory, and another large group which can be explained only on the corpuscular theory. Scientists have to leave it at that, and wait for the future, in the hope of attaining some wider vision which reconciles both.'[1] A strikingly Christian attitude, one may remark in passing! The case is similar with regard to the constitution of the atom where theories are held which, though in themselves contradictory, are found to be necessary to cover the variety of the phenomena. The difficulty is such that scientists are driven, as Bertrand Russell whimsically says, to use one theory on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and the contradictory theory on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

What does all this mean but just that our apprehension of reality is very meagre and partial? Light is neither waves nor corpuscles, but some mysterious entity far transcending both, though in some of its manifestations it may resemble now one, now the other. The atom is something which at one moment appears physical, at another spiritual; which confounds the laws of motion by being able to be in two places at the same time; which seems now to exist and again to be only a possibility of existence; in short, something which completely eludes description and baffles imagination. The meagreness of our apprehension of reality may, perhaps, be illustrated in this way. A good deal is written in these days about the fourth dimension, and we are being taught that though we are conscious only of a world of three dimensions, in reality the world is of four, and most probably of N, dimensions. What idea could a two-dimensional being form of our three-dimensional world? Suppose there were beings whose whole world was the floor of this room. They would observe certain regular markings which we know as the feet of chairs and tables; they would see footprints appearing and disappearing mysteriously; they could trace the outline of the cat sleeping on the rug, and a few other things. But if, on the basis of these, they proceeded to philosophize about the whole contents and ongoings of the room, how utterly beyond their powers the task would be, and how childish doubtless to our minds their most profound conclusions would appear. Is our philosophy any more adequate, for it may be said that we, too, are but philosophers of the floor, dimly scanning 'the footprints of the Creator.' All that we see and know is, as Job said, 'the mere fringe of his force, the faintest whisper we can hear of him. Who knows the full thunder of his power?'

All this may warn us to take a very modest view of those formulations which we have made and which we have dignified with the title of Laws of Nature. They are all imperfect and subject to emendation. If a new fact emerges, room must be found for it. If our theory cannot find room for it, our theory stands condemned. It must be enlarged to accommodate the fact, and if need be, scrapped. There is nothing sacrosanct about these Laws. They have no authority over facts, except such artificial and mock authority as we by our

[1] *Science and the Modern World*, 264.

definition have conferred upon them. If we define a yard as three feet, then, of course, there will always and inevitably be three feet to the yard, for the simple reason that if there were not it would not be a yard according to our definition. So, if science defines an oak tree as being marked by certain characteristics, then of course all oak trees will manifest these characteristics, because if they did not they would not be oak trees. Having in this solemn and portentous way formulated a so-called Law, we bow in reverence before the idol we have set up. All the generalizations which we call Laws of Nature are really of this sort. Being unable to cope with the complexity of phenomena and the infinite variety and individuality of things, we throw them into groups which we label, and then we proceed to make general remarks about the group. These groupings and these generalizations are for practical purposes most necessary and of inestimable value, but we err if we forget that each individual is infinitely more than a mere member of our group, that it has other qualities, connexions, and potencies which we for the moment are ignoring or which we are totally ignorant of.

It cannot be too clearly understood that twentieth-century science has completely robbed natural law of the illegitimate authority conferred upon it by the science of the nineteenth century. This is principally the work of those philosophic physicists who have done so much to clear the thought of our time. They have brought fully into view the immense difference between Nature in the fullness of its reality and Nature as perceived by us. While still believing in the essential rationality of the universe, they have shown that our formulations come far short of expressing that rationality. Eddington has even suggested that an insurmountably irrational element may remain with us to the end. 'It is one thing for the human mind to extract from the phenomena of Nature the laws which it has itself put into them; it may be a far harder thing to extract laws over which it has had no control. It is even possible that laws which have not their origin in the mind may be irrational, and we can never succeed in formulating them.'[1]

II. Miracles.

How, then, does the case for miracles stand in the light of this discussion? It would be greatly helpful if those who attack and those who defend miracles would come to some agreement as to what they mean by a miracle. No definition is, of course, to be found in Scripture. Miracles are simply spoken of by such indefinite terms as 'wonderful works,' or 'signs and wonders,' while often the story is told without comment of any kind. The miracles of Jesus are often referred to as His 'works.' No doubt these 'works' were regarded as striking evidence of the presence and direct action of God, but it should be remembered that in that age the hand of God was seen in everything that happened, and the idea that Laws of Nature could operate as it were automatically and without the direct will of the Creator was not present in any mind. When, therefore, we speak of miracles as violations of the Laws of Nature, or when we make a distinction between the natural and the supernatural, we are introducing categories of our own, which it behoves us carefully to define. We must also be on our guard lest by our definitions we take up indefensible positions and bring upon ourselves difficulties of our own making. Suppose we should agree to take the word 'miracle' in its original meaning as simply 'a wonderful event,' would any scientist deny that in that sense miracles have happened and may happen? The whole story of evolution is a record of the successive emergences of the unprecedented, and it is generally believed that the process is still going on. So that there could not be, in the name of reason, any *a priori* ruling out of the miraculous.

