

no frown of a retributive power when the observer witnesses in it only the exact fulfilment of his calculations as to the period and duration of the solar eclipse. And so, step by step, as irregularity disappears, and science sheds on Nature its all-penetrating light, the darkness in which superstition lives is chased away, and its divinities are exorcised from the world. But as this process goes on, it has unfortunately sometimes happened that religion has exhibited that jealousy of science which superstition only has just cause to feel.—at least that sincere but unenlightened friends of religion have looked with suspicion on the pretensions of science, as if reductions to law were equivalent to the ignoring of God—as if the phenomena of the universe in ceasing to be arbitrary ceased to be divine. The miraculous, indeed, in the sense of an abnormal manifestation of supernatural power, a disturbance by the author of nature of its uniform sequences, a divine power acting on nature out of the line of cause and effect, is an element inextricably involved in our Christian faith. The attempt to eliminate or explain away the miraculous element from the Christian records we must ever hold to be not less vain than it is disingenuous. You cannot disentangle miracle from the gospels without destroying their integrity. But the belief that miracles are not as rare and exceptional acts, excluded from the order of nature, and that in so far as science or scientific training leads to the denial of this, it is hostile to theology—is a very different thing from the half-acknowledged notion to which I have referred, as giving rise in religious minds to a needless jealousy of scientific theories, and as sometimes reaching on the other hand, on the part of men of science, in a mistaken contempt for theologic dogmas. For whilst science bases all her pretensions on the discovery of law, it has sometimes seemed as if theology rested its claims solely on exception to law. The former represents the universe as an order—a cosmos, in which by every fresh discovery she is establishing more and more the supremacy of law. The latter has but too often seemed to seek evidence and confirmation of her principles, not in the orderly but in the accidental, and with vain timidity to dread the advance of science, as if the reduction of all phenomena to law were equivalent to the final exclusion of God. Unable to dispute the uniform action of law in the more obviously regular phenomena of nature, such as the revolution of the heavenly bodies, the recurrence of the seasons and the like, it has seemed for a time perhaps as we could still claim as the exclusive domain of supernatural agency the apparently inconstant and unaccountable phenomena of the weather—the sending or averting of sunshine or storm, or favourable or adverse meteorologic influences; or again, the phenomena of health and disease—the advance or arresting of plagues and epidemics—as if in these and

like events, where no natural law had yet been discovered, the finger of God could more immediately and impressively be traced. But when in turn these irreducible phenomena began to yield to the advance of discovery, when even in mysterious pestilence and unaccountable storms and tempests the operation of laws as fixed, uniform, unvariable as that by which the planets revolve in their orbits, began to be discerned, pious minds have almost revolted from such discoveries, and in their apparent discomfiture and bewilderment, scientific, but sceptical, minds have been led to feel as if science had gained ground and theology lost it. This conflict between science and theology is, however, I need scarcely go on to remark, only an imaginary one. \* \* \*

—*Glasgow Courier.*

—o—

### Monday Forenoon Service, after the Communion.

I SEE by the January *Record*, that the Perth Churches now omit this service, and substitute a missionary meeting on the Monday evening. The reason, I believe, is that business men, tradespeople, and the working classes are unable in a large city, to attend in the middle of the day, however much they may desire it; the Thursday preceding, or Preparation Day is always declared an holiday, by the authorities, but it would be impossible to appoint another holiday so soon after, and to keep up such a practice twice every year. The consequence is, that in cities like Glasgow, you will see the Churches well-filled on the Thursday, over-crowded on the Sabbath, while on the Monday, perhaps not a dozen men could be counted inside any Church. Ladies who have nothing pressing to attend to, constitute the audience. In such circumstances, it is perhaps better to have an evening service, which all can attend; though one is indeed loath to resign the thanksgiving Monday sermon, around which so many fragrant and refreshing memories cluster. Each Presbytery, however, should be allowed to regulate this matter, so as best to meet the circumstances of the people within its bounds. The other day, I was dipping in an odd medley of a book, called "the Life of Brown, of Wamphrey," by the Rev. T. Lockerby of Cadder, when I stumbled across the origin of the Monday forenoon service. It was not prescribed by a law or the rubric of the Church, but was first adopted at the celebrated revival of religion, at the Kirk of Shotts, and the practice so recommended itself to the feelings of Christian people, as appropriate and solemnizing, that it thereafter gradually spread, until it became universal throughout the Church of Scotland. Here is the account given as by Mr. Locherby, a man I may remark by the way, whom a Scotchman would describe by telling you had a 'bee in his bonnet;' the most distinct specimen of the