

THE
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I.

NOTES ON THE REVISED NEW TESTAMENT.

THE long-expected Revision is at last before the public. The first rattling volley from the newspapers has spent itself with the result which might have been predicted; aiding to stimulate the general curiosity, but doing very little to satisfy serious and intelligent inquiry as to the true merits or demerits of the work.

Too much has not been said, too much cannot be said of the general excellence and the wonderful value and power of our Authorized Version. The interest awakened by the Revision is the grandest of all testimonies to these. All that has been so eloquently written concerning its racy, nervous English, its service to literature, and the tenderness, dignity, and inspiring character of its associations, may be reaffirmed with emphasis; and hence the Revisers were no more than judicious in laying down as one of their first and principal canons—to avoid all unnecessary changes in that which years and associations have made so precious. But on this point two things may be said, the one concerning the Revisers, the other concerning the readers.

As to the Revisers, it may be safely affirmed that nothing in their admirable preface justifies extravagant expectations on this head. Their clearly stated rule is, that the alterations to be introduced should be expressed, *as far as possible*, in the language of the Authorized Version or of the Revisions that preceded it. They are, moreover, at pains to set forth their endeavor, when compelled to use other words, to find such as

II.

THE PROOF OF NEW TESTAMENT MIRACLE COMPARED WITH THE PROOF OF THE MIRACLE OF THE ROMAN CALENDAR.

IN the modern assaults upon the Gospel, *miracle* is attacked with especial energy, but with no unity in the method of assault. The old ground developed by Hume is strongly occupied by one class of sceptical thinkers; the order of nature, the scientific law of continuity, is so fixed and inviolable that miracles are impossible. Others, avoiding any dogmatic assertion as to the abstract possibility of miraculous events, hold that such is the essential limitations of human knowledge, that such an event must, even if actual, ever elude discrimination, and be incapable of proof. Others again simply maintain that the miracles recorded in the Christian Scriptures are, as a matter of fact, not proven, alleging that the miracles of St. Ignatius and St. Francis of Assisi stand upon equal evidence.

So clear is the demonstration of the possibility of miracle on the datum of a personal God and so resistless the evidence that if *possible*, it is *provable*, that many of the later sceptics have openly receded from Hume's ground, and taken up a new position. They concede the possibility and provability of miracle, and now simply assert that the miracle of the Gospels is not proved. The possibility of miracle is admitted as a bare possibility; but they deny that it has ever passed into fact. They admit it can be proved if it should happen, and deny that it is proved to have actually occurred. Renan says in so many words: "We do not say a miracle is impossible, we say only no miracle has ever yet been proved." Froude takes the ground that the evidence of New Testament miracle is of no higher value than the evidence of the miracle of the

Roman saints. He says: "On human evidence the miracles of St. Teresa and St. Francis of Assisi are as well established as those of the New Testament." This makes up the issue; let us see if this assertion is true.

The question now is, whether the miracle of the Gospels is or is not proved in point of fact; and whether it is or is not proved by a species of evidence which draws a broad line of distinction between itself and the evidence of the alleged miracle of the Roman saints. The case is thus stated by Froude:

"The lives of the saints of the Catholic Church from the time of the apostles until the present day, are a complete tissue of miracles resembling and rivalling those of the Gospels. Some of these stories are romantic and imaginative; some clear, literal, and prosaic; some rest on mere tradition; some on the sworn testimony of eye-witnesses; some are obvious fables; some are as well-authenticated as facts of such a kind can be authenticated at all. The Protestant Christian rejects every one of them—rejects them without inquiry—involves those for which there is good authority and those for which there is none or little, in one absolute, contemptuous, and sweeping denial. The Protestant Christian feels it more likely in the words of Hume, that men should deceive or be deceived, than that the laws of nature should be violated. At this moment we are beset with reports of conversations with spirits, of tables miraculously lifted, of hands projected out of the world of shadows into this mortal life. An unusually able, accomplished person accustomed to deal with common-sense facts, a celebrated political economist and notorious for business-like habits, assured this writer that a certain Mesmerist, who was my informant's intimate friend, had raised a dead girl to life. We should believe the people who tell us these things in any ordinary matter; they would be admitted in a court of justice as good witnesses in a criminal case, and a jury would hang a man on their word. The person just now alluded to is incapable of telling a wilful lie, yet our experience of the regularity of nature on one side is so uniform, and our experience of the capacities of human folly on the other, is so large, that when people tell us these wonderful stories, most of us are contented to smile; we do not care so much as to turn out of our way to examine them."

Upon this statement we have only to remark, that so far as Protestant Christians, who have a proper appreciation of the grounds of the Christian faith, are concerned, they are not at all solicitous to deny any fact well authenticated upon any subject, whether of the miracles of saints or phenomena of Mesmerism, or facts of spiritualism or wonders of Hindoo jugglery. A fact is an independent occurrence, and cannot possibly be damaged by any other fact; the admission of the alleged facts in the field of calendar miracle or Mesmerism, if we choose to admit them really or hypothetically, cannot possibly discredit the facts of the Gospel history. All we should require is proof of the fact, to secure the full admission of it. Whether we should agree to the inference from the fact, and to the alleged miraculous origin of the event, is another question: that would

depend upon the nature of the fact, which *if true miracle* will always authenticate itself. Nor shall we at all impeach the general credibility of the witnesses of legendary miracle or even their special credibility if deserved, in reference to the facts alleged. The facts when proved may be fully admitted without admitting any special theory of their origin or significance, or at all shaking the supreme authority of the miracle of the Gospel. We are fully prepared to admit all such facts in the alleged miracles of the saints as may be fairly proved. If there were no such wonders developed in the history of the Church, *prophecy* would be falsified. The apostle Paul distinctly foretold that a power designated as "the man of sin" should be revealed, "sitting in the temple of God," whose "coming should be after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." To admit the alleged facts of saintly miracle, so called, when truly proved, is not only just and honest, but is needful to vindicate prophecy. The admission of the facts does by no means carry the admission of their imputed origin, nor compel the admission of any claim or asserted doctrine which is supposed to be sustained by the facts. We are ready to accept any given fact which may be proved by sufficient evidence; we will admit it as a mere occurrence, but the fact must authenticate its origin before we shall accept any special theory of its origin as miraculous. Nor will we admit any inferences from the fact except such as are legitimately drawn from it. This procedure is not the mere caprice of Protestant prejudice as is so pointedly insinuated, but the fair dictate of honesty and good sense. It is a mistake of Mr. Froude to suppose the Protestant Christian finds it necessary to discredit all the alleged wonders of the mediæval saints. It is a just procedure to apply the order of nature to arrest the credit of such allegations, until sufficient evidence is furnished to sustain the allegation. When that evidence is furnished, we are fully entitled to examine and test the fact by every legitimate application of a suitable touchstone. The principles upon which Protestant Christians justify their firm adherence to the miracle of the Gospels, and yet impeach the miracle of saints and pagans even when the evidence may fairly establish a fact with an appearance of a miraculous character, will be explained and vindicated as we proceed. The

soundness of those principles is capable of a triumphant vindication.

