On Knowledge and Miracles

Abdallah ibn al-Tayyib (d. AD 1043)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

On Knowledge and Miracles

On Knowledge and Miracles — By Abū al-Faraj Abdallāh ibn al- ayyib, secretary of the Catholicos and philosopher

[Translated by Sam Noble] In the religion of the Christians, rational proof is nobler than miracles because rational proof is proof by which the intellect comes to grasp the truth of the claim of those who have miracles, his own investigation, the investigation of his circumstances and the circumstances of those who are making the claim, and the state of the matter with regard to the claim. Rational proof is for the elites and the philosophers and the scholars who are not led except by it, while miracles are for the masses whose breasts are not delighted by certain knowledge and who only believe what they behold by the senses. So it is clear that rational proof is evidence which convinces through knowledge and is for the elites and that miracles are evidence which convince through the senses and they are for the masses. Scriptural evidence that knowledge is nobler than miracles is from when Paul, the chosen and heavenly apostle says, ”God appointed in His Church the apostles first, and after then the prophets, and after them the scholars, and after them those who work miracles, and after them those who heal the sick, and after them those who possess languages (1 Corinthians 12:28).” From this evidence it becomes known that knowledge is nobler than miracles. Then he says, ”The elders who order the affairs of the Church well deserve multiple recompense, especially those who toil with knowledge (1 Timothy 5:17).”

So rational proof is rational evidence and miracles are sensible evidence. If the intellect is nobler than sensation, then rational proof is nobler than miracles. Miracles are found in a specific place and at a specific time and among a specific people. If that place and that time and that people cease, then the miracle ceases with them. Rational proof is found in all places and at all times and among all peoples. So, knowledge and rational proof are nobler than miracles. Thus Christ our Lord worked miracles for the common people and the masses and set forth evidence and rational proof for the excellent philosophers who are not led by miracles and make no use of them. Glory to God forever.

[1] [2] [3]

[4] [5] : ”

[6] [7]”
: ” [8] ”. [9]

<56> [10] [11] .
[12] [13]
.
. [1] 50 1 239
240 241 230 [2] 1581 635 1137
[3] : . ” ” ” ” [4]
” ” ” ” ” ”

[5] : [6] 3 159 [7] 28:12 [8] : [9]
17:5 [10] : [11] : [12] ” : [13]

Source. English translation: an out-of-copyright translation as transcribed, or commissioned and given to the public domain, by Roger Pearse for his collection ***Early Church Fathers – Additional Texts*** (tertullian.org/fathers). SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Footnotes are left out, and Greek or Latin words, square brackets and any transcription error are as the source prints them. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.

Licence. commissioned for the site and dedicated to the public domain (2009).