MIRACLES AND SUPERNATURAL RELIGION

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Miracles and Supernatural Religion by James Morris Whiton

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JAMES MORRIS WHITON

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BY

JAMES MORRIS WHITON, PH.D. (YALE) F

Portentum non fil contra naturam, sed contra quam est nota natura – Augustum

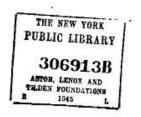
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PREFATORY NOTE

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WHILE the present subject of discussion tempts to many an excursion into particulars, its treatment is restricted to general outlines, with an aim simply to clarify current ideas of miracle and the supernatural, so as to find firm holding ground for tenable positions in the present "drift period" of theology. The chief exception made to this general treatment is the discussion given to a class of miracles regarded with as much incredulity as any, yet as capable as any of being accredited as probably historical events-the raisings of the "dead." The insistence of some writers on the virgin birth and corporeal resurrection of Jesus as essential to Christianity has required brief discussion of

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Prefatory Note

these also, mainly with reference to the reasonableness of that demand. As to the latter miracle, it must be observed that in the Biblical narratives taken as a whole, whichever of their discordant features one be disposed to emphasize, the psychical element clearly preponderates over the physical and material.

J. M. W.

NEW YORE, April 11, 1903.

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Arbitrary criticism of the Biblical narratives of the raising of the "dead." — Facts which it ignores.

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-The subject related to the phenomena of trance, and records of premature burial. --- The resuscitation in Elisha's tomb probably historical. - Jesus' raising of the ruler's daughter plainly such a case, - His raising of the widow's son probably such. - The hypothesis that his raising of Lazarus may also have been such critically examined, - The record allows this supposition. - Further considerations favoring it: 1. The supposition threatens no real interest of Christianity. - 2. Enhances the character of the act as a work of mercy. - 3. Is independent of the belief of the witnesses of the act. - 4. Is coherent with the general conception of the healing works of Jesus as wrought by a peculiar psychical power, - Other cases. - The resurrection of Jesus an event in a wholly different order of things. - The practical result of regarding these resuscitations as in the order of nature 47

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