

* OCT 24 1910
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

VOLUME VIII

OCTOBER 1910

NUMBER 4

MIRACLES AND HISTORY.

The remark is frequently made that miracles were formerly a means or weapon of apologetics, but have now become an object of defense. Once an aid to faith, miracles are now regarded by many as a burden, and as some would have it a burden too grievous to be borne. As the work of Paul was to throw off the yoke of legalism, and the task of Luther was to break the bands of sacerdotalism, so, it is assumed, the duty of the present age is to complete the work of emancipation, and to free religion from the twofold yoke of miracle and dogma.

Whatever other aspects the question of miracle may have it is primarily an historical question. Back of such considerations as the possibility or credibility of miracles, or their value as an evidence for the truth of Christianity, lies the more important question, Did the miracles recorded in the New Testament really happen? The perennial interest in the discussion is no doubt due to its inseparable connection with central and cherished beliefs in philosophy and religion, but it is this connection which makes the task of the historian peculiarly difficult. Absolute impartiality in investigating the evidence would be the ideal condition for the historian, but the historical student, as a man of like passions with other men, cannot but be influenced, in considering a question with so intimate philosophical and religious bearings, by the dominant thought of his time.

In proportion, for example, as current opinion in other departments of thought is adverse to belief in miracles, the evidence which the historian will require, as a basis for belief in their actual occurrence, will be stronger and more convincing. Now, as formerly, the objections against miracle are reducible to two, the scientific and the religious; and a brief review of the general situation in scientific and religious thought to-day may not be amiss as we approach the historical problem.

As the range of scientific investigation has widened, the postulate of the reign of law has hardened into an axiom, and the admission of any breach or interruption of natural law has become increasingly difficult. It could be believed even in the days of Leibnitz that angelic beings were harnessed to the planets and conducted them through their orbits, but it has become a commonplace of science that the same physical and chemical laws will explain all the motions of matter throughout the whole material universe. The progress of science, however, cannot be said to be unfriendly to those spiritual convictions which a belief in miracle presupposes. Materialism of the cruder sort has to-day very little scientific standing; modern inventions such as wireless telegraphy, no less than the familiar operations of nature, yield their parable to the preacher; and the deeper study of science in men like Lord Kelvin and Sir Oliver Lodge does not quench but rather kindles faith in spiritual realities. Modern psychology, whether or not to the ultimate advantage of faith in miracles, has emphasized the powers of personality, and thereby in part made the Gospel narratives easier to believe; while the progress of invention has repeatedly pushed back the limits assigned by scientists themselves to what was possible, and research in many branches of science has given new force to the old maxim, *Omnia exeunt in mysterium*. As Prof. J. J. Thomson has recently said: "The sum of knowledge is at present, at any rate, a diverging not a converging series. As we conquer peak after peak we see in front of us regions full of

interest and beauty, but we do not see our goal, we do not see the horizon; in the distance tower still higher peaks, which will yield to those who ascend them still wider prospects, and deepen the feeling, whose truth is emphasized by every advance in science, that 'Great are the Works of the Lord.'"¹

It may be thought, once more, that the advancement of science has done a kind of negative service to miracles by making them, as exceptions to laws universally operative in time and space, harder to believe. If they are still accepted, upon grounds regarded as rational and evidence regarded as sufficient, they acquire a greater significance. Where natural events were thought to be due to the volition of various deities, a miracle or portent might have only a local or temporary significance; but in the light of science no form of polytheism is possible to-day. Monotheism is a corollary in religion of the unity of the physical universe, and a dispensation of miracles, if believed in to-day, must somehow be related to the cosmic order. The progress of knowledge has taught us the lesson of "one God, one law"; and miracles, if we can believe them to-day, must relate themselves to the "one far-off, divine event, to which the whole creation moves."

The tendencies of religious thought have not of late been specially favorable to faith in miracle. Literary criticism as applied to the Old and New Testaments has tended, in part, to discredit the supernatural in general and the miraculous in particular. The four Gospels which contain the record of the miracles of Jesus were once regarded as themselves supernatural in origin and character—"a house not made with hands" (Robertson Nicoll), "a miracle of the Holy Ghost" (Stier). By many critics to-day, on the contrary, they are regarded as a patchwork of traditions rather clumsily put together by

¹ At the close of his President's address before the British Association for the Advancement of Science, at Winnipeg, 1909. See *Science*, Aug. 27, 1909, p. 279.

pious but credulous men. The study of comparative religions has called attention to the wonders of heathen magic and to the miraculous stories which gather round religious personalities: "the magicians did so with their enchantments". Again, the foes of miracle have been found in the very household of faith. Poets of the romantic school have interpreted with such beauty and insight the religious message of nature that a revelation given in exceptional occurrences, in signs and wonders, appears to be unnecessary and inharmonious. "The word Miracle", says Emerson, "as pronounced by the Christian churches, gives a false impression; it is Monster. It is not one with the blowing clover and the falling rain".² The doctrine of the divine immanence has been dominant in religious philosophy, and the transcendence of God implied in miracle has been denied or at least ignored. "If we cannot find the presence of God", it may be said, "in present daily experience, we shall not be apt to find it in the events of two thousand years ago. Piety as well as poetry demands but one miracle, the universal presence of the living God. Believe in miracles in the old sense if you will and if you can; but do not make them an essential article of the creed of the Church. If any man have faith let him have it to himself before God". Whether the depreciation of miracle be deplored as a sign of the decline of faith and the loosening of theological conviction, or be welcomed as an advance toward a purely spiritual and ethical religion, there is no doubt of its prominence in modern religious thought.

The historian, as we see, in approaching the question of miracle is beset by scientific objections, philosophic prepossessions and theological arguments pro and con. He may find the question so complicated with other questions, thought to lie outside his province, that he may leave the ultimate decision to metaphysics or to physical science. This is practically the attitude of Langlois and Seignobos, who say, "The very notion of a miracle is metaphysical;

² *Nature, Addresses and Lectures*, p. 109.

it implies a conception of the universe as a whole which transcends the limits of observation". And again, "The indirect method of history is always inferior to the direct methods of the sciences of observation. Historical science, with its imperfect means of information, cannot claim to check, contradict, or correct the results of other sciences, but must rather use their results to correct its own".³ The historian, in this view, when he finds a narrative containing accounts of the miraculous, will abdicate his claim to judge of its historical value in favor of the scientist or the metaphysician, neither of whom are by interest or training particularly concerned with the question of historical evidence. The principles thus laid down would either leave unused a mass of material which lies ready to the historian's hand, or would pass an *a priori* and therefore unscientific judgment upon narratives of the miraculous, rejecting them *en bloc* in the one case upon the principle that "miracles do not happen", or else accepting them in the other upon the authority of tradition, and in either case leaving the evidence unexamined.

