

THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION Chapter 6

THE HOLY BIBLE ADDRESSED TO REASON AND CONSCIENCE

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Transcript

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Chapter 6

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That the Living Oracles of Truth are addressed to the reason of men as well as their conscience is definitely established by the fact that God Himself appeals to prophecy in proof of the unrivalled character of the communications He made through His servants. Their messages were retrospective as well as prospective, treating of things of the remotest antiquity as well as of those which lay centuries ahead, and thus commanded the entire horizon of history past and future. Their Divine Author places such peculiar value and attaches such importance to those supernatural disclosures as an evidence of inspiration that not less than seven times in the prophecy of Isaiah alone He challenges any false faith or idolatrous cult the world over to produce any revelations like unto His. "Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring forth and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them and know the latter end of them, or declare us things for to come" (41:21, 22). "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them" (42:9). "Let all the nations be gathered together and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? [such as the creation of the earth, and everything else recorded in the book of Genesis]: let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified [in their claims]; or let them hear, and say, it is truth" (43:9). "I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of My mouth, and I showed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass" (48:3). None of the seers of false religion can show either "the former things" or the "latter things": their outlook is restricted to the present. Only the Omniscient One can endow His messengers with a vision which reaches back before history began and which looks forward to ages not yet historic. Again—that the Word of God is addressed to the reason of men is proven from the fact that appeal is made to the miracles recorded therein. "And many other signs [i.e. miracles—Acts 2:22] truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples (who have recorded many of them) which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing, ye might have life through His name" (John 20:30, 31). The record of the various wonders

wrought by God are given in Scripture not merely to furnish information, but to convince us that He is the Author of the Book which chronicles the same, and to bring our hearts and lives in full submission to His authority—and that we receive as our personal Lord and Saviour the One who is Himself God manifest in flesh, and therefore the final Spokesman from Heaven. Those whom God employed as His penmen gave to the world a Divine revelation, and He accredited the same with due evidences, so that any receiving them are left without excuse if they despise and reject them. Now it should be quite evident that if God is to give a personal communication unto fallen man, who is full of unbelief and skepticism, it will be supported with something more than the ordinary evidence of human testimony—that it will be supplemented by extraordinary evidence. A Divine revelation will be confirmed by Divine insignia. If God is to speak audibly to those who forsook Him, it can only be in a way out of the common course. If He commissions messengers to declare His will, they must possess such credentials as demonstrate that they come from Him. Each Prophet sent from Him must be authenticated by Him. Those bearing supernatural messages will reasonably be expected to possess supernatural seals and be accompanied with supernatural phenomena. If God directly intervenes to instruct and legislate for the children of men, then clearly revelations and miracles must cooperate and combine. But here the Infidel will at once demur, and deny that miracles are either possible or credible. Nothing is easier than for an atheist to affirm that since the universe exists by eternal necessity and is subject to no change, that miracles cannot take place; but it is impossible for him to make anything approaching a satisfactory demonstration of that assertion. We do not propose to enter upon a lengthy discussion of the subject, deeming it sufficient to appeal to what has been presented in the previous chapters as proof that God is, that He created the universe, and is now presiding over it. And then to point out, first, that what men term "the course of nature" is nothing but the agency of God. To declare that either a suspension or an alteration of the laws of nature is impossible, is to endow those laws with the attributes of Deity, and to be guilty of the absurdity of saying that the Lawgiver is subordinate to His own laws. The workman is ever superior to his works, and if God be the Creator and Governor of Heaven and earth then He must be free to interfere in His own works whenever He pleases, and to make such interference manifest, by suspending or altering those laws by which He is pleased normally to regulate them. "What is called the usual course of nature, then, is nothing else than the will of God, producing certain effects in a continual, regular, constant and uniform manner; which course or manner of acting being in every moment arbitrary, is as easy to be altered at any time as to be preserved. . . . To assert the impossibility of a miracle is absurd, for no man can prove, nor is there any reason to believe, that to work a miracle is a greater exercise of power than those usual operations which we daily witness. To restore life to a dead body and to bring it forth from the grave is not attended with any more difficulty than to communicate life to a fetus and to bring it forth from the womb. Both are equally beyond the power of man; both are equally possible with God. In respect of the power of God, all things are alike easy to be done by Him. The power of God extends equally to great things as to small, and to many as to few; and the one makes no more difficulty or resistance to His will than the other" (Robert Haldane). To proceed one step farther. In a world which is upheld and governed by the living God, miracles are not only possible but credible, because probable. If the arrangement of nature be designed for the glory of its Maker and the good of His creatures, then it becomes in the highest degree likely that when any end of extraordinary importance is to be attained, that the laws of nature in their uniform course should be altered and made subservient to that event, that it should be heralded and evinced by extraordinary manifestations. Not only will the laws of the natural world become subservient to any great moral end, but they will be made to promote it. Since the laws of nature be under the direct management of their own Legislator, then not only may He moderate those laws at His own pleasure, but it is reasonable to conclude that He will make those modifications palpable and visible to His creatures when

