

declared that they were witnesses of the miracles of Christ and of His risen person. For a hundred years sceptical scholarship has been perplexed and baffled in endeavoring to give a rational account of the person of Jesus on the theory of His being a fable and sometimes deluded and imperfect man. They have attempted to explain away the universal faith in Christ's resurrection for which men laid down their lives, a faith on which Strauss acknowledged the Church was built, a faith which was not destroyed by the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, not because they were unwilling, but because they were unable. But how was it that the early Church, which made no appeal to pride and human passions, which refused to use the sword, but espoused lowliness and purity as its distinctive virtues—how was it that the Church, beset by such constant and terrible antagonism on every side, was not extinguished? The system of truth which originated with the Jewish Carpenter and a few rough fishermen—could not have fought its way to world-wide acceptance against the combined hostility of Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome, against synagogue and philosophic school and armed antagonism, against all the external forces of imperial civilization, and against the obdurate unbelief and wickedness of the human heart, unless it had been accompanied by the signature of Almighty God.

8. The character of Christ is a luminous evidence of the truth of the Gospels. Dupes or liars could not have given us such a portrait of a perfect personality as shines from the evangelic pages. Matthew and John, the publican and the fisherman of Galilee, unless painting from the life, would have left some "action or omission to act" to stain the fair picture of an incomparable Being. We cannot tear out the miracles from the Gospels without sinking the apostles to the level of fools or deceivers, a conclusion which is irrational, both from what they have written, from the lives they lived, and, most of all, from the incomparable grandeur of the portrait which they have drawn of Jesus Christ. That portrait was not the product of imagination; it was drawn from the life, and that alone "is sufficient to demonstrate the truth of the Gospel history." It was natural that such a Being as the sinless Christ, who, with all His genuine humanity, manifestly did not belong to this world—it was natural for the Holy One of Nazareth, whose touch is the life of our civilization to-day, whose Spirit is the very breath of God, should do the works of His Father. Miracles are the jewels that naturally adorn the brows of this celestial King. He who spake with the tenderness, the holiness, the wisdom, and the authority of God, and with constant assertions of His supernatural origin and Almighty power, is to be believed when He claimed to do the works of heaven. The presence of Christ in the Gospels forever vindicates their truth.

9. The unanimity of the Christian Church in all ages with regard to the truth of that wonderful history out of which it sprang, the high character and services of the men who, after long investigation, have given in their adherence to historic Christianity and the unequalled transforming power