

## 1. "Demonstration of the Spirit"

The question is often asked, How may we be reasonably sure that the Bible is the record of a progressive *revelation* from God to man, communicated by the Holy Spirit? In answer to this question, I would suggest the following essential criteria of a genuine revelation: (1) it must meet all the spiritual needs of man; (2) it must recognize the fact that he is in sin, and show him the way out; (3) it must provide a *complete* salvation for him—salvation both from the guilt and from the consequences of sin; (4) it must maintain the proper balance of order in the moral universe and thus satisfy the demands of absolute justice; (5) it must give evidence of having proceeded from Divine authority and it must speak with that authority; and (6) it must be attested or certified by the proper credentials proceeding from that supreme Authority. I am prepared to defend the thesis at any time that the revelation in history, of which the record and interpretation are to be found in Scripture, meets all these tests.

This revelation, throughout the various stages of its unfolding, has been attested in two ways: (1) by prophecy (prediction) and subsequent fulfilment, and (2) by miracles. The working of miracles for the purpose of attesting revelation is known in Scripture as *demonstration*. *Revelation and demonstration always go together; that is to say, demonstration accompanies revelation; and when revelation ceases, demonstration ceases also.* 1 Thess. 1:5—"our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance."

Both *revelation* and *demonstration* are works of the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. 2:4, 5—"And my speech and my preaching," writes Paul, "were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in *demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*" In the work of revelation, the Spirit operates as the Spirit of Truth; in the work of demonstration, that is, in the attesting of Divine revelation, the Spirit operates as the Spirit of Power. Cf. Luke 4:14—here it is said that Jesus, after his temptation by the Devil, "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."

First of all, it is essential that we get a clear understanding of what a miracle is, in the Biblical sense of the term. The

word is frequently used in common parlance, and even in the treatises of learned men, with significations which it does not have in Scripture. Let us first consider the question negatively, that is, what a miracle is *not*, as follows:

1. A miracle, in the Biblical sense of the term, is not just an extraordinary or unusual event, either in the life of an individual or in the history of the race. A century ago, for example, popular speech would have pronounced it "miraculous" that an audience in San Francisco should be able to hear, *by means of copper wires*, a speech delivered in New York; and little more than a half-century ago it would likewise have been called a "miracle" in common parlance that such an exchange should take place *without the use of any wires at all*. Today, however, these are commonplace incidents. But they are now known to be the effects of perfectly natural causes. Therefore, they definitely are not miracles. Penetrations of the operations of nature, resulting in discoveries and inventions, or the coincidences of life resulting from the concatenation of the perfectly regular processes of nature—such things as these do not belong in the category of miracles.

2. On the other hand, a miracle is neither a violation nor a suspension of the laws of nature, as some have contended. For example, when a boy throws a ball into the air, the power of his arm transcends the law of gravitation in the particular instance. This does not mean, however, that the law of gravitation is thereby suspended; on the contrary, that law continues to be in operation universally. Nor does it mean that the law of gravitation is "violated" in any way; it means only that in the particular case the force of gravity is superseded by a superior force, at the command of a human will. The force of gravity, for instance, draws iron downward, but a magnet will transcend the force of gravity and draw the iron upward. So it is, although the analogy is inadequate, with miracles. When a miracle is performed, the laws of nature continue to be in operation as before; the miracle, a single event in time and space, is the effect of a Will outside what we commonly call "nature," of the Divine Will which is, in fact, the constitution of both the physical and moral universe.

3. A miracle is not an effect of exclusively "natural" causes. It has become the vogue among scholars of a certain type of thought to explain a miracle as an event which could

be accounted for solely as a result of natural processes, if men were only in possession of full knowledge of those processes: the effect of some law of nature with which men are not yet familiar. That is to say, the event is designated a "miracle" in accomodation to human ignorance. This explanation falls short, however, of accounting for a Bible miracle. A miracle, in the Biblical sense of the term, is an event which the laws of nature, even if fully known, would still not be competent to account for, without the immediate agency of God. (By a miracle, writes John Owen, we mean "such effects as are really above and beyond the power of natural causes, however applied."<sup>1</sup>) Miracles do not occur within the realm of God's general providence, that is, within the realm of "natural law" established once for all time by Divine decree (Psa. 148:1-6), such as, *e.g.*, the movements of the heavenly bodies, the rising and setting of the sun, the falling of the rain, the sequence of the seasons, of seedtime and harvest, etc. Miracles occur only as a result of the immediate intrusion of Divine power into that realm. Whenever such an intrusion does occur, in the entire realm of nature as we know it, then of course a miracle takes place, for the simple reason that nature is powerless to resist the Will and Word of God. Hence, miracles may properly be said to occur only in the realm of God's special providence.

4. A miracle is not an event without a cause. It is an event which has for its cause a direct volition of God or immediate exercise of Divine power.

5. A miracle is not a capricious, purposeless, irrational event. The acts of God are without exception manifestations of His Wisdom; hence they are never purposeless.

6. A miracle is not just a mystery. The world which we know is full of mysteries—the mysteries of matter, space, time, life, mind, consciousness, memory, personality, etc. There is no greater mystery, for instance, than that of the transmission of physical, temperamental and even mental characteristics through such sub-microscopic blobs of the "stuff" of life as chromosomes appear to be; or that of the union of the paternal and maternal natures in the fertilized ovum which develops into a new and strictly unique human being. Life as we know it is replete with just such mysteries, mysteries

1. John Owen, *op. cit.*, 79.

for which science has no explanation and probably never will have. These mysteries, however, are ever-present and constantly-recurring phenomena in the ordinary course of nature. Hence they are not miracles, for miracles lie *outside* the ordinary course of nature.

