

suit, by jimmy! Pete rushed back to attend to his coffee boiler for an instant and then he was at the window again. In and out through the crowds bobbed the blue feather, and in and out, till by the Gents' Furnishing Store next door it came into full view. Horrors! The face under the blue feather was as black as the ace of spades. Pete reeled from the shock.

"In the name of God, what is the matter with you, Pete?" asked Brian Kennedy, star fireman of the nook and ladder company round the corner. "If ever a man looked like he had a banesheep camping under his doorstep it is you. What at all is the matter with you, man?"

Pete shook his head. "There is nothing the matter with me, Brian," he answered. "My stomach is a little out of order. Maybe it's the gripe I'm getting. But anyway I'll be all right in a day or two."

"You can never tell," said Brian, shaking a gloomy head. "Dick Murphy was just like you for a whole week, nervous in himself and his stomach gone back on him. Well, sure we buried poor Dick a week ago next Friday. God rest his soul."

"Wasn't that all was the matter with Dick?" asked Pete. "Just a bit sick. He didn't have any trouble in his mind, did he? You know, Brian, trouble is a terrible thing. My mother used to say that trouble would kill a Kerry cat, and the cats in Kerry don't die at all. They go into the lakes with O'Donoghue's spirit and keep rats away from the shores of Killarney. You're from Killarney, Brian. Isn't that true?"

Brian Kennedy stuck a ten cent cigar into his mouth and answered with all the arrogance of a man who could say many things but is cautious in the saying of them: "Maybe so. But not being a Kerryman yourself, what is the use of tellin' you those things?"

Pete Daly stiffened. "A Kildare man," said he, "is fit to match with a man from any other part of Ireland, today, even if he does come from the Pale."

Brian Kennedy switched his cigar to the other side of his mouth. "Pete," said he, "Lord Edward was a Kildare man, so was Wolf Tone. Your country is all right. But it wasn't politics started this argument, it was the face of you and the ways of you lately that makes me think you are not the fine, healthy man you used to be any more. If I were you I would see Doctor Dillon and have myself examined all over. You know they're sayin' today that a bad tooth in your mouth or a boil on your face will set your whole brain goin' wrong. Or maybe 'tis your tonsils."

Pete Daly laughed. "Sure, Mike Kelly with a mouthful of teeth in his head like a row of milestones went ravin' mad when his wife died, and Denny McCusker, who always had nothing on his face but boils from one spring to the other, won first prize in the Gaelic League at home last year. You're all wrong in your figures, Brian Kennedy."

Maybe I am, Pete. But so are you in whatever is eatin' you lately," answered Brian as he paid his check and left the Old Home Restaurant.

As Brian went out Ned Kelly came in. Ned was the local mail carrier. Sometimes there was a letter for Pete Daly in his sack, but such letters were generally bills, or announcements of some organization to which Pete belonged. Today, Ned handed Pete a little pink envelope addressed in a neat hand that smacked, somehow, of a grey suit and a little black hat with a blue feather on it.

Pete Daly rushed out to the kitchen, and then out of the kitchen he ran to the store room: Washington Lincoln, his colored porter, being busy paring potatoes, looked after him and grinned: "Sho' is somethin' queer about da boss lately." If he could have seen Ned shaking like he had an ague as he opened the pink envelope he would have been really concerned.

Dear Mr. Daly:
Father was so pleased when I told him about our becoming acquainted, and he hopes you will call to see us at a very early date. He told me a very funny story about a famous chicken his father killed years ago, belonging to your mother. Father says the wars in Troy were nothing to the ructions that followed that fowls death in the Kenny and Daly families. Come over soon and we can celebrate the burying of the hatchet.

Very truly your friend,
MARY KENNY.

Pete Daly wiped the cold sweat from his forehead. A great wave of peace and joy flooded his whole being as he tenderly put a little pink letter in the left hand pocket of his white jacket, just about his heart.—Teresa Brayton.

way to record the fact that out of 32,000 mobilized priests or Religious, as many as 4,018 died for their country. 9,378 won the *croix de guerre* after having received a total of 16,000 citations, 895 were decorated with the Legion of Honor and 1,598 with the Military Medal. The French journal had attributed the odious expression used by it to the former minister Painlevé, who, it claimed, inserted it into one of his speeches. Resenting the imputation, "slackers" applied to the mobilized priests, the court declared that "all of these performed their duty and some of them magnificently." The 176 priests merely sought the refutation of a slander and were content with demanding one franc damages for each. The verdict will be a lasting vindication of the patriotism of the French clergy. The sentence was to be printed in all the papers of the Montpellier district at the cost of the Petit Méridional.—America.