A single preliminary difficulty must be removed before we enter upon the direct comparison between the proofs of the miracle of the Gospel and the miracle of the Calendar. It is asserted by some sceptics that time weakens the force of evidence, and that the evidence of Gospel miracle has been so far obscured by time, it cannot now command a rational assent. What then are the conditions upon which a reliable statement of events can be safely transmitted through long periods of time? This is the first point to be settled. If the facts can be safely transmitted, it is a manifest confusion of thought to impeach the evidence solely on the ground of time. A thing true, an actual occurrence, is *forever true*. The proof of its truth at the time of its occurrence is forever reliable proof. The only thing to be done in order to secure rational credit to an indefinite future, is to provide a reliable method of transmitting the evidence. If that evidence did once really prove the fact, it will prove it forever, and it is absurd to talk of the lapse of time discrediting evidence. If the evidence can be reliably transmitted, it will remain good proof forever. What, then, are the conditions of such a transmission, particularly in ages before the improved method and guarantee of printing was available for the purpose? How could we, for example, without the aid of the press, transmit for twenty centuries to come, a reliable account of any given facts of our contemporary history?

1. Obviously the first thing to be done would be to secure a written record of the facts, by persons thoroughly acquainted with them. Such a record will be indispensable: *first*, as a permanent repertory of the facts in a form which is capable of indefinite reduplication as necessity may demand; and *second*, in order to give full force and effect to another set of guarantees to be mentioned hereafter, and to prevent their being robbed of their testimonial power by the lapse of time and events.

2. A second expedient would be the formation of an *organization of men*, permanent in its existence, capable of an endless succession from generation to generation, like a civil, State, or Masonic order—with an order of officers to take

charge of the facts and the record of them, and by perpetual proclamation and public teaching from day to day and week to week—keep the facts constantly before the public from generation to generation. Such an institution existing or founded at the time when the facts occurred—charged with the single business of keeping them alive before the public—with the written record to prevent misapprehension and misstatement of the facts by the later successors in the office of the teacher—will afford a clear proof of the possibility of a reliable transmission of facts and evidence through long periods of time. Such an endless order of living men can give the needed guarantee against the evasive power of time and events, so long as it remains uncorrupt in its testimony to the facts.

3. A third expedient is to establish monumental memorials of the miraculous events, at least of one or more of the most remarkable of the series. This is a striking mode of transmitting evidence. These memorials may be of two kinds, stationary or movable. A granite shaft or a bronze statue erected in memory of a great man or a great event, is a testimony to the historical fact it commemorates, as long as the monument shall stand. A contemporary record explanatory of the purpose for which it was erected will not only be an additional testimony to that of the monument, but *may* be of great value in preserving the full testimonial significance of it. The pyramids of Egypt, at this distant point from their erection, disclose only a part of their significance as the tomb of the Pharaohs; it is obvious how valuable a contemporary record, fully explanatory, would be in enhancing their power as testimony to the views they were designed to embody. Movable monuments are either commemorative acts, or significant meanings attached to days and months and years, and are equally, if not more powerful as memorial monuments, less destructible than stationary memorials, and not confined to any locality. Of this sort is the month of July, which is a memorial of Julius Cæsar. The first day of the week is a memorial of the resurrection of Jesus; the bread and wine of the supper constitute a memorial of His death, and the living organization of the Church is a grand memorial of the influence and doctrines of the Nazarene in the same way in which the Mormon Church is a memorial of the influence and doc-

trines of Joe Smith. Anything to which a significance can be attached by statute laws, by custom, or agreement, can be made an instrument of transmitting ideas, and as long as it lasts, it will convey the meaning of which it has been constituted the vehicle. The influence of a contemporary record in preserving the testimonial force of such a monument is obvious in producing that result and in illustrating the value of such a record.

4. Another powerful agency in transmitting the evidence of facts, is the interweaving of the facts themselves, or of the doctrines and institutions based upon those facts with the public civil history or the governmental acts of nationalities existing at or shortly after the occurrence of the facts; first *historically* as a part of the national annals; and *second* into their legislation. The legislation of the United States Congress and the history of the last forty years of the American people will forever be a testimony to the existence and peculiarities of the Mormon sect. The testimony to the facts is thus widened from the basis of personal and propagandist testimony to that of an incidental, public, and wholly independent testimony. Many who find themselves incapable of an effective impression from the testimony of the apostles, the official witnesses, are impressed by the history and legislation both of the Jewish people and of the Roman Empire in relation to Christianity. Facts and evidence thus transmitted, put upon record, committed to an endless organization of men for the purpose of a perpetual daily and weekly proclamation of the facts from generation to generation, certified by memorial monuments, and at once and increasingly interwoven with the public history and legislation of nations—facts so certified can be reliably transmitted through any conceivable duration; and the sceptical pretext that time has or can weaken the Christian evidences is without foundation.

We are now ready to enter on the question of the actual proof of the miracle of the Gospels, and to point out the powerful line of distinction between it and the evidence of the miracle of the Calendar—a distinction as great on the proof as that between the actions themselves.

1. The first grand mark of genuine miracle *is its relation to revelation*. The fact which draws the first grand line of

distinction between the miracle of the Gospel and the lying wonders of the man of sin, which Froude pronounces equally credible and equally proved, is the admitted fact that *the canon of revelation is closed*. The miracle of the Gospel is inseparably connected with a revelation from God; the miracle of the Calendar is invariably separated from revelation. All efforts to discount this principle fail. There is an inseparable connection between all true miracle after creation and a revelation from God—a *correlation* which constitutes an invincible line of reasoning from one branch of the correlation to the other. The testimony of the Scriptures which is authoritative, as between Protestants and Romanists, clearly settles that the use and purpose of miracle, as we have already seen, is to make God a witness to truth which He has ordered to be communicated to man. The *necessity* of such a testimony from God in any case of alleged commission to speak in His name, is affirmed by common sense, which is authoritative, as between Christians and infidels. The mysterious conditions of human life have always created a demand for information touching the nature of these fearful dispensations and their bearing on the future. Impostors have found in this condition of human feeling a wide field for their arts of religious deception. The whole value of their teaching is conditioned upon its being a revelation from God; no testimony from any other source is considered anything worth because men know their destinies are to be controlled by the Supreme Power, and therefore they are only concerned to know from Him the terms and conditions by which His decisions will be regulated. All is dependent upon His will, which no one can know until He reveals it in some way of action or words. Independent of such an announcement, no one is competent to declare it. Whenever, therefore, an agent comes with a claim that he is sent by God to make known His will, and declare terms on which the divine favor will be shown, *God must certify him*. Until he is so certified, men have no right to receive him as a divine commissioner. His credentials must be authenticated; his claim must be proved, or it is absolutely inadmissible; and as he claims to come from God, no other witness but God himself is possibly allowable. God must put a seal upon his character as His official representative, or no

man can rely on what he says as really the mind of God. Hence the inseparable correlation between revelation and miracle as testimony. Wherever subsequent to creation revelation is found, miracle is found; they stand in a fixed logical relation to each other. Nor is the sceptical sneer, that the Christian argument is a gross example of reasoning in a circle—proving the revelation by the miracle and the miracle by the revelation, at all justified by the fact. The Christian theory proves revelation by miracle, and miracle by its own appropriate, but independent evidence. The correlation between miracle and revelation, which clearly emerges when the reality of miracle is proved, is seen to be a true correlation, like that between husband and wife, or father and son. The one notion is then seen to carry the other, because they are inseparable in fact. Whenever God would reveal His will, miracle is seen; where miracle is seen, there is a revelation of his will; and when revelation ceases, miracle ceases. Here is the first fatal objection to those miracles of the Roman Calendar of saints, which Froude pronounces to stand on as good a basis as the miracles of the Scriptures. *The canon is closed*; revelation from God has ceased; and miracle ceased with it. We may admit all the allegations of the Roman Calendar as facts; but they cannot be true miracle—*the finger of God*. They *may* be the result of the interposition of other beings; we may admit even this as an entirely gratuitous conception; they are certainly not the result of *divine power*. Hypothetically admitting the facts as they are claimed by the Romanist, they stand discredited as true miracle by the irresistible warrant of the scriptural and inseparable correlation between miracle and revelation. What revelation from God, additional to the closed canon of the sacred books, did St. Ignatius or St. Francis bring to the world? If they brought one, where is it to be found? If they did not bring one, their alleged miracles are discredited; they are not true signatures of God, whatever else they may be.

