

# The Gospel in Christ's Miracles

By **Malcolm H. Watts**

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A miracle has been defined as an intervention of Omnipotence, an event brought about by the immediate agency of God in contrast with his ordinary method of working through the order of nature. Dr Robert Dabney wrote: "We must hold fast to the old doctrine that a miracle is a phenomenal effect, above all the powers of nature; properly the result of supernatural power, that is of God's immediate power which he has not regularly put into any second causes, lower or higher."

Christ himself is the greatest of all miracles. "He is," as Dr Fausset once observed, "an embodied miracle, the miracle of miracles." The Scriptures therefore assign to him the very names normally as-

sociated with divine miracles: he is called Wonderful; he is called the Sign given to Israel; he is called the Power of God (Isaiah 9:6 cf. Judges 13:18,19; Luke 2:34; 1 Corinthians 1:24).

The miracles he performed served a two-fold purpose: first of all, they were evidences of his divine Person; and secondly, they were illustrations of his saving work.

## Our Lord's Divine Person

As Dr. William Taylor once said, Christ performed his supernatural works before men that they might serve as "a stairway, up which men might ascend to the reception of him as incarnate God." In John 10:37-38, Christ says, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe

the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." Again, in John 14:11, he says, "Believe me that I am in the Father and

took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house..." We note the italicised words of command - "I say unto thee..."

## **“A Miracle has been defined as an intervention of Omnipotence”**

the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

Therefore, as we would expect, his supernatural works were unique. He himself spoke of them as "works which none other man did" (John 15:24), while others were brought to confess, "It was never so seen in Israel"; "We never saw it on this fashion" (Matthew 9:33; Mark 2:12).

What was it that was so different about Christ's miracles?

First of all, he performed miracles purely of his own volition, without reliance on any outside communication or intimation. Therefore we read, in Mark 1:41, that he says, "I will; be thou clean" and in John 21:22, "If I will that he (the apostle John) tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

Secondly, his miracles were always wrought by the deployment of his own power, without reference to some external aid. In Luke 5:24, for example, he says, "I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and

Thirdly, in the working of his miracles he declared his absolute Lordship, as when he healed on the Sabbath. Claiming to be "Lord" of that day, he answered critics with the words, "Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days" (Matthew 12:8,11). On another occasion he "touched" a "leper", contrary to Jewish understanding of that ceremonial law which states "he is unclean: he shall dwell alone" (Leviticus 13:46), and we read, "Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Matthew 8:3). In all such cases he acted as sovereign Lord, even as sovereign Lord of the Law.

Fourthly, Christ's miracles were also unique in another important respect. In performing them, he repeated the ancient works of God in creation and redemption. We should pay special attention to this when we study the miracles. In Matthew 9:29 (with respect to the healing of the blind men) the Lord says, "According to your faith, be it unto you", those last words being authoritative and command-

ing, reminiscent of the decrees and fiats of Genesis 1, such as, "Let there be light", "Let there be a firmament", "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together" etc. And, in the case of the blind man of whom we read in John 9, the Lord "spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay", bringing to mind Genesis 2:7, and the making of first-made man out of "the dust of the ground." We also do well to take account of the people's response to his works - "he hath done all things well" (Mark 7:37) because that appears to echo the statement at the end of Genesis 1, the creation account - "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen 1:31).

Redemption's mighty works seem also to be repeated. In the report of the stilling of the storm, it is said that "he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm" (Matthew 8:26). Does not this call our attention back to Psalm 106:9, with its reference to the redemption and deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt - "He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness"? There seems little doubt that in such instances our Lord is proclaiming himself the divine Creator and Redeemer.

Fifthly, his miracles were unique in that his purpose in performing them seemed

often, if not always, to draw from people faith in himself. So, when the two blind men of Matthew 9:27-31 came to him, he said: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Perhaps even more to the point is the question Christ put to the healed blind man of John 9 - "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" (John 9:35).

