

Texas Christian Advocate

Miracles and their Interference with Natural Laws.

Prof. Tyndall and the scientists of his school not only deny the truth of miracles, but assert that the Creator could not perform one without deranging the system of the universe.

A stream is seen to be running along a ravine between two hills, and this stream, in accordance with the natural law of gravity, should for ever continue its course along that ravine.

Now let us apply the principles obviously illustrated by these cases to one class of miracles, which the scientist affirms will interfere with the natural laws established by the creative power.

Let us next consider a different class of miracles, such as the giving life to the dead, or creating a new being out of nothing.

Even if we assume that only two human beings were created, with the capacity for indefinite multiplication, that act implies all the subsequent multiplication.

With respect to the origin of the world around us, as it is manifested

to our senses, two conflicting theories have been maintained. The first, and that most generally adopted by mankind, attributes the existence of the universe to the act of an intelligent, all-powerful creator.

In one of Professor Tyndall's addresses, he says that he is not prepared to deny that every fact, movement, and even thought is the result and consequence of some condition of the sun in the past.

This statement, or figure at least, furnishes us as suitable an illustration of the two classes of views as can be had. Let it be supposed, for example, that long ago, from its expansion due to its intense heat, a portion of the sun's matter filled the space of the earth's present orbit.

So great and so complicated does such a problem seem, that the mind does not readily grasp and comprehend it. If I throw a stone against the window, we readily see that a glass may be broken as a consequence of the movement of my muscles, and we easily perceive that the motion of the hands of a watch is the result of the condition of its mainspring.

Let us suppose that a scientific professor in the city of Washington, for example, should say, "I have such a perfect knowledge of the existing condition of all the material and animal forces of the earth, that I will at a certain moment of time to-morrow, at a certain place, drop into the Potomac this piece of cork which I hold, and it shall be carried along down the stream, and though shaken by the movements of steamers, and tossed by the fins of fishes, it shall not lodge against the bank, but shall find its way into the Chesapeake Bay.

Such a statement as this, strange as it might seem, serves to give us but a faint idea of what the sun has done.

We will consider another case, by way of illustration: A certain man declares that he has so much mechanical knowledge, and such skill as a manipulator, that he will take an hundred bushels of printer's types, throw them into a large vessel which will be worked by a steam engine, and that he will so regulate the movement of the vessel that after it has been agitated for an hour, with the types in it, a small orifice will be opened in its side, through which, at each revolution, a letter will fall out.

Yet even this does not suffice to give more than a faint idea of what the sun has done; for it has printed all the books in the world, produced all the vegetables and animals existing, and regulated every one of their movements and thoughts. Let us consider for a moment one of the small items of its task. To form each observed part of a single human body, countless atoms are required.

The sun not only made and arranged all these for one man, but it had to provide in like manner for the innumerable millions that have existed, as well as the countless other organized animals and vegetables, and is now not only producing our movements and thoughts, but is in like manner producing those of every existing insect.

Let us now consider for a moment which of these two theories is the most probably true? Remember that it is the human mind, constituted as it is, that is to decide this question.

The body of our prayer is the sum of our duty; and as we must ask of God whatsoever we need, we must labor for all that we ask.

A man should never be ashamed to own he has been in the wrong, which is but saying, in other words, that he is wiser to-day than he was yesterday.

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discharges he rests for that day, and by continuing this operation for a hundred days, he fills all the bottles. No matter what may be the condition of the atmosphere, whether it be calm or windy, fair or rainy, he never fails to cause a shot to fall into each bottle.

Suggestions like these are calculated to assist us somewhat in deciding as to the relative merits of the two rival theories, by which we are to account for the existence of the elements constituting the material and organic world.

According to the latest official estimates of the population of large cities, or the latest census, where these are not attainable, they range as follows: London, of course, heads the list with its 3,533,484; Paris comes next with 1,851,792, by the census of 1872; then Peking, with 1,500,000, and Canton, with 1,300,000; next comes New York, with 1,069,362, and closes the list of those having more than 1,000,000 inhabitants.

Affliction is the divine school of virtue; it corrects levity, interrupts the confidence of sinning, and softens and purifies the heart.

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"STAR SPANGLED BANNER."

How the Song Was Written—An interesting Article that Gives Some New Facts About Our "Banner of Beauty and Glory"—That "Perilous Night."

It has often been asked how the "Star Spangled Banner" came to be written. The following article on the subject, from the pen of Mr. J. Fairfax McLaughlin, is published in the Journal of the Fair, and contains many facts bearing on the question that are new to the general reader.

