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- ART. I.—1. *Report from the Select Committee on Public Libraries, together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, &c.* Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed. July 23d, 1849. Folio. pp. 317.
2. *Evening Schools and District Libraries. An Appeal to Philadelphians in behalf of improved means of Education and Self-culture, for Apprentices and young Workmen.* pp. 27. Philadelphia: King & Baird. 1850.
3. *Free Reading Room of Spring Garden, for Young Men and Apprentices.* pp. 12. Philadelphia: Collins & Co. 1850.

ON the fifteenth of March, 1849, the English House of Commons appointed a select committee of fifteen "on the best means of extending the establishment of libraries freely open to the public, especially in large towns in Great Britain and Ireland, with power to send for persons, papers and records, and to report observations and minutes of evidence to the House." So promptly and efficiently did they execute the important commission, that on the twenty-third of the follow-

ART. II.—*Notes on the Miracles of our Lord.* By Richard Chenevix Trench, M. A., Professor of Divinity, King's College, London. Author of "Notes on the Parables of our Lord," &c. &c. Reprinted from the last London edition. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1850. pp. 375. 8vo.

WE look on this book as a very valuable addition to theological literature. The Professor of Divinity in King's College has done good service to the church, in presenting a remarkably clear summary of the teratological argument in general, and of our Lord's miracles in detail. The defender of the outworks of Christianity may feel himself safe behind such entrenchments as these. The author has enriched his pages, as he has those of his work on the Parables, with copious citations of the Fathers, with whom he appears to be familiar. One might almost be tempted to fear an undue partiality for patristic lore, were it not that we find occasional references to modern authors, as Arnold, Coleridge, and the German writers. His quotations are made with great point and discrimination, and may be read with interest and pleasure. His style is compact, and occasionally hard and dry; but he has one most admirable quality, a downright earnestness and perspicuity which never leave us in doubt of his meaning. We were pleased to find him speaking in such high terms of Thomas Aquinas, especially that portion of his *Summa Theologiæ*, in which he treats of Miracles. The argumentations of Aquinas on this subject and on the Being of God are models of logical power and succinctness.

The first and smaller portion of the volume is occupied with a dissertation on the nature and authority of miracles, and the assaults made on them by various schools of objectors; the Jewish; the Heathen; the Pantheistic, or that of Spinoza; the Sceptical, or that of Hume; the school of Schleiermacher, which viewed them as only relatively miraculous;* the Ra-

* It is to this class must be referred the semi-blasphemous hints of some of the advocates of Mesmerism and Clairvoyance, of which our author makes no mention. The Rev. Mr. Furness, of the Universalist body, has suggested, in one of his works, an explanation of our Lord's raising Lazarus by an unknown magnetic power. He says that we know not how far the force of sympathy may extend, even beyond the precincts of the grave!

tionalist, or that of Paulus; and the Historico-Critical, of which Woolston and Strauss are the exponents. The statement of each of these antagonistic theories is brief but very perspicuous. In a few words the author seizes the pith and marrow of the objection, disentangles it from the eloquence or the sophistry in which it was wrapped up, and demolishes it in the most neat and complete manner. He wields the spear of Ithuriel, and at his touch error drops every mask of plausibility it had worn, and stands exposed in all its undisguised ugliness, deformity, and weakness. The second part of the book consists of a thorough sifting of each of Christ's miracles by itself, from "the beginning of miracles" in Cana, to the second great draught of fishes. It displays learning, patience and judgment, and is executed in a masterly manner.

Miracles and Prophecy are the two pillars of brass, the Jachin and Boaz, which guard the entrance of the Temple, and constitute the stability and strength of its defences. Unless, indeed, with Huet and our author, we define the Prophecies to be only another species of Miracles, *miracula præscientiæ*, as distinguished from *miracula potentiæ*. But this is a refinement in terminology which is too delicate for ordinary purposes; and long established usage has acknowledged a sufficiently palpable difference between the two. This popular usage restricts the application of the word Miracle to those events designated in scripture as wonderful works, signs and wonders, or sometimes, elliptically, works, a favourite expression of the evangelist John. They are sometimes grouped together, as in 2 Corinthians xii. 12. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." Each of these terms has its peculiar significance. The term *works*, or *mighty works*, whether *εργα* or *δυναμεις*, denotes the operative energy of a superhuman power; the term *wonders*, *τερατα*, intimates the effect produced on the spectators; the term *signs*, *σημεια*, refers particularly to their authenticating a divine mission, or serving as seals of some divine truth. The word *miracles*, which in common usage covers the whole ground, corresponds with the second class of these terms, *τερατα*, wonders. But inasmuch as every thing unusual raises our wonder, the sacred penman

