

Now, the discussion of this assumption brings up the whole question of miracles, because, though we do not put forward Christ's miracles as a proof of His divine character, yet after all He Himself, as a superhuman being, is a miracle; and if miracles are impossible or incredible, He is so also.

I have said that Christianity might be true even if the miracles recorded in the New Testament were not true. Yes; but it does not follow from this that the question of the miraculous is of secondary importance and does not affect the essence of the Christian religion. Christianity is indeed independent of the truth of any particular miracle, save only the Incarnation and the Resurrection; but it is not independent of the question of the possibility of miracles. On the contrary, that question touches the very heart and life of Christianity. If there be no miracle, then there is no Christianity, there is no Christ, for Christ is the greatest of miracles, and Christ is Christianity.

Yes, the evidence of miracles is all important. Many, indeed, turn away and reject Christianity simply because of the miracles with which it is linked, and which are interwoven with the life of the Christ and the earliest beginnings of His religion. It is often said no one believes in miracles now-a-days. If you have no other witness but this your case must surely fall to the ground. "Miracles do not happen," and certainly if the mere repetition of a phrase is sufficient to prove it, then the impossibility of miracles has been and again proved conclusively. For since those words were first penned by one of our modern philosophers they have been a pet expression of those who will not receive the evidence of the miraculous. They have been repeated "ad nauseam;" they have been dragged into so-called religious novels, lisped by silly talkers, written down by grave philosophers, lightly appropriated by the many shallow minds who borrow the ideas of others, and so save themselves the trouble of thinking, if, indeed, they possess the faculty.

"If miracles are impossible, or at least incredible, then there is no revelation of God to man; for it, too, is a miracle. Nor is even this the whole result of that denial. There is, in that case, no personal God, for a God who is shut out of His own world is no God, since He cannot, by this

supposition, intervene for the help of His children, if He will. He may be a great artificer, a great mechanic, but He is not the omnipotent One. Nay, logically, we must go further even than this, and deny the Creation; for, if a miracle is impossible, how can we believe that the visible universe was created? When there was no universe, was not its coming into being a miracle? Will any man pretend that any one, or all, of the laws or forces of nature is enough to account for the origin of the universe? Was it natural or supernatural that this great universe (or the seeds and germs of it, if you prefer) should come into existence?

But most of all, if miracles be incredible, if God's hands are tied so that He cannot intervene in the processes of nature, or the evolution of history, then there is no living God who can hear and help us when we cry to Him. We may pray, but no Almighty arm can be stretched out for our deliverance in response to our prayer. We are caught in the coil of an iron chain of necessary causes and effects. We are not the free sons of a loving Father, but the slaves of an adamantine fate. Nay, we are orphans in a fatherless world. (McKim)

I. It is claimed that a miracle is impossible because it is a violation of the laws of nature. But let us ask, what is meant by violating nature's laws. It means that "a different result is produced from the same cause." As if, for instance, a stone were thrown up into the air, and remained stationary, or as if the water from an up-turned glass were arrested in the air as it fell, no force but the law of gravitation being supposed to be in operation. But are any of the miracles of the Christ such a violation of law?

What is a miracle? It is a lower law suspended by a higher. And who shall say this cannot be? To say so were to contradict daily experience. For instance, we can, we do continually counteract the great law of gravity by a higher. You can throw a stone upward, and for a time, at any rate, it seems to go against and violate the law of gravitation, or you can catch the stone as it falls, and arrest the working of that law; and all this is done, not by the violation of a law, but by the introduction of a superior law, the law of your own will, the law of volition, by which the law of gravitation is arrested or hindered. Again, man modifies the operation of the