

God exists—so reasonable that many unbelievers have admitted the validity but our case is strengthened infinitely by the combined force of the arguments. The possession of the purse of a murdered man may not be conclusive proof that the possessor was the murderer. But if his clothes are stained with blood; if various articles belonging to the murdered man are found in his possession; if it can be proved that he purchased the instrument by which the murder was accomplished; if his footprints exactly correspond to those of the murderer; if he has also adopted a number of cunning devices to avoid detection, if all these circumstances meet together in the same person, they afford a stronger evidence of guilt than that of one man who affirms that he saw the prisoner commit the murder, because testimony may be false, or a mistake may be made about personal identity. But facts like these can neither lie nor deceive, and when they thus converge in a common focus they possess all the force of demonstration. So it is with the evidence before us." Each separate argument, taken by itself, affords a strong presumption that God exists, but when they are all taken together, the evidence becomes overwhelming. We therefore feel justified in concluding that there is a personal God, the Cause of Causes, the intelligent orderer and adapter of the universe, who is at once benevolent and holy and just and true and moral.

Having proved the existence of God the next question that demands our attention is, "Are there any sufficient grounds for believing that He will make any manifestations of Himself to man other than those He has already made in His various creative and providential acts?" This point is of very considerable importance in relation to the question before us. You all know, for it is constantly brought to your notice in the ordinary affairs of life, that the amount of evidence which is necessary to prove that a certain event has taken place varies in proportion to the probability or improbability of its occurrence. Very slight evidence is sufficient to satisfy us that an event has occurred if such an event is likely and expected. For instance, if we saw a man in the last stages of consumption and were told that he could not live many hours longer, we would have no difficulty in believing he was dead if an obituary notice appeared in

the newspaper the next day. But we should require much stronger evidence than a newspaper to convince us that autumn was not succeeded by winter, or winter by spring, in some given locality. In a similar manner, an action which, if assigned to one motive, may be in the highest degree improbable, may be accepted on the most ordinary testimony if assigned to another. We should require strong proof before we could believe that one whom we had always looked upon as a consistent Christian, had subscribed largely towards the erection of an idol temple in his town, but if it could be shown that the money was extorted from him by threats of violence or injury to his business, while condemning his cowardice, the difficulty in accepting the fact of the subscription would disappear.

Or let me put it another way. If the papers announced that the Federal Government had ordered several shiploads of provisions and clothing to be sent to Charlottetown, to be distributed indiscriminately among the people, we should receive the news with a smile of incredulity. It is antecedently improbable that the Government should interfere in our favor, because there is no manifest reason why it should do so. But if next Spring we should hear that the people of Labrador had run short of provisions, and were, consequently, starving, we should not only have no difficulty in believing that the Government would send them supplies as soon as navigation opened we should expect them to do so. To-day we would laugh at a telegram stating that the principal cities in Canada, England, and the United States were raising subscriptions for us in Charlottetown; but if a fire swept away three-fourths of our city to-night, to-morrow we should expect to receive such a telegram, because our condition would be entirely altered, and consequently the idea of foreign assistance would be brought within the bounds of reasonable probability; in fact, we should be very much surprised if other cities did not come to our aid, since we have always helped other cities in similar distress.

The bearing of this principle on the question of divine revelation is obvious. Abstractedly it may be very difficult to believe in supernatural interferences with the ordinary affairs of the universe, and it may require an overwhelming amount of evidence to prove their reality. But if we