While the historian cannot claim to go his way without regard to scientific probabilities or philosophic convictions, it comports ill with the dignity of his science to surrender to the physical scientist or to the metaphysician his prerogative of estimating the value of evidence. The victories won in the field of physical science should lead him to apply similar methods to historical problems, rather than to decide these problems upon *a priori* grounds.⁴ The historian in fact has the means, without going outside the limits of his own

³ *Introduction to the Study of History*, E. T., pp. 207n. and 207-208. They say again, "The historian is not called upon to investigate the first cause or final causes any more than the chemist or naturalist." P. 286.

⁴ Prof. W. E. Collins says that history uses "the method of induction". "It has nothing to do (that is, so far as it is truly historical) with *a priori* reasoning; it assumes nothing and takes nothing for granted, but moves from the known to the unknown in accordance with fixed and definite laws. In other words, it makes use of precisely the same inductive method which has led to all our modern triumphs in natural science." *Study of Ecclesiastical History*, p. 18.

science, to estimate the value of the evidence for miracle. Says Mr. H. B. George, speaking of historical documents, "If their credibility is rated high, it becomes more difficult to disparage any statement in them, whether it is called miraculous or not."⁵ Again there may be alleged miraculous events, such as those related in the New Testament, with consequences in the stream of history so far-reaching and impressive that it becomes, for the historian who would understand events in their causal connection, a matter of prime importance to decide whether these narratives of miracle are trustworthy or not. The denial of the miraculous event or the elimination of its miraculous character might conceivably leave a gap in historical continuity not to be filled except through admission of the miracle, and in this case it would be a sorry tribute to the principles of thought to deny, in the name of natural science, the influence of factors demanded by the higher law of cause and effect. The purpose of natural science is to make nature intelligible, and it would be invoked to poor purpose if the result were to make history unintelligible.

What then should be the attitude of the historian when face to face with the reputed facts of the Christian history? We believe that it is correctly expressed by Schmiedel when he says: "The normal procedure of the historian in dealing with events of the past will be in the first instance to try whether a non-miraculous explanation will serve, and to come to the other conclusion only on the strength of quite unexceptional testimony".⁶ The prime requisite is of course a mind open to the reception of the evidence and disposed to give it its proper weight. But, it may be asked, is not this requirement of an open mind a demand that the historian should pass upon questions of "first cause and final causes", and do not these questions lie outside the historian's province? No amount of evidence for miracle, it is usually allowed, will convince an

⁵ *Historical Evidence* (1909), p. 169.

⁶ *Encycl. Bibl.*, Art. "Resurrection and Ascension Narratives", c. 4040.

atheist, and it will be said that to ask the historian to give due weight to the evidence is practically to demand that he be a theist at least, if not a Christian, in his religious philosophy. The truth is, we see again, that the question of miracle while an historical question is not solely an historical question. No amount of evidence probably can convince one of the occurrence of a causeless event; so the investigator of miracle, if a miracle be an event not due to the ordinary processes of nature but due to the immediate exercise of divine power, while he need not be a convinced theist, must yet admit at least the possibility of the theistic postulate. So again no amount of evidence perhaps can convince the theist that God would work an isolated and meaningless marvel, or that His power should be the immediate cause of an event offensive to the moral sense, or utterly incongruous with the character and mission of the performer. To say that the evidence must be viewed in the light of the existence or possibility of an efficient Cause, is then only to say that the evidence must not be thrown out of court in advance on account of anti-theistic prepossession. And to say that the evidence should be examined in the light of the benevolent purpose of God and the needs of men, and in relation to the mission and character of Jesus and His apostles, is to say that the motive for an action and its appropriateness to the character of the performer are always to be considered in weighing the evidence that the action was performed.

Given the admission of the evidence for miracles, have we in support of the New Testament miracles the "quite unexceptional testimony" required? When, under the guidance of Harnack, we open the Acts of the Apostles, we find in its author a witness of the very highest order. In the preface of his former work Luke claims to have examined the evidence with great care, and the character of the Acts justifies a similar claim for it also. In chronological matters the Acts is a "very respectable historical work", whose lack of definiteness in cases where the author

lacked definite information enhances "our recognition of the trustworthiness of the book".⁷ Again, "all that Luke directly or indirectly tells us concerning the provinces, countries, and cities of Asia Minor, and concerning the routes of Paul's journeys, is unexceptional from the geographical standpoint".⁸ In summarizing his estimate of Luke as an historian, Harnack says: "The geographical and chronological references and notices in the book show the circumspection, the care, the consistency, and the trustworthiness of the writer".⁹ His treatment of persons and reports of their speeches justify the same general high estimate.¹⁰ In the first half of the Acts alone there are thirty-nine passages confirmed by statements in Paul's epistles. "The agreement which in these numerous instances exist between the Acts (chaps. i—xiv) and the Pauline epistles, although the latter are only incidental writings belonging to the latter years of the Apostle, is so extensive and so detailed as to exclude all wild hypotheses concerning those passages of the Acts that are without attestation in these epistles".¹¹ Among the statements thus attested is that "the power to work miracles and signs appears as part of the equipment of an apostle and missionary".¹² These epistles supply an even more stringent test for the accuracy of the latter half of Acts.¹³ Luke was an eye-witness of some of the miracles recorded, for it is a part of Harnack's argument for unity of authorship that the attitude toward the supernatural is the same in the "we-sections" as in the earlier chapters.¹⁴ Further, Luke was not only a companion of Paul but was in touch with the leaders of the Jerusalem Church, James, Philip, Silas

⁷ *Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 29, 30.

⁸ P. 102.

⁹ P. 112.

¹⁰ Pp. 117ff.

¹¹ P. 272.

¹² P. 270.

¹³ P. xxxviii.

¹⁴ P. 141.

and Mark,¹⁵ and almost certainly with Peter and Barnabas.¹⁶ Moreover Luke's "self-restraint vouches well for the relative trustworthiness of the Jerusalem accounts"; and of all the miracles of Acts it may be said "that, measured by the miracles of the *Acta Pauli* or of the *Acta Johannis* and later apocryphal Acts of the Apostles they appear scarcely miracles at all".¹⁷ When finally we remember that Luke's training as a physician would be apt to incline him to skepticism rather than credulity, (he still practised medicine according to Harnack, p. xi., and we recall the old adage, *ubi tres medici, ibi duo athei*), we may well wonder how his testimony to the miracles of the early Church could possibly be stronger. Certainly in point of intelligence, candor, absence of credulity as compared with contemporaries, abundant means of information through his own observation and close association with the leaders of the Church, proved accuracy of statement in numerous details where his statements can be controlled, confirmation of his statements by contemporary documents, and professional bias, he is a witness whose testimony is of the "quite unexceptional" character required by Schmiedel, if not quite of the miraculous degree of strength demanded by Hume.

