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ARTICLE VII.

MIRACLE—TESTIMONY OF GOD.

BY HONORABLE F. J. LAMB.

"The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.—
Ps. xix. 7.

"The testimonies of God are true; the testimonies of God are perfect; the testimonies of God are all-sufficient unto that end for which they were given."

HOOKEE, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, ii. 8.

THE Bible begins with the miracle of creation, and ends with the miracle of "the revelation of Jesus Christ," and is pervaded throughout by miracle. Christianity, in its distinctive facts, is miraculous, and miracles authenticate its characteristic doctrines. Neither the Bible nor Christianity can be rationally apprehended, or even intelligently examined, without reckoning seriously with miracle,—its place and function in theology, the science of religion. Such reckoning would open a vast field of inquiry; and that is not now attempted. Nor will any attempt be made to meet objections to the possibility of miracles which may be made by any who openly or otherwise deny the existence of God, with what such denial implies.

It is here proposed to consider miracle in a limited but well-defined and important sphere; namely, the function of miracle as *evidence* in authenticating God's revelations of himself and his will to men, and in attesting God's agents in his service, applying in the examination the established rules and laws of evidence.

EVIDENCE: ITS VALUE AND IMPORTANCE.

The importance of that function of miracle must be estimated by the importance and value placed upon evidence in the

Christian dispensation. Is not that importance and value shown to be supremely transcendent in the gracious communing between the Son of God and the Father recorded in John xvii., which reveals so much of heaven and eternal things? That communing puts aside, so to speak, the veil between heaven and earth, and enacts openly, to the immediate apprehension of our human senses, a transaction involving the eternal destinies of men.

Dealing reverently but juridically with this episode in the Record, we see it is primarily a report made to God the Father by the Son, Emmanuel, God with us, of his execution of God's mission of salvation to mankind. Jesus says: "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do" (details how); "I have manifested thy name" to men (manifesting is *evidence*, that which is "open, palpable, incontrovertible"¹); "I have given them thy words which thou gavest me, and they have received them"; and thereby "they have *believed* that thou didst send me." Further, in vision of the future, Jesus contemplates his disciples communicating the same gospel evidence to men, and he prays "for them which shall *believe* on me through their word," and that the leavening energy of the gospel evidence may prevail, "that the world may *believe* that thou hast sent me"; and Jesus concludes the subject of *evidence* by a note of joy in his disciples in that "these have *known* that thou hast sent me." Thus, again and again, three times repeated in the brief communing, Jesus extols *belief* engendered and established by God's gospel *evidence*, given to and received by men, whereby they had come to "*know*," which is the logical outcome of tested and consummated *belief*.

Jesus exalts "knowing" the *product* of *evidence* to an eminence that taxes human comprehension, in making it central

¹ Anderson Law Dictionary, p. 653.

in defining eternal life (ver. 3): "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." The author of "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" emphasizes this by condensing the definition thus: "Life eternal is to know God." Knowing is made supreme. But indispensable for knowing, is whatever informs the mind and heart, supplies the means of knowing. That which informs, and so enables one to consider, judge, and "know," is evidence. It may be word, deed, life, or demonstration; but, whatever be the means, it is *evidence*, for that is its essential function.¹ Jesus, in another supreme moment, emphasizes the paramount importance of evidence in the Christian dispensation, by giving to his disciples, at the moment of his ascension at the Mount of Olives, his final charge, "Ye shall be my *witnesses* both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts i. 8, R. V.). Witnessing, giving testimony, is here again exalted as central in executing the great commission to regenerate the world.

If, then, God has made or *ordained* his miracle to be, and to be used and received as his testimony for any purpose, to disparage, neglect, or reject such testimony is not only disloyal to God, but must also defraud the soul that so treats it. Such course must inevitably be destructive to any just attainment of truth, because it nullifies *pro tanto* essential means which God has provided for ascertaining truth and "knowing" God and his will.

