

**PROTESTANT MIRACLES: HIGH ORTHODOX
AND EVANGELICAL AUTHORITY FOR THE
BELIEF IN DIVINE INTERPOSITION IN HUMAN
AFFAIRS. SOME ACCOUNT OF MARVELOUS
CURES OF ILLNESS, RESCUE FROM DANGER,
DEATH, PROPERTY AND SUFFERING, THROUGH
FAITH AND PRAYER**

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Protestant Miracles: High Orthodox and Evangelical Authority for the Belief in Divine Interposition in Human Affairs. Some Account of Marvelous Cures of Illness, Rescue from Danger, Death, Property and Suffering, through Faith and Prayer by F. J. Ryan

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F. J. RYAN

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Protestant Miracles.

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IN HUMAN AFFAIRS.

SOME ACCOUNT OF MARVELOUS CURES OF ILLNESS,
RESCUE FROM DANGER, DEATH, POVERTY AND
SUFFERING, THROUGH FAITH AND PRAYER,
IN RECENT CENTURIES.

Compiled from the Writings of Men Eminent in Protestant Churches.

By F. J. Ryan.

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PREFACE.

This work was begun with very little thought that it would ever become a book. Its origin is this: I had been reading and hearing lectures on Christian Science, on metaphysical healing; mental science, etc., for some months, when there seemed to be almost a general onslaught on the first named system of religion and therapeutics, by orthodox clergymen, newspaper writers, coroners and other public officers, even to legislators. The animosity appeared to reach its climax in my home city just about the time the Scientist congregation announced as the subject of its Wednesday evening meeting, "Is Christian Science a Delusion?"

In examining the affirmative side of the proposition I found the basis thereof to be a Protestant dogma to the effect that the age of miracles had passed away with the immediate successors to the apostles. I also found that the men who held to this dogma prayed with apparent fervor for especial blessings upon their favorite charities, Sabbath schools, enterprises, and about the time the onslaught was made, that orthodox Protestant clergymen were lobbying for appointment as chaplains to several legislative bodies where they must pray for the rare miracles of the investment of those bodies with wisdom.

I remembered well the stories told by revivalists in my youth—I hadn't heard any revival sermons for a generation—of how they were aided in their work by miraculous means.

I remembered also that some clergymen had regarded the assassins, Booth and Guiteau, as instruments of Providence. It didn't matter that these were ministers of the gospel of hatred when their sectional prejudices were stirred. I never heard of any of them being disciplined for what Northern clergymen of the same churches usually regarded as blasphemy. With these matters in mind I set about investigating the truth or falsity of the plea that Protestants agreed on the proposition that the age of miracles had passed away with the second century of our era. I was astounded at the result of my first week's search by finding that many of the most responsible, scholarly, eminent and effective laborers in the Protestant field of Christianity, in every century, and perhaps in every year since the Reformation, including Luther, have not only believed in but put themselves on record as believing in miraculous healing of the sick; of the rescue of the righteous from death by storm, by flood, by fire, by accident, by crime, by freezing and other means, in answer to prayer. I have also found cases in which clergymen have endorsed, as true, stories of the vindication of just persons from grave accusations of crime and other miraculous occurrences; of special providences and divine interpositions in human affairs for the promotion of religion and justice.

In pursuing my researches for material I have examined several hundred volumes by authors of acknowledged ability, learning and authority. While I have found something of value in nearly every work, many of them contain matter that is in substance repetitions of some other authors. Some are amusing for the simplicity they seem to ascribe to their readers. This class, though it includes some of the most

learned and famous, seems to suppose the reader will not or cannot detect discrepancies of statement or inconsistencies of argument, when the inconsistent or incompatible statements or arguments are widely separated.

Some are intrinsically and apparently intentionally amusing. Of this class is "Scientific Sophisms," by Samuel Wainwright, D. D. While it does not defend miracles it ridicules that class of scientists who seem to require readers to reject the supernatural for the hyper-natural, who spin metaphysical theories as intangible and unintelligible and that convey as little information on the subject to the average mind as do the clouds that chase each other or tumble and roll over each other during a summer storm. These theorists seem to expect their reader to play Polinius to their Hamlet and declare that they see in those nebulous theories whales, camels or weasels, as the theorist may suggest, without detecting the inconsistency or absurdity of the theories or assumptions.

In reading the various hypotheses advanced by materialists—philosophers real and presumptive—to explain away miracles, the conclusion is often forced on the reader that it requires more credulity to accept the theory than to accept the miracle. They seem to imagine that in calling marvelous occurrences "phenomena" they have disposed of the question. It never seems to occur to them that their writings will be read by those who can distinguish between matters of terminology and matters of logic, or that any will perceive that to call a miracle a phenomenon does not take it out of the realm of the miraculous.

It may strike some of those who read this work that the authorities I quote in support of the opinion that the age of

miracles has not passed away, do not agree well. That must be granted, but the disagreement is principally as to what are miracles. However inconsistent the arguments of one may be with those advanced by others, the inconsistency is no concern of mine. The main fact remains that most of those from whom I quote deserve to rank as leaders of Protestant thought and others are, at least, non-Catholic, so that in quoting them I am consistent with the purpose I had in view in undertaking to show that Protestants, under which classification I include all who are neither Catholics, Jews, Atheists, Spiritualists, Swedenborgians nor anti-Christians, are by no means unanimous in the belief that no real miracles have been wrought since the death of the immediate successors of the apostles.

Some may want to know who is the author of this little volume. He is a very obscure person and his personality is not involved. If the reader doubts anything stated herein as fact, he doubts not the author but the authority to whom he refers or whom he quotes. He has sought to verify his statements and, as far as possible, has confined himself to works that may be found in almost all public libraries in cities of say half a century's growth. The author is old in newspaper work, but this department of literary work is new to him and critics will probably see in it the evidence of journalistic journey-work and lack of literary finish—the ornamentals of book-architecture. These were not the object of the work and I have made fact the first object and argument the second. If the few arguments are good and well based they need neither a celebrated name nor the gilding, molding, carving or fillagree work of the word-artist to support them. On its merits this little book is respectfully submitted.

F. J. R.

PROTESTANT DISBELIEF.

IT OVERSHOT ITS MARK AND CAUSED ITS AUTHORS TROUBLE.

When it is asserted, as it often is, that the age of miracles has long been passed, it becomes a matter of interest to know when the age ended. The time usually given, by those who regard themselves as orthodox Christians, is the end of the second century. They rarely go into particulars as to the exact year or even the decade, but the impression gained is that miracles went out about the time that Constantine made Christianity fashionable.

Constantine embraced Christianity A. D. 313 and his conversion was one of the last miracles that are now generally recognized as genuine by orthodox Protestants. Catholics believe that miracles are still wrought by men of exceptionally pure and Christ-like lives. Even Father DeSmet, in his letters from the missions, in what was then Oregon territory, tells of some phenomena that were miraculous and, if my memory is not at fault, among them were the exorcising of evil spirits. I cannot now find the letters to which I refer, but my recollection is that these stories were published in a Catholic weekly paper in St. Louis during about the years 1844 to 1848. It will not do to quote Catholic authority, however, as Protestants