This mark of distinction between true and false miracle also serves to repel the insinuation of Froude that the Protestant rejection of Papal miracle is the result of an unreasoning prejudice, which is not justified in any one standing, as the Protestant does, on Christian ground and admitting the reality

of miraculous intervention. The distinction just discussed vindicates the exercise of that sound common sense which Protestants have always applied to legendary miracle, at once applying the uniformity of nature to all such allegations in advance of testimony, and rejecting them as *divine miracle* without hesitation, while standing ready at the same time to accept all of fact in the allegations made which are proved to be true. They are ready to accept the facts when proved, without determining what they may positively be; but they reject the miraculous character of the facts in advance of all inquiry because the close of revelation and the consequent end of divine miracle leaves the uniformity of nature to the undisturbed operation of natural law. Our appeal against legendary miracle rests firmly on the close of the canon, on one side, and the general uniformity of nature on the other. Froude sneers at the distinction; but we shall see farther that it is capable of a just defence. The miracle of the Gospels and the miracle of the Calendar rest on totally different foundations; and there is no inconsistency in accepting the one class and rejecting the other. Mere miracle of benevolence, as the legendary miracle is called, apart from revelation, finds no countenance in the word of God. Christ performed many miracles of benevolence, but they were all done that His works might bear witness of Him. In all cases of Gospel miracle the relation of the act of power to a revelation from God was entirely apparent. Where there is no revelation, there is no true miracle. This test sweeps wholly away the long list of legendary wonders, and wholly discredits them as *the finger of God*, whatever else they may be.

2. The second grand mark of true miracle, discriminating it from false, is that true miracle is *never done in favor of a religion already established: it always has a constructive or a revolutionary purpose*. It is the signature always of a fresh revelation from God, and is designed either to give an original statement of truth from heaven, or to authorize the development of an old, already divinely established system into a new form. God alone has the right to do either; and for either His power must certify His will when revealed through subordinate agents. All the miracle of the Old Testament was done to confirm the successive revelations to the

ancient Church. The miracle of the New was to authorize the changes of the old law and the old functions of the Church, which altered it from a stationary and non-propagandist institution into a positive instrument of aggression. This test again sweeps away the miracles of the Calendar; they are all, according to their own theory, miracles of benevolence not only apart from revelation, but in favor of a faith already established, but which is conceived still to need the support of perpetual miracle. True miracle invariably possesses an original or a revolutionary purpose. The miracle of the Roman Calendar is purely conservative, so far as its purpose is concerned; it is done in the presence of witnesses interested in the established faith, and under circumstances which cannot possibly lend any additional or independent weight to the allegation of fact or the support of the truth.

3. The *third* mark of true miracle which distinguishes it from all false miracle, is that the action done must be wrought in consistency with the character and dignity of Almighty God, and that the act must authenticate itself, both in its *intrinsic dignity* and in its definite demonstration of *divine supernatural power*. That any act performed by the direct energy of the divine will, for the purpose of certifying truth involving the eternal interests of an immortal race, must possess an intrinsic dignity worthy of the actor and worthy of his purpose, is intuitively obvious. This test alone is sufficient to discredit the so-called miracles of the Apocryphal New Testament—a collection of spurious writings of an early age of the Christian era. The book attempts to delineate the incidents in the youth and unrecorded portion of the life of Christ. He is represented as exercising miraculous power in childhood, and, for puerile purposes, turning dirt-pies into food, making birds of mud, and causing His to fly, which the mud-birds of His companions could not do, and withering the arm of a playmate who had angered Him. Such allegations are discredited upon the statement of them. Yet an immense proportion of the multitudes of miracles which are said to be constantly performed in the bosom of the Papal body, are of little or no more dignity than these absurdities of the Apocryphal New Testament. Two crows were long exhibited in Lisbon which were said to have saved a ship from wreck and guided

it into port. An image, found by a dog in a hole, is said to have wrought miraculous cures. A hole is said to have been made in a marble slab by the fall of the host upon its surface in order to convince an infidel. The Bambino of Ara-Coeli, an image of the Virgin about two feet high, is represented as walking to the convent where it usually remained, ringing the bell, and gaining admittance late at night. The Virgin is represented as mercifully interposing when an overloaded ass fell under his burden. St. Dennis once walked after his head was cut off, carrying his head in his hands. St. Martin crossed the Mediterranean on his cloak. St. Scholastica raised a storm to keep St. Benedict one night in her convent in order that she might enjoy the benefit of his conversation. Impressions of the five wounds of Christ are not unfrequently made on the bodies of favored individuals—a feat in substance done in New York a few years ago, both by a spiritualist medium and by an ordinary juggler. The Roman Breviary—the standard rule of Papal devotion—constantly in the hands of the priests for their guidance, is full of assertions of just such statements. With no disposition to be harsh in the judgment of such things, we are profoundly convinced that every candid, common-sense mind must at once perceive the incongruity between such acts and the ascription of them to the infinite God. These seem to be the highest forms in which the disciplined intellect of the Roman priesthood can conceive of miraculous acts. How vast the difference between these conceptions and the simple but grand delineations of the fishermen of Galilee! It is a difference which can only be accounted for on the supposition that they simply related facts in the history of the Nazarene, and the grandeur and majesty was *in the facts* and not in their superior conception of the possible in miracle. The miracles of Moses and the old prophets of the Messiah and the apostles were on a scale of sublimity which the human understanding intuitively recognizes as worthy of God to perform. The judgments on Egypt, the passage of the millions of Israel through the sea; the fire falling from heaven on the drenched altar of Carmel; the camp of the Assyrian, with its 185,000 dead soldiers, lying dead in the pale moonlight under their unstruck banners; the chariot of fire whirling down on the travelling prophets, the raising of the dead, the storm

bridled as it rushed over the midnight lake, the earthquake and midday darkness at the crucifixion, the healing and feeding of thousands—to compare these grand actions with such puerile follies as the Roman Calendar affords shocks every sensibility of the soul. Yet, in the judgment of Mr. Froude—a man of high and brilliant abilities, one of the leading literary lights of his age—the miracles of the Calendar “resemble and rival those of the New Testament.” Can prejudice go farther in extinguishing the power of perception in a gifted intellect? It is an infinitely greater degradation to make the comparison than to match the drivelling chatter of an idiot with the awful majestic eloquence of a Milton reciting the grand epic of the fall and redemption of man. All such actions as the miracles of the Bible carry their significance on their face; no power but divine could produce such effects. True miracle authenticates itself. False miracle, even if the fact be admitted, is never above the power of beings and agencies inferior to Deity, and is, certainly for the most part, discredited even as facts by the mixture of absurdity and extravagance carried on its front.

