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I. THE PENTATEUCHAL STORY OF CREATION.

IN the opening portion of the Book of Genesis we have a history of creation which claims to be a direct revelation from God. Geology aims to give us a history of creation gathered from a careful study of the structure of the earth itself, especially the study of its fossils—those “medals of creation,” as they have been aptly termed—in which many things respecting the order of creation are written for our learning.

These two histories ought to be in perfect harmony the one with the other. The books of revelation and of nature, where they cover the same ground, ought to agree. And yet, as a matter of fact, and as these two records are often interpreted, so great is their apparent discrepancy as to lead Prof. Huxley to write:

“My belief is, and long has been, that the Pentateuchal story of creation is simply a myth. I suppose it to be a hypothesis respecting the origin of the universe which some ancient thinker found himself able to reconcile with his knowledge of the nature of things, and therefore assumed to be true. As such I hold it to be not only an interesting, but a venerable monument of a stage in the mental progress of mankind, . . . and to possess neither more nor less scientific importance than the cosmogonies of the Egyptians and Babylonians.”—*Order of Creation*, page 147.

Such discrepancies as are alleged in this case are, I believe, apparent, not real, and may be owing either to a misinterpretation of the Pentateuchal story of creation, or to a misreading of the

II. THE MIRACLE, THE PRINCIPLE OF UNITY IN THE EVIDENCES OF A DIVINE REVELATION.

It is necessary that a revelation claiming to be supernatural and divine should be authenticated by proofs of the most extraordinary and indisputable character. Such proofs of the revelation contained in the Bible God has furnished in the form of miracles.

A miracle we have defined to be a wonderful event, contravening some known law or laws of the course of nature, physical, mental or moral, and accompanying the teaching of a person claiming to be commissioned by God, or a revelation professing to be divine and intended to promote human holiness.

If such an event can be proved as a fact, the inference is necessary that it is produced by the immediate efficiency of God; for, either it is produced by man, or by evil spirits, or by God. It could not be produced by man, for he cannot contravene the known laws of nature. It could not be by evil spirits, for they would not attempt to authenticate teaching designed to promote holiness; and, further, as Dr. Wardlaw has argued, since the Bible claiming to be a divine revelation furnishes the only information men possess concerning the existence and agency of præter-human spirits, it is illegitimate for its assailant to employ that information for the purpose of disproving its claim. He would involve himself in the contradiction of admitting the trustworthiness of the revelation, the trustworthiness of which it is his design to overthrow. The only remaining supposition would consequently be established, namely, that the event is produced by God; and, since it contravenes the known laws of nature, by the immediate efficiency of God. The conclusion is, that as God cannot be a party to a fraud, or sanction imposture, the commission or revelation accompanied by such an event is proved to be divine. The office of the miracle as a credential—its apologetic worth—becomes apparent.

Let it be observed, that the miracle is not said to be inconsistent with what Bishop Butler calls "the original plan of things," but

with the known laws of that natural system with which we are familiar. Nothing short of this could yield incontestable proof of God's interposition. A consideration of the objections to this definition, urged by all sorts of parties from the atheist to the christian theologian has required a separate discussion. But some of the positive proofs by which it is supported will, in the course of the following remarks, be presented in connexion with the several branches of the evidence in favor of divine revelation, as they shall come to be specially examined.

Following the course suggested in the introduction to this discussion, in the last number of the QUARTERLY, we proceed to show that—

II. All the different kinds of evidence in favor of the divine origin of the supernatural revelation contained in the Bible are, in the main, reducible to unity upon the miracle: that is to say, that they are all, so far as their principal features are concerned, miraculous in the sense of that term which has just been explained, as signifying not only what is wonderful and supernatural, but also what is contra-natural.

These evidences are divisible into three classes: the external, the internal, and the experimental.

We will not stop to vindicate this distribution. The classification, as a whole, is very generally adopted, and will upon examination be found logically complete; while each separate generalization—the external, the internal, and the experimental—is based upon a competent induction of particulars exhibiting specifically characteristic features. Let it be borne in mind, that it is not now intended to furnish a condensed treatise upon the evidences, but to consider them with special reference to the question whether they are miraculous in their character. All that is necessary, therefore, to the end had in view is to emphasize specimen examples of each class.

