

mighty in word and deed." We should perceive that it was utterly impossible for a God, infinite in truth and holiness, to set the broad seal of his omnipotence to the attestation of a falsehood. And the miracles wrought by Christ are of the decisive character here supposed. Leprosy was a disease beyond the power of the healing art, and for which the Jews never seem to have sought any cure; and yet Christ healed the leper with a word, or a touch. The maimed—those deprived of a leg or an arm—were brought to the great physician, and, in a moment, the last member was restored. There is even a regular gradation in our Lord's miracles, intended to place his glory in the clearest and strongest light. With the same ease, he restored to life Jarius' daughter when she was newly dead; that he did the widow's son of Nain, when they were carrying him out for burial; and Lazarus, after he had been four days in the grave. Such miracles were admirably calculated to carry the conviction to every candid mind, that Christ is the sent of God, and that every doctrine which he taught is attested to us by the seal of omnipotence. Dr. Wardlaw has clearly stated the nature of this purpose contemplated by miracles, as follows:—"You will further have observed, that I have represented miracles as attesting the one or the other of two things—either a divine commission in general, or the truth of any particular article in the communication made. It is in the former of these two lights that the words of Nicodemus present them as evidence of commission: 'We know that thou art a teacher come from God.' And in the same light our Lord himself, on various occasions, appeals to them: 'The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works they do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.' On the other hand, when Jesus said to the Jews, 'But that ye may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins'—and then, as a proof of this particular fact, or truth, commanded the paralytic to rise, take up his bed and walk, we have an exemplification of the second of the two lights in which we have said miracles may be regarded: the miracle having been wrought in immediate connexion with that one position, was the direct divine attestation of its truth."

But the particular miracles by which Christ proved himself to be the sent of God, Isaiah had predicted as an accompaniment of the gospel dispensation: "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; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."—Isaiah xxv. 5, 6. These were the prominent miracles that Christ wrought. And when John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Christ to enquire, "Art thou he that should come (the Messiah), or look we for another?"—the answer was manifestly borrowed from Isaiah's prophecy—"Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." Dr. Alexander rather arbitrarily denies that Christ refers to John the Baptist to this prophecy, and asserts that it can only refer to our Lord's miracles in a secondary and general sense, as forming part of the same prophetic picture. But it will be observed that our Lord does not say, I am the Christ, and then work certain miracles in proof of his claims; but he simply wrought the very miracle mentioned in Isaiah, and then, in the very words of the prophet, he commands the disciples to tell their master what they had seen.

2. The miracles of Christ prove his supreme divinity. This proof flows not so much from our Lord's miracles, considered as works of power, as from the mode in which they were performed. While the prophets of the past dispensation always said, "Thus saith the Lord," and the apostles, under the present economy, said, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth," Christ wrought miracles in his own name and by his own authority. His uniform language was: Be clean—Young man, I say unto thee, arise—Lazarus, come forth; showing that his power was neither exhausted nor exerted to the utmost; and manifestly identifying himself with that divine being who spake, and creation sprang into existence. The very manner of working shows that our Redeemer is "God manifest in the flesh;" and that all power has been committed to him in heaven and earth." The disciples evidently believed that their master is the supreme God, and hence, when working miracles, they exchanged the Old Testament formula, "Thus saith the Lord;" for "In the name of

Jesus of Nazareth," and since they were filled with the Holy Ghost, they could not err.

3. Christ's miracles showed the benevolent character of his mission. Dr. Wardlaw simply refers to this feature of our Lord's miracles among other characteristics, which he did not intend to illustrate. Its importance will, at least, claim for it a passing notice. It is evident that Christ could have proved his divine mission by works which only showed the greatness of his power, and not the tenderness of his love. He could have cast a mountain into the sea, or changed the dry land into a lake, or brought down fire from heaven; and such mighty works, as evidences of power, would have as certainly proved his divine mission, as cleansing the leper, or raising the dead. The miracles of Christ, therefore, not only demonstrate his love to us in working out our redemption, but also in the mode in which that redemption is accomplished. We have a detailed account of thirty-three of our Lord's miracles, while, from many incidental notices, it is evident that the greatest number are only mentioned in general terms. After he had healed the centurion's servant—it is said: "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils; and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick." Now, what do these numerous miracles intimate, but that our Redeemer is "full of compassion," and "plenteous in mercy;" and that equally in nature and in grace, he "does exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think." There is only one apparent exception to this statement—his cursing the barren fig tree, in consequence of which it withered to the very roots. This was, however, a symbolical warning to both Jews and Gentiles, and intimated, in the plainest and most impressive manner, that vengeance should ultimately overtake all unfruitful professors. Such a miracle was, therefore, prompted by the purest benevolence; and its object was completely served by being wrought on an unfeeling tree, instead of any sentient creature. "That he should have put forth his anger on a tree," says Trench, in his usually pointed and searching manner, "the real objection lying at the root of this in many minds oftentimes is, that he should have put forth his anger at all; that God should ever show himself as a punishing God; that there should be any such thing as the wrath of the Lamb, as the giving account of advantages, as a dreadful day. But seeing that such things are, how needful that men should not forget it; yet they might have forgot it, as far as the teaching of the miracles went, but for this one—all the others being miracles of help and of healing. And even the severity of this, with what mercy was it tempered. He did not, like Moses and Elijah, make the assertion of God's holiness and his hatred of evil, at the cost of many lives, but only at the cost of a single unfeeling tree. His miracles of mercy were unnumbered, and on men; his miracle of judgment was but one, and on a tree."

It has been suggested that Christ's miracles were also symbolical of spiritual cures effected on the soul. Some have even gone so far as to assert, that he never wrought a miracle on the body without working a corresponding miracle on the soul. But whether or not this statement can be proved to its full extent, it has manifestly its foundation in truth. There is sufficient evidence in the gospels that the cure of diseases is intended to symbolize the cure of sin—the casting out of devils, the destruction of Satan's empire—and the raising of the dead, that we shall be raised from a death of trespasses and sins, and made alive together with Christ. These facts fully show, that both body and soul are the objects of our Lord's benevolent care—that he went about continually doing good.

Dr. Wardlaw, in the seventh chapter of his treatise, gives a short account of rationalism, mythism, spiritualism, and Romanism, in reference to miracles. The two prominent feelings that lie at the foundation of all genuine religion are, a feeling of personal guilt and a conscious need of redemption. Now the great effort of the unrenewed heart has been, in all ages, to deny these doctrines, and to uproot such feelings from the human heart. In harmony with these representations, the Saviour has been viewed, not as a propitiatory sacrifice, but as a gifted teacher, a distinguished reformer, who came to deliver men from the bondage of superstition, and elevate our nature to its highest point of perfectibility. And as the doctrines of the gospel flow from its facts, these, by a peculiar system of criticism, were explained away. According