It might have been well if the word 'miracle' had retained its original simple meaning, so that we should have been left free to examine with unbiassed minds the record of any wonderful event. The term, however, has become inextricably involved in our time with questions of natural law, and its significance in that connexion requires to be made clear. Two positions may be maintained, both of which would seem to be unobjectionable from the point of view of science.

(*a*) *Miracles are not contrary to Nature.* When we affirm a miracle we do not mean to deny the rationality of the universe. We do not mean to assert that something has happened which is lawless, or chaotic, or in any way violates the Divine order of the cosmos. On the contrary, we most strongly affirm that a miracle is in perfect harmony with all the other works of God. This is no new idea, no concession to modern criticism. It is emphasized by Augustine, who may be said to have given the first philosophy of the miraculous. His argument is that as God's will is the ultimate source of all things, nothing can be *contra naturam* which happens by God's will. Everything is natural, not to us but to God. Miracles are part of an estab-

[1] *Space, Time, and Gravitation*, 200.

lished order. They are not *contra naturam*, but may be contrary to what is known to us of Nature.

In view of this, it is perhaps unfortunate that the term 'supernatural' is so commonly associated with miracles. Here we have introduced a category which is not scriptural. By our contrast of natural and supernatural we have fostered the idea that there is a lower world which runs by its own mechanical laws and from which the direct action of God is excluded, and over against that a higher world where God dwells and out of which He makes occasional excursions into the lower world. Religiously this doctrine is disastrous, and few things are more necessary in our time than a strong reaffirmation of the truth that God is everywhere on the spot, and that no laws intervene between Him and His creatures to hamper His working. But not only is this doctrine disastrous to religion, it is in the highest degree offensive to science, indeed to any rational mind. The universe must be one coherent whole, a single orderly system, else human reason itself is confounded. Thus we find Professor J. S. Haldane in his *Gifford Lectures* protesting at once in the name of science and of religion against the idea of the supernatural. 'It is only a narrow view of what is "natural" that prevents our recognizing the presence of God everywhere within and around us.' 'With those who imagine that science can or will present anything but the firmest opposition to beliefs in supernatural events I cannot for a moment agree. To ask science to desist from this opposition would be equivalent to asking her to abjure her religion.' And again, 'Nature is nothing but a manifestation of God, so that the very idea of anything supernatural is contrary to religion.' [1]

It is evident that Augustine and Professor Haldane are in substantial agreement. If by 'Nature' you mean this whole orderly system as the handiwork of God, then obviously miracles are part of that system, and it is difficult to imagine any religious man believing or asserting anything else. But Professor Haldane should, in fairness, remember that the term 'Nature' has a variety of more limited meanings. It is sometimes contrasted with 'history,' though history is part of Nature in the widest sense. It is also sometimes contrasted with 'grace.' So then, it is hardly legitimate to assume, as Professor Haldane does, that whenever the supernatural is spoken of, it is to be taken as a denial of 'Nature' in the widest sense, a violation of the Divine order of the universe, the introduction of an intolerable element of irrationality. On the other hand, seeing that this misunderstanding has arisen, and scientific minds are alienated by it, every effort should be made to remove it. Some religious writers have endeavoured to do this by using, instead of 'supernatural,' such terms as 'prætернatural' or 'supernormal.' Whatever may be thought of these terms, Augustine's principle, that miracles are not *contra naturam*, should be continually reasserted and held in view.

(*b*) While miracles are not to be understood as contrary to Nature, they may *transcend our knowledge of Nature*, so as to be quite inexplicable by any known laws. When we remember how limited our knowledge of Nature is, it seems easy to concede this as a possibility. Only in times when science has forgotten her limitations has she presumed to say what was possible and what impossible. The science of to-day is in a wiser and more chastened mood. Physicists are literally snowed under at the moment with the unprecedented and the inexplicable. 'Heaven knows,' exclaims Whitehead, 'what seeming nonsense may not to-morrow be demonstrated truth.' [2] In these circumstances we dare not close our minds to the possibility that some occurrences, though totally inexplicable to us, may yet be essential elements of reality. The spirit of science itself demands this attitude, for, as has already been remarked, all along the line of evolution there have been points at which the unprecedented and the inexplicable have appeared.

