

gospel as either of these? Did Christ ever require his disciples to believe that any diseased person was healed, without showing him to be healed? Or does he ever require them to believe that any dead person was restored to life, without first showing him dead, and then presenting him alive? Transubstantiation is the only instance in which we are supposed by the gospel to believe any thing contrary to our senses. It is a thing altogether peculiar, and totally unlike any other miracle that men ever were required to believe. It is not therefore to be explained or illustrated by a comparison with any other instance of the almighty power of God, either in creation or providence.

What is a miracle? It is a suspension of some of the laws of nature, effected by the power of God who appointed these laws. The appointment of these laws was itself a miracle, and indeed the greatest of all miracles. The instantaneous curing of the sick and maimed, the raising of the dead to life, the creation of the world, are instances of miraculous power that astonish our imagination, that convince us of the vanity of all human power, and force us to acknowledge the authority of the Sovereign Lord of all. But when a person offers us bread, and declares that it is himself, though he continues to be seen as before, to converse and reason with us all the time we are receiving or eating it, here we can see no miracle. There is nothing here which immediately strikes us as the effect of omnipotence. In fact, there is nothing but contradiction. A person requires us to believe that we see not what we do see, nor hear what we do hear—that we feel not that which we do feel, nor eat what we are eating.

Nor can the imperfection of our senses be pleaded in explanation of this contradiction. For it is admitted that the senses of our Lord's disciples informed them rightly. It might have happened through some disease of the eyes and ears of these persons, that they might have imagined they saw and heard our Saviour when they did not. By the effects of some other disease, they might have been mistaken in what they felt and ate. But here there is no room for this solution of the difficulty. Their senses informed them rightly, although this testimony of their senses was contradicted by our Saviour's declaration. Some of them saw him at the head of the table, others sat next to him; yet he declared they were eating him; and we are required to believe both these statements. In all other cases, when our senses give us contradictory information, we suppose them to be disordered, and that one part of the informa-

tion must be false. In this case, the declaration which the disciples heard from Christ, contradicted what they saw and felt; yet we are required to believe that their senses in both cases were equally sound, and equally correct; and that what they heard and what they saw, however contrary, were both true.

Let us farther inquire, what is the use of a miracle? It is to prove that God requires some doctrine to be believed, or some duty to be performed. The prophets and apostles were endowed with the power of working miracles, in order to prove that they derived their commission from God. Jesus Christ worked miracles for the same purpose. And it is easy to see how miracles serve this purpose, because no person can perform them except God himself, or those whom he empowers to do it. But the miracle of the Eucharist can never serve this purpose. It can never be offered as a proof of any doctrine; since it is of itself more difficult to be proved than any other doctrine that ever was proposed to the faith of mankind.

In the last place, let us inquire by what testimony a miracle can be proved. We believe the miracles recorded in the scriptures, because those who saw them have given us the clearest proofs that they were honest men who would not wilfully deceive. Since they were honest, we infer that the account which they give of what they saw must be true, inasmuch as a great number of persons could not readily be deceived respecting those facts which came under their observation. Had they told us things which they heard from others, or doctrines which they were convinced of by reasoning and argument, we should not have believed them so readily. But when they simply tell us what they saw, and we know that they were honest, we cannot refuse their testimony. The last appeal then is to the senses of those who saw these things. We believe the miracles of the gospel, because they were seen by those who recorded them; and we consider the testimony of the senses as sufficient to establish the truth of a miracle. But the miracle of the Eucharist contradicts the testimony of our senses. It requires us to disbelieve what our senses affirm, and to believe what is contrary to them. On what evidence then is this miracle to be received? Not on the evidence of the senses; for their testimony is overthrown by it. Is there then any evidence superior to that of our senses, on which this doctrine may be built? Is it not from the testimony of these senses that we receive the miracles of the gospel, and consequently itself? Is it not from the same testimony that we believe in God? For, from what other source can we de-