

**Miracles.**

I should not believe such a story were it told me by Cato, was a proverbial saying in Rome, even during the lifetime of that philosophical patriot. The incredibility of a fact, it was allowed, might invalidate so great an authority.

The Indian prince who refused to believe the first relations concerning the effects of frost reasoned justly, and it naturally required very strong testimony to engage his assent to facts that arose from a state of nature with which he was unacquainted, and which bore so little analogy to those events of which he had had constant and uniform experience. Though they were not contrary to his experience, they were not conformable to it.

But in order to increase the probability against the testimony of witnesses, let us suppose that the fact which they affirm, instead of being only marvelous, is really miraculous; and suppose, also, that the testimony, considered apart and in itself, amounts to entire proof; in that case there is proof against proof, of which the strongest must prevail, but still with a diminution of its force in proportion to that of its antagonist.

A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. Why is it more than probable that all men must die; that lead of itself cannot remain suspended in air; that fire consumes wood, and is extinguished by water; unless it be that these events are found agreeable to the laws of nature, and there is required a violation of these laws, or, in other words, a miracle, to prevent them? Nothing is esteemed a miracle if it ever happen in the common course of nature. It is no miracle that a man seemingly in good health should die suddenly; because such a kind of death, though more unusual than any other, has yet been frequently observed to happen. But it is a miracle that a dead man should come to life; because that has never been observed in any age or country. There must, therefore, be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation. And as a uniform experience amounts to a proof, there is here a direct and full proof, from the nature of the fact, against the existence of any miracle; nor can such a proof be destroyed or the miracle rendered credible but by an opposite proof which is superior.

The plain consequence is (and it is a general maxim worthy of our attention), "that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle un-

less the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish; and even in that case there is a mutual destruction of arguments, and the superior only gives us an assurance suitable to that degree of force which remains after deducting the inferior." When any one tells me that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself whether it be more probable that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact which he relates should really have happened. I weigh the one miracle against the other, and according to the superiority which I discover I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater miracle. If the falsehood of his testimony would be more miraculous than the event which he relates, then, and not till then, can he pretend to command my belief or opinion.—[Hume.

**When ?**

When have Infidels opposed investigation, education and science?

When have Infidels founded inquisitions to torture people into their belief?

When has Infidelity afflicted mankind with 1200 years of woe, known as the "dark ages"?

When has Infidelity carried on religious wars like the "Crusades"?

When has Infidelity slaughtered 50,000,000 people, as the mother church has?

When have Infidels murdered the teachers of our race—as Bruno, Servetus, and others?

When have Infidels vented their spite upon the dead by digging up and burning their bodies?

When have Infidels begun on St. Bartholomew's day and massacred 70,000 of their fellow men in one week?

When have Infidels persecuted the Jews, killed the Netherlanders, and sold indulgences?

When have Infidels worshipped bones, hair, rusty nails, "wood from the cross," and other relics?

When have Infidels driven people from their homes, burned holes in Quakers' tongues, whipped women, and burned 400 at one time?

When have Infidels opposed comforts and refinements, such as the introduction of carpets, stoves, violins and organs into churches?

When have Infidels put people into prison for simply working on Sunday, or for sending bible verses through the mails?

When have Infidels been dishonest enough not to pay taxes on a billion dollars' worth of their property, and little enough to force their doctrine into our public schools?—[Ex.

Woodworkers, don't forget to send an order for a set of the Forstner Auger Bits. Price, \$2.60 by mail. See ad.

...The....

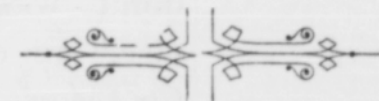
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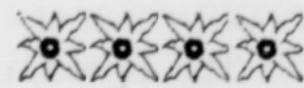
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