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*"The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light"*

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*Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD*

Ezekiel's vision was of great range. No doubt in part some of it was fulfilled when the Jews returned from Babylon in the reign of Cyrus, but it stretched far beyond that, to the time yet future when the scattered flock shall be gathered again, and the Shepherd-King shall lead them (34).

The Seer of Patmos and the Prophet by the Chebar both worked towards the same centre, for in the book of Revelation, as here, we see the City, the Temple, the Throne, and the Glorified Man upon it, and the Rainbow round about it. Gog and Magog are overthrown, and the Glory of God enfolds all things.

Surely this is witness sufficient to the inspired character and Divine authority of the Scriptures, that men separated by 600 years should see visions so closely corresponding.

*"Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven"* (Ps. 119:89).

## BIBLE MIRACLES

BY ROWLAND H. C. HILL

*(Concluding article)*

The miracles performed by the Lord Jesus Christ were unique in more than one respect. In the first place, according to His own word they were "works which none other man did" (John 15:24). "None other man" means He was man and as such performed a great number of miracles; and if we consider the great numbers healed on various occasions, each individual a separate miracle, the number is further increased. The Gospels record about forty but refer to other unrecorded ones. John, who recounts but seven, refers to the many others in chs. 2:23; 3:2; 6:2; 7:31; 9:16; 11:47; 12:37; 20:30.

In the second place, not all His miracles were performed publicly and He sometimes forbade the publication of them. There is an explanation of this that may be alluded to as it bears upon our subject. Of one great matter of revelation there will be no attempt at explanation. The Scriptures emphatically state, and we irrevocably believe and proclaim, that the Christ was God from eternity and ever shall be God. As emphatically it is stated that Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, condescended to be a babe needing the nourishment and care of His mother. He became and was man and so continues. As a man, and without stepping out of that condition He performed His miracles.

Peter, newly filled with the Holy Ghost and speaking by His inspiration says: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you." Peter had a knowledge of the Christ. It is sometimes asserted that no man can know the Son: True, none can fully know Him, but Peter had a knowledge of Christ which He said was revealed to him by the Father. It was Peter who declared Jesus to be the Christ the Son of God and he refers to Him as a man.

Let us now glance at His miracles, considering them in accordance with our definition of them for this discussion. They were wonders; they were special works of God; they were signs confirming Jesus of Nazareth as a man sent from God as Teacher and Messiah, or Christ.

Why was it, may be asked, that all were not given the widest publicity in order that their *effect* might have been felt throughout the whole Jewish population of Palestine? Certain facts, if recalled, indicate the reason. At that time the Jewish people were suffering under cruel and unjust tyranny and were passionately longing for their Messiah the Son of David and there was a general expectation that His advent was near. They expected the Messiah to be a king and one who would conquer the corrupt Roman Empire and set up his own universal sway. Their expectations were based on the declarations of the prophets but they ignored or explained away other predictions of the prophets regarding the Messiah that were not directly concerned with "the glory that should follow." The Messiah was to be an authoritative Prophet, like Moses, and thus a Teacher. When, therefore, the predicted Messiah came as a Teacher of God's truth, He had to correct their ideas of the character of Messiah and rebuke their hatred and rebellion. He seems first to have established His claims to be that Teacher, and then further as the Messiah of *the prophets* and not of *their* expectations. The task before Him then was to establish His Messiahship but in such a way that those leaders of the people who readily recognized His unparalleled influence over the masses as well as His power to work miracles, would not be able to use Him for *their* purpose. They would try and ally Him with the fanatical forces behind a rebellion that was impending then and later broke out. In quelling it the Romans suffered several defeats and fought for three bitter years before succeeding in putting it down.

The failure of Christ to live up to their expectations, conforming instead to the character in which the Prophets really set Him forth assured His rejection. He was accused before the Romans of inciting to violence but it was because of His refusal to do that very thing that the leaders of the people rejected Him. An imposter would have conformed to their expectations and assured his acceptance.

Because of these considerations there was one end to be accomplished in performing miracles and one to be avoided. This accounts for the suppression of the wide publicity of some of His miracles but by no means all. There was a sufficient display of miraculous power to make Chorazin and Bethsaida merit the awful doom predicted of them for refusing Him.