couples with it the word *signs*; thus unequivocally teaching us that every wonder is not to be counted a miracle, in the technical sense, unless it be a sign also. We are therefore authorized to withhold the term unless it is employed in a sacred or religious sense. Thus we get rid at once of all wonders or portents in which we may detect any thing false, immoral, ostentatious, or trivial. Tried by this test the pretended miracles of later times, the "wonders" of Antichrist, winking pictures and bloody stigmata, are to be discarded without hesitation. Our author properly considers the miracles of the Old Testament and of Christ and his apostles as normal, in the chief features at least, for all future time. Guided by such examples, we must pronounce spurious whatever would restore the bondage of the senses; whatever would be aimless or destitute of a moral object; whatever would be merely ludicrous or grotesque; or whatever the conscience enlightened by the Word of God condemns as untrue, in whole or in part. If these tests be applied, the pretended miracles of the middle ages, and those revived at the present day, must be abandoned as indefensible. It is obvious at a glance how difficult and delicate a task they who treat upon this subject undertake; for they must frame their definitions so exactly, as to give no advantage to the advocates of pseudo-miracles on the one hand, or on the other, to those who deny the truth of miracles altogether.

The objections to the miracles of the Old and New Testaments naturally fall into one or the other of two classes; those which assert the incredibility in the nature of things of miracles in general, or exceptions to the evidence which attests the scripture miracles in particular. The first class object an antecedent difficulty which must be disposed of, before we can proceed farther. And the steps necessary to take are, to show that miracles are possible, reasonable, and entitled to regard from the nature of the revelation with which they are found connected.

To pronounce miracles impossible is to limit the power of God, whether we consider the nature of a miracle or the attributes of the Supreme Being. Our knowledge of nature is limited. There are many secrets of nature which no tortures or

ingenious questionings of science have yet compelled her to give up. Among these are some on which the most practical and useful arts depend, the mystery of whose operations is as yet inexplicable. Physiology, Natural History, Navigation, these all have their depths which no plummet has ever sounded; the polarity of the needle, the enigma of animal instinct in migration, and the invisible and imponderable cause of electromagnetism, which is able

“To put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes.”

Since we meet so many mysteries that baffle our penetration, modesty becomes us. When the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, he enumerated a variety of perplexing inquiries, running through four chapters, which he demanded a solution of in vain; and to all which the patriarch completely humbled, could only reply, “I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.” But not only so. Many things in nature strike us with no sensation of wonder, simply because we have grown familiar with them, which, did we now view them for the first time, could not but appear to us miraculous.

“What prodigies can power divine perform
More grand than it produces year by year,
And all in sight of inattentive man?
Familiar with the effect we slight the cause,
And in the constancy of nature’s course,
The regular return of genial months,
And renovation of a faded world,
See naught to wonder at. Should God again,
As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race
Of the undeviating and punctual sun,
How would the world admire! but speaks it less
An agency divine, to make him know
His moment when to sink and when to rise,
Age after age, than to arrest his course?
All we behold is miracle; but seen
So duly, all is miracle in vain.”

Hume makes the essence of a miracle consist solely in the rarity of the phenomenon. “Nothing,” says he, “is esteemed a miracle if it ever happen in the common course of nature. It is no miracle, that a man, seemingly in good health, should

die on a sudden; because such a kind of death, though more unusual than any other, has yet been frequently observed to happen. But it is a miracle, that a dead man should come to life; because that has never been observed, in any age or country." (Essays, vol. ii. p. 108.)

Since then we are not qualified dogmatically to pronounce what is the legitimate province of superior intervention, the grand object we are concerned to ascertain is simply this: Is there a power adequate to produce a given effect, and can the special case, whatever it may be, be referred without violence to that power? In other words, is there a superhuman agency which originated and regulates the motions of nature, and is there no contradiction in supposing that agency capable of arresting those motions at pleasure?

