

he fastened the doors, he said to himself, "He will do better than I, but he won't love these dear people more truly, and he can't try harder than I have done."

That afternoon Father Mattingly heard Tim's confession and sent him away happier than he had ever been in his careless, sin-stained life; and afterward he saw two or three old women, who came to say good-bye and to bid him his departure.

"Sure, a new priest won't understand us at all," one complained.

And nodding emphatically, her companion added, "He'll probably be introducing new-fangled Gregorian music that never, since the world began, kept any tired old body from dozing on a hot morning—or maybe, he'll hear confessions only on certain days and at certain hours, that suit himself, to be sure, like the young priest they've got now at Martinsville. There's nothing obliging about him, I tell you."

Father Mattingly laughed at them, and gave them his blessing, and furtively dried his eyes after they were gone. "The poor old souls!" he murmured.

On Monday there were eight or ten more visitors, mostly women, but by far the greater number of the people gave no sign of regret, or even of knowing that Father Mattingly was going away. He tried not to feel hurt. "It's only natural for them to want a change," he told himself again and again. "One pastor for twenty-five years! They have had too much of me. But perhaps some of them will be at the station to see me off."

It lacked only five minutes of train time when Father Mattingly reached the station, and although it seemed to him unusually crowded particularly with men, there was no one on the watch for him, except three of his altar boys; little freckled-faced, red-headed fellows, whose lips quivered when they said good-bye, although they tried to look quite unconcerned.

"Good-bye, Father," one called after him, as he mounted the steps. "Good-bye, I'm going to be a priest as soon as I'm big enough."

"You ain't. You ain't good enough, and you're always scrapping, you are!" his brother hooted scornfully.

The last words Father Mattingly heard, as he entered the car, were the future priest's angry protests.

As soon as he reached his seat he took out his breviary and forced himself to say his Office, and afterward to read the morning paper, all the way to Richmond, for it would never do, he thought, to dwell too much on what lay behind him, or on the strange new road, with unfamiliar difficulties and problems, and only unfamiliar faces on every side. Once or twice he had to brush away a few tears, which it is not easy to believe were caused by the sweetness of any psalm in his Office, or the eloquence of the editorials in the Crescent City Dispatch; but on the whole he fared very well.

It was noon when Father Mattingly reached Richmond, and he went directly to the house of an old friend, who had been a classmate in the seminary. There he ate, or tried to eat, his dinner, and chatted and rested for an hour before he set out to present himself to the Bishop, with as brave a heart and as broad a smile as he could muster.

When the housekeeper opened the door she frowned. "There's no end to the visitors today," she said ungraciously; and led Father Mattingly to a small, bare room at the back of the house. "The parlors are full to the brim," she explained, whereupon he resigned himself to a long and wearisome wait, before it would be his turn to see the Bishop.

To his surprise he was hardly seated before His Lordship came into the room. "You are the very man I want most to see," he said briskly. "Come with me," and he led the way down the hall to a very large reception room to the right of the entrance. He opened the door, and stepped back, allowing Father Mattingly to see the men who crowded it to overflowing.

Feeling shy, and embarrassed, and out of place, Father Mattingly glanced at the man nearest him, and then, in surprise, from him to another, and another, and another. To his amazement he knew them all. He turned to the Bishop, with a troubled face, and His Lordship threw out both hands, and said laughingly:

"What am I to do with these people? They won't take 'no' for an answer. They insist that they are going to keep you in Crescent City to the end of your days; that they cannot, and will not, let you go. On the other hand, month after month I have reproached myself with allowing you—an old man—to do all the work in that big, scattered parish at Crescent City. I want to give you the rest you have earned so dearly. Now, what am I going to do?"

He appealed to Father Mattingly, as he finished, but the old priest was looking at his men, not thinking of them so much as trying to grasp the wonderful truth that his people loved him and the Bishop was not displeased, but eager to relieve him, only for his own sake. There was a long silence before he could speak, but at length he looked up into the Bishop's face, and said brokenly, "Please, please, let me go home!"

It is a great blindness and a great misery to seek rest where it is impossible to find it.—St. Teresa

THE TESTIMONY OF MIRACLES

WILFRED PARSONS, S. J., in America

God, as Creator and preserver of all created things, can work miracles. There is no reason why He may not use His power of working miracles, and when He works them, He is not contradicting Himself, nor acting against His will or promise. This is because miracles and the laws of nature are both part of the one higher law of nature by which God rules all creation. Moreover, God does work miracles; the Gospels, the history of the Church, and modern medical science all bear witness to the historic fact of miracles. All this has been proved in a former article. But why does God work miracles? He might have many reasons to work them. For instance, His mercy might be touched by the misery of a stricken creature and its fervent prayer, and He would merely wish to relieve its suffering, by curing its disease. Or in the presence of a crowd of sceptics, He might wish to convince them of His presence and power, as He did when Elias confounded the priests of Baal by bringing fire from heaven (3 Kings, xviii, 38.) But the fact is that miracles have a further value than these obvious effects. Christ worked miracles to prove the Divine origin of His Revelation. Orthodox Christians assert that Christ's miracles prove His Revelation to be from God. The proof of this assertion is the object of this article.