He purposes to effect some unusual influence upon them. Miracles could only be incredible if they were contrary to God's known perfections or contradicted some prior revelation of His will. "Everything we see is, in one sense, a miracle: it is beyond our comprehension. We put a twig into the ground, and find in a few years' time that it becomes a tree; but how it draws its nourishment from the earth, and how it increases, we know not. We look around us, and see the forests sometimes shaken by storms, at other times yielding to the breeze; in one part of the year in full leaf, in another naked and desolate. We all know that the seasons have an effect on these things, and philosophers will conjecture at a few immediate causes; but in what manner these causes act, and how they put nature in motion, the wisest of them know not. When the storm is up, why does it not continue to rage? When the air is calm, what rouses the storm? We know not, but must, after our deepest researches into first causes, rest satisfied with resolving all into the power of God. Yet, notwithstanding we cannot comprehend the most common of these appearances, they make no impression on us, because they are common, because they happen according to a stated course, and are seen every day. If they were out of the common course of nature, though in themselves not more difficult to comprehend, they would still appear more wonderful to us, and more immediately the work of God. "Thus, when we see a child grow into a man, and, when the breath has left the body, turn to corruption, we are not in the least surprised, because we see it every day; but were we to see a man restored from sickness to health by a word, or raised to life from the dead by a mere command, though these things are not really more unaccountable, yet we call the uncommon even a miracle, because it is uncommon. We acknowledge, however, that both are produced by God, because it is evident that no other power can produce them. Such, then, is the nature of the evidence which arises from miracles; and we have no more reason to disbelieve them, when well attested and not repugnant to the goodness or justice of God, only because they were performed several ages ago, than we have to disbelieve the more ordinary occurrences of Providence which passed before our own time, because the same occurrences may never happen again during our lives. The ordinary course of nature proves the Being and Providence of God; these extraordinary acts of power prove the Divine commission of that person who performs them" (T. H. Horne). Finally, miracles are not only possible and credible, but, as indicated in an earlier paragraph, in certain circumstances they are necessary. If there was to be a restoration of that intercourse with God which men had severed and forfeited by their defection, it must obviously be by supernatural means. Divine revelation, being of an extraordinary nature, requires extraordinary proofs to certify it. Since it was not to be a revelation made separately to every individual, conveyed to his mind in such a way as should remove all doubting, but rather a revelation communicated to a few and then published to the world, it follows that miracles were called for to confirm the testimony of the messengers of God, to convince others that they spoke by higher authority than their own, and therefore the necessity of miracles was in proportion to the necessity of a revelation being made. By the miracle performed through His servants God gave proof to those who heard them that they were not being imposed upon by fraud when they claimed to utter a, "Thus saith the Lord." A miracle is a supernatural work. It is something which could not be produced by the laws of nature, and it is therefore a deviation from their normal operations. A miracle is an extraordinary Divine work, where an effect is produced contrary to the common course of nature. God was pleased to perform such prodigies to testify His approbation of those who acted as His mouthpieces, to avouch their messages—the miracles they performed were their letters patent. Whatever God has confirmed by miracles is solemnly and authoritatively ratified. The miracles wrought by Moses and Elijah, and by the Apostles of the New Testament were such as were manifestly beyond the powers of any creature to produce and therefore they attested the Divine origin of their messages. Obviously, God would not work such wonders through imposters or in order to confirm lies, but only to witness unto the truth of a Divine revelation—see Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:4; though miracles were both probable and

