

MIRACLE

BY ASA L. COLTON

PEOPLE refuse to believe in miracles because they esteem them incredible; how, then, do they believe in existence - in the being of anything? Is it credible—to human reason, I mean—that anything should be without a cause? Nothing, so far as we can judge, ever *comes to be* without an efficient cause, something that goes before, with power to bring that which comes after.

But existence is an indisputable fact; we must believe it, whether we can or not.

Oh, yes, one may say, but there is an infinite Being from all eternity, and he has produced all other forms of existence.

Very well; but if that be so, do not let us trouble ourselves about what are called miracles. They come very easily after the creation of light—the creation of sun and moon and stars; or even of nebulous matter, so constituted that by its revolution in space it may generate these wondrous orbs.

But there is a difficulty, it seems, about laws—natural laws: we are not to suppose that they will ever be violated. But there is another law above all these, all at least of the inanimate world; i. e., that the forces of brute matter are subject to the will, or whatever is analogous to will, in any living creature. The law of gravitation is one of the most universally operative; but every bird rising upon its wings, every dog in its leaps, yea the grasshopper springing from the earth, sets this law at defiance. Almost every common law of matter is set aside by the ingenuity of man, as put forth by that most truly spiritual faculty, the will.

Are we then to suppose that the Almighty has so tied his power to agencies purely material that He can never perform an act except under their regulation? This would leave him with no discretionary power whatever—with no such liberty even as that which He has bestowed upon every creature that has will, or anything like it. Is this the idea of a God infinite in power, as in wisdom and goodness? Are we to think that the Almighty has just for once set a universe in motion, and forever withdrawn Himself from all meddling with its affairs? He permits us to control the electric power, but is never permitted to direct a thunderbolt upon the guilty, or to turn one aside from any path it might incline to pursue!

These and the like considerations apply to the subject of prayer, and the special favors which it is believed to bring. We men are perpetually turning the forces of nature where we please, and for the most special purposes; can we for a moment imagine that the Almighty has less of this power of control than we?

