

Is the life recorded in the Gospels, really a further evolution of the same supernatural agency, traceable in outward nature and in man? We have to do here with the trustworthy account of a real life. In the writings of the early Christian ages, there is ample confirmation of this. Even apart from these, the fourfold record cannot be explained, except on the supposition that it is a record of facts. Every attempt to explain it otherwise breaks down. It surpasses the powers of literary invention. It treats of an age too advanced for the annals to be mythical. There was not sufficient time before the Gospels were written for the formation of legends, nor do they bear the character of such writings. Moreover, if legendary, that fact could hardly have remained unknown, alike to those accepting, and those rejecting them. That Christianity with its literary basis in the Scriptures, and its centre in Christ, is a further stage in the evolution of supernatural agency, may be established by showing that in it, the divine attributes already traceable again appear, but now in essentially higher form, and furthermore, that all these manifestations are dominated by the supremely gracious purpose, of redeeming mankind through self-sacrifice.

Connected with the life of Christ is noticeable an exercise of supernatural power, essentially higher than had been manifested in outward nature and in man. The products of this power, when exercised over physical nature, are designated miracles. These consist of occurrences in the sphere of nature, which can be accounted for, neither by the ordinary uniformities known as laws of nature, nor by the agency of man, but are produced in acknowledged obedience to the will of God, and for ends worthy of Him. The possibility of such events does violence to no necessary principle of thought, and must be granted by all who acknowledge that there is a Divine Being, corresponding to the disclosures otherwise made. To doubt this possibility would necessitate the conception of a supernatural agency acting altogether by necessity of nature, a conception at variance alike with the intelligence and moral government of the Supreme Being. Such facts as the beginning of organic life, and of rational existence are not consistent with the impossibility of miracles. Not only so, it is antecedently probable that occurrences of this nature would accompany such a work as the redemption of mankind through the self-communication of