It is common knowledge, that multitudes in the Christian ministry and educational work, as well as many laymen, have individually lost faith in the authority of the Bible as the Word of God. This loss of faith in that authority was noticed conspicuously in the able addresses at the conference of the Ameri-

¹ Greenleaf, *Evidence*, Sec. 1.

can Bible League last May (New York), and the cause then assigned for the loss was the attempt in religion to yoke in concord things discordant,—to yoke Christianity in concord with hypotheses of natural evolution, and destructive higher criticism of the Bible. The evil efficiency of that cause is clear; but, rationally considered, is it not equally clear that denying or rejecting any testimony God has given in the matter must have been an equal, if not more potent, factor, in undermining and destroying faith in the authority of the Bible?

REVELATION — INSPIRATION.

As this investigation considers revelation as distinguished from inspiration, discrimination of lexicographers between those concepts is noticed. "Revelation in theology is that disclosure which God makes of himself and his will to his creatures, more especially such disclosures of truth *which could not be ascertained by natural means*; hence as contained in the Bible. Revelation differs from inspiration, the latter being an exaltation of the natural faculties, the former a communication through them *not otherwise ascertainable, not otherwise known.*"¹ Revelation and its indubitable authentication, not inspiration as thus discriminated, is the immediate subject of inquiry here.

BASES OF INQUIRY.

The examination proposed will proceed on these propositions: that the Bible is a record,—a record of God (of his moral government, his revealed will in dealing with souls he has created); that the record be dealt with reverently but juridically, as courts deal with ancient records; that miracle is an effect or event contrary to the established course of things (more briefly, as considered here, miracle is such effect or event as is possible mediately or immediately to Deity alone);

¹ Century Dictionary.

that miracle becomes, and is, the testimony of God when wrought for the purpose of authenticating any revelation of God, or of authenticating his agent in his service; that, from the perfect veracity of him who is the Supreme Being, it conclusively follows that he never will, nor can rationally, be supposed to give his testimony to anything but truth; and that it is not irrational, nor inconsistent with sound philosophy, to believe that God has made special and express revelations of his will, and that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments record such revelations.

PARTICULAR INQUIRIES PROPOSED.

Does the Record establish these propositions?

1. That God has made his miracle to be his testimony, and *ordained* it to be used as such, to indubitably authenticate to men his special and express revelations of himself and his will, and also to authenticate his agents in his service.

2. That indubitable authentication of God's revelations to men is impossible otherwise than by God's testimony, by his miracle wrought therefor.

Doubtless to many the truth of the first proposition may seem obvious without discussion, perhaps not so to all. Hence, and because the second inquiry proposed is dependent on the first, some conspicuous evidence operating on the proposition will be noticed. The examination may vivify the proposition.

OLD TESTAMENT EVIDENCE.

At the burning bush, God made to Moses this special and express revelation, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt. . . . I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians. . . . I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Ex. iii. 7, 8, 10). The revelation was to operate on Pharaoh, the Egyptians, and the Hebrews. Ought

they to believe the mere statement of Moses, that the revelation had been made, without evidence superior to human testimony? Moses' answer to Jehovah was, "But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee" (Ex. iv. 1), that is, a revelation authenticated only by human testimony would not be believed. The Record shows that the validity of the objection was admitted. To obviate the objection made by Moses, Jehovah then and there interposed his miracle to be his testimony, and ordained it to be used as such, to *indubitably* authenticate the revelation he had made, and Moses as his agent (Ex. iv. 2-8). We say "indubitably," because the situation and opposition to God forced that issue. Wonders wrought in opposition, whether by mere human skill or by power of opposing spirits, were constantly met and overthrown, until Jehovah's miracle compelled opponents to confess "It is the finger of God" (Ex. viii. 19). Thus early in the Christian dispensation the controversy and result was demonstration that the authentication of God's revelation should not fail, that neither the power of man nor the gates of hell should prevail against it.

