

Martin there is no confirmatory testimony. The miracles of Martin also are unessential to his history, and serve no purpose. They might be tacked on or pasted in the narrative anywhere ; while, in Christ's case, the miracle is so interwoven with the whole thread of His wonderful story that to remove it is to destroy that story's unity. The miracles of Martin have no moral character, and contain no more spiritual teaching than those of the apocryphal gospels and the Arabian Nights ; those of Christ are miracles of mercy, attestations of divinity, and spiritual parables revealing the heart of God. Martin's miracles have no superstructure. Those of Christ are the foundation of the faith of the great Christian Church, embracing all that is grandest in the mind and life of nineteen centuries. The miracles of Martin are of a piece with many puerilities in Sulpitius Severus' Life of the saint. Those of the New Testament have no such settings or adjuncts, being found in the story of a life that has no literary or historical antecedent, and which, in its devotion, purity, wisdom, tenderness, and sublimity, is, if viewed as the joint creation of four comparatively uneducated disciples, as great a miracle as the world has ever seen. The parallel then is a false one, the generalization is hasty, the conclusion altogether unwarrantable and misleading. Thus Elsmere went astray through superficial and false criticism, denying miracles, inspiration, and the divinity of Christ, to which conclusions the Oxford don had arrived through pseudo-philosophical reasonings regarding the laws of evidence. Nevertheless Elsmere and the don and the breezy Unitarian loved Jesus and tried to follow Him in life, word and deed, and, because of this, they are the favourites of Mrs. Ward, who will let you deny anything, so long as you love and follow the sage of Nazareth. Elsmere's wife shews the inconsistency of believing the testimony to Jesus of men whose whole story is based on and built up of falsehood, but he does not deign to answer this very pertinent objection. It cannot be answered. If the evangelists put into the lips of Jesus the statement that He was the Son of God, and His claim to work miracles and rise from the dead, what was to hinder them also putting into His lips the Lord's Prayer and the sermon on the Mount ? If Jesus Christ be not the Son of God, and the worker of miracles attesting His claim and declaring God, there is no Christ, and, even an historical Jesus is worse than doubtful. Mrs. Ward can't keep Jesus who is everything in her creed and at the same time reject miracles, for her Jesus is an imposter or the creation of imposters. Elsmere overtaxes his strength among the poor of London, whom he seeks to elevate by a sort of polytechnic institution with a feeble recognition of God and of duty towards humanity, and then goes abroad to die. But what a death-bed, what vague indistinct dying utterances came from that couch regarding God and the life beyond ! It is pitiful, and Mrs. Ward must have felt her failure in writing this poorest, most disappointing, part of her book. One respects what is manly, honest, and simple-minded in Elsmere, even though he is a poor critic, but his end is vanity of vanities, the end of a spirit that has lost its hold on truth, its way to the Father's house, and that hugs the consolation of the lost to itself, that all the world, spite of its professions, is in the same unhappy predicament. The book says amid all its errors, "There is no good apart from the love of Jesus," and that is enough to place before every mind that reads it His own question : "What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He ?"

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