

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—THE EVIDENTIAL VALUE OF MIRACLES.

By PROFESSOR MARCUS DODS, D.D., EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND.

THAT our Lord considered the working of miracles an essential part of His work appears from His reply to Herod's threat that His ministry would be cut short: "Behold, I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected" (Luke xiii. 32). Nowadays, however, the idea very commonly obtains that Christianity would float more buoyantly were the miraculous element in the Gospel narrative thrown overboard. Matthew Arnold, for example, says: "There is nothing one would more desire for a person or a document one greatly values than to make them independent of miracles." And the idea very widely prevails that miracle is an excrescence and an incumbrance, which may possibly once have served a purpose, but which it were well now to excise from the life and truth it disguises and retards. The ethics of Christianity, if cut free from this incubus, would assert their superiority and attract all men. And so long as miracles are not recognized to be of the essence of Christianity, so long will they be felt to be a hindrance and not a help to faith. Jesus considered the miraculous an essential element in His work; and whoever feels uneasy at the miraculous, and fancies that it would perhaps be better to yield the point and surrender miracle, must be looking at the matter from a point of view different from that occupied by our Lord.

If we are to understand the evidential function of the miracles, we must first of all apprehend their true relation to the whole work of our Lord. Now, the point to be emphasized here is this: that the miracles were themselves the revelation of the presence and love of God. They were the expression of His fatherly good-will toward men. The sympathy which prompted Christ to "bear our sicknesses" was the Father's sympathy. The tenderness which made Him feel the sorrows of men as if they were His own was the Father's tender-