7. A miracle is not necessarily an event which is contrary to human experience, as some (notably Hume, Renan, Baur, etc.) have contended. Nor is it an event contrary to the "constant experience" of the race, as Hume asserts. True, such an event as a Biblical miracle would be out of harmony with the regular day-by-day experience of people living in this twentieth century, and in fact of those who have lived in the intervening centuries since the apostolic age. But we have in Scripture the written testimony of men—all of them men of great sincerity and ability—who affirm that miracles did occur within their own experience and who even affirm that they themselves performed miracles by the power of the Spirit of God. Obviously, this is not a question of *power*, but of *fact*. If there is a God, He must be the Ruler of the universe, and His Will must be the constitution of the universe; hence He may and can interpose His Will at any time, for His own purposes, and transcend natural processes. Certainly our God is not a helpless homeopath who throws up His hands in supine surrender to His own laws of nature! In a word, if there is a God, He can work events in the field of human history which are of just such a nature as those described in Scripture as miracles, if He has a reason for doing so. This is not a question, therefore, of whether or not miracles can take place; it is a question, rather, of whether or not there is a God, and a God who would have a good and sufficient reason for working miracles. Therefore, I repeat, it is not a question of power, but of fact, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, of *the reliability of the evidence*. Are those men who claimed to have performed miracles and to have witnessed the performance of them, men upon whose testimony we can rely? Can we believe what has been written by Moses, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Paul and the other Bible writers? Can we believe the learned Jew named Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night with the frank concession: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2)? Were

these men insincere, personally ambitious impostors? Were they hopelessly deluded religious zealots? The whole question of miracles boils down to just one issue, namely, that of *the reliability of the testimony regarding them*. To say that a miracle is contrary to *ordinary* human experience, and to say that it is contrary to *all* human experience, is to affirm two entirely different propositions. Besides, the fallacy in this entire position consists in the fact that its protagonists overlook altogether the function of miracles as attesting revelation. In affirming that miracles are out of harmony with the "constant experience" of the race, they are simply begging the question. *For miracles were not Divinely intended to be the constant experience of the race. Because miracles were for the purpose of attesting Divine revelation, as it is expressly declared throughout the Scriptures, we need not expect them to have occurred, nor indeed should we look for them, outside the theater of space-time in which that revelation was made in human history. Moreover, in the light of this fact, any pretension to the working of miracles outside that same theater must be regarded with suspicion at least, if not with actual skepticism. It has been rightly said that all alleged "special revelations," from Montanus to Swedenborg, prove their own falsity by the absence of attesting miracles.*

8. A miracle is not a phenomenon of internal psychical experience; not any such change in thought, feeling, or will, as may occur in conversion, regeneration, or sanctification. It is an event which occurs *objectively*; not subjectively; "an event palpable to the senses, which may serve as an objective proof to all that the worker of it is divinely commissioned as a religious teacher."<sup>1</sup>

9. A miracle, in the Bible sense of the term, is not a phenomenon of the same rank as healings effected by the subconscious powers of the human mind. There is an analogy here, of course, between the powers of the subconscious in man to effect the healing of the body, and the power of Divine Thought to create and to control every phase of both animate and inanimate nature. But the operations are of a different order. Neither Jesus nor His Apostles ever gave any "treatments"—absent or present. All that Jesus had to do was to *speak the Word*, that is to order it, and the miracle was

1. A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, One-volume edition, 117.

wrought, whether a miracle of creation, or of mercy (healing), or of judgment. *The achievements of mental therapeutics lie outside the realm of Bible miracles.*

*To sum up, therefore, positively: Miracles, in the Biblical sense of the term, are (1) events which take place in the objective order, events which occur in time and space, events which are palpable to the physical senses of eye-witnesses; (2) events which are produced by the immediate agency of God or the direct exercise of His power, without which immediate agency of God and direct exercise of His power the events could not possibly occur; and (3) events which are produced by the immediate agency of God for religious purposes strictly; that is, for purposes essential to the execution of God's Plan for the redemption of mankind.*

The entire "theology" of miracles was clearly stated by the Apostle Peter, in the first Gospel sermon which the Spirit delivered through the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:22—"Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by *mighty works [powers] and wonders and signs* which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know." This affirmation leaves nothing to be added, in so far as miracles are concerned. Three words are used here, by the Spirit Himself, to describe miracles from as many different points of view:

1. From the viewpoint of their *cause*, they are designated "mighty works," or "powers" (*dynameis*, also rendered "miracles"); that is to say, they are events produced by a direct exercise of the mighty power of God. Cf. Rom. 15:18, 19—"For I [Paul] will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit," etc. (Cf. Matt. 7:22; 11:20, 21, 23; 13:54, 58; 14:2; Mark 6:2, 5, 14; 9:39; Luke 10:13, 19:37; Acts 8:13, 19:11; 1 Cor. 12:10; 2 Cor. 12:12; Gal. 3:5; Heb. 2:4, etc.).

2. From the viewpoint of their *effect*, that is, upon those who witnessed them, they are designated "wonders" (*terata*).