When the British army and marines, under Gen. Ross and Admiral Cockburn, debarked from their ships at Benedict, in August, 1814, to attack the capital of the United States, they marched inland through Prince George's County, Maryland. On the route to Bladensburg the enemy passed through the villages of Nottingham and Upper Marlboro, resting for some time at the latter place.

Dr. Beanes was the leading physician in Upper Marlboro, and an accomplished scholar and gentleman. He was highly respected by all who knew him, was the family physician of Dr. West, and the intimate friend of Mr. Key. He occupied one of the best houses in West Marlboro and lived very handsomely, and his house was selected for the quarters of Admiral Cockburn and some of the principal officers of the army when the British troops encamped at Marlboro, on their way to Washington.

After burning the Capitol, the President's house, the public buildings, and other property, and committing other barbarous acts, the vandals returned hastily to their ships on the Patuxent River. The main body of the English army had passed through Upper Marlboro on their way back to Nottingham, when the inhabitants of the former place were subjected to an irruption by stragglers who had lurked in the rear for purposes of plunder.

Francis Scott Key, a man of rare accomplishments, and of much poetical genius, was at that time practicing law in Maryland, and resided in Georgetown. Between himself and Dr. Beanes there existed a warm friendship, and he applied to President Madison for leave to go on board Admiral Cockburn's flag ship, under a flag of truce, to procure, if possible, the release of his friend before the fleet sailed. The President promptly sanctioned the mission. Mr. Key was accompanied by Mr. John S. Skinner, the American agent for the exchange of prisoners.

Gen. Ross at length said that he was sensibly moved at the kindness of the Americans to his wounded officers and soldiers in their hands, and, on that account, while he thought Dr. Beanes' conduct deserved greater punishment than he had received, he would consent to his release.

Mr. Key was informed, however, that neither himself nor any one else would be allowed to depart for several days, until after the impending attack on Baltimore had taken place. The flag-ship was crowded with officers of the army, and Admiral Cockburn transferred Mr. Key and Mr. Skinner to the frigate Surprise, commanded by his son, Sir Thos. Cockburn. Here they remained until the hostile fleet had entered the Patuxent, and the troops were landed to march on Baltimore, while the fleet moved up toward the city. The Admiral now transferred his flag to the frigate, in order that he

might move further up the river and superintend in person the attack on Fort M'Henry. Mr. Key and Mr. Skinner were put on board of their own vessel, together with Dr. Beanes, who thus far had been treated like a culprit, subjected to many indignities, and not allowed a change of clothing from the time he was first seized. A guard of British marines was placed in their vessel to prevent the escape of the Americans during the conflict. The vessel occupied a position from which Mr. Key could see the American flag, as it floated proudly over Fort M'Henry. At length, when the night had set in, and the land forces had already been for some hours engaged in battle with the Americans, who were panting with ardor to wipe out the defeat of Bladensburg and the outrage of Washington, the British fleet advanced to the bombardment of the fort, and the darkness was made lurid by shot and shell.

Our American friends watched each shell as it was fired, and listened breathlessly to hear if an explosion followed. As the bombardment continued through the night with unabated fury, they were at least satisfied that the fort had not been surrendered. All night long they paced their deck, and were filled with the conflicting emotions of fear and hope. At last, some time before the dawn, the bombardment suddenly ceased. Whether the fort was reduced or the attack abandoned could not be determined, for our friends had no communication with the enemy's vessels, and it was yet too dark to see the fort, and to discern whether the stars and stripes or the English flag floated above its ramparts. Every eye was strained with that eagerness which patriots alone feel under such circumstances, peering through the "perilous night" for the first dawn of day. Finally it came, streaking the East with russet hues, and it told the delighted watchers that "our flag was still there."

Mr. Key began to write his lines when he beheld the starry flag floating saucily over M'Henry's frowning battlements, and he continued to write on the back of a letter which he had in his pocket, as it became apparent the British were retreating in evident haste and confusion to their ships, bearing back many wounded with them. The inspiration of genius was kindled at the glorious spectacle of his country's prowess. The Americans were soon told they could go where they pleased, that the army was re-embarking.

Before he reached the shore Mr. Key had completed his glowing numbers. On landing he went to the hotel, copied off the poem from the back of his letter, and giving it to a friend to publish or throw in the waste-basket as the friend's judgment might decide, our poet went to bed and was soon sound asleep. The unknown bard arose the next morning to find the whole town ringing with his lines. The nation echoed the praises of the town, and the world the acclamations of the nation. Francis Scott Key was up among the immortals as the author of the "Star Spangled Banner."

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