4. The fourth grand test of true miracle, which supports its own claim and distinguishes it from all forms of imposture, is, that the miraculous action must be something plain, definite, clearly cognizable by the senses, and level to the apprehension of ordinary men—instantaneous in its result, and performed without the intervention of second causes which might possibly be sufficient to account for the effect. The object of miracle is to authenticate a message from God—to give sanction to the credentials of His ambassador. The certificate must be public to affect the convictions of those to whom the message is sent. It must be plain and easily apprehended, cognizable by the senses and incapable of misapprehension, or else it will fail of its purpose as testimony. This test is fully met by the miracle of the Gospel; it is altogether unmet by the overwhelming majority of the miracles of the Calendar. The few of the latter, which are exhibited in anything like a public manner, are manifestly not beyond the reach of skilful management and the combination of natural forces. The miracle of St. Januarius' blood is frequently repeated in view of crowded audiences. A small ball of a red color enclosed

in a glass vessel is made to liquefy without any apparent cause. The result is not beyond the reach of chemical manipulations, and fails utterly to impress any disinterested beholder with any, even the least, apprehension of the presence and exercise of divine energy. Such an impression could not fail to be felt in the presence of such an act as the raising of Lazarus or the feeding of the multitudes in the wilderness. The celebrated miracles performed at the tomb of the Abbe de Paris in 1789 and the cures at St. Winifred's well are subject to discount on more than one consideration, and are explainable on natural principles. However justly the allegation of a general or even a frequent realization of hope on the part of the devotees who resort to such mystical localities may be impeached, it is not necessary to deny every asserted case of cure at those places. We are ready to admit every one that is proved. The power of excited expectation, of faith and roused imagination is medicinally very great—so great that a distinguished German school of medicine (that of Stahl) was actually founded upon it as a principle of practice. The authenticated cases of cure at St. Winifred's well and at similar resorts in the dominions of Romanism are probably not much greater in number than the authenticated cases of the cure of scrofula by the kings of England, when the practice of touching for the king's evil was an usage of the English crown. In both cases the same natural force was to be credited with the result—the same principle utilized by Stahl in his theory and practice of medicine—the same principle by which every treatise upon mental science illustrates the power of the imagination over the states of the body. Miracle to effect its purpose must stand clear of all such possible discounts; it must authenticate itself. It must authenticate itself to the public view—to the senses and judgment of the average man, and leave no room to account for it from excited expectation, from blind confidence, from shrewd arrangements, from inferior beings (natural or supernatural). It must manifest clearly *the finger of God* or it is worthless.

5. The *fifth* grand test of true miracle is, that it shall be performed in the presence of witnesses of an indiscriminate character as friendly or unfriendly, undesignedly brought together, and the act incidentally done and without formal prep-

aration. It is not necessary that every individual miracle should be able to pass this test, or one or two more which will be mentioned. These mighty actions are generally developed in a *system* or series of miracle marking some grand addition or transition in the store of divine knowledge or the ordinances of the Kingdom. The *system*, as a whole, must be able to stand this test, and thus the authority of the vast bulk which is done in public will uphold the few isolated instances done in circumstances of less publicity and in the presence of chosen or limited witnesses. The object of miracle, to authenticate a commission from God, intended to embrace men generally in its influence, makes it necessary to address the *public* mind. This publicity is also necessary to the completeness of the proof of miracle, when, by the lapse of time and events, it is transmitted beyond the eye-witnesses of the facts. The incidental, and, so far as human arrangements are concerned, undesigned performance of the act in the presence of witnesses of indiscriminate character undesignedly brought together, is needful to repel all suspicion of craft and management, either in the production of the result or in a *packed and pre-arranged proof of it*. This test is met by the Gospel miracle; it is not met by the miracle of the Calendar. The vast majority of these latter acts is done in private — often with no witness whatever—often in the presence of a few interested in securing acceptance of the coming wonder, and disqualified as witnesses by personal defects, or by the circumstances in which they were brought in contact with objects of their testimony. The miracle of the Calendar is often performed in apartments of religious houses, in which the possible facilities for the management of a scenic display are without assignable limits. They are witnessed by devotees—either weak, and as such easily deceived, or bigoted in favor of the expected demonstration, and as such ready to receive any desired impression; or else unable to penetrate the whole case, and thus incapable of testifying to the whole case, no matter how generally intelligent or worthy of confidence they may be. The miracle of St. Januarius' blood is not only discredited by the fact that the liquefaction is not beyond the reach of chemical arrangements, but by the fact of an incompetent scrutiny by witnesses otherwise altogether reliable.

No doubt the liquefaction takes place ; but the pre-arranged scene, the place, the mechanical recurrence of the wonder at the will of the authorities, the actors, and the entire deficiency of any opportunities of a preliminary or concurrent investigation—all these features discredit it as a true exhibition of divine power. On the other hand, the miracle of the Gospel was done in open daylight, on public streets and highways, in the crowded temple and on the densely-thronged mountain's side, in villages and towns, in houses filled with an indiscriminate multitude of eager but non-partisan beholders—before scribe and Pharisee, priest and doctor of the law—jealous, watchful, filled with keen and vehement desire to disbelieve themselves and discredit to others all that was done. There was no secret preparation, no formal discrimination of witnesses to secure those who were friendly or exclude those who were hostile. The objection to the proof of the resurrection of Christ, drawn from His not showing Himself to the Jewish public, but only to selected witnesses, though all were not selected, is removed by the number of the witnesses, by the reluctance of many of them to accept the fact, by the subsequent history of the twelve official witnesses, and the profound change of temper wrought in them by the fact, and especially by three whole years and upwards of miraculous power displayed by Christ himself. This appearance after the rising to between five and six hundred witnesses is redeemed from all just suspicion and vindicated by its own peculiar reasons, into which we cannot enter now. Standing in a *system* of public miracle, it is freed from the censure of not complying with the test of publicity. As for the general system of the Messiah's miracle, it was marked by publicity in a degree so complete as to make the notion of deception in the acts or incompetence in the proof absolutely impossible. Suppose an analogous case : Surely if for three years past, in every part of a State of the American Republic, in its capital and chief towns, in its villages and country districts, before the thronging thousands of the people, before its rulers (civil and religious), its lawyers and educated intellect of every class—before multitudes, friendly, hostile, indifferent, and simply curious—if on such a theatre as that a thousand acts of miraculous power had been done by one man, surely there could be no possi-

bility of questioning the facts or impeaching the proof of them. To compare a publicity like this with a scenic show like the display of St. Januarius, is to mock the understanding. To make the proof in both cases equally respectable in the demand of credence, is absurd.

6. The sixth grand test and distinction of true miracle is that not only must the act be done in the face of the public, but that in some cases *public tests* must *be applied* at the time—examinations held by other than friends of the new doctrine. This is another of the tests which are not necessary to be applied to every act of miracle, but only to crucial cases. Science never deems it necessary that the entire body of the facts on any given subject should be examined; a sufficient number of them to fairly represent the force which produces or the law which governs them, is deemed altogether sufficient for scientific purposes. Renan, in his treatment of this point in the Christian theory, is singularly unfortunate. He claims that the only reliable investigation that could have been made should have been done by an assembly of scientific savants, and denies positively that any investigation was ever made at all, into any of the acts performed by Jesus. It is obvious as a reply to the first count in his objection, that he has confounded an examination *into a fact*, for which other than scientific men are fully competent, with an examination into the *cause* of the fact, for which only scientific men, possibly, might be competent. In this whole war upon miracle the proof of *facts* is perpetually confounded with the proof of *causes*. The nature of the *power* employed is perpetually confounded with the fact which is developed. The nature of the power employed is an *inference* from the fact, but cannot logically be either confounded with the fact or employed to discredit it. Even if a scientific habit of mind is needful to guarantee the inferences, it is certainly not necessary to the examination and proof of the fact. A fact is a reality subject to the cognizance of all men, and the apologetic power of miracle, is that the fact warrants no other assignment of cause than creative power. An instance of this is really as cognizable by the ordinary as by the scientific mind. A peasant would be no more at a loss to understand the nature of the energy present when a dead man is brought back into life, than a savant. It

is all-sufficient as a reply to the point made by Renan, that a congress of scientists is not necessary to the proof of facts ; a convention of average men is fully competent to do it. Moreover, Christlieb has justly remarked that the French Academy, which at one time rejected all faith in lightning-rods, vaccination, and the existence of meteorites, might have proved no more trustworthy in their judgment of miracles. A scientific body is far from infallible, even in its own sphere, the search for causes, and cannot command confidence merely on their scientific character and apart from their rendered reasons. But in a question of fact and not of causes, it is obviously inadmissible to deny the value of all investigation except that which is purely scientific.