The number of miracles to which Luke is supposed to give testimony is somewhat reduced in Harnack's hands by a rather free use of the theory of coincidence.¹⁸ It is

¹⁵ P. 164.

¹⁶ Pp. 149, 150.

¹⁷ P. 160.

¹⁸ Among the cases so treated are the earthquake at Philippi, "a natural occurrence treated as a special instance of Providential interference" (p. 141); the recovery of Eutychus from the shock of his fall, although "of course Luke regarded, and would have us regard the occurrence as an instance of raising from the dead" (p. 146); the raising of Dorcas whose place in primary tradition is defended ("I consider it quite probable that, even during the lifetime of Peter stories were current concerning dead who had been raised again by that apostle, indeed that he himself may have believed that he had called a dead woman to life again") (p. 152); the punishment of Herod, "a real event narrated from a religious point of view" (p. 153); the trembling

true that the explanation of coincidence readily suggests itself in some of the cases as probable, and it is sometimes very difficult to decide whether an event should be called miraculous or strikingly "providential". It may well be that Eutychus was merely stunned by his fall, although a physician present (Luke) thought that he was dead, and it is quite possible that a missionary (Paul) should be released from prison by an earthquake, a "natural event timed opportunely", as Dr. Sanday has expressed it;¹⁹ but that within the same religious circle a woman already laid out for burial should revive as another missionary (Peter) prayed, and that perhaps there should be another earthquake, "a natural occurrence", so timed as to assist and confirm the ecstasy of the disciples, puts a rather excessive strain upon our belief. The explanation of coincidence, which works well for one event, becomes less convincing the more it is used, and the coincidence of so many coincidences, occurring within the apostolic circle, itself cries aloud for a non-natural explanation.

Harnack's objections to Luke's testimony to miracle are really reducible to two. In the first place, Luke was superstitious, a "Christian Scientist", who thought that he himself worked miracles and that others performed them. He was influenced as Harnack says in mild reproach of such modern writers as Ramsay, B. Weiss and Zahn, by the "conviction that miracles really happened."²⁰ Although Luke was less

of the place, iv. 31, when it is said that the disciples' ecstasy "was assisted and confirmed by an earthquake" (p. 185n.),—elsewhere it is suggested that "the trembling of ecstasy is transferred to the place, &c." (p. 154); the blinding of Elymas, of which "it is enough to know that the Proconsul's magician lost his eyesight at the time that the influence of Paul won over his master" (p. 153); the death of Ananias, in which case we may even "suppose that Peter really pronounced a sentence of death against the guilty pair and that their death actually followed . . . How this took place scarcely allows of conjecture" (p. 155); and finally Peter's release from prison by an angel, where "we may suppose that such a wonderful (*i. e.*, entirely unexpected) release really occurred; the details of the story vouch for this" (p. 160n.).

¹⁹ *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 217.

²⁰ P. 302. Cf. pp. 148, 273.

credulous than other authors of his time, and as we are told less credulous than his sources,²¹ his testimony to miracles is vitiated by the fact that he believed that miracles happened. Who then could give competent testimony to the occurrence of miracles, if they really occurred? Not Luke, who was a sort of "Christian Scientist"; not Peter if he could be placed upon the witness stand, for he himself probably thought that he had raised a dead woman to life; not Paul, for he too believed that he wrought miracles; and not the members of the Primitive Community, for even in their case "later legends and legends with a doctrinal tendency show themselves even more powerful than the memory of the actual history".²²

But Harnack has a second and weightier objection to Luke's narrative of the miraculous. In his account in Acts of the Resurrection and Ascension, Luke has altered his own account at the end of his Gospel in favor of "a tertiary tradition, indeed a myth",²³ and it is asked "why may he not previously have given up a primary in exchange for a secondary tradition?"²⁴ Again as regards his description of Pentecost Luke has not seen that his account in Acts ii. is really a doublet of Acts iv. 31,²⁵ which according to Harnack describes "the actual historical Pentecost".²⁶ The point here raised of the difference between Luke's condensed account of the Resurrection and Ascension in his Gospel and the more extended and detailed account in Acts, no doubt presents a real and important difficulty. It is allowable to suggest, however, that the differences in the records do not invalidate the testimony to the central facts common to both, and Harnack himself, with his keen vision for the

²¹ P. 148.

²² P. 158. A remark of Prof. James concerning another matter may here be recalled: "A rule of thinking which would absolutely prevent me from acknowledging certain kinds of truth if those kinds of truth were really there, would be an irrational rule." *Will to Believe*, p. 28.

²³ P. 159.

²⁴ P. 157.

²⁵ P. 241.

²⁶ P. 184.

literary features of Luke's writings, has perhaps pointed out the direction in which we may look for a solution of the problem presented by the fore-shortened perspective of the Gospel's close. Arguing that the lack of definiteness as to time, place, etc., in Acts chap. ii. is not to be accounted for by supposing a written source, definite in these details but spoiled by an editor, he says: "It is ever so much more natural to suppose that we have here a worked-up narrative of a character that of itself forbids close examination into the clearness and definiteness of its details, because throughout one single point is kept in view. The unprejudiced reader does not notice these instances of obscurity—on the other hand, the essential point of the narrative stands out quite clearly—nor were they probably noticed by Luke himself."²⁷ It is quite apparent, as is pointed out also by Dr. Denney,²⁸ that in the last chapter of Luke's Gospel a single point is kept in view, that of the appearance of the Risen Christ in its full significance to the eleven and in its relation to the last commission; and this point stands out in the narrative all the more clearly because of the absence of detail. And further this lack of definiteness is pardonable in a writer who, as is probable, is contemplating another work in which some omitted details of time and place are to be supplied.²⁹

Of the extraordinary theory that Luke in his earlier chapters has unconsciously given us a double account of Pentecost little need here be said, particularly since, so far as observed, this view has not met with much favor from other critics. The presumption remains strongly in favor of Luke, as he was not a historian of a later age piecing to-

²⁷ Pp. 239, 240.

