

this charge, though he does not seem to know it, he has reduced Jesus to the level of the mountebank. No doubt, he tells us, that Christ, to withdraw himself from this false position, thought it necessary to urge on the crisis which would destroy himself, but establish his cause. Admirable resolution for one who deceived both his disciples and the multitude. By martyrdom he will establish a cause which is beginning to totter, because founded on supposed miracles which he cannot further supply. Tired of sustaining a false position, he rushes to death that he may become the patron of the true and the hope of the world! It is too absurd. He who claimed to have come from God, to be the image of God, and to have sustained in the opinion of the author of the "Origins of Christianity," that character with dignity, was surely not the one to *pretend* miracles.

Yet the claim to work miracles is every where made by him. This is not to be forgotten. Deny the miracles still they were supposed to be wrought by him or you cannot have a starting point for the myth. They could not be supposed to be wrought without an attempt to work them. If he attempted them and they were not real, he either deceived himself or he deceived others. The latter is impossible. The nature of man does not admit of such antitheses. That the most noble being of all the ages—thus according to recent sceptic opinion—should be a deceiver, no honest man can candidly affirm. Did he deceive himself? This would seem a weakness incompatible with his great strength. Then if the miracles were not wrought they could neither have been attempted nor pretended. But where then is there any foundation for the accounts? There is none. Had there been no attempt there had been no history of the success of the attempt. Had there not been many attempts there had been no such numerous and detailed accounts as we have. The utmost fertility of imagination could produce no fruit without seed. Some of this must have been sown. It must have been scattered broadcast to produce such an abundant harvest in so short a time. Without doubt then Jesus attempt-

ed the cure of many diseases, but did he only attempt them? Is imagination or faith—if you will—to be accredited with their success? Was there no reality in the hundreds of cures which the grave evangelists set down to the account of Jesus? Be it so. But what becomes of the noble character of Jesus? Self deceived was he? We cannot admit it. Did he deceive others? With his character that is impossible.

But it may be said there were no doubt cures of such diseases as may be acted on by an exceedingly powerful nature working beneficially, medicinally upon weak diseased ones. What then! Why then it is only the amount of the curative virtue that is objected to by scepticism. Grant that any disease was really cured by the power of his great presence, *by the virtue which went out of him*, why not admit that some disease more difficult of cure in our estimation might be operated on by the same presence and nature—and more difficult ones still tell you come to the most difficult of all—the arrest of death—the resuscitation of the corpse. The least is in some degree miraculous, which having admitted you cannot say unless you know the amount of curative virtue in the cause, how great must be the power of that disease which its agent cannot conquer.

But this does not touch those miracles in which material nature bent like a worshipper to his wishes. Did he attempt any of them? The same line of argument would shew that the attempt was made, or the story could not have had its necessary germ. But why should there be difficulty in admitting them. Is it impossible that spiritual will can operate on matter save through material media and contact? Then creation was impossible. God is a spirit yet he wheels the worlds. Grant this claim that Christ came from God, where is the difficulty about the delegation of such power. Why should he who guides the planets not be able to grant power to another to control the sea. Tell us the *scientific reason* against this rational position. Many of the most sceptical believe in the mesmeric will as a mechanical agent.