To evade the force of such a question, the advocates of scepticism throw in a cloud of metaphysical dust, and labour to prove that there is no necessary connexion between cause and effect. The result gained by advancing a proposition which shocks common sense and the established sentiment of mankind, will be to set aside all causes, and by consequence to get rid of that most obnoxious idea, the presence and agency of a great First Cause, adequate to produce changes and alterations in nature and to punish sin. It is therefore said that the only connection of cause and effect is that which exists in the mind, and which is of the nature of association or suggestion. Accustomed to see certain appearances follow others invariably, this antecedence and consequence furnish the only foundation for the inference of the mind that the one necessarily depends on the other. We might, as we think, prove that the mind is justifiable in drawing this inference; but we prefer to meet our antagonist on his own ground, and strike off the head of Goliath with his own sword. Grant then, for argument's sake, that the connection between cause and effect exists in the mind that conceives it, why should not a new connection be suggested? One being no more necessary than another, the new and hitherto unwitnessed appearance may prove only the beginning of a new order of sequences. It may turn out the herald of a valuable class of facts referrible to no precedents; and of course, until experience shows that

this is not the case, objections should be tardily raised. Besides, the necessary number of observations or experiences being indeterminate, it is unfair to assert that a dozen instances or fewer are not sufficient in regard to the new class of facts or new order of sequences, to establish the connection of invariable antecedence and consequence.

It appears therefore that there is nothing in the nature of a miracle to render it a priori incredible; since it leads at once to the idea of a superhuman power adequate to accomplish it. The only question that remains, is, whether God who established the present order of nature, can vary or disarrange that order if he pleases.

It is mere evasion to take refuge behind the laws of nature, and plead their uniformity. The phrase, laws of nature, is ambiguous. The only rational interpretation that can be given is, that they are laws which the God of Nature has imposed; a law being, according to its Saxon etymology, something laid down, thus implying a law-maker, whose prerogative it is to lay down the law. But He who imposed the law is the same who in the exercise of a sovereign authority accountable to none, can suspend the operation of the law for sufficient reasons. A dispensing power is always acknowledged to be inherent in the authority which originates. But sophistry has taken an underhanded advantage by calling miracles a violation or transgression of the laws of nature; thus affixing a sort of stigma on the act, and insinuating that God would be transgressing his own laws. This is preposterous; since the laws of nature were not laid down for his own government, but for the government of the creature. We therefore adhere to the more correct definition, that a miracle is only a suspension of the laws of nature.

It was this misrepresentation of miracles as violating the laws of nature which God had imposed, and which it would imply imperfection to alter, that formed the stronghold of Spinoza. But our author has admirably and eloquently met the objection. "The unresting activity of God," says he, "which at other times hides and conceals itself behind the veil of what we term natural laws, does in the miracle unveil itself; it steps out from its concealment, and the hand which

works is laid bare. Besides and beyond the ordinary operations of nature, higher powers, (higher, not as coming from a higher source, but as bearing upon higher ends,) intrude and make themselves felt even at the very springs and sources of her power." (p. 18.) And again; the miracle is "not a discord in nature, but the coming in of a higher harmony; not disorder, but instead of the order of earth, the order of heaven; not the violation of law, but that which continually, even in this natural world, is taking place, the comprehension of a lower by a higher; in this case the comprehension of a lower natural by a higher spiritual law; with only the modifications of the lower, necessarily consequent upon this." (p. 59.)

We are gravely told that we can know nothing more of God than we see of him; and that it is not right to argue from what falls under the purview of our senses to what lies beyond it. It is only necessary to reply briefly, that we are undoubtedly within the limits of rational probability, when we infer that the Being who can create worlds on worlds, stocked with animate and inanimate wonders, must be not less than Almighty.

What are the proudest works of man to those of his Creator? It was but a breath of his mouth, but a wave of his hand, and a whole world of mountains and sunny plains was built on no foundation but the empty void; his finger traced the channel, and mighty rivers rolled along, or expanded into capacious lakes; his hand hollowed out the great abyss of ocean,

"Strongest of Creation's sons,
Unconquerable, unreposed, untired;
That rolled the wild, profound eternal bass
In nature's anthem, and made music, such
As pleased the ear of God;"

the tameless, trackless sea, emblem of eternity, perpetual mirror of all that is bright or beautiful, terrible or dark in the wide firmament above; to which He set impassable boundaries, and said, "Hitherto shall thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed:" and when those ocean waves lashed into fury, swell, and dash, and roar with tumultuous wrath, he has but to say, "peace be still!" and

all is hushed to sleep, like gentle infancy upon its mother's lap. "Behold! these are parts of his ways; but how little is known of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?"