²⁸ *Jesus and the Gospel*, pp. 138-141.

²⁹ "The natural tendency is to think that the closer the agreement is, the greater is its demonstrative power; we ought, on the contrary, to adopt as a rule the paradox that an agreement proves more when it is confined to a small number of circumstances. It is at such points of coincidence between diverging statements that we are to look for scientifically established historical facts." Langlois and Seignobos, *op. cit.*, pp. 201, 202.

gether musty documents, but was in living contact with the actors in his history. Since his theme in Acts, as Harnack has so well expressed it, is "the power of the Spirit of Jesus in the apostles manifested in history",³⁰ it is natural to suppose that Luke would exercise unusual care in verifying from actual witnesses the accounts of a fact so fundamental to his whole history as that of the original descent of the Spirit. When the doublets discovered by Harnack are examined, it is seen that in one of them the descent of the Spirit is made the basis of the numerous conversions, the miracle of the lame man, and the boldness of the apostles; while in the other the miracle of the lame man (which we are led to believe may not have been as much of a miracle as is usually supposed) becomes the determining cause of the whole development.³¹ The more this theory of discrepant doublets is examined, the more likely, it is probable, will the reader be to accept Luke's "grandiose" account of Pentecost, as explaining the activity and success of the apostles, rather than Harnack's attenuated account.

The testimony of the apostle Paul to miracle corroborates that of Luke and is in itself of supreme importance. Not only the direct testimony of Paul to miracles, but the witness of his recorded words, and of his epistles, of his conversion and his career, to the Resurrection of Jesus, unless all such testimony belongs of necessity to the "charmed circle" of legend, is of the highest consequence. In a recent volume Dr. G. A. Gordon has attempted, with much beauty of rhetoric as well as elevation of feeling, to assimilate Paul's experience in his conversion and his vision of the Risen Christ to the experience of the Christian to-day. "If we are to have contact with the living Christ, it can be only after the manner of Paul. We must meet him in our way through the world; we must hear his voice out of the invisible,—we must be arrested by an immediate question from him, 'Why persecutest thou me?'"³² Dr.

³⁰ P. xviii.

³¹ Pp. 179, 184.

³² *Religion and Miracle*, p. 119.

Gordon says that "the experience of Paul sets the ideal for all disciples : 'nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me'. Here we are out of the region of miracle; we are in a far higher world, we are in the world of soul and love and triumphant life".³³ It is rather surprising to find Paul's words used in an argument to prove that miracles, including that of the Resurrection, are superfluous for religion. Is Saul among the prophets? Paul's preaching was based upon a miraculous fact, that Christ died and rose again, on the third day; his conversion and call to apostleship were, according to his own words, founded upon the fact that the Risen Lord had appeared to him in the way; the Resurrection of Jesus in its varied implications was woven into the very fabric of his thinking;³⁴ and miracles, "what Christ wrought through me", were the regular accompaniment and authentication of his apostolic mission.³⁵

It is sometimes said that Paul has given us no detailed description of any of his miracles, but there seems to be no reasonable doubt that, if he had done so, his miracles would be found to be of the same character as those attributed to Peter and to himself in the Acts. Just as he ranges his own vision of the Risen Christ along side of that of the other apostles, so, in a controversial passage in which he asserts that in nothing was he behind the chiefest apostles, he declares as not open to question: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works."³⁶ It is indeed difficult to see how a witness could be found, or even imagined, the testimony of whose words, religious experience and world-moving labors would be more telling upon the subject of miracles.

The witness of the Gospels to the miracles of Jesus, quite aside from the question of their authorship, is admittedly

³³ *Op. cit.*, p. 138.

³⁴ Cf. Rom. i. 4; iv. 25; vi. 4; vii. 4; viii. 34; x. 9; xiv. 9.

³⁵ Rom. xv. 19; II Cor. xii. 12.

³⁶ II Cor. xii. 11, 12. Cf. I Cor. xv. 4.

strong. Whether or not we have first hand evidence in Matthew, or in one of its sources, or in John, it is generally allowed in the case of the Synoptics, and quite commonly in the case of John, that we have at least good second hand evidence. It is admitted on every hand that the apostles founded the Church in the belief that Jesus had risen from the dead, however this belief is to be accounted for, and the apostolic band, if their testimony could be produced, would doubtless unite in their witness to the central miracle of the Resurrection. Again there can scarcely be a doubt that the apostolic witness, however accurately or loosely it may be reproduced in detail in the Gospels, would coincide with the Gospels in testimony to the mighty works of Jesus' ministry. Critical study has shown, as Traub has indicated,³⁷ that in their view of miracles there is no essential difference between the Synoptic Gospels and John, and that the Gospels are of one piece in their interest in miracles and in the value assigned to them. All four Gospels, for example, contain the "nature miracle" of the feeding of the multitude, and all the strata of tradition that criticism can discover testify to the raising of the dead.³⁸ Of the mighty works of Jesus in general it has been recently said: "So closely are most of these stories (of His mighty works in general) interwoven with the most probable incidents of His life, so supported are they by His authentic words, so sustained by direct and indirect evidence of every sort, that to tear them from the Evangelical narrative would be to renounce definitely and forever the hope of any real knowledge of the life of Jesus".³⁹

³⁷ *Die Wunder im Neuen Testament*, pp. 22, 33.

³⁸ Mark and parallels tell of the raising of Jairus' daughter (Traub thinks it very doubtful whether the words in Mk. v. 39, "She is not dead but sleepeth," are to be regarded as a medical diagnosis and not rather as an expression of the Christian assurance that for believers death has become a sleep. *Op. cit.*, p. 45); the special matter of Luke tells of the widow's son; John of Lazarus; and the non-Markan source called Q contains the message to the Baptist, "the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, etc."

³⁹ Worcester and McComb, *Religion and Medicine*, p. 339.