To prove this assertion we must do two things. We must first show as a general principle, that extraordinary facts prove the origin of a Revelation, on these three conditions: (1) when they are genuine miracles; (2) when they are worked in conjunction with a Revelation; (3) when they are appealed to as proofs from God of the truth of the Revelation. After proving this general principle, we shall then proceed to show that these three conditions are fulfilled in the case of Christ's miracles. If we show this, then we are justified in asserting that Christ's miracles prove that His Revelation is from God.

In general, miracles are valid proofs of truth, when they are worked by one who appeals to God to give them as proofs. Now miracles are the most striking communication from God that we know of, a real message from Him. Suppose we were in a prison and a friend were outside, but could not communicate with us directly. We get word to him that if he intends to try to free us, he shall go to a tree we can see from our cell window, and show a white flag. Our friend does this and thus gives us a sign of his will and intention.

We in this world are bounded in our knowledge by the limits of what our senses can perceive. God could talk to each of us directly, but it would ordinarily have little effect, because we would always doubt that it was He who was talking. We should want a further proof that it was He. Now there is just such a proof, and it is miracles. A miracle is an event showing at least this: God is here right now. He alone could do this thing, bring this man to life. Very well. God has a proof, a sign, appealing to our senses. He can use this sign to let us know, who live behind the barrier of sense, that He who is invisible, is nevertheless there and sending us a message. At a certain point in the world's history, He tells us, directly or through another, of His will and intention in regard to our salvation. Has He spoken? How do we know He has spoken? What sensible sign is there that only He could give, so that we may know it is that He who spoke? Miracles are that sign. The messenger who tells us that he brings us a message from God, must prove what He says, by a sign that only God could give. The sign is a miracle, an event that our senses can perceive, and yet that only God could produce. The messenger announces his message, says it is from God, and declares that we shall know it is from God by raising a dead body to life again. God is petitioned to do this miracle, precisely to show that the messenger is telling the truth. God can work the miracle or not, as He chooses. He chooses to work the miracle, and that is a proof that the messenger is truthful. The messenger says: "O God, give a sign, if what I say is true." God gives the sign, and by giving it freely and upon appeal, asserts that this is His messenger. And if this messenger works not one only, but a whole series of miracles, the proof is overwhelming. There might possibly be doubt about one miracle. There can be no possible doubt, when the same thing happens again and again, for the element of chance is then ruled out completely. Thereupon we can say: "O God, if we are deceived, we were deceived by Thee." As far back as we know, men have argued thus, because it is natural and reasonable to argue thus.

Miracles, then, given by God, when petitioned for a particular purpose, are signs given by God for that purpose. They are God Himself speaking in a language we can understand. Any other sign maybe would be misunderstood. There is no misunderstanding a miracle. They are signs of what the messenger proposes they shall be signs of, when he asks for them. In such circumstances, God could not give a sign, over and over again each time He is asked for it, unless the mes-

senger's statements are true. If his statements were not true, God would be deliberately leading all men into error, and that He cannot do. "O God, if we are deceived, we were deceived by Thee." Therefore when God repeatedly works genuine miracles for His messenger, after being called upon by him to work them precisely as signs of the truth of some statement He has made, then in that case God is directly testifying to the truth of the statement.

Now take the case of the miracles of Christ. First of all they were genuine miracles. There were four general classes of all the miracles Christ worked. There were cures, liberation from demonic possession, raising the dead to life, and miracles in lower creation. There were sudden cures of leprosy, even to this day incurable, even by long processes. There were seven cures of blindness, usually by mere touch of the fingers. There was a cure of a withered arm by mere command. There were cures of deafness and dumbness, of paralysis, of dropsy, of high fever, of an amputated ear. Some of these cures are impossible by ordinary means; others are possible, but not in the instantaneous fashion in which Jesus worked them. There are eight distinct cases of liberation from genuine demonic possession. There were at least three cases of a dead person coming to life. There were many miracles in the lower creation: two multiplications of loaves and fishes on a vast scale; the stilling of winds and waves in a violent tempest; walking on the surface of the water; two miraculous draughts of fishes from the sea; the sudden transmutation of water into wine. All these are guaranteed as facts by witnesses above suspicion.

Now these facts are genuine miracles. The cures in every case were worked by means with no proportion to the effect produced. Blindness is not cured by application of mud, nor any organic disease by mere spoken command. These cures were not worked by some strange power jealously concealed by Christ, for He is admitted by all to have been most holy, and incapable of such deception. They were not worked by some occult natural power unknown even to Christ, for Christ had complete mastery of His power, and used it when and in what manner He willed in a great variety of cases. Besides, in all His cures, there is one thing that stamps them as real miracles, namely the absence of the time factor. Every natural cure takes time. The very nature of the formation of physiological tissue demands time for it to be built up, for it is built up by a process of cell division, in which one cell is formed after another. In these cures of Christ, as of leprosy and the withered arm, large masses of tissue are formed instantaneously. The objection that Jesus worked by suggestion cannot even be applied to the miracles in the lower creation, and when we come to the raising of the three from the dead all doubt vanishes; only God could do that, as indeed only God could do any of the other miracles.