And shall man prescribe limits to the energies of that great Being to whom the universal reason of mankind, expressed in every tongue and language, hath accorded the title of Almighty! Shall a puny mortal presume to say that He may not regulate what he hath made, or arrest what he hath set in motion, or suspend the laws which in the plenitude of his sovereign and irresponsible will he hath enacted! What we see of Him but raises our ideas of what we see not; and as from the foot we infer the height of the colossus, so the manifest traces of the Deity, discernible in the works of nature, compel the inference of his absolute omnipotence.

Miracles are possible; are they also reasonable? Men are naturally disposed to inquire of any individual who presents himself as the promulgator of a new revelation, whence he derived his authority, and what are the proofs of his mission. He comes as an ambassador from the courts of Heaven, and it is proper to require the exhibition of his credentials. "What sign showest thou?" asked the Jews of our Lord. "Show a miracle for you," demanded Pharaoh of Moses and Aaron. There is no more connection between a visible miracle and a religious truth, than between an ambassador's credentials and the topics of his embassy. The only value either possesses is the value of attestation. The being favored with a revelation, and the being endowed with a power to work miracles, are both deviations from the usual course of things, and not to be hastily believed, both being attended with antecedent difficulties. If a man satisfies us that he has been endowed with the power of working miracles, it being as extraordinary as the revelation, we must for consistency's sake, allow the latter also. Miracles serve as credentials, which incline us to listen favorably to the communications made. They are indeed nothing more. And this leads us a step farther.

A miracle borrows no inconsiderable title to regard from the nature of the revelation with which it appears in connection. This is, and deservedly, a strong point with our author,

and he has presented it in a bold and clear manner. Indeed we are hardly prepared to endorse his statements in full. He believes that the marvels of the Egyptian magicians, and those predicted of Antichrist, are of a class brought about by satanic agency. On this subject divines have been greatly divided. It is so obscure that such men as Saurin and Hengstenberg hesitate to express an opinion. Our author has no doubts. Therefore he affirms roundly, "a miracle does not prove the truth of a doctrine, or the divine mission of him that brings it to pass. That which alone it claims for him at the first is a right to be listened to; it puts him in the alternative of being from heaven or from hell. The doctrine must first commend itself to the conscience as being good, and then only can the miracle seal it as divine. But the first appeal is from the doctrine to the conscience, to the moral nature in man. For all revelation presupposes in man a power of recognizing the truth when it is shown him." (p. 27.) "The miracles have been spoken of as though they borrowed nothing from the truths which they confirmed, but those truths every thing from them; when indeed the true relation is one of mutual interdependence, the miracles proving the doctrines, and the doctrines approving the miracles, and both held together for us in a blessed unity, in the person of him who spake the words and did the works, and through the impress of highest holiness and of absolute truth and goodness, which that person leaves stamped on our souls;—so that it may be more truly said that we believe the miracles for Christ's sake, than Christ for the miracles' sake. Neither when we thus affirm that the miracles prove the doctrine, and the doctrine the miracles, are we arguing in a circle: rather we are receiving the sum total of the impression which this divine relation is intended to make on us, instead of taking an impression only partial and one-sided." (p. 81.)

A revelation every way worthy of God, and in nothing derogatory to his pure and exalted character, lends a great authority to the signs by which it is accompanied. Paul recognized this principle, when he told the Galatians, "though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached, let him be accursed!" The

apparition of an angel would have been in direct contravention of what was already proved by like attestations. And when a contradiction distracts, belief cannot follow. The fact, therefore, that the revelation is sublime in its character, beneficial in its tendency, and worthy of the perfections of God, is a powerful presumption for the truth and genuineness of both the miracle and the revelation. To this purport writes Bonnet, "this moral certainty will increase, if I can discern what were the views of the legislator in thus modifying the laws of nature." (Inquiries Phil. and Crit. concerning Christianity, p. 54.)