1. Let us begin with the external evidences. These may be subdivided into prophecy, miracles of external fact, and the effects attending the propagation of Christianity.

(1.) The first of these which must be considered is prophecy. It is a miracle of knowledge, and as such contravenes a known

law, operating universally upon the human intelligence—the law of limitation upon the scope of the mental powers. It is not designed to affirm that it contradicts the essential elements of the human mind and the laws in accordance with which they operate, such as consciousness, conception, and the reasoning faculty, the ability to receive testimony, the contents of which may be incomprehensible by the recipient, and to express it in intelligible language. With these powers and their laws prophecy, in a sense, falls in and pre-supposes them. But it contravenes the law by which these powers with their laws are limited, so that certain kinds of knowledge become impossible to the human mind, in itself considered as acting by virtue of its own energies. Under this law of limitation falls the inability of man to foretell a large and important section of future events.

The prediction of events which may be expected to occur in accordance with the fixed laws of the physical world is not prophecy, strictly speaking; at least, it is not the kind of prophecy which constitutes one prominent feature of the evidences in favor of a divine, supernatural revelation. It is the result of common sagacity. The uniform operation of such laws grounds all ordinary effort, and justifies all temporal schemes and enterprises involving hope for the future. If a man had foretold a month ago that the sun would rise to-day, that would not entitle him to prophetic honors; but if he had then predicted that the sun would *not* rise to-day, and it had so happened, a terror-stricken world would recognize him as a prophet. It is the prediction of contingent events—that is, those which, contemplated from a finite point of view, may or may not occur, the futurity of which the operation of no known law guarantees, especially events conditioned by the free action of the human or the divine will,—it is this which is properly denominated prophecy. The prediction of such events transcends and contravenes the clearly established law of limitation under which the processes of the human intelligence take place.

How strikingly is this evinced by the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah touching the capture of Babylon! In their day it was a magnificent city, said to have been surrounded with massive walls, which, according to Herodotus and Ctesias, were about three hun-

dred feet high, and to have contained one hundred brazen gates. The area enclosed, in the judgment of recent scholars, was much greater than that occupied by the enormous city of London. Some generations before its fall one of these sacred writers named Cyrus as its conqueror, another described the mode in which it was taken, in the midst of a drunken revelry, and both detailed some of the circumstances that preceded and attended its surprising doom. All this was confirmed by the accounts of profane historians. And Isaiah, gifted with a vision of the distant future of this great city, adds a description of its final condition as that of a tangled morass, infested by reptiles and beasts of prey, which would prevent the Arabian from pitching his tent or shepherds from folding their flocks upon its site.

The prophet Ezekiel, after graphically painting the glories of Tyre, the beautiful empress of the Eastern Mediterranean, with her fabulous wealth, her merchant princes, her skilled artisans, her commerce reaching out in every direction, to the Caspian Sea, to the Euphrates, to Arabia, to the Persian Gulf, and to the Peloponnesus and the distant Pillars of Hercules, puts the finishing stroke to the gorgeous picture by representing the successive degradations through which she should descend, until at last she should be "a place to spread nets upon," and should "be built no more."

The same prophet, in describing the doom of Egypt, once among the most splendid kingdoms on the face of the earth, the seat of philosophy, science and learning which attracted the sages of Greece, uses these remarkable words, "There shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt."

Travellers and explorers now tell us that on the site of Babylon the roaming Bedouin does not venture to pitch his tent, nor the nomadic shepherd to fold his flocks. They inform us that Tyre is a pitiful town where poor fishermen spread their nets. History attests that, for two thousand years, Egypt has had no autonomy. It has been successively ruled by the Babylonians, the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Saracens, the Mamelukes, and the Turks. Look at her to-day. Our current newspapers tell us that she is a bone of contention to the European powers. She has no native ruler—no prince of her own.

How could Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel have known these future facts? It is supremely preposterous to say that they lived after their occurrence, or that the prophecies were simply interpolated histories. How did they know these distant events? The law which limited their faculties rendered the knowledge impossible to them, and, it may be added, to any præter-human finite intelligences. What solution of the mystery can be given, but that the omniscient Being who knows by an unchanging intuition the past, the present and the future, traversed that law of limitation by his immediate efficiency, and produced this contra-natural miracle of knowledge?