Sixthly, while performing his miracles, our Lord did not hesitate to speak in a divine way. This is particularly evident from the way in which he spoke to his disciples, saying, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:19). Here was surely a reference to Psalm 91:13, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder"; but our Lord spoke these words, originally spoken by God, and used them as if they were his own.

Seventhly, Christ's miracles were such that people recognised divinity at work in them, and they were brought to confess as much in their praise. One of the lepers healed in Luke 17:12-19, "with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks." Most noticeable is the connection between "glorifying God" and "giving him (Christ) thanks." The cleansed leper seems to be acknowledging here the full deity of Christ, which worship our Lord both received and commended (compare and contrast Revelation 22:8,9).

Our Lord was indeed the Son of

God, and God the Son: hence all his miracles were in a category of their own, unique in every sense, and manifestly the works of "God manifest in the flesh".

## Our Lord's Saving Work

Christ's miracles were intended to show the nature of his ministry. They were symbolical representations of his supernatural and spiritual works, performed both for and in men. This is made clear by one of the terms used in the Scripture to denote miracles.

The word translated "miracles" signifies "powers", referring of course to the cause or agency by which miracles are produced. Another word for miracles is that translated "wonders", which denotes "marvels", and refers not to the cause, but to the effect of the miracles, even to the great astonishment in those who witnessed them. However there is a third word, translated "signs", which has reference to the "significance" or "meaning" of these wonderful acts as they point beyond themselves to things more wonderful by far - "God's spiritual works of grace." John Calvin, the Reformer, wrote: "In the miracles which Jesus wrought for the cure of the body, he gave us, as it were, a specimen of that salvation which he brings to our souls."

We are convinced that in Christ's "book of teaching", he not only uses words, as in his sermons and discourses, his parables and sayings, but also pictures, as in his

miracles and mighty works, which are intended to illustrate his great salvation. In his miracles, we may behold, if we have eyes to see, what Christ will do, not so much for poor, sick people, but what he will do for poor, ruined sinners.

Grasping this truth is essential to a correct and proper understanding of our Lord's miracles. Here are ten arguments to prove that our Lord's miracles were dramatic revelations of his great salvation:

### 1. Miracles divinely explained

Even in Old Testament times, miracles took place in order to instruct God's people about his salvation. There are statements to this effect, as in Psalm 98:1-2, "O sing unto the Lord a new song: for he hath done marvellous things... The Lord hath made known his salvation." The mighty acts of God had profound significance as nothing more or less than disclosures of salvation. Sad to say, although the Jews witnessed so many of God's mighty acts, they did not always discern their true and real purpose. Deuteronomy 29:2-4 has Moses saying to them: "Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt... Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day" (Compare: Psalm 106:7). You see, there was more - far more - in these works than displays of miraculous power. There were revelations of saving grace, the

very hope of lost and ruined sinners.

In the New Testament, our Lord alludes to the miracle of Jonah's deliverance, showing how Jonah's experience pictures his own offering of himself to still the storm of God's wrath, and how his deliverance from the belly of the great fish foreshadows his death and resurrection, enabling the Gospel to be taken to the Gentiles (Matthew 12:40-41; cf. Jonah 1,2). The Gospel of John records what he taught concerning the miracle associated with the "brazen serpent", when people suffering from serpent-bites, "looked" to the brazen serpent and "lived". It was, Christ maintained, a remarkable exhibition of himself as the crucified Saviour and the absolute need of a believing "look" (John 3:14,15; cf. Numbers 21:4-9).

Again, he made clear that the miraculous supply of manna was not just an amazing event: it was an act revealing that God in Christ was "the bread of God" which imparts life to our souls and nourishes them in knowledge, comfort, holiness and eter-

ger..." (John 6:33, 35 cf. 6:27).

There can be no doubt, then, that Old Testament miracles were illustrations, vehicles of revelation for the Gospel.