Renan is even more unfortunate in the second count in his objection ; he flatly denies that any investigation at all was ever made into any miraculous act of Jesus, at the time of the occurrence. He deserves the curt rebuke of Christlieb, for a want of candor or a want of memory. Two cases underwent examination, one on a deliberate and the other on a repeated scale. The case of the man born blind, restored to sight by a word of Christ, was examined at length by an assembly of eager enemies of the Nazarene, and the examination is reported at length in one entire chapter of one of the Gospels. The parents of the man were examined on one part of the case ; the man himself was examined and rigorously cross-examined, and all in public. Bethany was visited over and over again by crowds from Jerusalem to see Lazarus after he was raised from the dead. The facts in this case were of such a kind as to admit of no dispute ; and the result of this repeated investigation by so many persons was so powerful on the public judgment, that the enemies of the Nazarene absolutely plotted against the life of Lazarus, to extinguish the influence of that wonderful event in his history. No such open and scrutinizing canvass of the facts by the general public and by the enemies of the system has ever marked a miracle of the Calendar. In the development of legendary miracle there has been a laborious travesty of the marks and evidence of true miracle ; but none have ever been invented of a character to command the confidence of a candid and impartial understanding. The miracle of the Gospel, in true test cases, was

submitted to the unrestricted scrutiny of the best educated and the most hostile intellect of the time, as well as to the repeated examination of the general public; and the facts were not only proved, but *admitted*. The very enemies of the Gospel testified to the facts, when they attempted to account for them by satanic agency; something must have been done by the admission of the Pharisees themselves which Satan alone in their judgment could do.

7. The seventh grand test of true miracle which profoundly distinguishes it from false, is that the alleged facts should be generally recognized, not by the partisans of the new system exclusively, but *by the universal public of the day as actual occurrences, known to the public*—not by the testimony of advocates, but by their own acquaintance with the events. The whole proof of the Gospel is sometimes treated as if it depended alone on the testimony of the apostles; they were the official, but not the only witnesses. They give us the detail of the facts, but indisputable facts outside of their personal credibility, *make all the public* of the time witnesses to the truth of their narrative. It is historically demonstrable, that out of the life of Jesus, and as the result of His doctrine, a new institute then came upon the stage. It won thousands of the Jewish people into its discipline; even a great company of the hostile priests at last became obedient to the faith. The apostles boldly appealed to the miracles of Christ as the ground on which they claimed obedience to the Gospel. They boldly appealed to the people's own knowledge of these wonderful manifestations. They boldly asserted that "Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, *as yourselves also know.*" They did not even pretend or attempt to prove these actions by their own testimony; they appealed to the knowledge of the people themselves as to the facts. They declared as matter of fact that these things had been done in the midst of the people, and that they knew it. Such a procedure was absolute insanity—it could not be called lying—if the statement was not true. Suppose a parallel case: Suppose a man should appear in this country with the design of establishing a new religion and uprooting Christianity, interwoven, as it is, with the highest interests of the existing

civil order and fixed in the affections and prejudices of the people. Suppose he should appeal as his warrant to make the new development, to miracles alleged to have been performed for the last three years, in city and village, in town and country, in the presence of thousands of the people in every section of the land. Suppose he should allege that these things were known to the whole people—not upon his say so, but on their own knowledge. Suppose now, that there was not one word of truth in the whole allegation. *What effect* would be produced by it? Certainly it would scarcely excite a smile; the allegation would be too transparently absurd to arrest any serious attention. Perhaps some of the more humane would think of providing a place in a lunatic asylum for the poor victim of mental hallucination. But it is absolutely certain that not a ripple would appear on the surface of society. But now suppose that the assertion was true, and that for three years and upward, in every part of the land, the dead had been raised, the sick healed, the blind cured, and miraculous power had been really manifested in manifold forms before the eyes of the public everywhere. Suppose the propagandists of the new faith should go forth calling the people to accept it, appealing to the facts and their own knowledge of them. What would be the effect in this case? Assuredly, society would be stirred to its foundations; the new institutions would grow rapidly into a power in society, and appear upon its surface; *and this effect would be the testimony of the public to the facts.* The overthrow of the existing system and the erection of the new, as the result of an appeal to the people's own knowledge of the facts, would make them even *more impressive witnesses* to the facts than the official promulgation of the new discipline. Thus in point of fact the rise of the Christian Church, the renunciation of the old faith, and the acceptance of the new by vast multitudes of the Jewish people, and of the hostile priests, is the embodied confirmation of the official witnesses by the Jewish people. No general public, by their own independent knowledge, have ever given any testimony, much less such testimony as this, to the miracle of the Calendar.

8. The eighth grand test is found in the public and permanently organized arrangements made to preserve the facts,

and to secure the transmission of them to all coming time. The conditions of a reliable transmission of facts and evidence through indefinite periods have been already explained. This whole elaborate arrangement was made to secure the miraculous facts and doctrines of Christianity. A record was made by eye-witnesses of the facts, by men who were in close attendance on the person of Christ during His whole public life. A living organization capable of an endless succession was provided. The voice of the living teacher daily and weekly proclaiming the facts, has never ceased to be heard since the reorganization of the Church on its new propagandist basis eighteen centuries ago. We know these facts were proclaimed two, six, ten, eighteen hundred years ago, because the daily and weekly proclamation has never ceased. Memorial monuments of the most striking and indestructible character were established. A change in the Sabbath day from the seventh to the first day of the week is a memorial of the resurrection of Christ. Bread and wine, made symbolically and religiously significant, are the memorial of His death. The organization of the Church, and the whole series of its acts of worship, are memorials of the influence and authority of the Nazarene, as much as Mormon institutions are of the Mormon founder. From the beginning of Christ's public ministry, His system was at once interwoven with the history of the Jewish nation, and in no long time became linked with the history and legislation of the Roman Empire. Tiberius very early proposed to admit Christ among the gods of Rome. Tacitus spoke with stern contempt of the "exitiabilis superstitio" of Chrestus. For the long period of three hundred years in ten distinct persecutions, the whole power of the empire under Nero, Diocletian, Decian, and Galerian, was exerted with remorseless energy to extinguish the victorious faith of the Galilean. Within fifty years of the death of the last apostle, a Christian apologist could say to the Roman Emperor, "We are but of yesterday, and we have filled all that belongs to you: the cities, the fortresses, the free towns, the very camps, the palace, the senate, the forum—we leave to you the temples only." All that tremendous energy of faith, by which old men and maidens, senators and noble ladies, soldiers of the legions, and plebeians of the imperial city triumphed

over the persecuting power of that remorseless government, testifies to the power of the truth as it is in Jesus. From that time three-fourths of the recorded history of many nations of the human race, and a grand proportion of human legislation, is concerned with the interests of Christianity—all of whose claims to faith and obedience are avowedly based upon three years of miracle and divine doctrine in the brief life of the Nazarene. On the supposition that the facts are real, the result is natural and somewhat proportionate. On the denial of the facts, the record, the endless organization, the memorial monuments, and the tremendous movement of human history, are absolutely unaccountable anomalies! Where can the miracle of the Calendar show such an arrangement to authenticate itself and prevent the erasure of the sign-manual of God, by the rush of time and events? *No facts of human history* can show any parallel or even comparable provisions to secure their transmission. *No events in human history* can trace back to their origin by a line of transmission so complete and so powerful as the miracles of the Gospel.