God made his special revelation to Elijah, that he would (1) vindicate himself as God against the worshipers of Baal, and (2) attest Elijah as God's prophet, and (3) *authenticate or confirm both revelations by his miracle*. Though not expressed in writing, this is clearly shown by Elijah's prayer and the miracle at Carmel. Elijah's prayer is, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day [1] that thou art God in Israel, and [2] that I am thy servant, and [3] *that I have done all these things at thy word*" (1 Kings xviii. 19-36). Elijah's prayer for God's authenticating testimony by the miracle was then and there granted and given by the miracle

wrought for that purpose. God supreme was manifested, the nothingness of Baal demonstrated, God's prophet confirmed, and especially the miracle was approved, as *ordained* to be God's authenticating testimony to the whole.

Many other special revelations of God are recorded in the Old Testament which have been authenticated or confirmed by his miracles, but lack of space prevents their discussion here. It is not necessary, for, with attention to context and environment, the authentication can be discerned. A few are indicated.¹

In passing from the Old Testament record, we note the fundamental fact that "a miraculous dispensation begins with Abraham and ends with the Apostles—with an interregnum of about four hundred years between Malachi and John the Baptist. All the books of the Bible received as canonical by Protestants are . . . supposed on good grounds to have been written during these two periods of special miraculous intervention. Outside of these books there is no trustworthy account of any special divine revelation."²

NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE.

The miracles of the four Gospels are too numerous to mention. The Apostle John sums up the purpose of those recorded by him: "And many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son

¹ Giving the Law many revelations at Sinai (Ex. xx., etc.); destruction of Korah (Num. xvi. 28-35); budding of Aaron's rod (Num. xvii. 1-9); waters of Jordan divided (Josh. iii. 9-17); Gideon's fleece (Judges vi. 36-40); altar rent and Jeroboam's arm withered (1 Kings xiii. 1-5); Sennacherib's host destroyed (2 Kings xix. 20-36); Hezekiah healed, and shadow put back on the dial (2 Kings xx. 5-11).

² G. Frederick Wright, *Divine Authority of the Bible*, p. 15.

of God; and that, *believing*, ye might have life through his name" (John xx. 30, 31). Jesus himself constantly asserted the same doctrine. The Jews said, "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." If Jesus had answered in words, it would have been received as only the testimony of a man. So Jesus answered, "The works that I do in my Father's name, they *bear witness* of me" (John x. 24, 25); "If I do not the works of my Father, *believe* me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, *believe* the works" (ver. 37, 38); and in xiv. 11, Jesus appeals again to his miracles as testimony, "*Believe* me for the very works' sake."

Passing the great array of other miracles in the New Testament, we notice these, for reasons obvious in the discussion.

REVELATION AND MIRACLE IDENTIFYING JESUS AS THE MESSIAH.

Consider a date, A. D. 30; and the situation, the millions of men, the seed of Abraham, then existing; and the problem, from the human view-point, of identifying indubitably to all men throughout one of all those millions as the Messiah. Human testimony, because merely human, could not do it. *Mercy* of the testimony of the angels: at the nativity to the shepherds, and the revelation to the wise men of the East, was lost.

Herod, mocked by the wise men, slew "all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under," to make sure the babe he feared was dead. The babe was secretly taken to Egypt, and evidently thereafter his home was fearful that disclosure of Jesus as the babe of Bethlehem would endanger his life; and he grew up in obscurity at Nazareth. The superior brightness of the boy at twelve years of age seems not to have suggested aught as to his identity as Messiah, only "his mother kept all these sayings in her heart" (Luke ii. 51). That was the situation and the problem when Jesus was thirty years old.