3. From the viewpoint of their *design* or *function*, in the Eternal Purpose of God, they are designated "signs" (*semeia*). That is to say, miracles were signs (marks) by which the stamp of Divine approval and authority was impressed upon

those who performed them and upon their message to mankind. Bible miracles were *signs* in the fact that they were the credentials by which God authenticated both the ministry and the testimony of His servants throughout all ages. (A *sign* is an event that occurs in *the world of being*, one that is amenable to sense-perception; e.g., the conferring of the baptismal measure of Spirit-power upon the apostles on the Day of Pentecost was accompanied by phenomena *that could be seen and heard* (Acts 2:33). A sign is a *signal*, in a sense, and in view of its character, it differs from a *symbol*, which functions primarily in the *world of meaning*.) (Cf. Matt. 12:38, 39; 16:1, 4; Mark 8:11, 12; 16:17, 20; Luke 11:16, 29; 23:8; John 2:11, 18, 23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; 20:30; Acts 4:16, 22; 8:6; 1 Cor. 1:22, etc.) Cf. *semeia kai terata*, "signs and wonders," (a) of the miracles of Moses, Acts 7:36, (b) of the miracles of Christ, John 4:48, Acts 2:22, (c) of the miracles of the Apostles, prophets and teachers of the early Church, Acts 2:43, 4:30, 5:12, 6:8, 14:3, 5:12; Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4; also, by way of analogy, (d) of professed miracles of false prophets or teachers, Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22; 2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:13, 14; 16:14; 19:20. Cf. also "signs" (a) with reference to the miracles performed by Moses and Aaron, Exo. 4:8, 17, 30; (b) with reference to the miraculous events and deeds which are to foreshadow the return of our Lord, Matt. 24:3, 30; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7, 11, 25; Acts 2:19; Rev. 12:1, 3; 15:1; (c) with reference to the gift of tongues in the early Church, 1 Cor. 14:22—here the Apostle states expressly that this gift was not for believers at home, but for the dissemination of the Gospel among unbelievers; and (d) with reference to the experience of the prophet Jonah, that is, the wonder which God wrought in the case of Jonah, in bringing him forth from the belly of the sea-monster, an event which foreshadowed the resurrection of Christ, Matt. 12:38-40, 16:4; Luke 11:29-30. Thus it will be seen that the whole "theology" of miracles is embodied in these three terms—"powers" and "wonders" and "signs"—by which they are scripturally designated.

Now the Scriptures make it clear that *demonstration*, like revelation, is distinctively a work of the Spirit of God. Jesus said to the Pharisees on one occasion, "If I by the Spirit of

God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you" (Matt. 12:28). Hence, if Jesus wrought miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit (He is said to have possessed the Holy Spirit without measure, John 3:34), as indeed it will be seen that He so affirmed in this text, it follows that it was by the Spirit's power that all miracles were performed by human instrumentalities. Hence, it is rightly said that God (through the agency of the Spirit, of course) "approved" Jesus of Nazareth "by mighty works and wonders and signs" which He (through the Spirit) "did by him in the midst of you," etc. (Acts 2:22). And so, when miracles are said in Scripture to have been wrought by the "hand" or "finger" of God, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that is described metaphorically by these terms. Thus it is said that "the hand of the Lord" was with John, the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth (Luke 1:66), and that "the hand of the Lord" was with the first disciples at Antioch (Acts 11:21); in either case "the hand of the Lord" obviously is a metaphor of the power of the Spirit. Similarly, Paul said to Elymas the sorcerer, at Paphos: "Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season" (Acts 13:21); in this case the power of the Spirit was exercised to perform a miracle of judgment. And in Luke 11:20, the passage which parallels Matt. 12:28 quoted above, Jesus is represented as saying: "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." ("The one passage [Matt. 12:28]," writes Cumming, "seems to speak of the power by which the works were done, and the other [Luke 11:20] of the outward bodily sign or gesture which accompanied them."<sup>1</sup>) Again, it is evident from the Scripture accounts that those persons who wrought miracles never acted as if their extraordinary power was something which was inherent in them, but always attributed that power to the presence of the Spirit with them and in them. Take, for example, the healing of the lame beggar, at the Gate Beautiful of the Temple, by the Apostle Peter. To the wondering populace, the Apostle said: "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we made him to walk?" He then goes on to explain that it was by the authority of Christ, as evinced by the exercise of the power

1. James Elder Cumming, *Through the Eternal Spirit*, p. 72.



of the Spirit of course, that the miracle had been performed: "And by faith in his [Christ's] name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know; yea, the faith which is through him [Christ] hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all" (Acts 3:11-16). Or, take another example from the Old Testament, one which has long been a butt of ridicule by skeptics and unbelievers, namely, the case of Joshua and the heavenly bodies on the long day of the battle between the Israelites and the Amorites (Josh. 10:6-14). When Moses' great successor issued his famous command to the heavenly bodies, obviously he did not expect that *his own* words would effect the results that he sought; on the contrary, he acted knowing by inspiration of the Spirit that he had Divine warrant to speak as he did; hence, it is said that "Jehovah hearkened unto the voice of a man" (v. 14). However this miracle may have been effected, the important thing to remember is that it continued to be light "upon Gibeon" and "in the valley of Aijalon," until the children of Israel had won the victory they so sorely needed. It will be remembered that Jesus told the Twelve on one occasion, when they found themselves unable to cure an epileptic, that their failure was due to their lack of faith. He then added: "Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. 17:19-20; cf. Luke 17:6). The faith alluded to here is the faith that makes possible the working of a miracle; the faith of a human instrumentality who allows the Word of God to be spoken through him by the Spirit, as Joshua did. I am sure, for example, that if I were to speak *my own* word to Pike's Peak, saying, "Pike's Peak, get out of my way," that great mountain would not even budge. But if the Word of God were to come to me and to be spoken through me, by the Spirit, saying, "Pike's Peak, get out of the way," I am certain that Pike's Peak would crumble. Nature is powerless to resist the Word of the living God. (Cf. Luke 1:37—"For no word of God shall be void of power.") Those men who wrought the miracles essential to the unfolding of the Plan of Redemption in human history knew full well that it was by the power of the Spirit of God that they wrought, and not by any power inherent in them. In this tenor wrote