necessary to authenticate unto men a revelation from God, yet it could not reasonably be expected that such sensible tokens or marks of Divine interposition should be renewed in every age or to each individual in the world, for that would completely subvert the regular order of things which the Creator has established. Nor was there any need for such a continual repetition of miracles. Once Christianity was established in the world, those extraordinary interventions of God ceased. It was fitting that they should, for God does nothing unnecessarily. The Jews, every time they heard the Law read to them, did not expect a recurrence of the supernatural happenings of Sinai: those were one solemn confirmation of the Ten Commandments, which were to serve for all generations. Likewise, the Christian doctrine is the same now as it was in the first century, and will remain unchanged to the end of the world: we have a sure and authentic record of it in the Bible. Miracles, like any other facts, may be certified by reliable testimony. It is by means of testimony that we obtain by far the greater part of our knowledge, and the trustworthiness of such testimony may be as conclusive as sense or mathematical demonstration. Evidence is necessary to establish the fact of revelation, though revelation existed before a line of Scripture came to be written. Those to whom the revelation was not personally made are required to believe it on the testimony of those who received it from the mouth of God. And it is just as unreasonable and illogical not to credit those witnesses as it would be to decline the trustworthiness of the atlas. I might as well refuse to believe there is any such country as New Zealand because I have never seen it for myself or personally spoken to those who have lived there, as reject the Bible as a Divine revelation because I did not personally witness the miracles God wrought to attest its original penmen, nor have had personal converse with them. It is only by the evidence of testimony of their contemporaries and then through historians that we know such men as Alexander and Napoleon ever existed. "On the same grounds of historical testimony, but furnished to us in a measure far more extensive, and connected moreover with a variety of other kinds of evidence, we are assured of the fact that Jesus Christ appeared in the world and that He was born, and lived, and died, in the country of Judea. This is attested by contemporary historians, and no man acquainted with history can be so absurd as to admit the reality of the existence of Julius Caesar and at the same time deny that of Jesus Christ. This is admitted by the greatest enemies of Christianity; and it is also acknowledged on all hands that the Christian religion which is professed at this day took its rise from Jesus Christ, and in the age in which He lived. Till then it is never mentioned; but from that period it begins to be noticed by historians, and shortly after becomes the subject of public edicts, and later produces revolutions in government, both more important and more permanent than that which Julius Caesar effected" (Robert Haldane). We have pointed out that our knowledge of and belief in all those events of the past which we did not personally behold are based upon the testimony of witnesses, and that we who live in this twentieth century have far better and surer evidence—judged from an historical standpoint—to be assured that Jesus Christ was an historical reality, than we have for believing that Julius Caesar existed. The only objection made against that fact which has even the appearance of substance is, that whereas the history of Julius Caesar followed the ordinary course of events, that of Jesus Christ was radically different, so much so that the latter makes a far greater demand upon our credence than does the former. Those who preceded us have shown that this objection, so far from presenting any real difficulty, only serves to render our belief easier, for it calls attention to just what should be expected in such a case, thereby rendering it more credible. Had the career of Jesus Christ flowed in normal channels—were there no extraordinary features to mark it, then we should indeed have good reason to suspect the records of it. If Jesus Christ were the Son of God incarnate then we should naturally expect Him to be born in a way none other ever was. If He came here on a unique mission, of supreme importance to the whole human race—a Divine Mission, having for its purpose a climacteric display of God's perfections, and the saving of His people with an everlasting salvation—then His life would obviously be without any parallel, yea, characterized by