THE QUESTION OF MIRACLES

Wilfrid Parsons, S. J., in America

A miracle is a sensible event that happens outside the ordinary course of nature, and is beyond the power of anything created to produce it. It is a sensible event, because we can know that it happened by the use of our senses, just as we can apprehend any other event. A man steps off a rock into the water and sinks; another steps off and does not sink, but walks on the water. The two events are equally apparent to our senses. A miracle is outside the ordinary course of nature. When the soul leaves the body, it does not come back, and the body corrupts; that is the ordinary course of nature. If, on the command of somebody the soul comes back and the body lives again, that is not the ordinary course of nature but a miracle. A miracle is beyond the ability of anything created to produce it by its own natural power. Tissue forms slowly in a wound that is healing, the creative power of nature can and does do that, in another case a whole mass of living tissue is created out of nothing in a twinkling of an eye. No finite created power can of its nature do that, only the Creator can create out of nothing, that is, bring something into being where nothing was before. It is then clear what we mean by a miracle. It must at the same time be some event that we can see. It must be outside the course of the laws of nature, and it must be such that there is no force in nature that can of itself produce it. When these three things together can be said about an event, that event is a miracle.

But when we have said this a whole series of questions comes up. These questions shall be answered in this and the following article. The questions are: Can God work miracles? If He has the power to work miracles is there any reason against His use of this power? If there is no reason against it, and if some extraordinary fact takes place can we be sure it was God who caused that fact and not another, an unknown power in nature itself? And if we be thus assured it was God who worked the miracle, can we know why He worked it? Has the miracle any meaning, does it teach us anything, and if so, what? If these questions are answered we shall know why Catholics hold to miracles, in the Gospels and in modern times, and we shall also be able to see how and why miracles prove the Divine origin of a Revelation, if they are produced in conjunction with a Revelation, for the purpose of calling God to witness its origin.

Can God work miracles? How do we prove that He can do so? To answer this, we have first of all to ask him, to whom we would prove that He can work miracles, this question: What is his idea of God? Is it the god of H. G. Wells, finite like ourselves and struggling along with us? Is it the god of the Pantheists, neither different from, nor more powerful than nature itself? Is our friend merely vague about it, even ignorant? If so, then we must before all show him what God is, as far as we can. But if God is the Christian God, who determined the laws of the stars and of all moving bodies, the properties of chemical elements and of physical energy, the structure and physiology of human and animal organism, if it is God who gave the universe a start, and once moving kept it in being and in motion, then that God can work miracles. Why?

It is wrong to imagine that a miracle is a violation of God's part of the laws of nature. It is a natural law that a stone will fall to earth. But if I interpose my hand and keep the stone from falling, I am not violating a law of nature, but acting in accordance with nature. Now if I take my hand away and the stone still remains suspended in the air, I have a miracle. But it is not any more a violation of a law of nature for God to hold it there than it is for me to hold it there. It is not a violation of nature for new tissue to form in a wound under a skillful surgeon's care. Neither is God violating nature, when He who made the laws of human tissue, suddenly creates new tissue in that wound. The truth of the matter is that we often have a false idea of what a law of nature is. The laws of nature are nothing more than

the constant way natural forces act if left to themselves. Fire burns; water seeks its level; bodies attract one another; man is mortal. We formulate these laws by observation and experiment. But a law supposes a law-giver. The constant action of the falling stone, of fire, of water, is not the law, but the effect of the law.

The law is in the will of the law-giver, and we who believe in God, know the Lawgiver is God. He made the laws, and what we call "His laws," is only the observed effect of His laws. The laws of nature are not independent of God, but merely the visible effect of His constant action. Only those who do not believe in the Christian God can deny this. He is the supreme Lawgiver. Surely when He freely decided that natural forces should act in this way and not in that, He could at the same time have been just as free to decide that at such and such a moment He would interpose His own unlimited power to make those natural forces act otherwise, just as I interposed my limited power to keep the stone from following out its law. This is not as if God really interfered in the course of nature, as if He were outside and suddenly came in disturbing it all. No, He was there all the time. The only reason natural forces act at all is because He is there. Fire burns, water seeks its level, bodies attract one another, man is mortal, because God so disposed natural forces, and by His power makes them act so.

The production of even the most ordinary object is just as mysterious as a miracle. They both come from the Infinite, the one no less than the other. God's action in a miracle is no whit stronger nor more complicated than in the least event. The development of a flower from a seed is as marvelous as the multiplication of loaves. God may necessarily concur with every action any created being performs; else they are not creatures, but gods. This is nothing more than to say that God is "transcendent to" (above) nature in His Being, but "immanent to" (dwelling in) nature by His presence and constant activity. This is the Christian's idea of God. This God can work miracles. No man is logical in admitting that there is a free cause of all things on which they depend for their being and power to act, and yet denying His power to change anything, if He wills.

God can work miracles. But maybe there is some reason why He should not use this power to change the ordinary course of physical nature which He established? We must remember that physical nature is not the whole of nature, but part of it. There is also the moral order of nature, the order of minds and wills. Beauty, truth, goodness, love, justice, wisdom, these, too, are part of nature, in the moral order. This order has its laws and ends, too. Physical nature is not independent of this order, but forms one whole with it. Physical and moral nature are interdependent, they work together, together they form the universe of laws. Only naturally the moral order is higher than the physical order. Where it touches man, the physical order exists only to aid man to attain the ends God gave him in the moral order. This is an elementary truth of religion. Now God, who has His ends to attain in the physical order, has also His ends to attain in the moral order. The attainment of the two sets of ends together forms the whole of creation.

