

the former days. But my dear brethren, you have to make allowance for the change of the conditions in which we are living now. It is, I venture to think, one of the good peculiarities of this continent that we have the fullest and the most public record of anything that takes place; and the more singular and remarkable anything is in its nature, the wider the publicity it acquires. If one of my brethren in this city should announce one of these Sabbaths that the best views that he had to teach his people he had learned in the theatre, and if he should follow up that statement after a few weeks by the further announcement, that he had ceased to believe in a personal God, and could not preach any more in that strain to the people, I tell you that these statements would get more publicity in the next week than the declarations of ten thousand men, who have been proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ as you are wont to hear them proclaimed; and you must not infer, brethren, because you are witnesses of a multitude of things said and printed—discussing and canvassing what you are not accustomed to hear discussed and canvassed—you must not suppose that the evidence has been touched in any degree, for the very contrary is the case. Turn in what direction you will, take the studious men that are engaged in Egyptology, take the large class of men that are looking into ethnology. I do not need to name the list of sciences in which able men are engaged, sometimes intentionally, and not unfrequently unintentionally, contributing their several quotas to the increase and extension of that volume of evidence by which this is commended to us as a true book, and a book given us by the inspiration of God. I stand here to say in the presence of my brethren, without hesitation or scruple, that there never was a time in the world's history when there was such a mass of scholarship, such a mass of science, such a mass of thought, such a mass of evidence, to say nothing of the mass of wealth and of intellect, ranged upon the side of Christian truth, as in the days in which we have the happiness to live. The volume of evidence is not merely untouched; it is increasing and extending as the years advance. "Oh" some one says, "I can understand certain evidence about which the ministers used to speak to me—the evidence which came from the working of miracles—and I sometimes think if I had been upon the earth when our blessed Lord was here, and if I had seen Him do the things that are recorded in the Gospels, I should never be troubled with doubts or fears." But will you reflect my brethren, that there were many men and women who did witness these miracles and who did not believe? And will you reflect on the other hand that you have compensation for your being removed in point of time from being witnesses of miracles such as those, in another direction. There is the volume of prophecy being fulfilled, that is being unfolded before you, and of which you would not have had the advantage, if you had lived in the days of our blessed Lord. Take the Jewish people alone. During the last two years attention has been called again and again to the sufferings inflicted upon them, to the despotic treatment of which they have been the victims, to the hardships that they have endured at the hands of Germany in the first instance, and later of Russia. What are all these things but the fulfilment of prophetic words uttered many centuries ago—uttered when the Jewish nation was strong and stable—uttered when these nations were unknown? The utterance does not justify the wrong that the nations have been doing, but that these words were spoken, and that they stand as specimens of a whole group of predictions being fulfilled as the ages advance—this fact you and I may take as blessed compensation to us for missing that other class of convincing evidence exhibited in the miraculous works done by our blessed Lord and Saviour. We say, then, that instead of our having less reason now to be steadfast than in the days that are past, there never was so much reason as in the age in which we live for believing. You know how readily one may say, "There are many things proceeding round about me now—call them if you will by the general name of worldliness—with which I was not familiar in earlier Christian days, and which seem to indicate clearly to me that Christian