

Then what followed the pests? Pestilence, just as it should. Murrain upon the cattle, boils and blains upon the men—the exact thing to be expected. These plagues were the reverberation of the first plague, according to the way in which such thunder ordinarily rolls through the world of natural law.

These six are what may be called the first chapter in this dispensation of retribution.

#### IV.

But the same singular correspondence between the miraculous energy and natural law, is even more striking when we turn to the second group of the Egyptian Plagues, the group of three, the seventh, eighth and ninth.

We have already referred to the water of the Nile as the one universal factor, to touch which was to touch all Egypt at once. There was still one other such factor, and that was the atmosphere itself. Storms are rare in Egypt. Violent and general disturbance of atmospheric equilibrium is almost unknown. All the more, then, would such a disturbance be startling and fatal if it should take place. It did take place. And this, we admit and contend, was God's miraculous work, who "hath his way in the whirlwind." But now observe again how strangely the supernatural energy, once loosened, conformed its method and results to what the natural law of such disturbance would demand.

The seventh plague, then, was that of the storm and hail. This storm was of unparalleled violence. The miraculous energy intensified the natural forces. It did not suspend them.

Now what would follow? Plainly, such a storm would naturally produce great and somewhat prolonged agitation in the atmosphere. Violent and shifting currents of wind would be excited; sharp contrasts and changes of temperature would occur. That ordinarily equable ocean of mellow air which spreads its cloudless depths above the land of Egypt, would be by this storm broken up into tumultuous and warring waves. Now what are the two following plagues—the eighth and ninth? Are they not plagues brought about by just such violent waves of air, namely: *by two great winds*—one from the east, the other from the west? After the storm of hail and breaking up of tranquility, first came the strong east wind, bringing the eighth plague, the locusts, from the vicinity of the Red Sea. This is expressly asserted. We read: "The Lord brought an East wind upon the land, all that day and all that night, and when it was morning the East wind brought the locusts." Surely, no antagonism of nature is indicated here! And how were the locusts gotten rid of? God did not send angels to pick them up in baskets, as an Oriental or mediæval fancy in regard to miracles might assert! The true miracle exhibits nothing of this fanciful or fantastic quality. Everything is appropriate and dignified. No little dexterities are paraded. No gymnastic