The minute study of the Gospels which modern criticism has promoted, aided by the progress of psychology and the rise of the modern healing cults, has brought about an interesting situation. It has come to be generally acknowledged even by those who in terms would deny the occurrence of miracles, that the record of the healing ministry is largely if not wholly trustworthy. The study of the Gospels has, it may be said, compelled belief in the healing ministry, and modern psychology has facilitated it. This attitude of acceptance of the works of healing and rejection of miracles of another class found classical expression in Harnack's aphorism: "That the earth in its course stood still; that a she-ass spoke; that a storm was quieted by a word, we do not believe, and we never shall again believe; but that the lame walked, the blind saw, and the deaf heard will not be so summarily dismissed as an illusion".⁴⁰ This attitude toward the healing wonders in writers with no special bias toward the supernatural may be abundantly illustrated. Schmiedel, for example, says, "According to Mk. vi. 5f. we are to understand that Jesus healed where he found faith. This power is so strongly attested throughout the first and second centuries that, in view of the spiritual greatness of Jesus and the imposing character of his personality, it would be indeed difficult to deny it to him".⁴¹ Similarly Dr. Andrew D. White: "While modern thought holds the testimony to the vast mass of such legends in all ages as worthless, it is very widely acknowledged that great and gifted beings who endow the earth with higher religious ideas, gaining the deepest hold upon the hearts and minds of multitudes, may at times exercise such influence upon those about them

⁴⁰ *What is Christianity*, pp. 30, 31. Cf. the statement in regard to the lame man, Acts iii; "These cures of lameness as well as the cures of blindness . . . could well have actually taken place—cures, more especially cures of lameness, by suggestion are recorded at all times." *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 151.

⁴¹ *Encycl. Bibl.*, Art. "Gospels" c. 1884.

that the sick in mind or body are helped or healed".⁴² And Dr. G. A. Gordon says : "That He wrought wonders upon the physical life of men is beyond dispute. That He gained access to the souls of the plain people by his marvelous power as a healer of physical distress is not open to question".⁴³ The author of *Ecce Homo* thinks that without the works of healing the name of Jesus would be known only to the antiquarian,⁴⁴ and Ewald says that "without the daily miracle of healing worked by Jesus Christ, there is no Gospel history left".⁴⁵

This general admission of works of power and mercy in the ministry of Jesus, whether these works be called miraculous or not, is an important step in the direction of recognizing the reliability of the Gospel narratives. But whether this admission is in the interests of belief in miracles is open to question. From the standpoint of historical criticism these works are very largely accepted, but in the light of modern psychology, mental healing, and the phenomena of the healing cults they are regarded as susceptible of a non-miraculous explanation. Thus Traub, who finds the secret of the mighty works in the healing power of suggestion, says : "Even the much-maligned modern science has established the fact that Jesus actually performed remarkable cures. But it has not thereby given any help to the old-time faith in miracle; it has drawn the miraculous out of the corner where it supposed that it had a quiet resting place".⁴⁶

Two queries are suggested by the situation thus presented: Can the healing ministry of Jesus be adequately explained by the psychology of suggestion? And can a

⁴² *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, vol. ii., p. 5.

⁴³ *Religion and Miracle*, p. 131.

⁴⁴ P. 58.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Godet, *Defense of the Christian Faith*,³ p. 118.

⁴⁶ Gerade die vielgeschmähte moderne Wissenschaft hat festgestellt, dass Jesus tatsächlich merkwürdige Heilungen vollbracht hat. Damit hat sie ja dem alten Mirakelglauben keinen Dienst getan; sie hat die Mirakel wieder aus einer Ecke vertrieben, wo sie einen ruhigen Platz zu haben meinten. *Die Wunder im Neuen Testament*, p. 41.

line be drawn between the healing wonders and the other miracles of the Gospels so that the former may be accepted and the latter rejected? (1) The influence of mind over body and the beneficial effects of religious faith, with its resulting cheerfulness and hopefulness, upon the bodily health, are not newly discovered facts. They have been known from the time when the Wise Man wrote, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine," to the remark of a modern physician, popularly attributed to Dr. Osler, that he prescribed but three remedies: faith, hope and *nux vomica*. In modern times, however, the study of hypnotism and suggestion in its various forms has not only enlarged our knowledge of the whole subject, but has shown that the power of mind over body in general, and the power of one person's mind mediately over the body of another, may be much greater than was formerly supposed. The influence of commanding personalities, such as great military or religious leaders, and of critical and startling situations has been studied and shown to be capable of bringing out not only surprising displays of courage and heroism, but quite unsuspected exhibitions of physical strength and endurance.⁴⁷

Again it is not a thing incredible to normal Christian experience that God should heal the sick in answer to prayer, without miracle in the strict sense. The admitted cures performed under the various healing sects, as well as the extraordinary claims put forth by some of them, strengthen the belief that there may be latent and hitherto unsuspected powers in personality and in nature available for the cure

⁴⁷ At the battle of Five Forks General Sheridan was just giving the order to advance when "a man in the skirmish line was struck in the neck; the blood spurted as if the jugular vein had been cut. 'I'm killed!' he cried, and dropped to the ground. 'You're not hurt a bit,' cried Sheridan. 'Pick up your gun, man, and move right on to the front.' Such was the electric effect of his words that the poor fellow snatched up his musket, and rushed forward a dozen paces before he fell, never to rise again." Horace Porter: *Campaigning with Grant*, p. 437. Similar instances are given in W. James' "*The Powers of Men*," published as a tract by the Emmanuel Movement, Boston.

of disease. It is natural then that the New Testament miracles should be studied in the light of these modern instances, and of the newly discovered or suspected powers of personality, and that an effort should be made to assimilate the miracles to experiences open to observation to-day which, while mysterious enough, are not regarded as miraculous. It is not strange that men should argue by analogy from what men are known to do to-day to what Paul or Luke may have done, and from Paul and Luke to the greater works of the greater personality of Jesus.⁴⁸

The effort "to make both ends meet", as Dr. Sanday has expressed it,⁴⁹ by doing justice on the one hand to the recorded events of the Gospels, and by giving to these events on the other hand a natural explanation through the aid of the psychology of suggestion, is without doubt the most significant and interesting feature of the recent discussion of the subject. So far as the attempt is successful, we may, it is presumed, retain the old and precious faith in Jesus as the Great Physician, and yet may be relieved of the burden of miracle. The cures performed by Jesus, as the response to human faith, may still have religious value—they called upon the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them from their distresses,—and a mystery, perhaps impenetrable, surrounds these cures. The influence of mind upon matter, even in its most familiar manifestations, is often thought to present an insoluble problem in metaphysics, and the phenomena of hypnotism and suggestion heighten this mystery to a striking degree; but we are nevertheless enabled, it is thought, through the mediation of psychology, to believe in the healing ministry of Jesus with a conscience void of offense both toward the Gospel record and toward the scientific conception of the universe.

It may now be asked, however, whether this attempted assimilation of the healing power of Jesus and the powers of the modern hypnotist or healer (assuming for the moment

⁴⁸ Cf. Sanday: *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, pp. 222, 223.