John the Baptist testifies that then God made a special and express revelation to him, accompanied with a commission to preach repentance, and "to baptize with water." The Baptist testifies, also, that the revelation to him was that, in performing the commission, the "Messiah should be *manifested* to Israel," and therefore John came "baptizing with water"; and, particularly, "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John i. 31, 33), and (ver. 32) of Jesus, "I saw the spirit descending from heaven, like a dove, and it abode upon him" (Matt. iii. 16; Mark i. 10; Luke iii. 22). This fulfilled the prophecy, and authenticated the special revelation, and identified Jesus as the Messiah. But this was to John the Baptist only,—to him alone. The Baptist proclaimed the revelation and authenticating miracle. But John's statement was merely human testimony, and could not indubitably authenticate or confirm the revelation or the identification. The great problem yet remained of indubitably authenticating or confirming the express revelation made to the Baptist, and the identification of Jesus as the Messiah.

The Baptist was cast into prison, and thence he sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the Messiah. Whatever moved John to send the inquiry, it was respected by Jesus, and gave the opportunity indubitably to authenticate the revelation and identification of God that Jesus was the Messiah. Christ did not answer, "Yes," which, to the world, would have been only human testimony, but "in that same hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered and said unto them, Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the

lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me" (Luke vii. 19-23, R. V.). The miracles were the testimony of God given expressly, and *expressly ordained* by God to be used as such, to authenticate and confirm the express revelation of God and his identification of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

LAZARUS RAISED FROM DEATH (John xi. 54).

The purpose and intent of this miracle as authenticating evidence is stated explicitly by the Master himself. Jesus (John v. 31) recognizes a fundamental law of evidence, that a man cannot put his own declarations concerning himself in evidence in his own favor. But in this miracle he uses a well-established exception, namely, when an actor controlling his own proceedings, for instance, enters upon land in order to enforce a right, say of forfeiture, foreclose a mortgage, defend a disseizin or the like, or in fine does any other act material to be understood and in itself not unequivocal, but depending for its legal signification, upon the *purpose* and *intent* with which it is done, his declaration made at the time and in connection with the transaction and expressive of its character, purpose and intent becomes an integral part of the transaction and proof of its character.¹

The Record shows that Jesus gave his testimony, in the case of Lazarus, in accordance with this rule. Before the miracle, Jesus said to his disciples regarding the staying away from the sick man until after his death (John xi. 15): "I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there, to the *intent* ye may believe." In a figure of sleep and awakening, Jesus said to his disciples that he would *raise* Lazarus from his death (ver.

¹Greenleaf, Evidence (Wigman's ed.), sec. 108.

14 and 23). Jesus also said to Martha that Lazarus should be *raised* alive. This prediction Jesus gave twice, and when the stone had been removed, so that Lazarus could come forth, Jesus communed with God and said: "Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it, *that they may believe* that thou hast sent me" (John xi. 41, 42). The purpose and intent of Jesus' proclamations, and of the miracle as the testimony of God to authenticate and identify Jesus as the Messiah, and his mission were thus publicly announced, immediately before the miracle was performed, and then "Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. ~~And he that was dead came forth.~~"

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

When, at the grave of Lazarus, Martha voiced the common belief of the Jews, that all the dead would "rise again in the resurrection at the last day," Jesus made the amazing revelation: "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth [at the last day], and believeth in me, shall never die." This was a special and express revelation of Deity, and, like all the revelations here discussed, could not be otherwise ascertained or known. It was supplemental to Jesus' revelation (John v. 17-29 (R. V.), especially ver. 25, 28, 29), "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. . . . Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment."

How could this express revelation of Deity be indubitably proved and authenticated to men? Here Christ's process of

authentication brings into operation a somewhat unusual, yet well-established, method or means of proof, designated as Autoptic or Real. It is defined as "such evidence as is addressed directly to the sense of the [tribunal] court or jury, without the intervention of witnesses."¹

That is demonstrating the proposition to be proved by actual performance before the tribunal.² Here actual demonstration by suffering, extinction of life, being dead, laid away in the tomb, and rising alive at a time previously designated would be Autoptic evidence and proof of the revelation. Jesus foretold he should be killed, and would rise on the third day, thereafter. He was crucified, dead and buried, and rose from the dead on the third day. So the prophecy and God's testimony by miracle combined in Autoptic evidence of Jehovah himself to authenticate and confirm indubitably the special and express revelation of Christ, that in him was the power of resurrection of all the dead, and that at the last day, at his command, all the dead shall hear his voice, and come forth to meet the end and consummation of earthly things.