Paul to the Corinthians as follows: "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, *but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*" (1 Cor. 2:1-5). Demonstration is distinctively a work of the Spirit; those who acted as instruments of Divine power in the performing of miracles were simply instruments of the Spirit in so doing. When, for example, it is said of the Apostles, prophets and teachers of the early Church, that "the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that followed" (Mark 16:20), and that "God bore witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will" (Heb. 2:4), it is quite clear that this confirming and witnessing was done through the agency and power of the Holy Spirit. Cf. the words of Jesus to the Eleven, John 15:26—"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me." As is evident from the New Testament Scriptures, this witness took the form both of revelation and of demonstration. 1 Thess. 1:5—"Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance," etc. Again, it is specifically the temporal mission of the Holy Spirit in the present Dispensation to *glorify* Christ. As Jesus Himself put it, John 16:14—"He shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." How, then, does the Spirit glorify Christ? He does it, undoubtedly, as Cumming says, by "*removing the veils and coverings* which have prevented Him, *as He is*, from being *seen or known*,"<sup>1</sup> that is, by revealing Him to men as the only possible Savior, and His death as the only possible Atonement and ground of acceptance with Infinite Holiness. This, again, the Spirit did both by revelation and by demonstration. By demonstrating, through the power of the Spirit, His complete mastery of the natural world, Jesus

1. James Elder Cumming, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

demonstrated at the same time that He is sovereign of the moral world. Cf. Matt. 9:1-6; "And he [Jesus] entered into a boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city. And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven. And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? *For which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.* And he arose, and departed to his house." The Spirit has glorified in all Dispensations, and still glorifies, the Son by making Him, and God the Father *through Him*, known to men. John 17:5—"And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

*Demonstration is eminently a work of the Spirit of God.* [Rom. 15:18, 19]: I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit. [Gal. 3:5]: He therefore that supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? [1 Cor. 2:4, 5]: And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. [1 Cor. 12:4-11]: Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit; and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally as he will. [We must never lose sight of the fact that, since the Day of Pentecost, the Day of the beginning of the Gospel Dispensation, the Spirit has been the agent both of the Father and of the Son, in the final phases of the execution of the Plan of Redemption.]

The Scriptures make it equally clear that miracles were designated primarily to be *evidential as to function*, that is, for the purpose of attesting Divine revelation. As a matter of fact, there is no scriptural basis for any human opinion to the contrary. Secondly, of course, miracles served other pur-

poses, as to kind; e.g., there were miracles of guidance, of instruction, of mercy, healing, deliverance, judgment, etc. Broadly speaking, miracles in both Covenants served two purposes, namely, to convict and convince unbelievers and sinners, and to confirm the saints in the most holy faith. Primarily, however, the general design back of these special manifestations of Divine power was that of giving proper credentials to the proper instrumentalities, to confirm them as ministers and ambassadors of God and Christ, and to attest the Divine origin and authority of the message which they delivered to men. Hence, as we have seen, miracles were commonly designated "signs," because they were tokens of God's presence and approbation. That is to say, God confirmed the ministry and testimony of His great servants by the signs which followed.

When Moses, for example, was called and commissioned by Jehovah to lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, he, being a well educated man, immediately asked what evidence he might be able to give both the Egyptians and the Israelites, and the former especially, that he would be acting as the Servant of the living and true God. Whereupon God conferred upon His great leader and mediator of the Old Covenant the power to perform miracles, and put in his hand a rod, which was to be a symbol of the Divine Word. At the same time, God commissioned Aaron as Moses' helper, and conferred upon him similar credentials.

[Exo. 4:1-9]: And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee. And Jehovah said unto him, What is that in thy hand? And he said, a rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail (and he put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand); that they may believe that Jehovah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. And Jehovah said furthermore unto him, Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. And he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again. (And he put his hand into his bosom again; and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.) And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe even these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of

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the river shall become blood upon the dry land [cf. Exo. 7:19]. [cf. Exo. 4:17]: And thou shalt take in thy hand this rod, wherewith thou shalt do the signs. [Exo. 4:27-31]: And Jehovah said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mountain of God, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron of the words of Jehovah wherewith he had sent him, and all the signs wherewith he had charged him. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: and Aaron spake all the words which Jehovah had spoken unto Moses, and *did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed:* and when they heard that Jehovah had visited the children of Israel, and that he had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped. [We are all familiar with the miracles which were wrought by Moses and Aaron in Egypt (including the ten plagues, Exo. 7-12) and throughout the following forty years of wandering in the wilderness. These were all primarily for the purpose of attesting the mission and work of Moses, and only secondarily, *as to kind*, for purposes of deliverance, guidance, instruction, healing, judgment, etc.] [Cf. Acts 7:36]: This man [Moses] led them forth, having wrought *wonders and signs* in Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. [Miracles were also wrought *through* or *on behalf* of other men of God under the Old Covenant: e.g., Joshua (Josh. 6:1-21, 10:12-14), Samson (Judg. 15:18-20), Samuel (1 Sam. 12:18), Elijah (1 Ki. 17:8-16, 18:20-40, 2 Ki. 2:11), Elisha (2 Ki. 4:1-7, 4:32-37, 4:38-41, 4:42-44, 6:1-6, etc.), Daniel (Dan. 6:16-23), Jonah (Jon. 1:17—2:10), etc. These were all personages, of course, who were performing significant roles in the unfolding of God's purposes for mankind.]

In like manner, God, by the agency and power of His Holy Spirit, authenticated the incarnate ministry and work of His Son Jesus Christ.

[God anointed Him, immediately following His baptism,] with the Holy Spirit and with power who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him [Acts 10:38]. [John 2:11]: This beginning of his signs [turning water into wine] did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him. [John 8:1, 2]: Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him. [John 6:2]: And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick. [John 6:14]: When therefore the people saw the sign which he did [the feeding of the five thousand], they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world. [John 6:30]—They [the people] said therefore unto him, What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee? what workest thou? [John 7:31]: But of the multitude many believed on him; and they said *When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?* [John 9:16]: Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them.

