

In this way to the spiritual life of the Christian. Nothing proclaims the faith of a people more powerfully than their public acts. An idea enshrined in some recognized rite or ceremony is guarded more carefully even than when expressed in actual words. Baptism certainly conveys the idea of the Resurrection in a most striking way, and it is, therefore, a standing witness to the faith of the Church.

3. The Holy Communion also is an act quite incomprehensible without a belief in the Resurrection. The rite is celebrated throughout the whole Christian world. Wherever there is a Christian church we find the Holy Communion occupying a place of peculiar honor. It must be remembered that this rite came into existence in comparatively modern times, and that it displaced the old systems of sacrificial worship, to which men adhered with such strange tenacity. If it is a rare thing for a new religion to meet with universal acceptance among races widely separated, it is still more rare to find the new system utterly abolishing the older forms of worship, which had met with the favor of the people. It is certainly a most remarkable fact, and one which goes far to prove the truth of Christianity, to find that, within a few years after the first preaching of the gospel, the heathen altars were abandoned, and the Holy Communion everywhere established in place of the former worship. Such an entire change challenges attention, and we are bound to offer some explanation of so strange a fact. Nothing, indeed, is more surprising than the calm and confident assurance in which Jesus Christ predicted the future triumph of the Society He was about to found. He never seemed to hesitate a moment, nor to be troubled with any doubts as to its ultimate success. He appointed officers, laid down laws and regulations and never appeared to entertain the slightest misgiving but that everything would be carried out according to His appointment. He instituted the Holy Communion, and said unto His disciples, "Do this in remembrance of Me." And the plan laid down by Jesus has been carried out. The Sacraments which He ordained have been administered in all ages of the Christian Church, and are being administered today. Is there any fact like this in history? Does it not stand quite alone as something altogether unparalleled? A

poor man, living in an obscure part of the world, declared that he would found a Society which should prevail against all opposition. He died a death of shame and ignominy, "despised and rejected," deserted in His greatest need by all His followers. And wonderful to say, His words came true. The Society began to grow within a few weeks of His death, has been growing ever since, and is growing today.

One fact, and one fact only, gives a rational and sufficient explanation, and that fact has ever been alleged by Christians as the one ground of their existence, the one source of their hope, viz: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

X. ARE WE TO BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?

"Those who have followed the argument which I have hitherto traced in these lectures will remember that I have undertaken to give valid reasons for believing in the superhuman nature of Jesus, without assuming either the inspiration or authority of the Bible, or the certainty of His having wrought the miracles there recorded. I have waived all the doctrines of the Christian religion, and made my appeal to facts that cannot be denied or disputed. I have pointed to the character of Christ, and I have challenged any man to give a rational account of it, except on the ground of its reality, and of its being a copy of a superhuman original. I have cited the teaching of Christ, His stupendous plan and His unique and flawless ethical principles, another fact as undeniable as the light, and I have asked if these be not plainly beyond the reach of any mere human sage. I have appealed to the work of Christ in history, in society, in the church and in the individual soul; and I have urged that here, too, is a fact that defies explanation upon any other ground than this—that it was and is the action of a superhuman being, and I have examined the evidence for the resurrection of Christ. These are all undeniable facts, and they are intelligible only on the supposition of the superhumanity of Christ Himself.

There is only one way of evading the force of this argument, and that is by an "a priori" assumption that the superhuman is itself incredible, and therefore whatever may be the explanation of the marvellous facts to which I have appealed, we cannot accept the one suggested, because the superhuman, like the supernatural, is unbelievable." (McKim.)