

uniformity of result were the law, it would follow that when not observed the law would not exist. It is the same in the physical world. Uniformity is the result, but not the law itself. In fact the law precedes the acts, points out the relations these acts should follow. Uniformity is a mark showing how these relations have been carried out.

Invariability is a contention scarcely borne out by facts. This will appear very clearly in considering the physical law in another sense. Nature, as we see, is made up of innumerable parts all working together in admirable and perfect harmony. There is a wonderful succession of days and nights, of years and seasons; there are phases of vegetable and animal life of birth, growth, decline, a faultless arrangement in every department of nature by virtue of which the most various phenomena are seen to arrive without fail at a given point. These successions and phases are called laws. It is common to hear mentioned the laws of the succession of days and nights, of seasons, years, and so on. Yet is invariable precision found here? It is the law of a fruit-tree to bear fruit each season. Still can it be said that it will bear fruit every season? It is the law of winter to bring ice and snow. Can it be depended upon absolutely, that every winter will be accompanied with these attendants? It is a fact of experience that natural laws are far from rigid in their working. Nay more, there were laws, not now in operation, and there are laws in force for but a comparatively short period in the world's history.

Extraordinary as miracles are, they do not, however, effect any special violence to the laws of nature. They do not undo as it were, what was constituted not to be undone. The physical law is not of such unyielding stuff that it cannot be departed from. Among the many powers and forces observed in creation, some are stronger than others. Naturally the superior force overcomes the weaker if placed in opposition to it and suspends

the law by which it would otherwise have accomplished its effect. Man himself can counteract many of those laws. What then is there to prevent a yet higher cause like the supreme agent from stepping in and producing in nature effects, which either as to substance or mode surpass the activity of man or any creature.

It may appear that the occurrence of miracles indicates an abrupt change or redispotion of the decrees and plans of God. However it is not so. God has decreed once for all, by a single act of His will, all the events of which He was to be the immediate cause and He accomplishes invariably in time, that which He has decreed in eternity. It is not for the human mind to say what is contained in these decrees. Miracles are included in those plans in the same way exactly as less miraculous events. The contrary was never decreed and hence the decree could not be changed when it did not exist.

To sum up briefly, miracles are physical phenomena and belong by this fact to the physical order of things. They are further most extraordinary in every respect. They belong in no way to the claim of connected events which compose this sphere. The natural play of secondary causes does not give birth to them: the very name of miracle shows that they are far from happening daily or even at distant periods. If the natural world does not exclude, neither does it in any way call for them for the world does not need to be repaired or retouched by the hand of the Creator. To be sure, there are beings which cannot come into existence without the immediate influence of God, but apart from these, nature does not require the immediate action of its Maker. At the same time, the miracle can exist in most beautiful harmony with physical effects. By the addition of these unique facts a new and rich department is secured to the already vast store of nature's marvels.

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