the supernatural. The very nature of His mission required that miracles should attest His teaching. Those very miracles being matter of fact, evident to the senses of those who witnessed them, of such a nature they could not be misunderstood, were, equally with common occurrences, the subject of credible testimony. They were not of a momentary nature, but permanent in their effects. They were not performed in secret, but in broad daylight in the midst of multitudes. They were not few only, but numerous. They were not performed only in the presence of friends but before enemies, and under a government and priesthood which bitterly hated their Performer and the doctrine He supported. The miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus were, both in their beneficent character and in their wondrous nature, worthy of Him who did them and of the mission which engaged Him. They were not performed as spectacular displays of power, but directed to such gracious and practical ends as feeding the hungry and healing the sick. Moreover, it is to be carefully borne in mind that those wonders were specifically predicted centuries before He was born at Bethlehem. Wrought as they were in the open, before friends and foes alike, had there been any deception practiced, it must have been detected. But the fiercest of His detractors were compelled to acknowledge their reality (John 11:47; 12:18, 19), though ascribing them to a diabolical influence. It is an historic fact that Christ's miracles were not denied in the age in which they were performed, nor for many centuries afterwards. They are related to us by eye-witnesses and are inseparably connected with the rest of the history of which they form apart. They are in perfect accord with what the rest of the Bible reveals of the power and goodness of God. When Moses beheld the bush burning and not consumed, and heard the voice of the Lord speaking to him therefrom, not only were his senses convinced, but the awe-inspiring effect upon his heart was self-attesting evidence that the living God was there revealed to him. But those to whom he related that startling experience, especially when he declared he had then received a Divine commission to act as their leader, would require some convincing proof that God had indeed spoken to him. When the Lord bade him return into Egypt and inform the elders of Israel that the God of their fathers had appeared unto him in Horeb, Moses was fearful that his report would be received with skepticism, saying, "They will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice." Whereupon the Lord, in His condescending grace, told him to cast his rod on the ground, and it became a serpent; and take it by the tail and it became a rod in his hand; so that repeating these miracles, "they may believe that the LORD God . . . hath appeared unto thee" (Ex. 4:1-5). Thereby the mission which God had entrusted unto Moses would be confirmed beyond all dispute. Upon this particular point we know of none who has written more lucidly and convincingly than Mr. J. C. Philpot, from whom we shall now quote and paraphrase. "In such a matter as Divine revelation, which, being supernatural, is to fallen men naturally incredible, there is a necessity that the ordinary evidence of human testimony should be as it were backed and supplemented by extraordinary evidence, that is, the evidence of miracle and prophecy . . . Let us see the combined effect of testimony and miracle when Moses goes to execute his mission." "Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped" (Ex. 4:29-31). "First, there is testimony: 'And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses.' Next there is miracle: 'And did the signs in the sight of the people.' Thirdly, there is belief 'And the people believed.' Fourthly, there is worship: 'they bowed their heads and worshipped.' Thus we see that the weakness of testimony ["weak" under such circumstances as those—a single weakness unto an unexpected and unprecedented occurrence: A.W.P.] is made up for and supplemented by the strength of a miracle. Without testimony, the miracle would be purposeless; without a miracle, the testimony would be inefficacious. Testimony is to miracle what Aaron was to Moses—'instead of a mouth'; and miracle is to testimony what Moses was to

Aaron—'instead of God' (Ex. 4:16). But why should a miracle possess this peculiar strength? For this simple reason: that it shows the special interposition of the Almighty. Thus the magicians, when baffled and confounded, confessed to Pharaoh, 'This is the finger of God' (Ex. 8:19)." Another instance of the place and value of miracles in connection with testimony is found in 1 Kings 18. Half a century before, 10 of Israel's tribes had revolted from the throne of David. Jeroboam their king had set up the worship of the golden calves in Dan and Bethel, which marked the extremities of his kingdom. Two generations had grown up in idolatry and, "for a long season Israel [in contradistinction from Judah] had been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law" (2 Chron. 15:3). But in the days of the wicked Ahab, God raised up the Prophet Elijah, and His messenger announced that, "there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (1 Kings 17:1), and for three years there was an unbroken drought (James 5:17), which resulted in famine and great distress. Yet when the Lord's hand was lifted up in such manifest judgment "they would not see" (Isa. 26:11), but Jezebel slew the Prophets of the Lord (1 Kings 18:13), while Ahab vowed vengeance upon Elijah himself. Nor did the common people evince any sign of repentance. Elijah gave orders that all Israel should be gathered together unto mount Cannel, with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of the grove. He then came unto the people and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions: if the LORD be God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (1 Kings 18:21)—apparently because they were nonplussed, perceiving not how the controversy might be determined. Whereupon the servant of God proposed, "Let them therefore give us two bullocks: and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under. And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken" (vv. 23, 24). The controversy should be decided by a miracle! Nothing could be fairer than what Elijah proposed; no test more convincing than the one here put to the proof. The people unanimously assented, and forthwith the trial was made. For hours the prophets of Baal called upon their god to answer by fire, but there was no response; they leaped up and down at the altar, cutting themselves with knives till the blood gushed out upon them, but there was not "any that regarded"—the desired fire fell not. After their vain pretensions had been fully exposed, Elijah, to make more evident the miracle that followed, called for four barrels of water and poured it on the bullock which he had cut up and upon the wood until, "the water ran round about the altar, and he filled the trench also with the water." Then Elijah prayed unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob saying, "Let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and I Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy Word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the LORD God, and that Thou hast turned their hearts back again" (vv. 36, 37). Nor did the Prophet supplicate in vain. "Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when the people saw they fell on their faces, and they said, The LORD He is the God; the LORD, He is the God" (vv. 38, 39). Now what we would particularly note in that memorable scene on Carmel is the light which it casts upon the evidential value of miracles. That was made unmistakably plain in Elijah's prayer. The supernatural fire which came down from Heaven in the sight of that vast assembly, consuming not only the bullock but the very stones on which it was laid, and the water in the trench round about the altar, was designed to make manifest, first, that Jehovah was God in Israel. Second, that Elijah was His authorized servant. Third, that his mission and work was according to the Word of the Lord. Fourth, that God still had designs of mercy in turning the hearts of Israel back again unto Himself. Here, then, is another case in point where the evidence of testimony was ratified by the evidence of a miracle. The mission of Elijah was authorized by the miracles performed in answer to his prayers: the special interposition of God attested the Divine origin