These instances, selected from a numerous class, suffice to show that the evidence derived from prophecy in favor of divine revelation is miraculous, in the sense that a universal and clearly established law is contravened—the law of limitation upon the mental powers, which renders impossible their knowledge of future events conditioned upon the free acts of the will.

To say that there is here simply the introduction of a new antecedent, in accordance with which a new mental result is attained, is to confess that, as a novel and unexpected force is employed, not provided for in the constitution of the human mind, the known laws of its operation are contravened. To take the ground that the immediate efficiency of God is that new antecedent is to give up the question; for it is absurd to treat the divine causality, which underlies and pervades all second causes, as a special force and to coördinate it with the special forces of nature. It is in the case of prophecy, as in all other miracles, exerted in a wholly extraordinary and contra-natural manner. To maintain that it is employed in consistency with higher laws is to shift the issue; for the constitution of things with which we are familiar alone can be considered a legitimate field of evidence. What is higher and by us unknowable cannot possibly be a valid element of evidence. And it must be remembered that the question before us is concerned about the evidence in favor of a divine revelation.

(2.) The next special class of evidences consists of what we have denominated miracles of external fact—works wrought in the phenomenal sphere and appealing to the bodily senses. What we

shall attempt to show is that they were contra-natural—that they infringed some known laws of the physical system. Let us take, for the sake of illustration, two examples, one from the Old Testament, the other from the New:

One of the sons of the prophets, under the tuition of the illustrious Elisha, was felling a tree on the bank of the Jordan, when the axe flew from the helve and sunk into the river. It was held at the bottom in accordance with the law of gravitation. Now, had the axe been fished up, or had the young man dived and brought it up, the law of gravitation would have been counteracted, but there would have been no miracle. The iron rose and floated upon the surface, without the employment of any such natural force. The law which was contradicted was, that iron will not rise to the surface of water unless some physical force counteract and overcome that of gravity. That is the law; and it is established upon an induction of innumerable particulars. That law was, in this instance, violated, for the iron rose to the surface and swam without the use of any natural force. According to the laws of nature merely it could not have floated. They were not only transcended, but contravened. God palpably sealed the prophet's commission.

Consider next the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. If there be a law which has been established by an induction of facts it is that of the immobility of the dead body without the application of extraneous force. No dead man voluntarily moves and resumes the functions of life. In this case, without the employment of physical force, the corpse of Lazarus, in obedience simply to a command of Christ, moved and came forth from the sepulchre still strapped by the linen bandages with which it had been interred. Was not the law of the absence of voluntary mobility from the dead body absolutely contradicted? This must be admitted, if the propositions, A corpse is not able to move voluntarily; a corpse is able to move voluntarily, are allowed to be contradictory.

Take another view of this transparently simple case. It is a universal law—except when a miracle of resurrection occurs—that a dead man continues to be dead. But this man, Lazarus, did not

continue to be dead. Did not the act of Christ by which he ceased to be dead contradict the law that the dead remain dead? If not, there are no such things as contradictories. Every bodily sense was constituted a witness that the law of death was contravened, and the contradictory law of life established. The eye-sight of the transported sisters, for did they not see him hobbling out to light? their hearing, did not his voice once more salute their ears? their touch, did they not clasp him in their arms? their smell, was he any more offensive? their very taste, for did they not imprint fond kisses upon his now warm lips?—all attested the phenomenal miracle by which the law of death had been violated, and the law of life substituted in its room.

(3.) The third species of the external evidences which we shall here emphasize is the effects which flowed from the propagation of Christianity.

In the first place, survey the forces against which Christianity as an infantile system had to contend—Judaism, false, apostate, intensely bigoted and supporting itself by the consecrated traditions of the past; Paganism, as a religion pervading the multitudinous Gentile nations, and consolidated by the sentiments and usages of centuries; Greek philosophy, the queen of human speculation, the climax of subtle intellectualism; the secular power of Rome, whose invincible legions had made her the imperial mistress of the known world; and, more than all this formidable array of opposition, the natural passions of men. Each christian confronted the probability of his becoming a holocaust, each church of being made a hecatomb.