⁴⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 203.

that the healer does not work miracles) has been really successful. Or, in making the attempt, are the powers of nature expanded beyond the limits that sober scientific judgment would approve, or else the mighty works of Jesus contracted into limits so narrow as to do injustice to the Gospel records? Even Dr. Sanday, the most cautious of those who have attempted this adjustment between miracles and modern science, admits that some concessions must be made. "Deduct something perhaps from the historical statement of the fact; and add something to our conception of what is possible in the course of nature; and if the two ends do not exactly meet we may yet see that they are not very far from meeting".⁵⁰ The leaders of the Emmanuel Movement, again, have attempted the adjustment more in detail so far as the Gospel miracles are concerned, and it is plainly in their interest both to confirm the historicity of the Gospel accounts and to show that their own method of the "moral control of nervous disorders" was used by Jesus in His own healing ministry. We may appreciate to the full the purpose of the movement, the sobriety of its claims and its large measure of success in alleviating both mental and physical distress, without being convinced that its leaders can find in the miracles of the Gospel support for their particular method. A glance at the claims of the Emmanuel leaders and at their treatment of the Gospel records of healing may show some ground for this doubt. Dr. Worcester is modest in his claims in the introduction of *Religion and Medicine*, saying that "as an independent remedial agent the legitimate sphere of psychotherapy is strictly limited. It is in the field of functional neuroses that all its real victories have been won".⁵¹ Yet in the chapter on "The Healing Wonders of Christ", it is intimated that all the cures wrought by Jesus can be accounted for by the same principle as that used in the Emmanuel treatment; that of suggestion. Of the

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 223.

⁵¹ P. 4.

healing of the leper, it is said : "In the ancient world two types of leprosy were recognized, the one curable, the other incurable. And from the vague description given in the Gospels we are unable to decide which type is referred to. An analogy to the healing of the milder type may perhaps be found in the well-known fact that certain forms of eczema are recognized to be largely of nervous origin and are amenable to the influence of suggestion. 'Eruptions on the skin', says a distinguished medical writer, 'will follow excessive nervous strain'".⁵²

Of a different case, however, it is said : "Even at a distance, as in the case of the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter, He is able to effect a cure,—a feat not unexampled in modern times and certainly not to be set aside when we take into consideration the results of psychical research".⁵³ In both of these cases, it may be suspected, there is a little straining necessary in order to make out the analogy; in the first instance by a substantial reduction from the face value of the record, and in the second by a tribute to the power of modern "absent treatment" scarcely warranted by a sober estimate of the available evidence. From the narrative we have no reason to suppose that the Evangelists or the people who heard of the cure⁵⁴ thought of the leprosy as being different, for example, from that of Naaman; and we recall what the king of Israel said when appealed to in behalf of the leprosy of Naaman, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?"⁵⁵

⁵² Pp. 345, 346.

⁵³ P. 362.

⁵⁴ The effect of the publication, as given in Mk. i. 45, is that "Jesus could no more openly enter into a city, . . . and they came to him from every quarter." Lk. v. 15 says, "great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed of their infirmities."

⁵⁵ II Ki. v. 7. Strauss' polemic against the naturalistic theory of Paulus will be recalled. Speaking of the cure of demoniacal insanity, Strauss said: "But while granting the possibility of many cures, it is evident that in this field the legend has not been idle, but has confounded the easier cases, which alone could be cured psychologically,

In the attempted explanation of the Gospel cures by the principle of suggestion, it is only fair to notice the contrast between these and the cures effected by those who professedly use this principle. The leaders of the Emmanuel Movement, for example, profess to treat with success only a certain kind of disorders, functional and nervous; Jesus, according to the records, cured all manner of sickness and disease among the people. Even of patients of the desired kind, the Emmanuel leaders do not pretend to cure or benefit all who come for treatment—there are some hits and a good many misses.⁵⁶ Jesus healed them all, the only limitation, if we interpret the passage Mk. vi. 5, 6 aright, being one not due to lack of power, but growing out of the moral situation. Their treatment by religious suggestion is regularly accompanied by medical treatment; and the resulting cures are as a rule, we believe, gradual; He healed instantaneously⁵⁷ by a word or touch, or without either. The same motive of compassion for human suffering no doubt underlies the healing ministry of Jesus and that of the Emmanuel Movement, but in point of comprehensiveness, of method of treatment, and of uniform success the contrast is more striking than the analogy.

In the case of Christian Science the analogy, from the standpoint of claims put forward, is much closer. Christian Scientists make no distinction in theory between organic and functional disease, they discard the use of medicine or other material means, and where there is faith their treatment should be immediately and uniformly suc-

with the most difficult and complicated, to which such a treatment was totally inapplicable." (*Life of Jesus*, translated from fourth German edition, vol. II., p. 479.) In spite of advances in psychology and medicine in the last half century, it is evident that the theory of suggestion still needs to be helped out quite largely by the legendary theory to account for the full record of the healing ministry.

⁵⁶ Their own estimate, according to current report, is that they accept for treatment two-thirds of those who apply to them, and of those accepted two-thirds are benefited or cured.

⁵⁷ With one exception, of course, Mk. viii. 22-26, where there were two stages in the cure.

cessful. But these claims, as all investigators who are not Christian Scientists, and the practice of many Christian Scientists themselves as well, unite in testifying, must be considerably abated. In the class of cases where a true test of these claims could best be made, i. e., surgical cases, the text-book of Christian Science itself confesses failure. We are told, indeed that "bones have only the substantiality of the thought which formed them", but are advised by Mrs. Eddy that "until the advancing age admits the efficiency and supremacy of Mind, it is better to leave broken bones and dislocations to the fingers of a surgeon, etc".⁵⁸ It is not unusual, we believe, for the healer to refuse to treat surgical cases. Dr. R. C. Cabot thinks that by a sort of "natural selection" sufferers from organic disease rarely consult the Christian Scientist, and his investigation of "One Hundred Christian Science Cures"⁵⁹ leads him to the conclusion, "first, that most Christian Science cures are probably genuine; but second, that they are not the cures of organic diseases". Over against the mental and physical benefits conferred by their treatment should fairly be placed the fear produced by the theory of "malicious animal magnetism"—if thought can cure it can also kill—and the reported tragedies resulting from neglect of medical advice or other necessary precautions. A careful examination by an outsider of the benefits or evils of Christian Science will scarcely lead to the conclusion that there is enough similarity in their cures to those of the Gospels to argue either that the Gospel miracles are reproduced in Christian Science practice, or that the modern instances explain the miracles of the Gospels. No method of healing known to-day, it may be asserted with confidence, can cure all forms of disease, or is uniformly successful with any form.

⁵⁸ *Science and Health*, edition of 1895, pp. 421, 400.