In saying that miracles transcend our knowledge of Nature we do not, and we need not, affirm that they must for ever remain inexplicable. Our knowledge of Nature grows, and what would have seemed miraculous to one age may be commonplace to the next. Had it been recorded in the Gospels that the Sermon on the Mount was distinctly audible in Jerusalem, the scientist of yesterday would have said, 'Impossible,' the schoolboy of to-day would say, 'H'm! Wireless.' With our advancing knowledge of the power of mind over body there has been an increasing tendency to accept Christ's miracles of healing as historical, while rejecting the so-called Nature miracles. It may be that a future generation, having gained a deeper knowledge of the intimate connexion between spirit and matter, will find it just as easy to accept the Nature miracles. The question has been mooted whether with the advance of science the world may not hope to see the miracles of the gospel repeated and surpassed. This possibility also need not be foreclosed, only it should be

[1] *The Sciences and Philosophy*, 310, 322, 336.

[2] *Science and the Modern World*, 166.

observed that the Gospels represent the power by which the miracles were wrought as being not simply intellectual but principally moral and spiritual through faith in God. So far is Christ from speaking of His miracles as utterly beyond man's power that, on the contrary, He explicitly declares that, where His spirit is, the like, and even 'greater works,' may be wrought.

It is not within the scope of this article to deal with the historical evidence for miracles or with their religious value. The aim has simply been to remove certain objections to the possibility of miracles which have been urged in the name of science, and to clear the way for an unbiassed approach to the records. Once it is conceded that unprecedented and inexplicable events have occurred and may occur, then the credibility of any miracle becomes a question of historical evidence. Each case falls to be examined on its own merits. Many doubtless, after examination, we shall be disposed to reject; regarding others we may be disposed to suspend our judgment. The gospel miracles will be felt by every unbiassed mind to stand in a class by themselves, because of their connexion with a personality confessedly unique.

Into this great subject it is impossible here to enter. Suffice it to suggest that the whole record of evolution is the record of a progressive mastery of spirit over matter; that in human history man's power to achieve has been in proportion to the supremacy within him of spiritual elements such as intelligence and will; and that there are other spiritual elements, particularly goodness and faith in God, by which men have been lifted above themselves and enabled, as by the inspiration of the Almighty, to do what otherwise would have been impossible. Not unnaturally, therefore, the hope arose and was cherished that in the fullness of time there would come an Ideal Man in whom spiritual forces would have complete sway, a very Hero of faith, an Incarnation of God, fully commissioned and empowered to redeem the world. The Christian faith is that in the man Christ Jesus this hope has been fulfilled, and that His mastery over Nature is completely congruous with His personality and mission. In which case it is futile criticism to examine His miracles one by one as isolated events. The whole situation must be faced; the whole record of the life and ministry is of a piece, and manifestly bears the stamp of uniqueness. If the record be studied in that way it will appear that the miracles are the natural and inevitable 'works' of Jesus, that is to say, as naturally the outcome of His spiritual power as the works of Shakespeare were the outcome of the genius of the poet. In that case the miracles of Jesus are not to be apologized for, or timidly defended, still less are they to be explained away. They are to be gloried in, as the apostolic Church gloried in them, because they are at once a revelation of God's almighty power to save, and a pledge of what man may be and do when restored to spiritual fellowship with God.

Literature.

MR. MIDDLETON MURRY'S RETROGRESSION.

Those who read Mr. Murry's 'Life of Jesus' with sympathy and appreciation, despite his obvious lack of equipment in certain directions, must have hoped that the book marked a stage in a religious progress towards a fuller Christian faith. This hope is rudely shattered by the new volume which Mr. Murry has just published under the title *God: Being an Introduction to the Science of Metabiology*, by Mr. John Middleton Murry (Cape; 10s. 6d. net). Mr. Murry lands finally (if it be finally) in a complete and self-contained naturalism. He has gone 'beyond God.' He is not an agnostic; he is an atheist. He is not uncertain about God, he denies Him altogether: 'We deny God, and we will to deny Him utterly.' The writer's course is summed up by himself in three phrases: 'I have been, by this compulsion, a God-seeker, and a God-finder, and a God-denier. I deny him more gladly than I found him, though the finding was glad enough.' How really he disbelieves in God is made clear in a passage which is happily the only piece of 'smart' writing in the book: '"God" and I, one might almost say, are a little tired of each other. It is time for us to part. This book is the story of the parting. It seems to me that we part on good terms, better, far better, than I should have ever imagined possible.'