This is a favourite point with Professor Trench. He lays out his strength upon it. It is in fact the key note of his whole treatise. To view the miracles isolated he considers the great omission of former apologists; a tearing of the seals from the documents to which they give validity and without which they are in turn worthless; nay, a paving of the way for Antichrist, who is to have miracles of his own. On the contrary, all true miracles are always, more or less, "redemptive acts; in other words, works not merely of power but of grace, each one an index and a prophecy of the inner work of man's deliverance, which it accompanies and helps forward. But, as we should justly expect, it was pre-eminently thus with the miracles of Christ. Each of these is in small, and upon one side or another, a partial and transient realization of the great work for which he came that in the end he might accomplish perfectly and forever. They are all pledges, in that they are themselves first fruits, of his power; in each of them the word of salvation is incorporated in an act of salvation. Only when regarded in this light do they appear not merely as illustrious examples of his might, but also as glorious manifestations of his love. (p. 31.)

The effect of such a presentation of the subject is widely different from that produced by a dry proposition in logic or mathematics. The analysis no longer ends in a *caput mortuum*. The skeleton is clothed with flesh. The truth is instinct with life, it is warm and glowing. The feelings of the soul, as well as the convictions of the intellect, come within the range of our appeal. The commanding themes of sin and salvation

enlist attention, and throw their own interest about everything that bears upon them. Indifference is rebuked. The hearer listens as one who desires to be convinced of what is for his own good. The aversion of the unbeliever is seen to be directed not so much against the miracles as the truth they attest. The sting is extracted from infidelity, and the insect is left to buzz harmlessly. "The standing miracle of a Christendom commensurate and almost synonymous with the civilized world," is an argument which may now be wielded with tremendous effect, without denial or gainsaying. "Little as it wears of the glory which it ought to have, yet it wears enough to proclaim that its origin was more than mundane; surely from a Christendom, even such as it shows itself now, it is fair to argue back to a Christ such as the church receives as the only adequate cause. It is an oak which from no other acorn could have unfolded itself into so goodly a tree." p. 78.

In order to give this thought increased weight, it must be remembered, that in spite of all insinuations thrown out against miracles as resorted to by all religions, and so mutually neutralizing or destroying each other, Judaism and Christianity are the only two religions that claimed to be received on the score of miracles attesting them. Their introduction was ushered in by stupendous signs. Herein they differ from all other religions. They differ also in this, that the pretended wonders were wrought for false religions in agreement with the already existing prejudices of the people, and in favour of an established system; while the miracles of Christianity were wrought in opposition to established systems, and did violence to the oldest and strongest prejudices of the men who witnessed them.

The "ethical aim" of the miracles, as Professor Trench felicitously calls it, should ever be kept steadily in view. It gives the Christian reasoner immense advantage over his antagonist. Our author is undoubtedly correct when he laments the throwing away of this advantage by writers on the evidences of our religion, while they laboured to convince the judgment alone, and extort an unwilling verdict. It was a *lumen siccum*. Dr. Chalmers has expatiated largely on this

distinction between the ethics and the objects of theology, and shown conclusively that an indifference or aversion to the prima facie evidence which constitutes a claim on the attention, imports a delinquency of spirit. The beneficial consequences of the truth of Christianity being established are so many and great, so much in harmony with all that is good and virtuous and lovely and happy, that there should be a proclivity of the mind to those arguments which tend to evince its probability or even its possibility. In short, the human heart ought to desire to find it true, and if in a candid and truth-loving state, will do so. For this we have our Saviour's authority. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light." "If any man will, *θελεῖ*, is willing, to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." "Next in importance," says Dr. Chalmers, "to the question, 'What are those conclusive proofs on the side of religion which make it our duty to believe?' is the question, 'What are those initial presumptions which make it our duty to inquire?'" (*Nat. Theol.* vol. i. p. 94.)

All antecedent difficulties being disposed of, and the credibility of miracles being ascertained, another class of objections meets us in regard to the particular miracles which claim our belief. Descending from the abstract and speculative, we are brought into the region of the practical.

It would be to little purpose to have discomfited the general objection, if we can prove no specialties. Have miracles been actually performed? is now the question that must enchain attention. This takes in the subject of Testimony, on which our author has said little. The assertion that no testimony can be admitted as sufficient is unreasonable, if the possibility of miracles is once established. All that remains is to fix and ascertain beyond a doubt, the date of their occurrence.