In the second place, notice the extreme feebleness of its human resources for so gigantic a conflict. Its propagators, with the exception of Paul, were unlettered: there was no appeal to learning or philosophy. They were physically powerless: there was no appeal to the sword or to civil authority. They were poor: there was no appeal to wealth. They were few: there was no appeal to numbers.

In the third place, contemplate the antecedent improbability of success arising from the nature of the religion to be propagated. Its great law was self-denial: the cross was marked into the heart

of its adherents. Its promise for this world was tribulation: its rewards were postponed to a future state. Faith, not sense nor carnal reason, was its principle of action, its motive to exertion. It was characterized by utter simplicity: it had no outward pomp, no magnificent temples, no gorgeous ritual, no smoking altars, and no vested priests.

In the fourth place, consider the antecedent improbability of success springing from the means of its propagation. This was preaching—the foolishness of preaching salvation from sin, death and hell through faith in a crucified man; of preaching to the Jews salvation by one whom they had handed over to the Romans to be executed; of preaching to the Romans salvation by one whom a procurator had sentenced to the ignominious death of a felon and a slave.

In the fifth place, observe its marvellous success in the teeth of these accumulated and apparently insuperable difficulties. Without an appeal to learning or philosophy, without the sword or civil patronage, without pecuniary resources, and without numbers in the inception of its career, apostolic Christianity ere long triumphed over every obstacle and pushed its spiritual conquests into regions which the Roman armies had never pierced. And now that the spirit of an apostolic propagandism has revived, the Apocalyptic angel flies mid-heaven with the everlasting gospel, and Christianity has secured what no other religion ever attained, a well-nigh universal dissemination—at least a representative existence in almost every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue of earth. It is leavening the masses of Paganism with its doctrine, erecting its missionary stations in the heart of a ferocious Mohammedanism, and planting the standard of the Cross in the blood of its martyrs amidst the central populations of the dark and barbarous continent.

It has suffered from great corruptions; it is suffering from them now, such is the tendency of our poor human nature to degeneracy from a pure religion; but notwithstanding this mournful fact, it has exerted, and is exercising, a meliorating influence upon human society. It humanizes its civilization, refines its institutions, and despite the desperate attempts of David Hume and

materialistic sceptics of the present day to show the contrary, it is advancing its moral condition. Among its fundamental and leading virtues, it crowns the heavenly grace of charity, and the tongue of slander itself cannot refuse to it the credit of erecting infirmaries and hospitals, asylums and refuges for the insane and unfortunate, and of carrying the banner of its beneficent ministrations into crashes of conflict and upon fields of blood.

Here, then, are miracles, stupendous miracles, accomplished not by human agency—that were impossible—but by the immediate efficiency of Almighty God, in the face of obstacles which would have been otherwise insurmountable. The truth is that Christianity, as a remedial scheme designed to achieve holiness and life, contradicts by its very genius and end the law of sin and death, and every step of its progress affords an instance of this contradiction. That progress depends upon the regeneration of sinners, and every regenerated soul is a monumental proof that the law of spiritual death has been violated and the law of spiritual life established.

To these considerations it may be added that the continuous existence of the church through all the vicissitudes of past ages is a standing miracle. How else is it to be accounted for, that having been a contemporary of the mighty organizations of the world, and having been often brought to the verge of extinction, she alone has survived? There is evidently here the contravention of a known law operating upon the organic history of the race. If there be a law generalized from a sufficient number of particulars, it is the law of successive vigor and decadence that has been impressed upon the empires and governments of the world. But upon this peculiar and distinctive society rests undimmed the *purpureum lumen juventatis*. She outlived the catastrophe which overwhelmed the antediluvian populations. She has stood at the entombment of Egypt, of Babylon, of Assyria, of Medo-Persia, of Greece, of pagan Rome, pronounced the funereal words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," and has passed onward from their graves with an accelerated development and an undying life. This wonderful fact must challenge attention. The history of human empire has been a history of a rise and fall; that of the