## 2. Testimony of the Prophets

Ancient prophecies declared that the promised Christ would perform spiritually instructive miracles. Isaiah 35:5-6 reads: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." On studying this passage, it becomes clear that it contains prophecy to be fulfilled both "literally" and "spiritually", predicting, on the one hand, Christ's physical cures, but, on the other, foretelling his spiritual cures (See: Isaiah 29:10,11,18; 42:7,18). The prophet blends the two together for one reason, and for one reason alone: because physical cures would be the emblems, or symbols, of spiritual cures.

## “It was... a remarkable exhibition of himself as the crucified Saviour ”

nal life. "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world...I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hun-

Our Lord connected these together during his own earthly ministry. His first sermon preached in the synagogue at Nazareth has him declaring that he had been sent "to heal the broken hearted, to preach de-

liverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18). Why did he use this kind of language unless it was to show that making the blind to see, and so on, prefigured his enlightening, and saving work upon the souls of lost men and women?

When speaking to two of John's disciples, the Lord made clear that there was a definite connection between the things which they did "see" and the things which they did "hear". He specified some of the more signal miracles which they may well have witnessed - "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; (and) the dead are raised up"; and he then intimated that these were really external signs of internal cures, for he went on to unite them with spiritual blessings, adding these words, "and the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:1-5).

It is therefore perfectly justifiable to view his miracles as vivid portrayals of soul-deliverance. Dr. Franz Delitzsch once wrote: "The healing of bodily defects...is merely the outer side of what is effected by the coming of Jehovah."

### 3. Prophetic Actions

The Lord Jesus Christ was the prophet, pre-announced by Moses, and appointed to declare, in the fullness of time, God's mind and will concerning salvation (Deuteronomy 18:15; Luke

7:16; John 6:14). Now in Old Testament times the prophets performed symbolic acts in order to present profound spiritual truth, and these acts, even when not miraculous, were really object-lessons. We remember how the prophet Ahijah "caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces", saying to Jeroboam, "take thee ten pieces"; and the action is then explained to Jeroboam as a sign that God would "rend the kingdom" from Solomon and give to Jeroboam "ten tribes" (1 Kings 11:30-31; cf. Is 20:2-4; Jeremiah 13:1-9; Ezekiel 4:1-4).

Christ likewise, as the great Prophet of God, taught the Gospel not only in what he said, but also in what he did, which is why Luke 24:19 refers to him as "Jesus of Nazareth...a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." In other words, in his prophetic ministry he both acted and spoke, so that revelation was given through visible actions as well as through verbal declarations. John Trapp, the Puritan, quaintly says, "As he taught, so he wrought." And Augustine, in the fifth century, wrote as follows: "Let us ask of the miracles themselves, what they will tell us about Christ, for if they be but understood, they have a tongue of their own...He was the Word of God, and all the acts of the Word are themselves words for us. They are not as pictures, merely to look at and admire, but as letters which we must seek to read, and to understand."

## 4. Teaching and Healing

Certainly there was a strong link between our Lord's words of grace and his works of grace. Throughout his ministry, teaching and healing went side by side. Matthew 4:23, for example, informs us that "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (cf. 9:35; Luke 5:15,17). The reason why these two different ministries were performed side by side is quite obvious: the great things which he taught were illustrated, and sometimes even clarified, by the astonishing things which he did.

Christ himself insisted that there was revelation in his teaching and in his miracle-working. He told the Jews, "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me" (John 5:36).

A very interesting verse appears in John 14:10. It reads: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." Notice here that the Lord is speaking of his works, but he actually calls them words. Why? It is because something is being said through his works. Through them he is making known his mission as the Saviour of helpless and hopeless sinners. Dr J. P. Lange

perceptively comments in one of his books, "His words are works of wonder, and his miracles are words of God."