Much more evidence is found in the Record sustaining the first proposition. We find none opposed. We conclude the testimony establishes the proposition that God has *made his miracle to be his testimony*, and *ordained* it to be used as such to authenticate and confirm to men his special and express revelations and his agents in his service.

SECOND INQUIRY.

We next inquire; Could such revelations of God be indubitably authenticated to men otherwise than by his miracle

¹ American and English Encyclopædia of Law. (2d ed.), p. 563.

² Greenleaf, Evidence (Wigman's ed.), chap. v.; *Eldt v. Cutler* 127, Mass. 522; *Brown v. Foster* 133, Mass. 136; *People v. Constantine* 133, N. Y. 2487.

wrought for that purpose? Although this is a matter about which man may not dogmatize, yet, as the question seeks light and verity regarding the very foundations of faith, may we not conclude that it is not beyond or outside the gracious invitation of Deity; "Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isa. i. 18).

The essential elements of the problem are: (1) what purports to be a special or express revelation of God, i. e. disclosure of truth not otherwise attainable—not otherwise known; and (2) its indubitable authentication to men.

The problem supposes, and is based on, what in any instance purports to be such revelation of God to man. Hence, on what inheres necessarily in the problem on the inquiry, whether what purports to be the revelation is genuine, and how its genuineness can be indubitably authenticated to men, these conclusions follow:—

1. No intelligence except God knows indubitably (before God certifies it) whether or not the alleged revelation is in very truth a revelation of God.

2. Hence, in such case, indubitable authentication of the verity of the alleged revelation is absolutely impossible, otherwise than by God himself,—by him alone.

3. The will and purpose of God, the content of such revelation, is Divine thought, and an indispensable requisite for communicating that Divine thought to man is, that the content to be manifested to human comprehension, in human language, shall truly carry the Divine thought; hence, likewise, no intelligence but God can indubitably certify that the human language employed truly expresses the revelation.

4. Hence indubitable authentication must come from God, and can come from him only. After such authentication has been given by God, published, and recorded, it thereafter stands with the Record.

5. The means or method by which the testimony of God to so authenticate his messages of revelation and his messengers shall be given is as God chooses; but inherent in the problem is this condition, that to secure indubitable certainty it is indispensable that the means employed must be what God alone can control and employ, must be means or method of testifying absolutely impossible except for God—for him only.

6. Hence, whether, as in the case of the Exodus, God's testimony to authenticate his revelation and his agent Moses should be, as it was, by the miracles wrought therefor, or the raising of Lazarus from death to authenticate God's revelation, identifying and manifesting Jesus as the Messiah, or the like; or if God Omniscient and Omnipotent should devise or adopt any other or different means or method of giving his testimony to indubitably authenticate his revelation to men, by the inherent terms of the problem, it must be such means, act, proceeding, or transaction as transcends natural law, transcends every power but the power of God, which is only another way of saying it must be supernatural, and so miracle.

In other words, that which is essential to God's testimony to indubitably authenticate his revelation to men must, however defined, be that which in any just definition will also concurrently rightly define miracle. Hence, on fundamental principles, truths, and conditions inhering in the problem, the conclusion is, that a special or express revelation of God cannot be indubitably authenticated to man otherwise than by the testimony of God, by his miracle wrought therefor. Because the fact includes adoption of method by Deity, it is a fact of controlling force, that the Divine method adopted for authenticating God's revelations to men has, in all recorded instances, been a method in strict accordance with the foregoing conclusions. In that fact, and what inheres in it and is implied by it, the Record corroborates the conclusions.