The miracles of Christ were genuine miracles. Are the other two conditions also fulfilled by which we may know that Christ's miracles prove the Divine origin of His Revelation? The other two conditions are that they be worked in conjunction with a Revelation claimed to be from God, and in direct appeal to God that He give these same miracles as a proof of that claim. If we can show that this appeal was present when God worked the miracles, then we are sure that God gave them as an answer to that appeal. Being free to give them or not to give them, God could not give them except as an answer to that appeal, else God Himself would be leading men into error.

Christ was engaged in delivering a Revelation to men while He was working His miracles. This is proved by every page of the Gospel. The most hostile man knows, the most hostile dare not deny that Christ's purpose in His public life was to present to men a new religion, and that He presented it as coming from God. "I have not spoken of Myself," Jesus said, "but the Father Who sent Me, He gave Me commandment what I should say and what I should speak, and I know that His commandment is Life everlasting. The things therefore that I speak, even as the Father said unto me, so do I speak." (Jo. xii., 49-50.) Moreover Jesus directly appealed to His miracles as proofs that God had sent Him. At the very beginning of His career He made this declaration which is valid for all His miracles: "The works themselves ('works' is His term for His miracles), which I do, give testimony of Me that the Father hath sent Me." (Jo. v., 36.) When He cured the paralytic, Christ said: "That you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins, (then said He to the paralytic) arise, take up thy bed, and walk." (Matt. ix., 6.) And just before He raised Lazarus from the dead, He said: "Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me, and I knew that Thou hearest Me always, but because of the people who stand about have I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Thereupon He cried with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come forth!" (Jo. xi., 41-43.) Lazarus came forth

alive, and many of the Jews believed in Jesus; "the whole world is gone after Him," said the Pharisees. Christ therefore worked His miracles along with the testimony of the Father, and they were the two Witnesses required by the Old Law: "I am one that give testimony of Myself, and the Father that sent me giveth testimony of Me." (Jo. viii., 18.) "If you will not believe Me," He said again "believe My miracles," Jo. x., 38, because miracles are the voice of God.

This truth has often been hidden from the wise and great and revealed to the little ones. The simple people of Judea, when their rulers were harassing Jesus, said: "When the Messias cometh, shall He do more miracles than this man doth?" (Jo. vii., 31.) And that poor blind man, so simple and so wise, whom Jesus cured, said to the Pharisees: "Why, herein is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence He is, and He hath opened my eyes. Now we know as do the strings of a harp to the touch of the finger. There is a tender chord in every soul, which when swept by the breath of God, him He heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard, that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were from God, He could not do anything." (Jo. ix., 30-3.) For his common sense and his courage, this man was rewarded with faith in the Divinity of Christ.

SYMPATHY

Generations of indifference, rebuff, and suffering have not quenched the sparks of divinity that glimmer in the hearts of men the most obtuse and impious. Their feelings vibrate with compassion as readily as the strings of a harp to the touch of the finger. There is a tender chord in every soul, which when swept by the breath of God, sympathy, wakes angels' melodies. Those who do not allow for this responsive and sublimating force, who do not recognize sentiment as distinguished from interest as a potent factor in all government, take a partial and distorted view of human nature.

MENTAL FATIGUE

What is the most important and sensible step in your life? Most people would hesitate long before answering such a question. Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton has no such hesitation. With the rightness that is almost a characteristic, and with an assurance that leaves no room for doubt, he avows that his recent entrance into the Catholic Church was the most important and sensible step of his life. Since Mr. Chesterton has taken many important and sensible steps in the space of his long and brilliant career as a journalist and man of letters, the force of his remark will not be lost on those who ponder it.

Mr. Chesterton might talk about the reasons that for so many years prevented him from taking this important and sensible step, and the discussion would be both interesting and profitable. But he preferred in a recent lecture to throw some light on the reasons that prevented others from taking the important step. This he does with characteristic insight and clarity, in the following paragraph.

"My firm conviction," he declares, "is that so far as Western civilization is concerned, the great obstacle to people joining the Church is what I may term fatigue of the intellect. The exhaustion of a very heroic military struggle, followed as it has been by economic problems and industrial difficulties of every kind, has led to the development of a large amount of intellectual sloth. It is too much trouble for the wearied brain to follow a line of reasoning to its logical conclusion.

The world is being lost declared the prophet of old because no man thinketh in his heart. It is the same old world in our day. Most people today prefer their thoughts

ready made. They have no time in the pressure of modern living to sit down and think things out for themselves. Hence they fall prey to each new hatched, unfiled theory of life, and allow the one tried and true philosophy of life to exist without taking the time to examine it. Mr. Chesterton has hit upon a modern frailty that has grown upon society since the War. Neither slander nor falsehood in Mr. Chesterton's opinion is so great an obstacle in the way of people seeking admittance into the Catholic Church as "mental fatigue."—The Pilot.

The first step necessary for a Christian is to be humble.—St. Augustine.



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