Perhaps this is hinted at in Luke 11:20 where Christ is reported as saying, "If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." The "finger" was sometimes the instrument by which God conveyed a message, as in Exodus 31:18 and Daniel 5:3, so here what the Lord did with his "finger" - the casting out of devils - was as much a communication of truth as his preaching of some impressive sermon. Sadly the people of his day rejected the revelations in his miracles, even as they did those in his teachings, and in response to both they are said to have sinned against light. Christ said this of them, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin...If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin..." (John 15:22,24).

## 5. The Great Physician

On occasions, when performing a miracle, our Lord would give a clue concerning its higher meaning. He spoke of a woman with the terrible spinal curvature as someone "whom Satan hath bound...these eighteen years" but who hath been, through his own gracious ministry, "loosed from this bond" (Luke 13:16). It appears he wanted to show that Satan was the author of evil, both physical and moral. This

would then facilitate a proper understanding of what had taken place: divine power exerted on a body illustrating divine power exerted on a soul. Take another example: the case of the paralysed man recorded in Mark 2. The Lord said to this man, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (verse 5). Now the man evidently needed to be healed, but Jesus said "thy sins be forgiven thee." Why? He clearly wanted to forge the link between the "palsy" of this poor man and his "sins", in order to show that just as he was able to deal with the one, so he was able to deal with the other. The one (sickness of the palsy) was understood to be a picture of the other (the man's sinful spiritual state).

In this connection it is worth noting how the Lord made free use of the word "save", a word most commonly used of spiritual salvation. In Mark 5:34, the Lord Jesus says to a woman, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole", which is literally, "thy faith hath saved thee." Here the Lord raises the healing to an altogether higher level, for in his eyes, it was not merely the deliverance of a person from an infirmity, but it was a marvellous disclosure of the saving purpose and power of God through his Son. Similarly, in Luke 18:42, we read that the Lord said to the blind man at Jericho, "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee." Once again the term associated with spiritual salvation is used to describe a physical, healing miracle. This point should not be overlooked, because each supernatural

cure is emblematic of something even more wonderful - the salvation of the soul.

## 6. The Historical Context

The setting of the miracle often helps us to appreciate its significance. Our Lord's miracle of the changing of water into wine takes place between the Baptist's account of him as "the lamb of God" (John 1:29) and a reference to "the Jews' Pass-over" (John 2:13) when, according to Josephus, the historian, 266,560 victims would be slain. Did not the "wine" therefore symbolize Christ's "blood", freely shed for us, and therefore all the blessed benefits of redemption? (In this connection, see Mark 14:24)

Take the miracle of the healing of the man with "dropsy", described in Luke 14:1-6. "Dropsy" is a condition resulting from the unnatural accumulation of fluid and it causes severe swelling in various parts of the body. The passage declares how the Lord "took him", or "laid hold on him", and amazingly "healed him" (verse 4). Now this is immediately followed by a reference to the "proud" who, at table, "chose out the chief rooms (or places)", just as some men at a "wedding" aspire to occupy "the highest room (or place)." Christ urges upon his hearers true humility, concluding "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11). Is it not patently clear that "dropsy" is an emblem of inflated pride, pride that



"puffeth up" (1 Corinthians 4:6, 18,19; 5:2; 8:1; Colossians 2:18), and that such pride the Lord Jesus came to remove?

On another occasion, Peter, deeply conscious of his heart's impurity, becomes quite overcome in the Lord's presence, and he says, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). Now this event is immediately followed in Luke 5:12 with the healing of a leper - "And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Peter falls down, overcome with concern over his inherent sinfulness, and immediately afterwards the Lord Jesus shows that though a man is defiled, unclean, and vile, yet is it possible for him to be cleansed. (See also: Matthew 12:22,29)

## 7. Helpful Pictures

Our Lord openly taught that physical healing illustrated spiritual healing. Consider his words found in Matthew 9:12-13. He said, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Here, in this place, after demonstrating that he was a "physician" of the body, he declares that he is also a physician to the sin-sick soul. The Lord

says, in effect, "If the sick turn to me for healing, should not sinners come to me for saving?". (See: Psalm 103:3; 147:3; Jeremiah 8:22; Ezekiel 34:4)