⁵⁹ *McClure's Magazine*, Aug., 1908. He says that he has never in his researches found a case "in which there was any good evidence that cancer, consumption, or any other organic disease had been arrested or banished."

Cases of dispossession readily lend themselves to the explanation of cure by suggestion, and the method of rebuke used by Jesus in such cases is sometimes regarded as typical of the method used in all His cures. Not only are cases of demoniacal possession regarded as those of nervous disorder, but other symptoms, such as those of fever, loss of hearing or speech, lameness, blindness and paralysis, are brought within the category of possession, and thus thought to imply no real impairment of the organs affected, but to be of nervous or hysterical character.⁶⁰ But even in the plainest cases of dispossession, the assumption that the cures were wrought through the conscious or unconscious use of certain psychophysical laws whose operation may be studied to-day, is not without its difficulties. Our authorities unite in believing, doubtless correctly, that Jesus attributed the disease, at least where He said, "Come out from him", to demon possession. Even the authors of *Religion and Medicine* say, "His ignorance of psychology and physiology is one of the limitations of His human knowledge".⁶¹ We cannot then refer His uniform success to superior knowledge of the nature of diseases, mental or physical, for at least in the cases of possession His diagnosis was incorrect. Nor are we able to attribute His cures to superior knowledge of those laws of suggestion, and of the influence of mind over body, of which students now know more than they did, but of which they do not yet know the limits; for His own explanation of the method of the cure was, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons".⁶² Certainly then the Gospel cures are not to be regarded as miracles of knowledge, or as due

⁶⁰ Traub treats the use of the hand, of the word of rebuke, or of spittle, by Jesus in His cures as indicating the belief that the disease was due to a demon. *Op. cit.*, p. 53f. Schmiedel says: "It is highly significant that, in a discourse of Peter (Acts x. 38), the whole activity of Jesus is summed up in this, that He went about doing good and healing all those that were oppressed of the devil. By this expression demoniacs are intended." *Encycl. Bibl.*, art. "Gospels," c. 1884.

⁶¹ P. 361.

⁶² Mt. xii. 28. Cf. Lk. xi. 20, "If I by the finger of God, etc."

to superior knowledge either of the laws of the psychophysical organism, or of the power of suggestion. How then, under the admission of ignorance of diagnosis, are we to account, apart from miracle, for the uniform and incomparable success of the treatment? Traub says finally, as explaining the healing power, "The principal means of healing was and remains the personal impression. Jesus overpowered".⁶³ And should one ask upon what this overpowering personal impression itself rests, the answer is, "Here we stand at the boundary of historical knowledge".⁶⁴ The solution proposed for the mysterious problem of demoniacal possession as recorded in the Gospels, is not at least so clear that it can be used as a key for the understanding of all of the healing ministry. The elimination of superior knowledge both of the nature of the disease and of the method of cure may be said rather to deepen than to dispel the mystery.

(2) Beside the healing wonders, the Gospels contain accounts of other mighty works to which the principle of conscious or unconscious suggestion are plainly inapplicable. If all the diseases mentioned in the records, whether of lameness, blindness or leprosy, were of the hysterical order, there is a broad line of distinction between the healing works and the other reported miracles; but if the healing ministry be accepted in its fulness and at its face value, the reason for making the distinction here will be less obvious. If Jesus really healed all manner of disease among the people, if He cured the paralytic and restored the withered hand, if He opened the eyes of the blind, if He delivered the leper from his "death-in-life", took the demoniac from his "hell-in-life" and left him clothed and in his right mind, if He had power to call back those who were at the very gates of death, He did the works which no other had done, or

⁶³ Die Hauptmittel war und bleibt der persönliche Eindruck. Jesus überwältigte. *Die Wunder im N. T.*, p. 56.

⁶⁴ Fragt man uns zum Schluss, worin beruhte jener persönliche Eindruck? so stehen wir hier an der Grenze des geschichtlichen Erkennens. P. 57.

can do to-day, whatever those works be called. He showed a mastery over the complex elements of human life which make it not incredible that, as Lord of life, He should reach even beyond the gates of the grave, and that, if nature was made for man and not man for nature, as Son of Man, He should be Lord over nature. Aside at least from philosophical theories, the cure of the demoniac (Mk. v.) is as wonderful as the withering of the fig-tree (Mk. xii.), and surely the turning of water into wine (Jno. ii.) is not a greater miracle than the cure of congenital blindness (Jno. ix.). From the standpoint of historical criticism at least, it seems somewhat arbitrary to accept the miracles of healing and dispossession, and to reject the miracles of nature and of raising from the dead, when the latter are equally congruous with the character of Jesus, supported by the same evidence, and contained in the same strata of tradition. To say that Jesus had such absolute mastery over the bodies and minds of men, that He could hold back from death, but that He could never reach beyond its gates; that He could cure all the ills, mental and physical, which human nature is heir to, and yet that He could not reach one inch beyond the bodily organism to avert danger or to minister to human need, would be to draw an arbitrary line both through the Gospel records and through any consistent picture of the person of Jesus.

When we study the words and claims of Jesus we see again their harmony with all classes of His mighty works. In one respect at least the figure of Jesus as drawn in the Gospels is consistent. It is that of one who had supreme control over all the forces of human life and destiny. He said "Thy sins be forgiven thee", and He said "Arise and walk"; He said to the leper "Be clean", and to the threatening waves, "Be still"; He opened the eyes of the blind, and He fed the fainting multitude. He restored the demoniac boy to his distressed father, and the dead son to his anguished mother. He raised the dead and preached the gospel to the poor. His words as recorded are in strik-

ing harmony with the silent claim of His works. He called Himself the Son of God, the judge of the nations, and the light and life of men. We may reject the whole Gospel picture as to our way of thinking bizarre, grotesque and impossible; or we may, by the use of a subjective criterion or at the behest of a philosophical theory, tone down all the colors, in words, claims, character and deeds, to a naturalistic basis; but to accept fully and without qualification the works showing power over disease, and to reject entirely those showing power over nature or death, would be a proceeding with little warrant either in science or in historical criticism.

