

sample of it in the history of religions. Such are the evidences of the story of the miracles. There are distinctions relative to the miracles themselves.

1. We need not admit as a miracle that which can be resolved into a false perception. This excludes the *dæmon* of Socrates, the vision of Lord Herbert, Colonel Gardiner's vision, &c. Those may be accounted for as temporary insanity: they appeal but to a single sense, they appear but to the individual—they are momentary. The blind man that saw was an object of investigation to the multitude; the cure of the withered limb was permanent; Lazarus retained life. The blind man appeared to stand the scrutiny of the Jewish sceptics. The lame man, cured by the Apostles, followed them to the judgment-hall before the Jewish council.

2. The miracles never failed, according to the Gospel narrative. This distinguishes them from all tentative wonders—those in which one out of many succeeds. This excludes the cures wrought by relics, and at the tombs of saints, the King's touch, and the effect of nostrums, &c.

3. We exclude all accounts, which, allowing the facts to be true, leave their miraculous nature in doubt: we thus get rid of the story of the "Thundering Legion;" the hindrance to the rebuilding of the Temple by Julian; the circling of the flames at the death of Polycarp; Constantine's vision of the cross in the clouds; the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius; the sudden cure of hypocondriacal complaints, &c.

4. We exclude those that may be the exaggeration of a simple fact. But the raising of Lazarus, the widow's son, and the feeding of the five thousand, allow of no connection with an original fact, not miraculous. The sum of all is, that the miracles of Christ are numerous, public, pow-

erful, and for an immediate and adequate purpose. He heals all diseases; feeds multitudes with a few loaves and fishes; walks on the sea; calms a storm; and raises the dead in three several instances. Connected with those stupendous evidences of the divine power, are the voice and celestial appearance at his baptism; his transfiguration; and his resurrection. And such is the author of Christianity. There is no wonder wrought since the days of Christ and the Apostles, which cannot be resolved into deception from the actual narrative. But in the miracles of Christ and his immediate disciples, the narrative leaves no room for the suspicion of imposture. No human ingenuity has since that memorable age succeeded in constructing the glory of a miracle; and no human scepticism has been able to discover a weakness in the story of the signs wrought by the Jewish wanderer, "who had not where to lay his head," and his twelve peasants. And this mass of evidence is to be abandoned for the feeble folly of a few half-witted profligates, whose opinions we should not adopt on any subject in the whole range of human questioning. Why are we to suppose their wisdom in religion more infallible than in politics? We see that in public questions they are either treasonous or mad; we see, that if they had power equal to their malignity, the state would be in flames from end to end. Is the man, breathing bitterness against all that we know to constitute the honor, and happiness, and existence of society, in the state of mind to judge of the solemn purity of Revelation? Is the being, whom society labours to cast out as a disease, born in degradation, reared in pestilent ignorance, and feeding his maturity on visions of universal subversion—the hater of the law—the anticipated murderer of every man above himself—to be our guide in the concerns of the eternal world?