9. The *ninth* grand test of true miracle is *prophetic announcement beforehand*. The sceptic must deal with the historical and literary fact of a record confessedly several hundred years in existence before Christ appeared, which, after describing a great number and variety of minute circumstances connected with His history and person, distinctly announced that this predicted messenger from God would perform many miracles. The blind would see, the dumb sing, the deaf hear, and the lame man leap as the hart. Isaiah's prophecy is extant in the Septuagint Version, which is as well known to have been made near three centuries before the birth of Christ as that the Bible was translated into English in the time of James I. It is extant in the Hebrew Scriptures centuries before the Septuagint. This prophetic test covered all the miracles of Christ. Moses foretold his own miracles to Pharaoh. Joshua was before informed and fore-announced the fall of Jericho. Christ told the seventy as He sent them out, they should exert a miraculous power. Prophecy always goes in a closer or more remote relation to miracle. This test discredits all the miracles of the Calendar. The only prophecy connected with them completes their discredit; it is the prediction of them as

“the lying wonders of the man of sin.” This prophetic test is of correlated force; the prophecy confirms the miracle, and the miracle demonstrates the prophecy to be true fore-knowledge. In the light of this close and apparently universal connection between miracle and its previous announcement, we have a right to discredit all miracle which cannot disclose its correlated member in a prophetic advertisement, if not of each separate act, yet of the general commission of the agent to perform such works. The apologetic work of the test is great. The previous announcement challenges attention and challenges *fulfilment*; it discriminates the act more clearly when it is done. It strongly confirms faith, not only as in itself an additional instance of miraculous knowledge combined with an act of power, but because it is a deliberate challenge of divine energy which can never be the instrument of deception; and when this challenge is answered by the power invoked, the demonstration is complete on both sides of the correlation between the miracle of knowledge and the miracle of power.

10. The tenth test of true miracle is *variety and wealth* of action. Impostors in religion economize in this species of proof by miracle, and sink the dignity and variety of action in the interests of practicability. They never undertake anything of special dignity or greatness for fear of failure in the execution of it, and restrict themselves to a line of action undistinguished by any greatness or variety of invention. The miracles of the Calendar, which, taking the whole period in which they are said to have occurred, count up by thousands, are graduated on a scale of insignificance in both these respects. The healing of disease, the elevation of the human body in the air, visible appearances of the Virgin and the saints, victorious physical combats with the devil in person, winking and weeping images, and mysterious marks upon the human body, are the chief forms of miracle in the conception of the architects of the Calendar. Of the Gospel miracle only about *forty* are on detailed record. There is something of conscious power in this stern economy of recital. This specific detail is no index to what was actually done. Incidental allusions are made to multitudes of these wondrous acts. Great multitudes are represented as resorting to the Nazarene, bringing the sick from far and near, and the record says, “He

healed them all." Several distinct allusions of this kind, at different periods in the narrative, are suggestive of a wonderful multiplication of individual acts of miraculous energy. The three and a half years of Christ's public ministry glow like the star-fretted midnight, with His wondrous works. The whole age resounds with the footsteps of God walking among men. At what period they ceased is not easy to tell, except in a general way, that they ceased when the revelation of God, through special agents of His will, came to an end. When a sufficiency of recorded evidence was placed in the hands of the endless order of the Church to secure a rational credence in all the coming ages, the inspired record of these facts was closed, and the miracle of apostle and apostolic men, outside of this record, was employed to give currency to their teaching and authority to their legislation in the special fields of their personal labor. As only a portion of the twelve were engaged in the composition of the record, it is morally certain that a large amount of apostolic miracle was never reliably or at all recorded. But doubtless the law of correlation between revelation and miracle ruled throughout the miraculous period and marked its close. Enough was gathered into the canonical record to serve all the ends of testimony to the truth. Not only a *wealth* of production, but a noble *variety* of sublime conceptions was realized in the miracle of the Gospel. The raising of the dead, the cure of disease in manifold forms, the feeding of the enthusiastic and fainting multitudes in the wilderness, the repair of broken senses and useless limbs, the command exerted over animal nature, over storms and the agitated sea, over the light of the sun and the steadiness of the earth, and over the constitution of bread, water, and wine, indicate at once the wide range and the grand conception of the Gospel miracle. In reply to the objection raised against the test of greatness and dignity in true miracle in the *Saturday Review* of April 29, 1876, the following remarks may be sufficient: The writer excepts to this test on the ground that "it does not discredit every individual instance of Calendar miracle, nor apply to every individual instance of the miracle of the Scriptures." According to this reasoning no general rule can be accepted as such, unless it is exclusive of all exceptions. This is obviously inadmissible. Admit that indi-

vidual instances of suitable dignity are claimed for Calendar miracle and similar instances of familiar action are attributable to Gospel miracle, the admission certainly does not destroy the unquestionable prevailing character of both—the one as marked by lowness and the other by sublimity of conception. Nay, in some of the favorite instances of hostile criticism, on which sceptics frequently dwell with scornful pleasure, it is clear that the full significance of the action is overlooked. Take, for instance, the rod of Moses turned into a serpent, devouring the serpent-rods of the Egyptian priests. It is well known that the animal and reptile creation afforded symbols of the divine power to the old Egyptian, and were worshipped as such. It is also said that there was a peculiar serpent, or what is more likely, that the priests were in possession of a peculiar process by which a serpent could be stiffened into the likeness of a rod or magician's wand, and restored to animation and motion at will. This power over serpents, and the symbolism of the Supreme power by means of serpents, gave peculiar influence over the multitude to the artful priesthood of Osiris. It was, therefore, a noble and rational policy, worthy of God, to discredit the false gods and the deceitful priesthood of the Egyptians by showing, through the peculiar method of this miracle, how powerless they were in conflict with the true and living God. The purpose of Moses was to secure credit to the word of command which he brought from Jehovah to the Egyptian monarch, and it was entirely germane to his purpose to overthrow the influence of the gods of Egypt over his mind. The speech of Balaam's ass is another stock-instance of sceptical merriment. The use of the organs of an animal to convey intelligence from a spiritual being unembodied to another intelligent spirit in a body and confined to bodily organs as the instruments of its knowing and acting, is certainly not irrational in itself, provided it is practicable. If the skill of man can draw articulate speech from a raven or a parrot, it would not seem to be irrational to suppose that infinite power could extract it from the organs of an ass. That it *is* impracticable, at the least, cannot be proved; and why a thing, not obviously irrational and not capable of being proved to be impracticable, should be construed as an obvious subject for contempt, it is not so easy to conceive. If we knew all the circumstances sur-