Christ did not hesitate to use language normally pertaining to people's sick conditions to describe wretched spiritual states: for example, in Luke 14:21, he spoke of "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind", each of which points to a class of sinner - "the poor", such as are destitute of good, greatly in debt, and most needy; "the maimed", crippled by sin, greatly enfeebled, and without strength; "the halt", the unbelieving, incapable of going God's way, and lacking conviction; and "the blind", ignorant of themselves, confused about spiritual things and missing out on so much in life. In each and every case the reference is to the plight of the sinner.

In his ministry, the Lord was apt to use a term in both a literal and a figurative way, as when he says, "Let the dead (as spiritually understood, 'dead in trespasses and sins') bury their dead (the physically dead, those dead in body)" (Luke 9:60). His use of the word "dead" to indicate two very different states strongly suggests that we are meant to see not so much the contrasts as the similarities between them. The "dead" that he raised to life were meant to remind us of the "dead" whom he would quicken unto life eternal. As he himself later said, "I am the resur-

rection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

At times the Lord seemed to go out of his way thus to explain a miracle. In his day, lepers had to stand far away from people, crying out, "Unclean! Unclean!", and Luke 17:12 tells of the ten lepers who stood "afar off"; but in the very next chapter, in Luke 18:13, the Lord Jesus tells of two men praying in the temple: the publican, like the leper, deeply aware of his awful condition, stood "afar off", yet, just as the lepers were miraculously "cleansed", so sinners - like this publican - could find "mercy" and be "justified" (Luke 18:13,14).

Observe too that even the actions of the sick were significant. At times they were meant to show right spiritual responses to the Saviour. So many of them illustrate faith; as, for example, in that instance when "the blind men came to him" (Matthew 9:28). Is that not an allusion to the needy, miserable sinner who must "come" by faith to Christ for the blessing of salvation? (Matthew 11:28) Is it not true that, in the Lord's vocabulary, "coming" and "believing" are synonymous terms? (John 6:35)

A striking scene confronted the people in the country of the Gadarenes. After Christ had delivered the man possessed by many devils, that man was found "sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right

mind" (Luke 8:35). In a very similar way, once Christ saves a sinner, that sinner will become like Mary, "which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word" (Luke 10:39). There were two works of Christ, but the resultant cured state strongly resembles the resultant saved state. This is no coincidence, for, in our thoughts, the one is meant to lead us to the other.

## 8. Physical Works Superseded

As we can now see, there were, according to Christ, two kinds of miracles: external or physical, and internal and spiritual, and the former definitely illustrated the latter. Now our Lord was at pains to show that physical miracles should be superseded by spiritual miracles. This is the meaning of John 14:12, where he promises the disciples: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

It is difficult to conceive of "greater works" than changing water into wine, feeding five thousand people, raising Lazarus from the dead, and so on; but our Lord is evidently referring to the amazing acts of grace which will follow the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:41; 5:14; 6:7; 10:44etc.). The term "greater" in John 14:12 therefore designates miracles of a different and nobler kind: the saving of men from their sins.

Commenting on these words, Professor F. Godet writes, "The words: the works that I do shall he do, refer to the miracles, like those of Jesus, which the apostles wrought; and the words following, greater than these shall he do, not to more extraordinary external works...but to works superior in their very nature to bodily cures...The term greater does not, then, designate miracles of a more astounding character, but of a more exalted nature."

Similarly, Dr. John Brown of Aberdeen observes, "His miracles, accordingly, apostles wrought, though wholly in His name and by His power, while the 'greater' works - not in degree but in kind- were the conversion of thousands in a day, by His Spirit accompanying them."

One further quotation, this time from Bishop J.C. Ryle, whose brief note on the "greater works" is as follows: "The meaning of these words must be sought in the moral and spiritual miracles which followed the preaching of the Apostles after the day of Pentecost."

