

That is what the world is asking, and there cannot be much doubt about the answer. 'There can be less doubt,' Glanville continued, "when we come to the third group of statements—statements that the eternal God dictated to Abraham's children a series of books which abound in every kind of error, and which—as even our friend the Bishop of Glastonbury told us—are in many places revolting to our commonest ideas of morality. But this is the very point with which we have all along been dealing. We have practically taken Mr. Hancock's third group of statements first."

"Well," said Lady Snowdon, "now go on to the fourth. It is the most important of all."

"Excuse me," said Mr. Brompton. "Excuse me for one moment. Mr. Glanville has hardly done justice to the miracles of the Old Testament, and the question of how far they are credible. Let me take the two most remarkable of them. The Old Testament tells us that the course of the solar system was once brought to a standstill, and once absolutely inverted; and I ask you, if you please, why? In order, on the first occasion, that one little tribe might complete the murder of another; and, in the second, in order that a curiously incredulous gentleman, who was none other than our good friend Hezekiah, might be assured that a poultice of figs was a good prescription for a boil. A child would laugh at such miracles if it found them in Grimm's fairy-tales; and in point of credibility they are all on the same footing—Jonah's whale, the talking ass of Balaam, the fiery chariot of Elijah, the two bears specially sent by Jehovah to gobble up some poor little children because they giggled at Elijah's successor—in short, the whole blessed bag of tricks."

Lady Snowdon drew herself up at these last remarkable words as a protest against the irreverence offered by them, less perhaps to the Bible than to herself. "Mr. Glanville," she said, "please go on."

"Well," said Glanville, "our fourth and last set of statements are those which assert the miraculous birth of Christ,