SUBJECTIVE REVELATIONS.

As is well known, many who disparage or reject, tacitly or otherwise, the Bible record of miracles, and the supernatural generally, do so insisting they are still loyal to the Christian religion. This loyalty is asserted on the contention, that God is interested to benefit human souls now the same as in past ages, that men now attain or achieve inspiration and revelation of God the same every way as in cases recorded in the Bible, that inspiration and revelation are not given or bestowed from without specially or expressly upon any, but that God is immanent among men, and every one who is attent will attain or achieve. Their contentions may vary in phraseology, but in fundamentals may be found stated by Schleiermacher more than a generation ago,—that inspiration and revelation are nothing other than “the activity of the universal mind in the will of the individual for the sake of producing a definite special work.” “So the act of composing one of the Holy Books and the preceding creation of thought in the soul of the Scripture writer, cannot be looked upon as an act of *Divine revelation*.”¹

As there stated, their contention is, that “for the church of our day there is, alongside of and above the written word, the living *Divine revelation*, which continues to operate *as it did* in earlier days.” Their contention is sometimes stated thus: Any person having intellectual ability like Moses, by seeking and pondering on situations, will, by his human spirit itself, achieve inspiration and attain revelations of God the same as that which guided Moses in the Exodus. The experience of Moses himself on that line forty years before the Exodus seems to confirm the contention.

¹Quoted by Rev. Abraham Kuyper, D.D., *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1904, p. 436.

The inherent basis on which these contentions are made seems to bring the matter directly into the realm of psychology, and demonstrate that the mental and spiritual processes by which they contend that alleged inspiration and revelations of God are so achieved, are subjective, *ideal*, as contrasted with what is objective, *real*. The results alleged to be so obtained and promulgated are distinctly within the definition of "subjective," viz, "especially pertaining to or derived from one's own consciousness." The contrast between "subjective" and "objective," by established usage, is stated by Sir William Hamilton: "Objective means that which belongs to or proceeds from the object known, and not from the individual knowing, and denotes what is *real* in opposition to what is *ideal*, what exists in nature in contrast to (*subjective*), what exists *merely in the thought of the individual*."

1. Obviously such contention that man can, by brooding or pondering, achieve inspiration or revelations of God, is distinctly and directly in conflict with the essential concept of revelations of God, viz. "disclosure of truth which cannot be ascertained by natural means." While that conception of revelation of God stands, the contention that man can, by his brooding or pondering, achieve revelations of God, cannot stand a moment: for achievement so contemplated would be achievement by human powers, which are natural means, certainly not unnatural nor supernatural.

2. Such contention is also obviously in direct contradiction of the testimony, in the Record, of unimpeached witnesses, who knew by personal experience the truth of which they testify.

Peter, speaking expressly of inspiration and revelation, says of himself and his associate apostles: "We did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were *eye witnesses*

of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves *heard* come out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount. And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed . . . knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of private interpretation [setting forth]. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 16-21, R. V.).

3. The contention that such subjective processes yield verity in results in regard to religion and spiritual life is not only doubly contradicted by (1) the essential in revelation, and (2) by the Record, but such subjective concepts are (3) what the Record shows were contended for as verity by men professing to be loyal, godly teachers more than two thousand years ago. Such contentions were then condemned, and declared to be the result of self-deception of the very persons who promulgated them; not only condemned, but declared calculated to foster vanity and self-conceit. Of such subjective results the Record is, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts . . . they make you vain; they speak a vision of their own hearts . . . they are prophets of the deceit of their own hearts" (Jer. xxiii. 16, 26).

4. It is common knowledge that such subjective concepts, although utterly destitute of truth, are yet capable of becoming imperative in impelling force over the person by whom they have been evolved, as much so as though imposed, or commanded in fact, directly and expressly by God himself. This is so even to the extent of impelling to the commission of criminal homicide.

