

prophecy, or of predicting future events, being given to eminently good men "in answer to prayer."

And a third objection is, that the persons I named in my first paper were so pre-eminent for their piety, and walked so near God, that it would be little short of blasphemy to question the truth of whatever they affirmed.

To these several objections I will attempt an answer in their order.

The first objection scarcely deserves notice. If the principle of "let alone" had been acted upon, there would have been neither religious nor social progress. The Highlanders would be still engaged in thievish forays and raids, levying "Black Mail" off each other; they would be still the dupes of a perverse superstition, and under the influence of the wildest delusions. And although they are not better, in this latter respect, than they should or ought to be, nevertheless great and marked progress in the right direction has been truly made. But certainly this progress was not made by "letting them alone;" nor can I help thinking but that the progress would have been much greater and more satisfactory, even in *Ross-shire*, had not their spiritual guides been encouraging the prevailing superstition by mixing the truth with a great deal of that which is too questionable and improbable.

In answering the second objection, "Whether I deny the possibility of the spirit of prophecy and prediction of future events being given in answer to prayer?"

My reply is, that I believe "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." I believe, that, in answer to prayer, God, in His good providence, guides and protects us through day and through night, in ways and by means we know not—but not by visible signs and wonders. In answer to prayer, I believe the Holy Ghost blesses and sanctifies the reading and preaching of the Bible, so that the sinner comes to understand and believe, and in a measure to obey—but not by granting any new revelation aside from that which is already written. I believe in all the miracles and prophecies recorded in the Old and New Testaments, but I believe in none other. I believe there is not one miracle or prophecy recorded in the Scriptures but such as is absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of the great purposes for which a revelation has been given; and I believe none is wanting which infinite wisdom saw necessary for that end. And I therefore ask myself, Wherefore should any more be given? It were a waste of Divine energy, contradictory of what we see to obtain in all God's other works. When we look around on His works of Nature, we see nothing superadded, nothing thrown away, nothing going to waste—the greatest economy, and the most marvellous adaptation of means to an end prevail; and may we not be sure that the same order obtains in His works of Pro-

vidence and Grace? We fearlessly challenge the production of a single authenticated miracle performed, or of the fulfilment of a prophecy or prediction which have been uttered, since the close of the Scripture canon to this day.

With respect to the third objection—the sacred character, and hence, the veracity of the persons of whom I made mention in my first paper—

I here, once for all, utterly disclaim having the slightest intention of saying a word in disparagement of their piety or moral worth. My business was with a certain book, and what it contained. My allusion to the late Rev. Lauchlin McKenzie's insanity was simply to account for the absurd nonsense in that book attributed to him, should any one suppose it was ever uttered by him; and as far as the Rev. Mr. Kennedy and his *Ross-shire* "Fathers" are concerned, they may be as pious and as godly, for aught I know, as their greatest admirers would have them: all I say is—that here is a book containing matter enough to show, that, whatever may be his other qualifications, the author is a miraculously weak and incredulous person—giving heed to idle tales and old-wives' fables, and parading them as special instances of Divine interposition. Take his account of the "Milk-woman and the Monkey": "The woman went to America with her ill-begotten wealth, made by selling milk with which she mixed one-third part of water." The monkey, acting under an inspiration not its own, sought out and found the old woman's bag, "carried it aloft," and, guided by the same inspiration, "sitting upon a spar, threw into the sea *just the quantity representing the water with which she had mixed her milk.*" returning the remainder to the old woman! Now, upon what authority did this incredible story come back to *Ross-shire*? and how authenticated, before the author admitted it into his catalogue of special interpositions of Divine Providence? Clearly, it has no other authority than a sailor's yarn! And we will just now see, that the authority on which the alleged Divine interposition in the case of the Whisky-man is vouched, is far less satisfactory than that of the Milk-woman: "A flaming cinder fell right into the midst of his bundle of Bank-notes; and before the man could rescue them, as many of the notes were consumed *as exactly represented the quantity of water with which he diluted the whisky*"—not an iota more, not an iota less! Surely if this were established on sufficient evidence, it were as truly a miracle as was the drying up of the *Red Sea*! But who were the witnesses to this astounding interposition of Divine Providence? None, positively, save the Whisky-man himself—a dishonest man withal! Who would believe him, save a person labouring under the most incurable fanaticism?

Monstrous, however, as is the attempt to