Did not our Lord himself mention in another place of the "greater works"? I refer to Luke 5, which contains an account of the miraculous catch of fish, and the sequel to that miracle is Christ's word to Simon Peter. He says this to him: "Fear not: from henceforth (in the future, in a new set of circumstances) thou shalt catch men (literally, 'catch men alive', by throwing out the gospel net and enclosing thou-

sands of souls for the Master)" (Luke 5:10). These words were to find glorious fulfilment, not just in the conversions of the day of Pentecost, but thereafter, in the amazing successes enjoyed by the early church. These were miraculous draughts of an altogether different kind. "Greater works" indeed!

## 9. Acted Parables

As already intimated, Old Testament miracles were "parabolic", in the sense that they had a meaning other than the one that was obvious. When the Psalmist refers to the accounts of God's past "wonderful works", handed down from father to son, and calls them "parables" and "dark sayings", he means that they were "figurative representations of truth" and "enigmas requiring interpretation" (Psalm 78:2,4 cf. 78:10ff.). Most significantly this is the passage cited in the Gospels as prophetic of Christ's own ministry, so we are led to assume that in what he said, and did, there were concealed messages. (Matthew 13:34,35)

So much is asserted in Mark 4:11 - "Unto them that are without, all these things are done (happen, or take place) in parables." We know that he spoke in parables. What now appears is that he also worked in parables, which explains why it is said that people, seeing his miracles, did not discern their meaning. We read that even the disciples "understood not the miracle of the loaves." The Lord had to say to them,

"Perceive ye not yet; neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not?...How is it that ye do not understand?" (Mark 8:17,18,21). He thought it sad, if not quite tragic, that they had not reflected on the miracle's significance; and their failure not to perceive the purpose of his miracles, meant a failure not to grasp what he was seeking to get across to them.

## 10. Wonders of Grace

So then, just as preaching made the Gospel audible, miracle-working made it visible; and, no doubt, this is the reason why "mercy" and "grace" to sinners of mankind were the distinguishing features of all our Lord's miracles. As the Lord said to the man out of whom he had cast a legion of devils, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (Mark 5:19).

Here is the great difference between the Old Testament miracles and those of the New Testament. The former, on the whole, are described as terrible and fearful events. They seem to breathe divine indignation and feel as punishment for sin. Such are the plagues brought upon the land of Egypt (Deuteronomy 4:34; 10:21; 26:8). However, there is a marked contrast between those and Gospel miracles. As Christ said to one delivered man, "Go home to thy

friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee (Mark 5:19).

Moses' first public miracle was turning water into blood. Christ's first miracle was turning water into wine. In fact, there is only one miracle of judgement in our Lord's ministry: the cursing of the fig-tree - and even that was a warning rather than some kind of example. Every other miracle Christ performed was kind and saving. And what does this show? It shows that, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

## A Beautiful Sight

They tell me that in Rome there is a famous work of art by Aurora Guido and that it adorns one of the high ceilings. However, it is difficult to look up and appreciate its beauty, so a mirror has been set up in the room beneath to reflect its every detail. A visitor coming into that room does not need to strain himself to look at that picture: he can simply look into the mirror to behold the wonderful work of art which is on high.

It seems to me that the high miracle of salvation in Jesus Christ is wonderful and far above our inspection. Most difficult it is for us to understand those sublime truths and profundities, but God has given to us a mirror - the mirror of the miracles - and as we look into it, we are able to see a most moving reflection of our so great sal-

vation. The miracles serve to help us to a sure and better understanding.

When we read the accounts of them, we must always bear in mind this "salvation-interpretation." If we confine our thoughts only to the outward events, we shall certainly miss the very special truths God would have us consider. We must recognise why these miracles were performed. In each of them we must seek - and find - the Gospel. Then, and only then, shall we see on every page, "the works of God" and truly "wondrous things".