church, of a rise and progress. The drama of human affairs ever returns upon itself and ends where it begun—a tragedy which opens with life and closes with death; that of redemption ever unfolds some new and startling act, and advances to the consummation of a final judgment and a glorious heaven. The poem of humanity is a mournful elegy, its music a ceaseless dirge; that of the church a hope-inspiring epic, its music a grand march, blended, it is true, with minor strains, but passionately moving on to the hallelujah-chorus of a people redeemed and glorified, the coronation-anthem of a King triumphant and eternal. The progress of this world's societies is a procession to the grave; that of the church a jubilant movement to the gates of glory and the joys of immortality. Stand, then, the hopes of the church founded on God's unchanging Word! Yonder heavenly fires, the stars which lit the plains on which the patriarchs tended their flocks; the sun, which has risen and set upon the fluctuating dynasties of the past,—all shall pale into darkness, but the light of God's Word that burns in the church endureth forever. The prophetic aurora of an endless day, it shall suffer no disastrous eclipse, but is destined to cheer the gloom of the grave, to flush the sky of the resurrection morning, to gild the blackness which shall enwrap the cinders of the world, to blaze upon the judgment throne, and to illuminate with its unfading splendors the heavenly and immovable kingdom of Christ.

Here then we encounter a law of life pervading the church as a human society, which contradicts the law of decay and death enthroned amidst the ruins of other human organizations. Of what is this the effect, but of the immediate efficiency of God acting above and contrary to the natural laws which operate upon the systems of this earth? In other words, we are confronted by an amazing miracle.

2. The second department of the evidences in favor of a supernatural revelation is the internal—that derived from the contents of the Scriptures themselves.

(1.) The organic unity of the Scriptures is miraculous. That sixty-six books composed, many of them at least, at widely distant intervals, by authors who, from the nature of the case, could not

have had any concerted action, should be possessed and dominated by one great, central idea running through them all and reducing them to fundamental unity; that this leading and potential idea, dimly enounced at first, should have been developed more and more clearly and fully as centuries elapsed, developed not by the logical concatenation of a system, but by compositions of every variety, by histories, chronicles, codes of law, poems, psalms, lyric odes, proverbs, prophecies, epistles and didactic treatises, and developed by authors, some of whom were shepherds and fishermen; that the writers, so circumstanced, should have maintained a consistency with each other, excluding contradictions or even serious differences during the prodigious period of nearly sixteen hundred years,—this may safely be pronounced an impossibility, on the supposition that the result was to be accomplished in obedience to the known laws which operate upon the human mind. Such a case has never occurred in the history of merely human authorship, and nothing is risked by the assertion that it never could occur. There is no analogue to this organic unity of the sacred writings in all the annals of literature. An attempt was made by thinkers of the highest genius to develop the principles of the Kantian philosophy, but, scientific as were their discussions, it took only a few years to demonstrate that the effort to preserve unity was a disastrous failure. It literally, with the last of that splendid succession of speculative intellects, ended in *nothing*. It is seldom, as every student knows, that an individual writer of any voluminousness succeeds in avoiding self-contradiction. It is rare that two witnesses exactly agree in their testimony to an event which fell under their own observation. But that numerous writers, living through the course of a millennium and a half, should not only maintain harmony with each other in regard to a regulative principle, but despite a great variety in the minor and incidental topics handled by them, this is a fact that not merely transcends but contravenes the laws by which the imperfect faculties of men are controlled.

(2.) Much of the matter contained in the Scriptures is miraculous, not only as overpassing the power of human reason, but as contradicting the law by which it is limited.

This has already been proved with reference to the prophetic

contents of the Bible, and it need not be insisted on in this place. But there are truths in the form of facts and doctrines didactically delivered, in regard to which this holds good. In order that misapprehension may be avoided, let it be observed that the Scriptures and the gospel are not coincident as to the scope of their matter. All that is evangelical is scriptural, but all that is scriptural is not, at least primarily, evangelical. Redemption, for example, is evangelical and scriptural, creation scriptural but not evangelical. There would have been a great body of religious truth had the Scriptures never been communicated as a written revelation. But the Bible having been furnished to man as the supernatural and the latest revelation made by God, it incorporates into itself both the old truths of natural religion and the new truths of redemptive religion or the gospel. It is in this wide and comprehensive sense that the Scriptures are regarded in this discussion.