rounding those miracles of Scripture which are supposed to be deficient in dignity, it is altogether probable they would be quite as capable of vindication as the miracle of Moses in the court of Pharaoh. In an age, not far advanced from barbarism, among a people among whose scanty virtues a profound reverence for old age held a high position, there may have been a peculiar energy of wickedness in the mockery of Elisha by the rude boys of an Arab camp to justify a judgment of God in the form of wild beasts or the spears of a hostile tribe. It may also have been the case that the prophet was known and the insult was to his official character, not to his person or age, and as such an insult to the majesty of God himself. If we knew the whole case, criticism might be disarmed. The axe raised from the water may have sustained peculiar relations to the training of the school of young religious teachers which the prophet was instructing. The accidental touching of a dead body by the bones of a prophet may have sustained relations to some previous teachings of the prophet, as made a miracle through the unconscious agency of his bones important to the purpose of the divine government. We do not know all the circumstances of the case in these instances of Scripture miracle, and in the absence of knowledge to the contrary, an impartial and candid criticism will be disposed to give them the benefit of a presumed sufficient reason. Besides this line of vindication, it may be that the analogy of God's works of *providence*, and of the mode of teaching He has employed in His *word*, may be carried into His miraculous *action*. In general, He speaks to be understood; occasionally He speaks with studied obscurity in His word. His providence is generally benevolent to sinful men; occasionally it does His strange work—vengeance. There cannot be a doubt that the general character of true miracle is grave, elevated, and even sublime; occasionally He may use His sovereignty of will in actions familiar and common. The purpose to test the temper in which men construe His ways is a ruling element in His administration of grace, and by these instances of miracle He may incidentally design a test of character and candor toward Himself. Even admitting the instances to be all the sceptic would construe them to be, they are the exceptions only to a true general rule; they do not discredit the general character of Gospel miracle

for a grandeur worthy of their author and their end. Properly and fully understood in their circumstances, and not merely in the bare statement of the supernatural effect, they may, for all any one can now know, sustain this character even in the apparently exceptional instances, if they are exceptional. Nor will an individual instance of dignified miracle in the Calendar series at all redeem their general character as low in conception.

11. The *eleventh* test of true miracle, distinguishing it strongly from the miracle of the Calendar, is *the infrequency of their occurrence*. The rival class is graduated on a scale just the reverse, on the assertion of a *perpetual system* of miracle, co-existent with the life of the Church, and alleged to be necessary to sustain it. This necessity is discredited by the actual effects of the system; instead of confirming faith it breeds infidelity. This result is legitimate. The allegation reflects dishonor on the previous provisions made by God, to secure the rational belief of mankind, by implying their insufficiency. It reflects upon His moral and providential administration; on the one, as providing superfluous proof in deference to unreasonable unbelief; on the other, as allowing a perpetual interruption of His regular system of administration. The miracle of the Gospel, while making an ample display of *power*, during an epoch of miraculous intervention, does not permit such an epoch to appear except at rare and necessary periods. It appears only when some revelation of truth of infinite importance to an immortal race of sinful creatures is to be made. As the Providential Ruler of the universe, God guides His administration by a general system of laws. The laws of nature are the determinate effects of His *will*; they are the expressions of His will; they indicate that it is His choice and purpose that effects shall follow causes in a certain regular sequence, capable of being known and conformed to by creatures of intelligence and will. To allow of a constant reversal of those laws is tantamount to a *contradiction of His will*. To allow such an interference at rare periods, for a great and vitally important moral purpose, involving the eternal interests of an immortal race, is altogether admissible; human reason can see nothing unreasonable or incredible in such a conception. But perpetual reverse of law is a contradiction in itself and involves it in the will of God. It is altogether inadmissible, either on

the ground of fact or possibility, and the very foundation of the Calendar miracle is swept away by this test. The notion of perpetual testimonial miracle is at war with every just conception of the divine administration.

12. The twelfth test of true miracle is found in the character and work of *the official witnesses*. As before remarked, the credit of Christianity does not stand *alone* upon the testimony of the twelve apostles. Only a portion of them were concerned in the construction of the record. They were the official teachers and witnesses of the new development, but not by any means the only witnesses. The whole public of Jewry were witnesses, and the changes in the society of the day is the demonstration of their undesigned testimony. The *work* of the apostles, which is independent of all consideration of their character, is an independent source of evidence to the truth. These men were selected to proclaim the facts and doctrines in the system of the great teacher; to extend still further the revelation from God, and to organize the institutions growing out of them. The testimony of these men is threefold in character: it consists *first* in what they *are themselves*; *second*, in what they *said*; *third*, in what they *did*. Their credibility is unimpeachable on all their grounds. They were men of sound minds; this is evident from their writings. They were men of transparent candor, as evinced by their whole relation of the facts, by their self-sacrifice, by their resolute confidence in their own statements, by the loss of all for the testimony they bore. They were plain and unlettered men of a low rank in society, for the most part, and it is not supposable that in such mere ambition and the *éclat* of establishing a new religion would overbalance the loss of all things which such a class would be likely to value. Conscious impostors in founding a new religion always provide for securing their personal interests in this life, and a sure part in the promise of the future. These men encountered the loss of all things in this world; and the lofty system they taught condemned all liars, and themselves if they lied, to endless wretchedness. They gained poverty, persecution, imprisonment, wanderings without end over sea and land, the scourge and vengeance of the religious systems they assailed; yet they never flinched from testifying to the facts and doctrines of the Gos-

pel. A refined and intense ambition might tempt a single intense and resolute intellect to hazard much to establish a new faith, in the success of which he might indemnify himself for the sufferings incident to the attempt. But it is wholly incredible that twelve plain men, giving no one of them indications of any peculiar ambition, should sacrifice home, friends, ease, and security, for danger, suffering, incessant labor, and death itself for a lie of which they were the conscious authors. They did evidently believe, with intense conviction, what they taught others to believe. That they were not deceived is clear from their incessant appeals to the knowledge of the facts by the people to whom they first preached; self-delusion, however honest, could give them no hold on a people not similarly deluded. If ever witnesses were credible on the ground of faultless personal competency, the official witnesses of Gospel miracle were worthy of confidence.

But independent of their personal character, the work these men did, testifies irresistibly to the truth of what they declared. This work is of varied character. Take the delineation of the character and purposes of Christ—a delineation which is as real as a work of literary art as the character of Lear or Hamlet. They describe by artless touches a character so unique, so simple, so grand, so beautiful, that it stands alone in the history, as it does in the literature of mankind, a character which commands the reverence of all men, and which even the leading infidel intellects of the age have united to praise as something absolutely beyond comparison. This delineated character of Christ is a demonstration of the truth of what they say of Him. It could not possibly have been due to the natural genius of these uncultured fishermen, in the sense in which the character of Hamlet was due to the genius of Shakespeare. It would be as well to suppose that wondrous creation was the work of a dozen of the scene-shifters and candle-snuffers of the Globe or the Blackfriars theatre, or that the Transfiguration of Raphael was the work of a dozen small negro artists, whose only culture in art had been sketches in charcoal on a cellar-door. The notion is preposterous. The possibility of the achievement lay in only one thing, and that is, that these men simply related what they had seen a living person say and do; and the unparalleled splendor and perfection of the por-

traiture lay in the history and qualities of that living man, and not in their conceptions of the ideally perfect in human character. Considered on their character, these witnesses are competent; independent of their character, their work certifies itself. The delineation of Christ is true, because it was impossible unless true.

