

conclusion of his predecessor—not, however, as having adopted it implicitly, but as a theory by which the facts may be explained. I believe that starting with the incarnation as a doctrine, we shall find all the facts take their proper place under it; and also that from the mere consideration of the facts, we shall ultimately arrive at the deity of Christ as the necessary law from which such a life must flow. We express our conviction that the indisputable character of Christ will necessitate the affirmation of the miracle and of the incarnation. This method of testing the character with a view to the discovery of the nature from which it springs, has great advantage with the sceptic. The character of Christ puzzles him, confounds him. It is a Sphinx which eats up all the daughters of his thoughts. No Edipus will ever solve for him the riddle. I have seen no explanation of the confessedly lofty, glorious, pure character of Jesus from the pen of Rationalism, which is not self-destructive,—affirming what it denies, denying what it affirms,—allowing so much to Christ that it must allow all—a perfect manhood, sinlessness, sovereignty, God—nature. He is a miracle, and why should He not begin in miracle, evolve miracle, triumph over the grave, trample on death, and ascend to God as His natural father, and to heaven as His native home?

The argument against the miracles of Christ often presents itself in the following form. Miracles have been pretended in all ages. We have apparently well attested accounts of some of them. What can be said to those of Port Royal &c. Where shall we stop? Admit those of Christ and it is argued we have no barrier against a perfect inundation of the miraculous, sweeping away the deductions of reason and the facts of observation in a general deluge—not even leaving us a Newton in his Principia, like another Noah to float over submerged science. Such is the form which the reasoning assumes. But is this reasoning reasonable? Having a good claim to an estate should I be debarred from an action at law for its recovery, on the ground that other unfounded claims to

that or other estates will be encouraged by my deed? Absurd! Because I believe that those flashing brilliants in the crown of the queen of the greatest empire are diamonds of incalculable worth, I am not necessitated to admit, that the tiara of a stage heroine, who assumes for the night the sovereign character, is set with gems of like worth, although their sheen may be as dazzling. We come to probable conclusions about paste and pearl, about coloured glass and rubies, about tinsel and gold, from a knowledge of the position and character of their wearers. In the moral world we make like deductions. We want to know who this priest, prophet, prince is, before we accredit him with the diamonds of heaven and the signet of God. If indeed we could bring them to the trial—make a personal eye witness examination, it would not be necessary to say, or think much of the quality of the possessors. But this we, who live long after the shining acts, have been hid in the night of the ages, only as it were gleaming fitfully on us from the past, cannot do. To an extent we still can do this with telescopic thought—we can still bring them near, and view their wondrous majesty. But when dealing with those who deny the evidence, who talk of the improbability of God's granting those jewels of his crown to be worn by any one—we may shew that what were otherwise improbable becomes only a natural assumption when we find that it is from the head and bosom of His own Son, that they flash their light over the naturalism of the world. Is He, the sinless one, the only perfect man, the only begotten of the Father, whose claims to Godhead have been accepted by the highest thinkers and the best of men—from Thomas the leader of sceptics, and Paul the converted persecutor, down to all who accept his religion in its vital power,—as their Lord and God.—I say, is he to stand in the world without any other ornature save that of His own transcendent character? Well, He might have done so; but assuredly when we have accepted the miracle of his being and character, we can feel but little hesitation in accepting the belief that God also by His own supernatural Son should