If God has an end to attain in the moral order, and He chooses to use the physical order to attain that end, there is no contradiction in His doing so. This is important. When God chooses to use physical nature in some other way than it ordinarily acts, it is no arbitrary caprice. There is a meaning to His act. When Christ walked on the water, it was not a mere spectacular act performed to dazzle and confuse people. He did it with a higher purpose; truth in the higher order demanded that the lower order for a moment change its course. And so of all other miracles. Just as physical nature acts in a certain way because of God's constant will, so now by His power He makes it act in another way, but in response to a higher law. The ordinary way of acting, and the new way are together the order of His rule of the world. He has decreed both of these ways from all eternity. By the same act by which He decreed the constant action of created forces, He decreed that at certain times and places they would act differently according to His desires. He is not changing His mind, He is not acting against His nature nor against His expressed will or promise. He has one will that embraces all. Some men get well slowly in the ordinary way; others here and there get well suddenly; both get well in response to law, the first in response to the ordinary law, the second in response to the extraordinary law, but both in response to the one universal law by which God rules the world. In the mere physical order, the effect of a law is suspended when Christ walks on the water, but the complete order of God's rule is not suspended, and this order is the true law of nature. It is the complete order of God's rule that sometimes in the interests of the moral order physical nature be used for a moment, that the whole purpose of God's will may be accomplished.

It is the old question: What think ye of God? If I think He is the Christian God, then I must think that He is not hindered by any reason from working miracles if He chooses. Rather He would cease to be the God we know He is, if He were so hindered. Therefore there is no contradiction in saying that God can work miracles. There is a contradiction in saying that He cannot work miracles. It is indeed sad that some moderns who call themselves Christians should be deceived in this matter by scientists who are merely atheists. The Christian who claims to believe in the Christian God, and yet denies Him the power to work miracles, is in reality denying his God.

God can work miracles. There is no reason why He should not choose to work them. Does He ever choose to work them? Do miracles happen? Matthew Arnold once said that the great argument against miracles is that they do not happen. They do happen. They often happen, at Lourdes and other places. They have always happened in the Catholic Church since the days of the Apostles. The miracles of today, for instance, at Lourdes, besides the testimony of eye witnesses, have in their favor the severe laboratory methods of the *Bureau des Constatations*, as may be seen in such works as "Medical Proof of the Miraculous" by Dr. Le Bec, "Twenty Cures at Lourdes," by Dr. de Grandmaison, and Father Clifford's excellent, "The Logic of Lourdes." The Saints since the beginning have performed miracles, for which we have the word of such soundly critical historians as the Bollandists. Christ fed 5,000 people in the desert with seven loaves and two fishes. He cured advanced cases of paralysis, He cured cases of dropsy. He raised three people from the dead. We know that He worked these miracles, for we have reliable witnesses that He did so, in the Gospels that have been proved genuine historical documents.

THE POWER OF GOOD EXAMPLE

An incident occurred in a city parish a few weeks ago that is worthy of note. A non-Catholic was in a dying condition due to a cancer in the mouth. Unable to speak, he wrote out the request that a certain priest be called, whom he had known thirty-five years before in a small town situated about seventy miles from Buffalo. His wife reluctantly sent for this priest, who hastened to the bedside of her Protestant husband. There the priest found that the old gentleman had written on a piece of paper, "I wish to join the Holy Roman Catholic Church." The priest instructed the patient in the Church's teaching, baptized him and administered the other sacraments. Forty-eight hours afterward he was dead.

Thirty-five years ago this non-Catholic, holding a responsible position in the southeastern hamlet, was struck with the zeal and sanctity of the young pastor who came to direct the small Catholic flock. The priest's example edified him and for three and one-half decades the thought would come back to his mind that here was no ordinary man, and his was no ordinary Church. The power of example was so convincing that at the close of his life, despite a protesting family, he called for this pastor whose ministrations made him a child of Christ and an heir of heaven.

Volumes may be written to persuade non-Catholics of the falsity of their position, but example will lead far more into the Church than the wisdom and knowledge of scholars. Good example is the most eloquent sermon that priest or layman can preach.—Catholic Union and Times.

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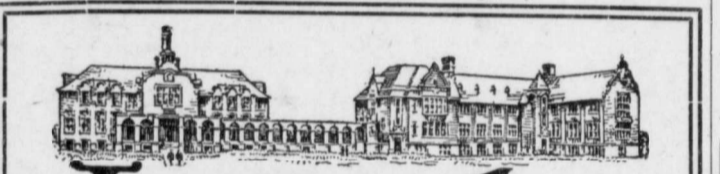
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"SLACKERS IN BLACK ROBES"
The action brought against the Petit Méridional by 176 priests of the diocese of Montpellier, France, all war veterans, for referring to the Catholic clergy as "slackers in black robes," has resulted in a signal verdict of honor for the French priests. The court goes out of its