

noble and infallible test of a genuine miracle, and the distinction between a real and a spurious or pretended miracle.

In the pretended miracle Nature *is* ignored, its presence disavowed, its powers contravened, its proprieties violated, its reasonableness set at naught; whereas, in the real miracle, the case and situation plainly disclose natural law and force, not only present, but active and acting at their highest pitch of open energy, neither hidden, suppressed nor suspended, but *supplemented* at the very acme of their free and unhindered might, by the different and still mightier push and pressure of a supernatural Hand. The result in an extreme case might be a transformation, but never a real reversal of natural law.

II.

We propose then to illustrate this hypothesis by recalling briefly the grand and familiar story and scenery of the Egyptian Miracles.

The purport of the argument will not be misunderstood. It is not at all to diminish the evidence of the supernatural; it is to establish that evidence free from cavil; it is to show that, while nature and miracle are two, the God of Nature and the God of Miracle is one, and that He uses nature so far as it will go on the way up toward His miraculous acts. It is not to lessen by a fraction the sense of that solemn and splendid and divine majesty by which God, Jehovah Himself, delivered Israel by His stretched-out arm, but it is to show, if we may use the metaphor, that He did it with *both* arms—the one arm of natural forces and laws, the other arm of supernatural—we will not say *intervention*, but the nobler word *supervention*.

The Miracles of Egypt were a series of Ten Plagues, which descended upon the land in connection with that wonderful method of divine surgery by which a nation of slaves were to be cut out from a nation of slave-holders, separated not only physically, but mentally and morally, and made a nation of freemen.

To accomplish this—to disengage and develop so many thousand bondmen, ignorant, superstitious and timid, without organization or discipline—was a task of superhuman difficulty and demanded superhuman measures, and here, let us say, although it is a very trite thing to say, that in this fact of the exceptional greatness of the end to be secured is the first beam of light on the subject. A real miracle always possesses and usually discloses an end sufficient to justify it. A part of the reason of the case is that in the instance of a genuine miracle, there must exist an imperative necessity that something should be done for which ordinary natural means are insufficient.

Now here it seemed to be necessary to withdraw and isolate one nation among the corrupt nations of the earth in order to educate the sense of righteousness and the knowledge and fear of God. Complete isolation was necessary. The moral salvation of the world demanded it.

It was necessary also that this withdrawal should be effected and