And as we have had to dispute every inch of our way hitherto, so we must gird up our loins again. We will not be permitted merely to walk over the ground. We are told that faith in testimony is the result of experience solely; and that as the belief of the uniformity of nature is the result of experience also, we have two contradictory experiences, the last of which counterbalances the other; and hence no human testimony can prove a miracle. We deny that faith

is the result of experience. We hold that it is the effect of a principle connate with our existence. These are the words of Mr. Starkie, a writer whose opinions have deserved authority among jurists. "In short, where knowledge cannot be acquired by means of personal observation, there are but two modes by which the existence of a by-gone fact can be obtained: 1. By information derived either immediately or mediately from those who had actual knowledge of the fact, or 2. By means of inference. . . . In the first case the inference is founded on a principle of faith in human veracity sanctioned by experience." (*Treatise on the Law of Evid.* vol. i. p. 10.) The truth undoubtedly is, that faith in testimony is prior to experience, for there is no reason why it should be otherwise. There is inherent in the human breast a disposition to confide in another's word, till forced to retract that confidence in consequence of having been deceived.

"Candid, and generous, and just,
Boys care but little whom they trust,
An error soon corrected:
For who but learns, in riper years,
That man, when smoothest he appears,
Is most to be suspected."

It is again objected to testimony that it is weaker than the evidence of the senses. But the evidence of the senses is far from infallible, and we are often liable to be deceived by them. The very writer who insists most loudly on this evidence, has elsewhere arrayed all the objections that can be urged against it, and has affirmed that neither the senses, experience, instinct, nor reason can compel conviction of the existence of an external world. So hard is it for error to be consistent with itself. But if Proteus can escape, he cares little whether he turns into fire or water.

This is not hearsay testimony; we have the recorded assertions of eye witnesses. They inform us explicitly "what their eyes have seen, and their hands have handled." The records are admitted to be authentic, so that the contents stand on the same footing with the letter we received yesterday. The lapse of time makes no difference; unless indeed as it has afforded more opportunity to apply every conceivable test of genuineness. It is, therefore, as if John, or Peter, or

Paul were present before us to tell their story in their own words. There is nothing intermediate. It is all the direct force of a deposition or affidavit read before the court from a man unable to attend in person.

Test these witnesses by the rules laid down by the leader of the sceptical school, and they come off triumphant. We shall not rehearse these rules. They are found in any treatise on the evidences. Suffice it to say that we have three classes of independent testimony. One is of eye-witnesses; not traditional, but preserved in authentic records in their own words. Another is of a host of converts convinced in spite of prejudices national, popular, and religious. A third is the admissions of enemies and unbelievers who retained their prejudices, and wrote against Christianity, and explained away its miracles, but never ventured to call the reality of those miracles in question. And if we were to add to these "the standing miracle of Christendom," as Coleridge called it, or of each individual Christian, regenerated and improved, as Mr. Griffin proposes in a recent work, we might swell the evidence to its highest culmination.

Weigh against these combined proofs the assertion that "no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle," and next the concession of the same writer, that immediately follows, "unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous [i. e. improbable,] than the fact which it endeavours to establish." On which side the greatest improbability lies it will not take long to determine. It would be the most astounding of all improbabilities that this host of witnesses should have been all either dupes or impostors, in matters so public, so notorious, and so easily sifted, and in opposition to which were arrayed the most virulent prejudices of the times. To all this, add the remarkable coincidence of the miracles with the predictions and the general tenor of the Old Testament scriptures, thus forming a stupendous, unique, harmonious plan. We see a number of separate writings by unconnected individuals, covering a space of some thousand years, all mysteriously linked and dovetailed with each other, and pervaded by one single towering idea, to which all others are subordinate or ancillary, the idea of a Saviour from sin

and its tremendous consequences. It shocks every supposition of probability that this complicated apparatus, this vast chain of circumstantial evidence, could owe its birth either to imposture or to accident.

Four of the most eminent assailants of the miracles, Spinoza, Woolston, Hume, and Strauss, our author has summarily disposed of in turn; singling out, as by instinct, the salient point of error in each case, and exposing its weakness. In his anxiety to be laconic, he has omitted some things which might be dwelt on to advantage. A dozen or twenty more pages added to the volume, would have enabled him to give a more complete *resumé*, and would have materially increased its bulk or its price. Thus we should have been pleased to find a larger space devoted to Spinozism, which seems likely to have a resurrection in our times, and which is an exceedingly subtle system. It appears to be very generally conceded that Dr. Clarke's elaborate demonstration, intended as a refutation of Spinoza has proved a failure. We are not of the number who hold this opinion, nor have we lost our confidence in the legitimacy or validity of the argument *a priori*. Different minds are affected differently according to their constitutional turn or mode of education. Dr. Duff, the eminent Scotch missionary in India, found the use of this argument satisfactory and triumphant among the acute and metaphysical young Hindoos, while the argument *a posteriori*, so popular in England, fell powerless on their minds.