But this is only a sample of their work. Add to this the development of the purest and loftiest system of practical morality, the grandest theories of the universe; the most profound and skilfully adjusted system of doctrine and the founding of the most remarkable institution in human history, the reorganized Church of the old covenant—all these are the work of the Galilean fishermen. The Christian theory is, that they did it under the inspiration of God. The sceptical theory is, that they did it under the inspiration of their own genius. This theory is utterly incredible. On the Christian theory all is plain, for the cause is adequate to the effects. To crown their credibility as witnesses to the miracle and doctrine of Jesus, they themselves, as charged with a further extension of the new revelation, worked miracles. This is admitted even by the Talmud. It is repeatedly recorded and affirmed in the New Testament. It is confirmed by the early and unpolluted traditions of the Church. This fact might constitute a distinct test of true miracle in its conflict with the miracle of the Calendar. The testimony of the Gospel miracle is confirmed in its official witnesses by miracle. No such indorsement is claimed for the miracle of the Roman saints as a divine certificate of their *witnesses*.

13. The *thirteenth* and last test and evidence of true miracle, by which it is honorably distinguished from all false miracle, is the testimony and assent of the enemies of the Gospel to the facts. For seventeen centuries these facts were not questioned even by the infidels of the ages as they succeeded. Celsus and Porphyry, Hierocles and Julian, all admitted the facts and ascribed them to magic. Jewish writers join in the same testimony. Josephus, in a passage so clear that no refuge is left to the sceptic but an attack on the genuineness of the writing, gives important evidence; and even if the passage has been interpolated to a certain extent, of which we have no

reliable proof, it is incredible the whole passage is spurious, and its importance cannot be destroyed. He says :

“ Now there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man ; for he performed many wonderful works. He was a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many of the Jews and also many of the Gentiles. This was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the instigation of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him from the first, did not cease to adhere to him. For he appeared to them alive again, on the third day, the divine prophets having foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe or sect of Christians, so named from him, subsists to this time.”

The Talmud, which is a collection of old Jewish traditional doctrines, first committed to writing about the middle of the second century of the Christian era—probably not more than fifty years after the death of the last apostle,—amid many strongly hostile sentiments toward the Nazarene, openly acknowledges that He did many wonderful works. The Talmudic writers ascribe the facts they admit, to His having acquired the right pronounciation of the Shemmaphorah, or the ineffable name of God, which they say He stole out of the Temple. They also ascribe them in part to the arts of magic, which He is said to have learned in Egypt. The Talmud also gives instances of miracle wrought by the apostles, and accounts for them in the same discreditable way.

Another remarkable testimony from a source not friendly, if not positively hostile, is to be found in the reports of the pro-consular or procuratorial government of Pontius Pilate, to the Imperial Government at Rome. It was an established usage of the Roman administration to require regular reports from all the provinces of the Empire, and in this way all occurrences worthy of note in every section were laid up in the national archives. Under this rule, it might have been expected that Pilate would transmit an account of the marvellous transactions in Judea during his administration. The reports from the provinces were called *Acta*, and while no more intended for general circulation than any other official papers, they were accessible to scholars and inquirers of every class and afforded material for the historian. That Pilate did send an official report touching the history and execution of Christ, to the Roman Government, is proved by the indisputable fact that the Christian apologists, for more than two centuries, appealed to the *Acta Pilati* in the public archives, as confirm-

atory of the teachings of the Church. In various public documents petitioning for mercy, addressed to the Emperor and the Senate, they appeal to this documentary evidence in the Government archives. Thus Justyn Martyr, in an address to Antoninus Pius about A.D. 140, follows his narrative of the crucifixion by this bold appeal: "And that these things were so done, you may know from the Acts made in the time of Pontius Pilate." After relating some of the miracles of Christ, he appeals to the archive document again as containing the same statements. Tertullian, about A.D. 200, after speaking of the crucifixion, the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven, adds this statement: "Of all these things relating to Christ, Pilate himself, in his conscience already a Christian, *sent an account* to Tiberius, then Emperor." That Pilate did report the facts to Rome is not only proved by the constant appeal of the Christian apologists to the *Acta Pilati*, but is in a high moral probability supported by the unquestionable historical fact that the Emperor Tiberius, very early, about A.D. 52—within nineteen years of the death of Christ—formally proposed to the Senate to decree him a place among the gods of Rome. On what information did he proceed? No doubt the public bruit of the wonderful history was wide spread and widely received to have justified such a proposal; but if we suppose the official report of the governor of Judea to be in the hands of the Government, it is easier to account for it. It would hardly have been made solely on the current reports, unsupported by the legal report of the provincial administration. The same Tertullian goes on to say: "There was an ancient decree, that no one should be received for a deity, unless he was first approved by the Senate. Tiberius, in whose time the Christian name had its rise, having received from Palestine in Syria an account of such things as manifested the truth of his divinity, proposed to the Senate that he should be enrolled among the Roman gods, and gave his own prerogative vote in favor of the motion. But the Senate rejected it, because the Emperor himself had declined the same honor." There can be no doubt that the *Acta Pilati* were for many years in the archives of Rome, and were perpetually appealed to by the Christian apologists, to deprecate the persecuting fury of the Government. Those official re-

ports of Pilate seem to have confirmed all the leading facts touching the history and death of Jesus as narrated in the New Testament. It is also known that the Emperor Alexander Severus kept the image of Christ in the chapel of the palace, and was only restrained from raising a temple in honor of him, by the oracles, which foretold if this were done, all the rest of the temples would be forsaken.

The early infidel and pagan enemies of Christianity, Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, and the Emperor Julian, the Apostate, never pretended to question the miraculous facts of the Gospel history, as facts; they only denied their divine origin. Celsus openly admits the facts and ascribes them to the magic arts, which Christ learned in Egypt. Julian says: "Jesus did nothing worthy of fame unless any one can suppose that curing the lame and blind, and exorcising demons in the villages of Bethsaida, are some of the greatest works." He acknowledges that Jesus had a sovereign power over "impure spirits," that He walked on the surface of the sea, and expelled demons. He admits the facts, but endeavors to depreciate their significance and value. Strauss and Renan admit a basis of fact, but explain away all that was miraculous in them. According to the modern rationalistic commentators, the transfiguration, for example, was only the beams of the new-risen sun, falling on the eyes of the witnesses suddenly roused from sleep, and mistaken for a supernatural transformation. To all this sort of canvassing of the facts, the plain Anglo-Saxon intellect refuses to consent. The facts are true as related, or we have no reliable evidence that anything at all occurred. The testimony must either be accepted or refused. Witnesses who are deceived, or who positively lie in the cool narration of alleged occurrences, are not to be believed at all. If they are at all reliable, they are reliable in all they say.

This is an imperfect *resumé* of one single branch of the Christian evidences, the proof of the Gospel miracle. They not only establish the wondrous history of the apostolic era, but render it forever impossible for any really well-informed and judicially impartial understanding to confound them with the miracle of the Calendar. The brilliant and prolific writer who estimates that on "human evidence the miracles of St. Teresa

and St. Francis of Assisi are as well established as those of the New Testament," and that the miracles of the Roman Calendar "resemble and rival those of the Gospels," will not be able to carry the judgment of any one outside of the infidel ranks and the Roman Catholic Church, who is sufficiently informed to be credited with a competent knowledge of the case. We repeat again, the Christian Gospel stands upon facts—facts already accomplished and incapable of obliteration or change or successful obscuration—facts supported by a kind and degree and complication of evidence which support no other facts in all the history of mankind. Science may compel alteration in some interpretations of Scripture, but can never shake its foundations. The Word and Church of God rest upon a basis of past facts, which are absolutely incapable of change by any conceivable power.

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