Now, with reference to the question before us, all the truths of Scripture may be distributed into three classes:

The first consists of those which, although they may be incomprehensible by the thinking faculty empirically proceeding by the discursive process, are enforced by the fundamental laws of belief which are elicited by experience into positive faith-judgments. Into this category fall such truths as the existence of God, creation from nothing, and the immortality of the soul. They are not strictly speaking supernatural, since the natural powers of the human constitution were designed to conduct to them. The revelation of them as natural, though supernaturally re-published by the Scriptures, cannot be said to contradict the law of limitation upon the human intelligence, for although reason, as thinking, cannot comprehend them, yet, as believing, it positively affirms them.

The second class comprises those truths which reason, in no aspect of it, either as thinking or believing or both, could have reached, but which, when made known by a supernatural revelation, that is one over and beyond the competency of the natural powers of man, fall in with the measures of reason, and are accepted and vindicated in conformity with its principles. Such, for instance, are the doctrines of a federal economy, implicating in itself the covenant of works and the representative relation of the

first man to his posterity, and also of the scheme of redemption, proceeding by the covenant of grace, mediation, vicarious atonement and the recovering grace of the Holy Ghost. These, as free determinations of the divine will, could never have been suggested by reason, but when communicated are not simply received by it upon arbitrary authority but as appealing for approval to its own principles. This class of truths, however, unlike the first, manifestly contradicts the law of limitation operating upon the rational powers. That law would, apart from supernatural revelation, forever have precluded the attainment of that kind of truth.

The third class embraces those truths which, when supernaturally revealed, are, in certain aspects of them at least, unsusceptible of confirmation by reason, but are accepted upon the naked testimony, the unsupported authority, of God. Such, for example, are the trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, the constitution of his mediatorial person, and the resurrection of the dead. These doctrines are in no measure received on account of the evidence they themselves present to thought or even to faith. In themselves considered, they are both inconceivable and indemonstrable; but they are believed to be true simply because God so declares by an objective, authoritative, verbal revelation. Without doubt, therefore, they contravene the known law of limitation upon the human faculties, and as they are a part of the contents of the Bible, they constitute miraculous proof, in the highest degree, of its supernatural and divine origin. The fact that the trinity is dimly hinted at in some Oriental religions, and perhaps in the Platonic philosophy, only shows that these mutilated semblances of that doctrine were either remnants of the primitive revelation coming down by tradition through the ages, or derived from contact with the Hebrew people or writings:

But it may be said that these doctrines are mere vagaries of the imagination, or the crochets of wild speculation. Now, either they were produced by man, or they were communicated by the devil, or they were revealed by God. The supposition of the agency of holy spirits is unnecessary, as that could only have reflected the will of God. They could not have been produced by man, for he recognizes his own products—everything knows its own progeny;

but these doctrines, aside from an influence not native to him, he will not recognize, but, on the contrary, wholly repudiates. Further, what man produces man is able to understand. Although water cannot rise higher than its level, it can rise up to that level. But so far from understanding these doctrines, the natural man pronounces them contradictory to reason, inconceivable, incredible and absurd. They certainly are not man's products. They could not have been communicated by the devil, for they constitute parts of a system intended to deliver man from his dominion and to restore him to holiness and happiness. The argument of our Lord is here irresistible: A house divided against itself falls, and if Satan cast out Satan, by whom shall his kingdom stand? The only remaining supposition is, that they were revealed by God. And to this conclusion we are shut up by the requirements of this species of argument. The transcendent nature of these truths infers a transcendent origin. God alone could have been their author. The beams of morning light could have an origin no less glorious than the sun itself.

(3.) The conception of holiness, given in the Scriptures, is an instance of the contra-natural miracle. By holiness we mean the perfection of all moral excellence in God, and godliness, contradistinguished to mere civil virtue, godliness as the radical principle of all moral excellence in man.

Examine by the most rigid induction the religions of the race, apart from Christianity, and you will discover this conception of holiness absolutely nowhere. The absence of it is the generalization—the law, which you will reach. The Greeks and Romans represented their deities as guilty of crimes which, had their perpetrators been men, would have been punishable by human law. Was the king of Olympus characterized by holiness? Holiness? Their supreme divinity was an apotheosis of lust.

