

times. There is a feeling abroad, vague and undefined indeed, distilled through the magazine, the novel and the jest of our day, that many of the miraculous events described in the Old Testament are merely legendary. Occasionally one meets a man,—a decent enough man, a church-going man, a man whose “wife is religious,”—who declares himself as quite ready to believe that Jesus Christ performed miracles and that he wrought by divine power, but who would say, if he would speak his mind frankly, that the account of the Deluge, of the destruction of Sodom, of the adventure of Jonah and a score of other things, recorded in the Old Testament, draw a little too heavily on faith. Of course, it is easy to remind him that his salvation does not depend on the amount of credence that he can give to this, that or the other event of Ancient History. But he ought to be told that *Jesus Christ referred to these things as facts*. Let us be severely logical. Either the cities of the Plain were destroyed by fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven or Jesus Christ said what was not true. Either the “fish story in the Book of Jonah” is a fact or Jesus Christ falsified. Either Lot’s wife was killed in the manner described in the Old Testament or the author of the New Testament is unreliable. You cannot mince the Bible and why should anyone attempt it? Almighty God *can* do anything recorded there and always could, and, if some of the miracles cannot be explained in terms of what are called the “laws of nature,” why should any of them be? I, for one, can see neither sense nor profit in the well-meant attempts of good, ingenious souls to “naturalize,” as Horace Bushnell said, the miracles of the Bible. Better expend your energies, ye nervous souls who tremble for the ark, better expend your energies in helping General Booth with the “submerged tenth” than in endeavoring to make the Gospel “easier to believe” for men who don’t want to believe it and who would not believe it “though one should rise from the dead.”

The Gospel account of any event is not what one of the Evangelists says about it, but what all of them say who speak of it. Gathering the facts from the four Evangelists, we find that a short time before this the twelve apostles had been sent out on their mission of mercy. They now return and report to Jesus. They declare that they had been well-received; that their work had been blessed, and that even the devils had been subject to them in Jesus’ name. Jesus now says to them: “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile.” They then cross the Sea of Tiberias to a desert region in the neighborhood of Bethsaida, to rest and to get rid of the crowd. Observe that Jesus said “come,” not “go”; and, notice also that the disciples, in going to take a holiday, took Jesus with them. Who has not seen people—at home in the city staid, sedate, religious, the very pink of ecclesiastical propriety,—in the country resorts display an entirely different character? One is tempted, sometimes, to be uncharitable enough to sus-