

Rousseau said, "the conception and delineation of such a character as that of the man Christ Jesus, by such men as the fishermen of Galilee, would have been a greater miracle than the actual existence of such a man." Between these two miracles the critics must choose. For there is the character of Jesus, unique, original and ideal, and either the evangelists performed the miracle of its origination, or they transcribed it from life and in Christ as we know Him through the Gospels we have the real fact of Christ which of these appeals to reason?

As a second proof that in Christ as we know Him through the Gospels we have the real fact of Christ we refer to His sinlessness as exhibited in them. Without hesitation the New Testament claims sinlessness for Jesus. The word of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is the word of every evangelist:—"He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." As His disciples they knew Him as only the intimacy of friendship and love may know us, and they never admit a flaw in His character nor swerve from their assertion of His absolute sinlessness. Indeed at their hand even His enemies bear the same witness. Nowhere in the New Testament do the enemies of Jesus impeach His character or prefer a moral charge against Him. With all their ingenuity of hate and malice they detected nothing impure, untrue, ignoble or sinister and the challenge of Jesus, "which of you convicteth me of sin" lies upon their pages unanswered. Further as we see Jesus in the Gospels He Himself has no consciousness of sin. A keen and lively sense of sin has ever been a characteristic of saintly men. "When I look at my own sinfulness," says Rutherford, "my salvation is to me my Saviour's greatest miracle." "My daughters," said Santa Teresa on her deathbed, "do not follow my example; for I have been the most sinful woman in all the world." "When a man like me" says Luther, "comes to know the plague of his own heart, he is not miserable only—he is absolute misery itself, he is not sinful only—he is absolute sin in itself." Such ever has been the judgment of the saints upon themselves; but as for Jesus no word of penitence ever crossed his lips and fell on the ears of men or was uttered in secret to God. It was not that He closed His eyes to the presence of sin, or made light of its guilt, for He was keenly aware of it in others and fiercely scourged the Pharisees for their lack of moral discernment. He had no consciousness of sin. Thus evangelists claim sinlessness for Jesus.

Our proof, however, from the sinlessness of Jesus, that in Christ as we know Him through the Gospels we have the real fact of Christ, does not depend upon the mere assertion of His sinlessness by the evangelists. To assert the sinlessness of Jesus were easy. But the New Testament writers do not pause or content themselves with declaring