An instance of the tendency of miraculous evidence of His Messiahship to lead to wrong conclusions on the part of the people is found in the feeding of the multitude. They concluded He was the leader they required in their desire for revenge and rebellion and tried to make Him king by force. There was danger that even the disciples would be carried away by it, so He had to send them away from the scene while He alone pacified and dismissed the people (see Matthew 14:22 and John 6:14).

He came that first time to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and thus obtain eternal redemption for man. But He was not only the Author and Giver of salvation, as Bernhard points out, but also the Messenger and Teacher of salvation. It was as Teacher that He first presented Himself to the people and His teaching in the Gospels includes the substance of all Christian doctrines. These get a fuller unfolding in the teaching of the apostles. We see this first purpose of His miracles fulfilled indicated in the testimony of Nicodemus: "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him" (John 3:2). The words "except God be with him", were true of the Man approved of God for "God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). This first purpose then, of proving Him a Teacher sent from God, was accomplished. Miracles established Him as a Teacher of the way of salvation as well as one qualified to correct and rebuke their views of the character of the Messiah.

In the case of Nicodemus and others who accepted Him thus more was required than Nicodemus granted at that first interview. It was required that they accept His teaching concerning Himself

and the Kingdom He founded for which the new birth was essential.

It has been pointed out, notably by Bernhard, that there is a progress in doctrine from Matthew to John. In John itself the same progress may be discerned and a brief reference to the miracles in John may indicate that it is so; that there was an unfolding of the truth concerning Himself progressively made by the miracles.

In Matthew, in the Sermon on the Mount, we have the teaching of the Old Testament restated and amplified by the Prophet like unto Moses. In the Discourse beginning with the fourteenth chapter of John everything is seen as "in Him," "through Him," and He is One with the Father and not merely a teacher of unusual authority. Is there progress in John's Gospel itself leading up to this self-revelation by Christ? There seems to be and the miracles themselves indicate a progress in their testimony to His person.

John's selection of miracles, as he states in ch. 20:30-31, was made from many to bear witness that Jesus was the Christ the Son of God. Christ Himself appealed to that witness given by His miracles.

The first of them was turning water into wine. As man He is invited to a wedding but the Guest ends up as Host and supplies the embarrassing lack. He supplies that without which, earth's highest joys fail.

In the second miracle we learn that while His actual presence at the feast assured the joy failing not, He can minister where He is not physically present and He demands faith in His word as a condition of the blessing He gives.

Next He heals a man suffering for 38 years as a consequence of his sin, for he is warned to go and sin no more lest something worse befall him. Only the Judge who imposes the penalty has the right to remit it. This man was released from the penalty of his sin without serving the full sentence. After this miracle He declared (John 5:22) that He was the judge, and the Son, and in vs. 39, the One predicted by the Old Testament prophecies.

His creating power was manifested in the feeding of the multitude and His control of nature in walking on the water. His teaching based on the feeding of the multitude was such that it resulted in many of His disciples going back and walking no more with Him (John 6:66). What was required of them was more than they were prepared to acknowledge.

Many believed as the result of His discourse on the Light of the World, but going farther and claiming to be before Abraham, and the I Am, resulted in their taking up stones to stone Him—but He passed out of their reach. Passing by, He healed one born blind, a hitherto unheard of miracle, proving His claim previously made and at the same time illustrating His power to illuminate the eyes of men's understanding, thus teaching that unless there was the obedience of faith they would have no sight to behold Him.

The crowning miracle was performed after He had gone to Jerusalem to die and in face of the rejection of all His claims that did not accord with the people's ideas of what the Messiah should be and do. He, at the grave of Lazarus, met death in its highest manifestation, when corruption had taken place, and conquered it. This miracle was given wide publicity and as a result many believed while others, unable to deny that it took place, hurried off to inform the Pharisees. Where there was prejudice against Him miracles did not produce faith. They were not meant to produce faith and never do. They are meant to confirm faith or convince those of a ready mind. Miracles would not *produce* faith where the Word of God had not been accepted. The narrative of Lazarus and the Rich Man prove this. Even one raised from the dead would not persuade such (Luke 17:31).

In the raising of Lazarus the miracle was undeniable and acknowledged by His enemies but its result in the hearts of His enemies was to incite them to kill both Him and Lazarus. Other acknowledgments by His enemies or critics that the miracles actually happened are found in Matt. 11:4, 5; Matt. 12:22-25. For this reason they were never denied by anyone while those were living who witnessed them.

