

This might have had some influence in the first introduction of Christianity; yet far less, even then, I apprehend, than is generally supposed; for it is usually quite easy to get rid of the influence of a miracle by imputing it to imposture, jugglery, and delusion, as we know was done in those days. But it is not settled whether the power of working miracles was possessed by any after the days of the apostles; certainly that power was withdrawn a century or two before the days of Constantine. Nor have we evidence that there was any thing peculiar in the divine influence which was exerted upon the hearts of men in primitive times. It seems to have operated then, as now, according to the established laws of mind, and in proportion to the means employed. Furthermore, we have the testimony of the Bible to the position, that men are no more apt to be convinced by miracles than by the ordinary truths of the gospel; *for if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.* We must, therefore, impute the extraordinary success of the gospel in early times, and in the midst of fiery persecution, mainly to its adaptation to human wants and the human conscience.

In subsequent periods of the world's history, this same experiment has been often repeated. And it has ever been true that the kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation. No loud trumpets have sounded its advent; no powerful array of means has ushered it in. A few obscure men, without money or influence, and perhaps with little of worldly wisdom or policy, unarmed saved by the Bible and faith, have gone into the arena of conflict, like David to meet Goliath. And so inadequate have the champions and their weapons seemed, that the world have looked upon them with as much contempt and derision as Philistia's giant did upon