The celebrated argument of Hume about experience has also been but briefly handled in the prolegomena, nor has the name of Dr. Campbell been once mentioned in the text or the notes. The Essay on Miracles is disposed of in less than three pages. This is the argument which has gained most currency in Great Britain and in this country, doubtless owing to the author's reputation as a historian. Notwithstanding its celebrity, and the confidence of Mr. Hume that he had discovered an unanswerable argument and "everlasting check," we feel bound to record our impression of its being a flimsy, sophistical, and flippant performance, savouring less of logic than of rhetoric, and recommended chiefly by its easy style, and a sort of complacent, well-fed, post-prandial philosophy. We

remember distinctly what were our feelings after twice carefully perusing it several years ago. We could not avoid asking ourselves again and again, is this the strongest argument which such a champion could adduce? Especially, after following the close logic and clear conclusions of Dr. Campbell in his masterly Reply, we could hardly avoid feeling that so much pains and elaborate reasoning were hardly necessary to refute it. And indeed, they would not have been necessary, had not the inclinations of the depraved heart been so propense an ally of error.

Hume versus Hume, or the self-contradictions of this distinguished sceptic, might be shown up without much trouble. After repeatedly affirming that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, he admits that a total darkness of eight days might be so attested as to command belief; and yet rejects the less wonder of a darkness of three hours at the Passion. He insists on the absolute uniformity of experience against every miraculous event, and that there is no contrary testimony; when it is the very object of his essay to invalidate such contrary testimony. He boasts of his freedom from bigotry; yet whenever a religious miracle is in question, he forestals inquiry by forming a general resolution never to lend it any attention, however specious. He maintains that polytheism was the primitive religion, and pure theism the result of philosophy and high civilization; yet he ridicules the Pentateuch, which sets forth a pure theism, as the work of a barbarous age. And to add no more—what are we to think of that man's morals, who after attempting to stab Christianity to the heart, hypocritically talks of "our most holy religion!" It reminds us of a midnight scene of old, when a certain individual said, "Hail, Master!" and kissed him, and in the same breath betrayed his victim to his enemies.

Woolston is another of these worthies, whose *Six Letters on the Miracles* had once a great run. Swift speaks of them as having reached the twelfth edition. Above sixty answers were elicited. The book is now only to be found on the shelves of some dusty library. Our author has noticed his ridicule of the miracle of the paralytic let down through the tiling; but not under the appropriate head (as it seems to us,) of the

miracle itself. On opening the volume, our first impulse was to look there for it, and we had a sensation of disappointment at not finding it in the second part.

Strauss is classed in the same school, though he has added the speculative refinements of Spinoza. Strauss is dismissed in two pages, which we regret; as his life of Jesus is translated and diffused in this country, and our divines should be better acquainted with it. Neander thought it of so much consequence that he wrote another Life of Christ as an antidote, but of this reply our author has taken no notice. We regret that his anxiety for brevity should have led to the omission.

W. G. Green

ART. III.—*The Prophet Habakkuk expounded by Francis Delitzsch.* Leipzig 1843. pp. xxx. & 208.*

If we estimate the value of a commentary by the size of the volume, or the extent of scriptural surface over which it travels, the merit of this exposition of Habakkuk by Dr. Francis Delitzsch will undoubtedly not be very great; but if we allow the ability, the learning, the evangelical views, and the deep-toned piety, which it displays, to enter into the computation we must assign to the work before us a distinguished place. Its author belongs to that school of German Theologians so happily on the increase, who with profound scholarship unite staunch orthodoxy, and who are turning the tide of popular unbelief by their unanswerable demonstrations, that learning and faith in scripture go hand in hand. In the matters of inspiration and of the supernatural facts of the Bible Dr. Delitzsch admits of no compromise; and he plainly evinces in abundant instances throughout the book, the truth of what he thus states in his introduction, that there must be—for we have in Habakkuk an instance of it—"a prophecy, which as it cannot be explained from human foresight, must have a supernatural divine illumination for its cause." This deserves to be rated pre-eminently among the qualifications of an expositor. How essential it is for a biblical interpreter to have

* *Der Prophet Habakuk ausgelegt von Franz Delitzsch.*