[John 10:41, 42]: And many came unto him; and they said, John [the Baptizer] indeed did no sign; but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there. [John 11:47, 48]: The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many signs. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. [John 12:17, 18]: The multitude therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, bare witness. For this cause also the multitude went and met him for that they heard that he had done this sign. [John 12:37]: But though he had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him. [Why, then, did Jesus work these miracles? Obviously, to attest His Divine Sonship and Messiahship, and His ministry on behalf of fallen man. They were the means by which God the Father, through the agency of the Spirit, attested the mission and work of His Son, the incarnate Logos. Jesus Himself makes this crystal clear, in the prayer which He uttered just before He called Lazarus out of the tomb.] [John 11:41-43]: So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hearest me. And I know that thou hearest me always; but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, *that they may believe that thou didst send me.* And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. [Cf. John 20:30, 31—Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: *but these* are written—[for what purpose?]—*that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.*] [Cf. again the testimony of Peter, on the Day of Pentecost]: Ye men of Israel, hear these words: *Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you,* even as ye yourselves know. [It is difficult to see how language could be more explicit.]

Perhaps the most significant characteristic of the miracles of Jesus was their *variety* as to *kind*. No intelligent person can study His miracles from this point of view without realizing that He had absolute control over every phase of Nature and her processes; that all He had to do was to command and Nature obeyed Him at once. Note briefly, in support of this statement, the following general classification of the miracles of Christ:

1. *Miracles of healing*: (1) the nobleman's son, of a fever (John 4:46-54); (2) Peter's mother-in-law, of a fever (Matt. 8:14-17, Mark 1:29-31, Luke 4:38-39); (3) the leper, of his leprosy (Matt. 8:2-4, Mark 1:40-45, Luke 5:12-16); (4) the bedridden man, of his palsy (Matt. 9:1-8, Mark 2:3-12, Luke 5:17-26); (5) the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-16); (6) the man with a withered hand (Matt. 12:9-14, Mark 3:1-5, Luke 6:6-10); (7) the centurion's servant, of palsy (Matt. 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-10); (8) the woman who had been twelve years afflicted with issue of blood (Matt. 9:20-22, Mark 5:25-34, Luke 8:43-48); (9) restoration of sight to two blind men (Matt. 9:27-31); (10) restoration of hearing and speech to a

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deaf and dumb man (Mark 7:32-37); (11) restoration of sight to a blind man (Mark 8:22-26); (12) restoration of sight to a man born blind (John 9); (13) a woman healed, who had been afflicted eighteen years (Luke 13:10-17); (14) healing of a man, of dropsy (Luke 14:1-6); (15) ten lepers, healed of leprosy (Luke 17:11-19); (16) sight restored to a blind beggar (Luke 18:25-43; cf. Matt. 20:29-34); (17) sight restored to blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52; cf. Matt. 20:29-34); (18) restoration of the ear of Malchus, the High Priest's servant (Luke 22:50-51; cf. John 18:10).

2. *Miracles of casting out devils:* (1) the man at Capernaum with an unclean spirit (Mark 1:21-28, Luke 4:31-37); (2) the blind and dumb man possessed of a demon (Matt. 12:22-23, Mark 3:19-30, Luke 11:14-23); (3) the two Gadarene demoniacs possessed of a legion of devils, exceeding fierce (Matt. 8:28-34; cf. Mark 5:1-20, Luke 8:26-39); (4) the dumb man possessed of a devil (Matt. 9:32-35); (5) the daughter of the Syrophenician woman (Matt. 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30); (6) the lunatic boy, whom the disciples had failed to cure (Matt. 17:14-21; cf. Mark 9:14-29, Luke 9:37-43). Cf. Mark 3:11—"And the unclean spirits, whensoever they beheld him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God."

3. *Miracles of raising of the dead:* (1) the widow's son at Nain, as they were bearing him to the grave (Luke 7:11-17); (2) the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue (Matt. 9:18-26; Mark 5:22-24, 35-43; Luke 8:41-42, 49-56); (3) Lazarus, at Bethany, after the man had been dead four days (John 11:32-44).

4. *Miracles of deliverance:* (1) He delivers Himself from His enemies (Luke 4:30); (2) He delivers His disciples from a storm on the Sea of Galilee, calming the winds and waves by a command (Matt. 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25); (3) Peter saved, trying to walk on the sea, as Jesus did (Matt. 14:28-31, Mark 6:45-52); (4) the wind ceases, and the vessel is instantly at the land (John 6:16-21; Mark 6:51-52); (5) those sent to apprehend Him fall to the ground (John 18:4-6).

5. *Miracles of supply:* (1) water converted into wine, at Cana (John 2:1-11); (2) Peter's net filled with an immense draught of fish (Luke 5:1-11); (3) tribute money furnished by a fish (Matt. 17:27); (4) another great haul of fish (John 21:6-14). *Two of these at least were miracles of creation*, namely, (1) the feeding of five thousand men, besides the women and children, with a few loaves and fishes (Matt. 14:15-21, Mark 6:35-44, Luke 9:12-17; cf. John 6:5-14); (2) the similar feeding of four thousand men, besides the women and children (Matt. 15:32-39, Mark 8:1-10).

6. *Miracles of judgment:* (1) the demon-possessed swine run down a steep place into the sea and are drowned (Matt. 8:30-32); (2) the fig tree withered (Matt. 21:18-21; Mark 11:12-14, 20-24).