Two illustrations will be noticed of cases of victims of such subjective concepts, in each of which the actor, dominated and

impelled by a conviction evolved subjectively from anxious thought, brooding, or pondering, and his own inner consciousness, became guilty of unlawfully slaying a fellow-being.

(1) *The case of Charles F. Freeman.*—The records of the Supreme Judicial Court of the State of Massachusetts for Barnstable County, show the prosecution of Charles F. Freeman for the crime of murder committed May 1, 1879. On a preliminary issue and hearing, Freeman was adjudged sane. Thereafter Freeman's trial for murder was had. He escaped conviction of murder with malice aforethought, on the ground that at the moment of the killing he was not sane. Court and jury seem to have been convinced that in what Freeman did with his daughter he was thoroughly conscientious and sincere. He was condemned to be confined in Danvers Lunatic Hospital during his natural life.

Freeman's case was widely published. As to what is here involved, the facts are understood to have been that Freeman (called sometimes the man of Cohasset) had a little daughter whom he cherished. But he became dominated by a subjective conception that it was his duty to prove his religious devotion, by sacrificing what he most loved and cherished. His brooding centered on his daughter, and he took her life, under the dominating impulse of that subjective conception. This case is modern; the other is ancient.

(2) *The case of Moses.*—Forty years before the Exodus, when Moses was forty years old, he slew the Egyptian (Ex. ii. 12). On the whole Record it is clear that that act of Moses had no sanction from God: it was unauthorized and a crime. It is likewise clear that Moses acted conscientiously, dominated, however, and impelled, by a subjective conviction that the Divine will had been made clear to him, and also to his brethren the children of Israel, that God by Moses' hand would deliver them from Egyptian bondage.

In full faith that that was also verily the conviction and understanding of his brethren, Moses committed the homicide. Moses was wrong. He ran, although God had not called him, nor revealed a call to him. All the evidence is that God did not. But the Record testimony is ample, to account for the conviction that Moses evolved subjectively from pondering the situation. That situation, affecting Moses' brethren the children of Israel, and Moses alike and in common, was, a lively expectation of fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham,— a national country and state, deliverance from bondage after four hundred years, of which three hundred and ninety had passed when Moses slew the Egyptian (Ex. xii. 40, 41). Before Moses' birth, Pharaoh's death decree against all male infants of the Israelites appealed to every family with constant terror, from which decree Moses was marvelously saved through adoption by Pharaoh's daughter,— a notable exception, whereby also Moses became learned and of superior ability, fitted for great undertakings; and, with all that, the urgent need of deliverance was emphasized by "lives bitter with hard bondage" enforced with "rigor."

Broadly and briefly stated, that constituted the situation, and was ample in material and influence to move Moses, by brooding or pondering, to evolve, as he did, his subjective conviction that he was called by God to then and there undertake, as he did, the deliverance of his brethren; and, as already said, with full faith that his brethren, equally cognizant of the situation, and affected by it more immediately, materially, and keenly, had the same conviction and understanding, and concurred with Moses in his conclusion.

The testimony of the martyr Stephen on this is as follows: "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty

years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian; *for he supposed his brethren would have understood, how that God by his hand would deliver them, but they understood not*" (Acts vii. 22-25). Moses' brethren did not understand nor believe, as Moses did, in his false subjective conviction. Moses was disappointed,—found himself the victim of that subjective conviction evolved by "deceit of his own heart,"—and was forced to flee for his life, a criminal manslayer and an outlaw.

Does not the Record reveal and demonstrate the seductive sin, and terrible danger, of the assumption, that man by his own power can in fact verily and certainly attain and know revelations of God (unauthenticated otherwise); and then act on such alleged achieved revelations in dealing with human life either *physically*, as in the foregoing cases, or religiously by teaching men that such conceptions are true revelations of God.