

the original impulse no matter what might be the advantage of interference? Man at least is not so helpless. He can interfere with his own works to stop them, to vary them, to guide them. He interferes even with God's works every day, breaks chains of natural causation at a thousand points. Is he greater than God? The God of science is a miserable fetish. The spirits locked up in caves by genii are less helpless. Let science at least give God some liberty—a freedom of will which, either by or without motive save what he finds in himself, is able to do what his creatures can, in regard to their works daily perform. But in doing this it concedes the possibility of the miracle.

“But though possible, the scientific mind so accustomed to absolute regularity finds, itself at last incapable of conceiving the suspension for a moment of any one natural law. Childhood believes any wonder, youth begins to doubt, manhood to deny, and as knowledge increases the possibility of the miraculous vanishes.” Well we cannot deny the *tendency*. We feel that all material things go on by fixed laws, but are we scientific in making our experience the measure of all experience? We should not permit our tendencies to pronounce impossible what we have *previously* seen to be possible. Science should put the curb on its tendencies or it will plunge into absurdity. The wise tongue will become a babbler. Strange that science, the highest thought of the grandest being made by God,—the great contradiction of atheism—should affirm atheism as its faith. But we remember “the world by wisdom knows not God.”

So we return to the consideration of the trustworthiness of the witnesses with this thought, that though they should affirm some things that are miraculous about Christ, we are not to assume that all this is mythical, the work of popular imagination. We refuse to take it for a canon that the miraculous is to be rejected because it is such. We are not about to affirm at present the inspiration of the record, the truth of the miracle, and, as a consequence the divine origin of Christianity. It has been said

that in the present day the miracle is the great weight which Christianity has to bear. Miracles do not support it—they are supported by it. If that were true, and in one sense it is, we have this position to make good—It is able to bear them. Only know Christ and all miracles will be possible unto you.

But we must not forget the Mythical Philosophers. They have taken away the miracles; well, let them in the meantime. What do they leave us? Christ's teachings? Yes, pretty much. Christ's character? Yes, that too; for it would be evidently more difficult to suppose such a character invented, than that one actually existed sustaining it. We have to thank Rousseau for the most eloquent expression of this truth. The witnesses, then, are trustworthy so far. Then we can have Christ up before us. If Strauss refuses to allow John to come up as an eye-witness and reporter of actual sayings—Renan, his pupil, thinks there is no good reason why he should be put out of court. After all, he only says in his own way what the others have said in their way. We have no objection to admit that he presents the doctrine of the incarnation after a Platonic fashion, but he presents it. “The word was made flesh,” contains all that Luke has spread over two chapters. John, too, has a retentive memory for the antilogies which often arose in Christ's communications with the Jews. We shall not, however, assume anything which our opponents are unwilling to grant. If there be any sand beneath our foundations we are willing that it be removed, if only we at last come to the rock, and that rock is not John, or Matthew, or Peter, but Christ.

The point, then, at which we commence, is that a certain character has been drawn of Christ by the Evangelists, which is altogether original and unique—the history of the world presents nothing like it. Moses and Elias, Isaiah and Ezekiel grow pale in the light of this bright star. It was no affectation, but simple truth, which led the Baptist to say, the latchet of his shoe I am not worthy to unloose. All the world has looked to it with the long wonder of eighteen centuries. Imposture, or superstition,