(Note also the miracles wrought not directly by Jesus Himself, but wrought by God through the Spirit to attest His divinity: (1) The guidance of the Magi to Bethlehem by a star (Matt. 2:1-9); (2) the signs at His baptism (Matt. 3:16-17, Mark 1:9-12, Luke 3:21-23, John 1:32-34); (3) the signs at His Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-14, Mark 9:1-14, Luke 9:28-37, 2 Pet. 1:16-18); (4) the direct answer from Heaven, to His prayer (John 12:28-30); (5) the signs at His death (Matt. 27:45-53); (6) the signs at His resurrection (Matt. 28:2, Mark 16:4); (7) the signs at His ascension (Luke 24:50-51,

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Acts 1:6-12). (Cf. John 21:25—"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.")

Why this great variety of kinds of miracles performed by our Lord? Why did He thus demonstrate His absolute power over every phase of Nature and her processes? Obviously, to prove, once for all, that He was all that He claimed to be,—the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the only possible Savior of men; to demonstrate, once for all, that He who had the authority and power to say to a palsied man, "Arise, and walk," had also the authority and power to say, "Thy sins are forgiven" (Matt. 9:5); to validate once for all the claim which He made just before His ascension to the right hand of the Father, after His conquest of man's last and greatest enemy, death itself: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). The "all" in this text means *all* or *nothing*; He who came the first time as suffering Savior, will return a second time at the end of our age "on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30) as the reigning Judge.

[Col. 1:12-18]: giving thanks unto the Father . . . who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love: in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: *that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

Again, when Jesus first called and sent forth to His own people the men who were to become His Apostles, He bestowed upon them also the Spirit's power to perform miracles to attest their ministry and message.

[Matt. 9:35]: And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness [Matt. 10:1-20]: And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. . . . These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the



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dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely ye received, freely give. . . . Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. [Thus it will be seen that they—the Twelve—were in possession of the Spirit's gifts both of revelation and of demonstration; when they were sent out upon their special mission, they were given the proper credentials; demonstration was for the purpose of attesting revelation.] [Cf. Mark 3:14;19, 6:7-13; Luke 6:14-16, 9:1-6] [Later, Jesus called and sent out seventy other disciples, again on a special mission to His own people, and commissioned them in the same manner.] [Luke 10:1-9]: Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come. And he said unto them . . . Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves. . . . And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you; and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. [As a matter of fact, God never did send out special messengers without qualifying them with the proper credentials to attest their message.]

Hence we find Jesus saying to the Eleven, just before His ascension and coronation, Mark 16:15-18: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." The inspired writer goes on to add: "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. *And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed*" (literally, by the accompanying signs). (I realize, of course, that this section of Mark, ch. 16, vv. 9-20, is not found in the two oldest Greek manuscripts. It does occur, however, in versions which are older than these manuscripts. Besides, everything in it is in harmony with New Testament teaching as a whole.) The point is, that the signs which followed the apostles' preaching were for the purpose of *confirming* the Word which they preached. Moreover, when we read on into

the book of Acts and the Epistles, we find that the very signs enumerated here *did accompany* the ministry and work of the Apostles. There is no indication in this text, of course, that they should extend beyond the apostolic ministry and the apostolic age.

Certainly by this time we are quite familiar with Jesus' promise to the Eleven to send the Holy Spirit upon them, after His return to the Father, to guide them into all the truth (John 14:16-17, 14:26, 15:26-27, 16:7-15; 20:21-23). This coming of the Spirit upon them was, according to His promise, to be in baptismal measure, and was not only to clothe them with infallibility in revealing the message of the Gospel to mankind, but with *power* as well to attest that message with the customary proper credentials, namely, miracles. Hence, we find Jesus saying to them, before His ascension, Luke 24:49—"And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, *until ye be clothed with power from on high.*" Again, Acts 1:1-8, after charging them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, He said to them: "John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence. . . . *But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you:* and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." What was the *power* alluded to, in these statements? Obviously, the power of working miracles and thus attesting the Gospel message, the power of *demonstration*. In His work of demonstration, the Spirit operates as the Spirit of power. And certainly when the Holy Spirit did come upon the Apostles a few days afterward—on the Day of Pentecost—He came in great power: "And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

Now what were the *signs* which, according to Mark's account, were to accompany and to attest the apostolic ministry and message? "In my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents,

and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Did these signs accompany them that believe? That is, did they actually accompany the apostolic proclamation of the Gospel message, and the reception of that message by many of those who heard it? The following passages from the book of Acts and from the Epistles will surely suffice to answer this question beyond any possibility of doubt.

[Acts 2:4—And they [the Apostles] were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to *speak with other tongues*, as the Spirit gave them utterance.] [Acts 2:43]: And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. [Acts 4:29-33]: And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness. . . . And *with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*; and great grace was upon them all. [Acts 5:12-16]: And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people: and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. . . . and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women: insomuch that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came by, at the least his shadow might overshadow some one of them. And there also came together the multitude from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed every one. [Acts 6:8]: And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. [Acts 8:5-7, 13]: And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. For from many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice; and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. And there was much joy in that city. . . . And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed. [It will be remembered that both Stephen and Philip had received this miraculous power by the laying on of the Apostles' hands, Acts 6:1-6.] [Acts 14:3]: Long time therefore they [Paul and Barnabas] tarried there [at Iconium] *speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands*. [Acts 15:12]: And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them. [Acts 19:6]: And when Paul had laid his hands upon them [twelve disciples at Ephesus], the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. [Acts 19:10-12, 20]: And this continued for the space of two years [at Ephesus]; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. And God

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wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out. . . . So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

