

super-normal power from Christ—power which he became aware of and frequently used for purposes of beneficence and compassion, though he scrupulously refrained from using it for any other purpose,—never for a moment to benefit himself, even though he were starving; nor did he wish to use it in order to call attention to and enforce his mission. He evidently mistrusts the attitude of mind which can depend much upon external evidence of that kind. He will not give them a sign; and where candour does not pre-exist mighty works become impossible. No conversion is to be effected by main force: he always appealed to free volition. His credentials were not so much the super-normal power, as the discriminating use he made of that power. This scrupulous reticence, according to the author, impressed his immediate followers as the most superhuman thing about him, so far as his acts were concerned.

The point of view thus indicated is an important feature in the book, though it is not a feature upon which it is considered safe to dwell at the present day. Some are now in favour of rejecting all miraculous narratives wholesale; others would accept the acts of healing, but would reject all others. Such a miracle as the feeding of five thousand, for instance—one of the most difficult to accept as it stands—is liable to be treated nowadays as if it had only a spiritual significance, was in fact only a parable and was understood by contemporaries as such and no more. The author does not go to this length, nor do I feel called upon to go to this length either.

An easy way to truth is not to be found by rejecting wholesale, any more than by admitting wholesale. The risk of error lurks on both sides. It has been easy to believe uncritically in the past; it is easy to reject too readily in the present. Truth lies in a middle way, and it is our business to pick our steps carefully.

I would, however, urge people to lay no particular stress on any one miracle, though they may fancy it to be fundamental and certain, for such a foundation is apt to prove a sandy one. These signs and wonders