As to the conception of human holiness, it is nowhere found as having its root in supreme love to God. The universal law of sin seems to have rendered such a conception impossible. Take the human character of Jesus as portrayed in the gospels—a concrete exemplification of his own inimitable summary of a supreme moral law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and

with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,"—a miniature copy in humanity of the infinite perfections of God, as a small lake reflects a celestial hemisphere blazing with the glories of starry systems; and it is absolutely without a parallel, without a distantly approximative analogy in the length and breadth, the height and depth of human literature. The conception of such holiness was impossible to the sinful imagination of merely human genius.

We are complacently informed that some of the Oriental religions contain choice collections of the noblest moral precepts, that Christianity is not exceptional, but merely coördinate with other moral systems, and that consequently only an eclecticism which would assemble into unity the best features of them all would be entitled to the illustrious position of a universal religion. Suffice it now to say, that Christianity is the only religion which takes account of the revolutionary and disastrous influence of sin, and the only religion which indicates the means by which man may be recovered from its effects and elevated to holiness and therefore to happiness. It is the only scheme of redemption *from* sin and *to* holiness. This is its genius, this its professed end; and this it is which lifts it infinitely above the rabble of religions by which the world is fooled. Like the God whose holiness it represents, it knows no peer and tolerates no rival.

We are justified in concluding, then, that it is a law of universal scope that the religions of the earth make no provision for holiness, and as the Bible alone proclaims and promotes it, the Bible contravenes that law, and thus presents internal evidence of its divine origin which is contra-naturally miraculous.

3. The third and last general branch of the evidences in favor of a supernatural revelation is the experimental—that derived from the experience of its power.

The conversion and renovated life of individuals affords a proof of Christianity as supernatural, since it professes to secure these results, and the proof is miraculous, because these changes contravene the known law of sin. There is not time now, nor is there any need, to elaborate the proposition that sin operates upon

men universally, and operates with the force of an all-conditioning law. He who would maintain opposite ground would simply rave. The history of the race, the facts of observation as wide as the world, the testimony of individual consciousness, and the express statements of the Bible considered merely as a credible witness, all concur in establishing the universal law of sin. This law is contradicted and counter-worked in the experience of every converted man. His intellectual perceptions, his principles and motives, his feelings, tastes and will, from having been determined towards sin, are directed, at least dominantly directed, towards God, holiness and heaven. Were one professing to be a messenger from God, charged with a revelation supplementary to, and expository of, the Scriptures, which would reconcile the conflicting denominations of Christendom, to stand on the levee at New Orleans and bid the mighty Mississippi roll back to St. Louis more than half of its swirling current, and were the command to be obeyed, would we not confess a miracle contradicting the known laws of nature, and sufficient to constrain our conviction of a heavenly commission? It is a similar miracle when the main current of a sinner's thoughts, affections and volitions, which had been sweeping downward to hell, is turned back, and against the gravitation of nature rolls upward to heaven.

This kind of miracle is furnished to the individual to convince him, beyond doubt, of the divine origin of the christian religion and the sure foundation of his hopes. Other miracles are chiefly suited to affect the mass of outside inquirers. This influences principally the individual believer. Hence the illiterate disciple of Christ who cannot cope with the philosophic or scientific infidel on the field of argument, and who may, indeed, be but poorly acquainted with the external evidences of Christianity, is prepared, by an appeal to the miraculous results attested by his own consciousness, steadfastly to hold his ground and to withstand all assaults upon his faith. He can say, in reply to the sophistry of scepticism and in the teeth of its jeers: "One thing I know: whereas I was blind, now I see." This sure testimony to the miraculous change wrought in him, which is borne by his consciousness, renders him impregnable. His own converted soul is a

miracle—a monument inscribed by God's finger with the characters of supernatural grace.

But although conversion is a miraculous proof of Christianity designed chiefly to confirm the faith of the individual who experiences it, it is also suited to exercise an evidential force upon others than himself. His testimony to the fact of his conversion, as a spiritual and moral change revolutionizing his character, has to be accounted for upon the principle of cause and effect. There are tests by which the competency and credibility of a witness can be determined; and when a competent and credible witness testifies to convictions in his mind which he assigns to a certain cause, his testimony is worthy of credit unless another cause can be discovered which was adequate to produce those convictions. Is not this the underlying principle of testimony? It is true that the individual may be honestly self-deceived, and therefore it may be granted that the proof afforded to others by his testimony rises no higher than to a presumption.