Note the following special miracles wrought at the hands of the Apostle Peter: (1) A man lame from birth is made to walk and leap, at the Gate Beautiful of the Temple in Jerusalem (Acts 3:1—4:16); (2) Ananias and Sapphira stricken dead for lying to the Holy Spirit: thus to lie to the inspired Apostle was to lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11); (3) Aeneas, who has been bedridden with palsy for eight years, at Lydda, is made whole (Acts 9:33-35); (4) Dorcas (or Tabitha) is raised from the dead at Joppa (Acts 9:36-42). Also the following special miracles wrought by the Apostle Paul: (1) Elymas the sorcerer, trying to prevent the conversion of Sergius Paulus, at Paphos, is stricken with temporary total blindness (Acts 13:6-12); (2) a man, at Lystra, who had been such a cripple from birth that he had never walked, is made to stand up, leap and walk (Acts 14:8-11); (3) a "spirit of divination" is cast out of a maiden at Philippi (Acts 16:16-18); (4) Eutychus, killed by a fall from a window at Troas, is restored to life (Acts 20:9-12); (5) a *deadly viper proves harmless to the Apostle, on the island of Melita* (Acts 28:1-6); (6) the father of Publius, and many other sick persons, cured, on the island of Melita (Acts 28:7-10). [Had not Jesus said, according to Mark's Gospel]: "they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them"?

A study of these various miracles in relation to their respective settings will convince any unbiased person that their function was primarily evidential, that is, to attest the ministry and message of the Apostles and their co-workers.

[Hence wrote Paul to the Corinthians]: Truly *the signs of an apostle* were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works [2 Cor. 12:12]. [Cf. 1 Cor. 9:1]: Am I not free? am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord? [1 Cor. 2:4, 5]: And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. [Rom. 15:18, 19]: For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit. [Those special miraculous powers included in the general category of *charismata* or "spiritual gifts" [1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28-31], which were bestowed quite generally upon Christians of the apostolic age by the laying on of an Apostle's hands (Acts 8:14-19, 19:1-7) were for the twofold purpose (1) of attesting the Gospel message, and (2) confirming the saints themselves in the most holy faith.] [Rom. 1:11, 12]: For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be established; that is, that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. [Cf. again 1 Cor. 2:4, 5]: My speech and my preaching were . . . in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. [2 Tim. 1:6, 7]: I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God

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which is in thee through the laying on of my hands. For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and love and discipline. [Thus it will be seen that for the benefit of sinner and saint alike—for the conversion of the former, and for the establishment of the latter in the faith once for all delivered—miracles were wrought through the Apostles, prophets, and teachers of the early Church, to confirm the message of the Gospel; that, in a word, *demonstration was essential for the purpose of attesting revelation*. One more explicit Scripture passage should put the matter entirely beyond possibility of controversy, namely, Heb. 2;3, 4] How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord was confirmed unto us by them that heard; *God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts [distributions] of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will.*

Now in view of the fact that demonstration accompanied and attested revelation, it naturally follows that when revelation ceased, demonstration came to an end also. When the account of this progressive revelation, as first unfolded in the theater of human history, together (1) with the interpretation of its significance, and (2) with the record of the miracles wrought to attest that revelation—when all these matters were embodied in permanent form in the Scriptures, by competent witnesses, for all men to read, understand, and believe—then inspiration, revelation, prophecy and demonstration *all* gave way to the written but *living* Word of Christ as the Spirit's Book of Discipline and rule of faith and practice for the administration of the Church. As long as the Church was in an infant state and had to depend upon the oral instruction of the Apostles and prophets for guidance, then God, through the Spirit, graciously confirmed the Word by the signs which followed. But, according to the Will and Plan of her Divine Head, when the Church became a man, she put away such childish things as miracles (children are necessarily instructed by means of objects presented to their sense of vision), thereafter to take her instruction and guidance from Him as permanently set forth in His Last Will and Testament. [1 Cor. 13:8-11]: "Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man I have put away childish things." The Apostle is writing here to emphasize

the fact that the "most excellent way" (I Cor. 12:31) or rule for Christians—that is, most excellent by way of comparison with dependence upon miracles, which are, after all, says he, not designed to continue in the Church, but to serve contemporary ends only—is the way or rule of Love. Hence, he concludes, 1 Cor. 13:13, 14:1—"But now *abideth* faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love. Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy" (that is, as long as such *charismata* shall, in the wisdom of the Head of the Church, continue to prevail among Christians). Again, Eph. 4:1-15: "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to *keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" At this point the Apostle enumerates the essentials of this "unity of the Spirit" (which the Church would maintain, if she had proper regard for the Will of her Divine Head; cf. John 17:20-21), as follows: "There is *one body*, and *one Spirit*, even as also ye were called in *one hope* of your calling; *one Lord*, *one faith*, *one baptism*, *one God and Father of all*, who is over all, and through all, and in all." (While churchmen are pondering various plans put forward by men, it might be a good thing for them to give some consideration to the Spirit's plan, for the unification of Christendom.) The Apostle goes on to say: "But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men . . . And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers"—for what purpose?—"for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." What ultimate end was to be served by these special gifts? "Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ." That is to say, special gifts were to prevail

until the Mystic Personality—Christ the Head, the Church the Body—should become fullgrown or fully established in the knowledge of Him “from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together, through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love” (v. 16). Hence, says the Apostle elsewhere, Rom. 10:6-10, that the righteousness which is of faith does not ask that Christ should again come down from heaven, nor does it ask that He should again return from the dead, in order to convert sinners and strengthen the faith of the saints. (That is, the Incarnation and the Resurrection, having occurred once, need not be repeated, the witness of both events having already been stated in the Word, and this should be sufficient for the man of faith.) “But what saith it? *The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach:* because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” When the Word of Faith was embodied in permanent form in Scripture, as the Rule of Faith and Practice for the Church, miracles were no longer necessary. The *righteousness which is of faith* depends not upon signs, but upon the testimony presented in the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). The Scriptures themselves are sufficient to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus; sufficient to furnish the man of God completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