The attempted explanation of the healing wonders by psychology and psychotherapy, has emphasized the vital connection between the personality and the works of Jesus. The Scriptural record and the modern historical critic unite in ascribing mighty works of some kind to Jesus, and in connecting them inseparably with His person. "This beginning of signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth His glory". Where the personality and the works are so indissolubly connected, our view of one will inevitably react upon our view of the other. If the Person is above nature, we should expect the works to be above nature also. The world of scholarship still believes that He did all things well, that He made the deaf to hear and the blind to see; and historical criticism has made clearer the "inimitable harmony" between the character and teaching and the healing works of Jesus. "When we see the conqueror", says Emerson, "we do not think so much of any one battle or success. We see that we had exaggerated the difficulty. It was easy to him". Where Jesus is viewed, as He has been by the Christian Church, as the manifestation of the love and power of God, the miracles do not seem incongruous or incredible. If He came to the world as the expression of divine love, as the good Samaritan, binding up the wounds of humanity, it is not unnatural that He should show extraordinary resources in the relief of human

distress. It was natural for Him, if He was what the Church has believed Him to be. And if further He was, as Peter called Him, the Prince of Life, it would indeed be strange, apart from His own Resurrection, if He showed no power over death.

“If our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 't were all alike
As if we had them not”.

Modern science has indeed enlarged our conception of nature and of the powers of human nature, and it is legitimate to attempt its expansion still further so that it may include the mighty works of Jesus. But unless we subtract very materially from these works, it must be confessed that, in the present state of our knowledge, nature with Jesus in it is not nature as its laws may be discovered without reference to Him and to His works of might and of mercy. It will be an idealized nature, the thought of which is never far from the prophet's vision or the apostle's hope, wherein the lawlessness of sin will be banished, peace will reign instead of strife, diseased organs will be restored to their normal use, the lame man shall leap as an hart and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

The words of the Great Teacher warn us against an over-valuation of miracles. An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and the greatest of miracles is the miracle of a transformed character. “If I were worthy in the sight of my Lord”, said Ansgar, the missionary to Sweden, “I should ask Him to grant me one miracle—that He would make me a good man”. The subjective miracle of grace, however, naturally leads one to look for its complement in the objective field of history. Said Franz Delitzsch of his experiences in the Mündenthal: “Still to me is the reality of miracles sealed by the miracles of grace which I saw with my own eyes in the congregations of that blessed valley”.⁶⁵ History and experience seem somehow, for better or worse, bound together; just as the

⁶⁵ Quoted by Robertson Nicoll: *The Church's One Foundation*, p. 163.

Christ within was experienced by the apostle Paul in the faith of the historic Christ, who loved him and gave Himself for him. It is an illusion to suppose that by surrendering the objective miracle the question of the relation of religion and science is avoided. The psychologist will claim the sphere of inner experience, and will give a naturalistic analysis of prayer and conversion, as surely as the physicist claims the sphere of matter and the movements of matter. "However remote an emotion of the soul may appear, however intimate, however hidden, however mysterious it may be for the theologian, it is a phenomenon, linked necessarily according to certain laws with other phenomena. In vain does the believer protest that his act of faith, his prayer, his sentiment of union with God, are entirely spiritual in their mode of being, without relation to material things".⁶⁶ The same tide which sweeps out the supernatural from the field of history may banish it as effectually from the realm of religious experience.

For the theistic faith in general, we venture to say in closing, the question of miracles is not indifferent. "It is not miracles that matter", Harnack has said, "the question on which everything turns is whether we are helplessly yoked to an inexorable necessity, or whether a God exists who rules and governs, and whose power to compel nature we can move by prayer and make a part of our experience".⁶⁷ It is precisely here that miracle becomes a support to theistic faith, for it answers this important question and answers it unmistakably in the affirmative. It is not without significance that the faith in God which has sustained itself among great numbers of people and throughout long reaches of time is in a God who has revealed His help in history by a mighty hand and stretched out arm. It is the faith of Abraham and Paul in a God who raises the dead.

⁶⁶ Emile Boutroux: *Science et Religion dans la Philosophie Contemporaine*. Paris, 1908; pp. 226, 227.

⁶⁷ *What is Christianity?* P. 32.

The revelation of God in nature, as this is interpreted for us by the poets, is often offered as a substitute for this faith in historic revelation. "If there appear to be no longer any room left for miracle, it is that the whole creation may appear miraculous, the garment that God is weaving for Himself on the roaring looms of time."⁶⁸ It is proper to ask for the origin of this new interpretation of nature, and it may be that it will be found to be itself the product of supernatural revelation. Perhaps if God had never spoken in some burning bush, even the poet's eyes would never have seen that

"Earth is crammed with heaven,
And every common bush aflame with God."

Perhaps men would never have seen the universal miracle if their eyes had not been opened by the special miracle. The history of religion indeed teaches us the insufficiency of the natural revelation when not interpreted by the special revelation. In ancient and modern times, the revelation in nature has not lifted men out of polytheism and idolatry, nor has the goodness and glory of God shown in nature and providence called them to repentance. Even in modern times there are not wanting philosophers of insight, who recognizing the loss of their denial to the poetic interpretation of nature, yet deny the inference "from Nature to Nature's God. To them nature is no vestal virgin. "Visible nature is all plasticity and indifference,—a moral multiverse, as one might call it, and not a moral universe—if there be a divine Spirit of the universe, nature, such as we know her, cannot possibly be its ultimate word to man. Either there is no Spirit revealed in nature or else it is inadequately revealed there".⁶⁹ The supernatural revelation, indeed, presupposes and rests upon the natural revelation. The supernatural is not unnatural or contranatural; it interprets more clearly the message of "the blowing clover and the falling rain". The special revela-

⁶⁸ Gordon, *Op. cit.*, p. 154.

⁶⁹ W. James : *Will to Believe*, pp. 43, 44.

tion does not obscure but makes clearer the natural revelation. It comes not to destroy but to fulfill.

A theistic view of the world, if it is to be of any religious value, must contain and exalt the doctrine of God's love. But "to say that God is love", Professor Royce somewhere says, "is to say that He is or will be incarnate". From the standpoint of the love of God the incarnation is the appropriate and we might almost say necessary expression of the divine order. If, as theism teaches, God has shown His purpose to reveal Himself to man, and has done so in divers portions and manners in nature, history, and in the mind and conscience of man, it is not strange that the crowning revelation of the Personal—of the heart of God—should be itself a Person. And from such a person we should expect not only a moral majesty in His character, and a fountain of grace and truth in His words, but in response to the cry of human need a limitless outflow of sympathy and power. It may ultimately appear that if we are to remain the true children of Abraham we must believe that God raised up Jesus and gave Him glory; and that in short the interests not only of Christianity but even of theism are vitally bound up with belief, in the broad sense, in the miraculous, as a bulwark against the irreligion of a mechanical universe from which God is excluded, and the moral indifference of a pantheistic universe with which God is exhaustively identified.

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