Our effort is not to establish the truth of Judaism, and its fulfilment in Christianity by its appeal to miracles performed in the long ago. Rather, as was stated in the beginning, the Bible and Christianity are sufficient proofs that the miracles actually happened. Other lines of evidence besides the miracles there are and as far as Christianity is concerned there is one miracle and one only on which the writers of the New Testament state the truth of the whole—the bodily resurrection of Christ. He Himself staked the entire claims He made on the fulfillment of His own prophecy that He would rise from the dead.

In these days it is well to reiterate the necessity of speaking

of the bodily resurrection of Christ. Leave out "bodily" and you have a meaningless and unscriptural theory. There can only be a resurrection of what is dead and buried. Spirit cannot die or be buried therefore a "spiritual" resurrection is an impossibility. On the other hand we do not mean that there was a revivification of the former body. That body underwent such glorification as to fit it for an indissoluble life, yet without losing its identity.

All the New Testament preachers stressed the importance of the bodily resurrection of Christ. They did not preach, "Follow this Teacher and do your best," but preached a risen, living, glorified Lord Jesus Christ.

True, in the days of His flesh He was accredited a Teacher sent from God, but He is also Lord and Christ and thus presented to men today. We must first accept Him as Lord and then He becomes our Teacher. Salvation is through Him only as *Lord*. He has no teaching for the unbeliever.

In conclusion we may note the claim made for other so-called founders of religion. The necessity for claiming miraculous attestation was referred to at the beginning of our subject. Leaving out of the discussion the puerile and useless character of these supposed miracles and also the lack of any moral significance in them let the following considerations suffice. They are taken from an old work in which the author put to rout the Deists of his day. Referring to other pretended miracles he challenges their proponents to adduce matters which they allow to be true, and possessing evidence superior, or even equal, to those of Christ, by producing any historical personage of whom it could be stated he—

1. Performed a fact, of which men's *outward senses* can judge:
2. Publicly, in the presence of witnesses:
3. In memory of which *public monuments and actions* were kept up:
4. Instituted and commencing *at the time of the fact*:
5. Recorded likewise in a set of books, addressed to the identical people before whom it was performed, and containing their *whole code of civil and ecclesiastical laws*:
6. As the work of one previously announced for the very period by a long train of *prophets*:
7. And still more peculiarly prefigured by *types* both of a circumstantial and personal nature, from the earliest ages: and



8. Of such a character as made it impossible for either the relaters or hearers to believe it, if false, without supposing a *universal deception of the senses of mankind*:

After doing this could they display, on the part of its *professed eye-witnesses*, similar *proofs of veracity* in some *doctrines* founded upon it, and *unaided by force or intrigue*, a like *triumph* over the *prejudices* and *passions* of mankind: And among its *believers*, equal *skill* and equal *diligence* in *scrutinizing* its evidences, or, alternatively, let them submit to the irristible certainty of the Christian religion.

## NOTES ON HEBREWS

BY W. E. VINE, M.A. (Lond.)

*Chap. 4, verse 16*

### The Throne of Grace

We have already noticed that the first chapter describes the Son of God as having a Throne and a Sceptre, while in the second and third chapters He is seen as a merciful and faithful High Priest. Here in the fourth chapter the Throne is presented in association with His Priesthood as a place to which we are encouraged to draw near because there His authority is combined with His sympathy, His power with His mercy. The grace that meets us in our need emanates from a Throne.

The subject of God's grace is taken up again in the latter part of the Epistle, but there it is presented from the standpoint of Christian conduct. We are warned against doing despite unto the Spirit of grace (10:29), and exhorted to have our hearts established by grace instead of being carried away by divers and strange doctrines (13:7). But in this earlier part of the Epistle grace is viewed from the Divine standpoint as that which was exhibited at the Cross and is now ministered from the Throne.

### Analysis of Chapter 5: 1-10

#### The Excellency of Christ's Priesthood

A.	<i>Christ's Priesthood and the Aaronic</i> —a parallel and contrast	...	...	...	...	vs. 1-4
i.	The appointment and its object	...	...	...	...	1
ii.	The character of the priest	...	...	...	...	2
	(1) his attitude towards the people	...	...	...	...	2a
	(2) his identification with the people	...	...	...	...	2b