The essential facts of the Christian System are that Jesus lived, that He died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He was raised up on the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Now for Christ to have made the spread of His Kingdom and the faith of His Church to depend on *signs*, would have been, to a large extent at least, to override or transcend man's exercise of his natural abilities to examine the testimony respecting these facts and to decide for himself the issues of his own life on the basis of the evidence presented. As long as that testimony existed only partially, and in *oral* form at that, the miracles were necessary as supports. Once the testimony was complete, however, and fully attested by miracles, and the

records, both of the Gospel facts themselves and of the signs by which they were Divinely attested, embodied in permanent form in the Scriptures, the miraculous supports were no longer needed; miracles ceased, giving way to the rule of the Scriptures themselves. Miracles as fitted into their proper setting, that is, as signs attesting Divine revelation, are perfectly natural and proper, outside that setting, however, they become incongruous. Certainly miracles performed today would not serve to attest historical facts which occurred over nineteen hundred years ago. *Therefore I repeat, for the sake of emphasis, that when Divine revelation ceased, Divine demonstration ceased also.* I have no doubt, of course, that miracles will occur again in connection with the sublime events with which the present Dispensation will terminate. Indeed, this is clearly indicated by the prophecy of Joel as repeated by the Apostle Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:16-21; "I will show wonders in the heaven above, And signs on the earth beneath; Blood and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, Before the day of the Lord come, That great and notable day." That Joel's prophecy embraced the entire Gospel Dispensation in its scope, and that the portion of it just quoted will have its fulfilment in those events—some catastrophic, some apocalyptic, and all of them sublime beyond the power of the human imagination to conceive—which are to herald and to accompany the return of Christ to take up his universal rule upon the throne of David in Jerusalem, seems obvious. Until that great and notable Day shall come, however, God's saints need not expect the Spirit to work miracles in this present age, when as a matter of fact the testimony respecting the facts of the Gospel—the death, burial and resurrection of Christ—is piled so high in Scripture that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. Christian faith is not founded on contemporary signs; it comes from hearing the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17).

Hence the folly of those deluded persons who think they are "witnessing" for Christ by drinking poisons or by allowing poisonous snakes to sink their fangs in them. They need to be reminded that *God, and God alone, determines the time when, the place where, and the purpose for which His Holy Spirit shall work miracles through human instrumentalities.* These



poor souls would "put God on the spot," so to speak; they themselves would choose the time and place, and determine the purpose for which the Holy Spirit is to work signs and wonders. All this of course, no matter what they think, they are utterly powerless to do. Besides, how would such contemporary "signs" serve to confirm the Word of Christ which was fully delivered nineteen centuries ago? Were not such tactics clearly the product of ignorance, they would have to be regarded as acts of sheer presumption. I repeat that the working of miracles is God's business alone, through the Holy Spirit; He alone determines when and where miracles shall be performed. Of course these fanatics are not the only persons who, in the long sad history of human corruption of New Testament doctrine, have undertaken to transact God's business for Him; some of the most distinguished and scholarly theologians have manifested the same presumption.

Finally, the Bible being the permanent record of God's progressive revelation to mankind, it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that from beginning to end it is enshrouded in the miraculous. Take the miracles out of the Bible, and gone are the stories of the Creation, the Garden of Eden, the Deluge and Noah's deliverance, the call of Abram, the experiences of the Patriarchs, and the wonders in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness. He who would delete the miraculous from the Bible would take away the stories of the translations of Enoch and Elijah, the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, the burning bush on Mount Horeb, the fire descending from Heaven at Mount Carmel, the three Hebrew children in the furnace of fire, Daniel in the lions' den, and the handwriting on the wall at Belshazzar's feast. He who would destroy the miracles would repudiate the Annunciation to Mary and the Virgin Birth of Jesus; he would strike the Star of Bethlehem from the sky; he would silence forever the beautiful story of the angels, the shepherds, and the Magi; and he would still the voice of the Almighty speaking from Heaven after the baptism of Jesus and on the Mount of Transfiguration. He who would destroy the miracles would take away the accounts of the feeding of the five thousand, the stilling of the tempest, the healing of the fierce Gadarene demoniacs, the blasting of the fig tree, and the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Worst of all, he who would reject the miracles would take away

man's only hope—the Resurrection of our Lord—and would dissipate the light that now shines from the other side of Joseph's tomb, and would make the earth once more but the valley of the shadow of death. And he who would take away the miracles would repudiate the Lord's appearance after His Resurrection, His Ascension to the Father, the descent of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and the Creation of the Body of Christ, and all the signs and wonders attending the permanent establishment of the Church. In fact, if the miracles are taken from the Bible, *its authority is gone*; its content becomes just another guess at the riddle of the universe. The Bible is enshrouded in the miraculous—thank God! It breathes forth the atmosphere of Heaven. It is clothed in garments of celestial beauty and glory. The reason is that the Bible is the Spirit-inspired record of God's progressive revelation of His Eternal Purpose, and revelation is always accompanied by demonstration. There is no other book in the world like the Bible in this respect. It is indeed and in truth THE BOOK.

Ultimately, then, he who would repudiate the miraculous element in the theater of God's revelation in history, would have us live in a world where the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is unknown. What a horrible world that would be!

## 2. "The Sing of Jonah the Prophet"

It remains to the everlasting credit of Jesus, and another proof as well of the perfection of His teaching, that He repeatedly emphasized the fact that faith in Him which was founded upon the signs and wonders which He wrought was of a lower order than faith in Him, and love for Him, *for what He was as a Person*, namely, the Son of God and the only Savior of men. Even though He fully recognized the significance of miracles as signs attesting Divine revelation, He affirmed again and again their secondary character in the engendering of genuine personal faith. A few Scriptures will suffice to set forth His teaching on this subject.

Take for example, in the first place, Jesus' statements to the Eleven, as recorded in John 14:10-12. In vv. 10-11, He says: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself; but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else