If, however, in addition to his testimony to an inward, conscious change, a phenomenal and undoubted alteration takes place in his life and continues to its end, the previous presumption amounts to positive proof. "The tree is known by its fruits." The blasphemer becomes reverent, the drunkard sober, the debauchee chaste, the liar true, the thief honest, the churl charitable, the miser liberal, the murderer gentle, and the despiser of God and his ordinances a devout suppliant at the throne of grace in the closet, the family and the house of the Lord. Finally this renovated life terminates on a bed of death, not marked by insensibility to the impending crisis or the composure of mere submission to an inevitable stroke, but illuminated by unbroken peace or triumphant joy. The sun of life sets in a blaze of glory; the visage of the king of terrors is transformed into the face of an angel, and the gloomy gorge of death is lighted up as the resplendent passage to a beautiful and immortal home. To say that all this is the cheatery of fanaticism, or the infatuation of self-delusion, is what human nature will not endure. The logic of indisputable evidence and the pathos of profoundest feeling combine to resist the unreasonable and savage indictment.

The proof is mightily enhanced by the fact that the testimony of the individual is concurred in and corroborated by multitudes of individuals. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established": much more in the mouth of an innumerable throng. Many congregations in a single city, many in a single rural neighborhood, confirm the testimony. A vast host of congregations throughout a whole country swells the accumulating volume of evidence. From land to land the testimony rolls until, like the voice of nature, it resounds throughout the world. The whole contemporary church of true believers, wherever the sun in its circuit around the globe shines upon its sanctuaries, unanimously renders the same attestation. Can the infidel, in accordance with the laws of evidence, treat such a mass of concurrent testimony with contempt? Can he silence it with a sneer?

Add to this immense aggregate of contemporaneous testimony that of an uninterrupted succession of witnesses in every past age of the world's history, a column which began its march from the spot that was crimsoned with the blood of Abel, the first martyr of the Old Testament church, and has continued it—tramp! tramp! tramp!—through the centuries of the Patriarchal, the Jewish and the Christian Dispensations, and the case becomes simply overwhelming. Imagine now the sceptic, with curled lip, saying to this countless multitude of witnesses, You are all wrong, I am right. Picture him trying to still the thunder of this consentient testimony with a—pooh!

The argument which has now been urged, if based in truth, furnishes a refutation of the trite objection to miracles, that as alleged past facts they need to be proved as much as the religion they are adduced to prove, that having no parallel in our own experience, no testimony is competent to establish them. The objection is without foundation, if miracles are allowed—as they ought to be—the scope attributed to them in this discussion. Leaving out of account what we have denominated miracles of external fact, the continuance of which is a matter of dispute, the miracles involved in the fulfilment of prophecy, the propagation of Christianity, the supernatural contents of the Bible, and the ex-

perience of converted souls, are in a *continuous* process of exhibition before the eyes of every generation of men. They are not merely past facts depending upon testimony for their acknowledgment. They are also present facts subject to the proofs of observation and consciousness. Even if the followers of Hume and Strauss, in their attempts to storm the defences of Christianity, could succeed—and they cannot—in carrying the position of the sensible miracles, they would be exposed to a converging and ruinous fire from every other position along the line.

We have thus endeavored to show that all the evidences in favor of a divine, supernatural revelation are, as to their main features, characterized by a common element upon which they may be reduced to unity: they are miraculous, in the sense of contravening certain laws of that natural constitution, physical and mental, with which we are acquainted. As this can be done only by the immediate efficiency of God, extraordinary proof is supplied of his extraordinary interposition.

We close with the remark, that if evidence be not a delusion and argument not a juggle with words, Christianity is proved to be true; and if true, it is everlastingly, gloriously and, as Leslie has said, "tremendously true." If, on the contrary, there are no principles grounding the certitude of human conviction, and evidence is a name and a sham, it must be granted that Christianity cannot be proved true; but then it would also follow that nothing can be proved true. Knowledge would be Nescience, philosophy Nihilism, and everything Nothing.

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