of his message, for obviously the Lord would not work such wonders in answer to the petitions of an impostor. God was pleased to perform those prodigies to testify His approbation of those who served as His mouthpieces, thereby leaving "without excuse" all who turned a deaf ear unto them. Herein we may at once perceive how futile and senseless is the method followed by the "Modernists" and "Higher Critics." They are obliged to acknowledge the canonicity of the books of the Bible, for the whole of the Old Testament was translated into the Greek more than 200 years before Christ. While there is independent evidence for the existence of the books of the New Testament from a very early date in the Christian era: yet they refuse to believe the miracles recorded in them. But that is utterly irrational. One has but to read attentively either the Pentateuch, the four Gospels, or the Acts, to discover that their historical portions and their miraculous portions are so intimately related we cannot logically accredit the former without accrediting the latter. They necessarily stand or fall together: if the history is true, so also are the miracles; if the miracles be spurious, so is the history. We could not delete the miraculous plagues upon Egypt and the supernatural destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts at the Red Sea without rendering completely meaningless the historical portions of the book of Exodus. The same holds good of the book of Acts: remove the miracles recorded therein, and much of the narrative become unintelligible. The same feature obtains in connection with the wonders wrought by the Saviour. "Take, for instance, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. How can we separate the narrative from the miracle, or the miracle from the narrative? To see this more clearly, let us look at the narrative as distinct from the miracle. How simply, and so to speak naturally, is it related, and with what a minuteness and particularity of circumstances, which could not from their very nature have been invented. The name of the sick and dying man; the place where he lived, not far from Jerusalem, and therefore open to the closest investigation and examination; the names of his two sisters; the absence of Jesus at the time; the deep grief of Martha and Mary, and yet the way in which it was shown, so thoroughly in harmony with their characters elsewhere given (Luke 10:38-42). The arrival of Jesus: His conversation with them; His weeping at the tomb, and the remarks of the bystanders—what an air of truthfulness pervades the whole! There is nothing exaggerated, nothing out of place, nothing but what is in perfect harmony with the character of Jesus as reflected in the mirror of the other Gospels. "But this narrative portion of the sickness and death of Lazarus cannot be separated from the miraculous portion—the raising of him from the dead. The first precedes, explains, introduces, and harmonizes with the second. Without the narrative the miracle would be unintelligible. It would float on the Gospel as a fragment of a shipwrecked vessel on the waves of the sea, furnishing no indication of its name or destination. So without the miracle the narrative would be useless and out of place, and of no more spiritual value than the sickness and death of a good man who died yesterday. But narrative and miracle combined, interlaced and mutually strengthening each other form a massy web which no Infidel fingers can pull to pieces. What we have said with respect to the miracle wrought at the grave of Lazarus is equally applicable to the other miraculous works of our blessed Lord. Narrative introduces the miracle, and miracle sustains the narrative—their combined effect being to prove that Jesus was the Son of God, the promised Messiah of whom all the Prophets testified" (J. C. Philpot). To the miracles which He wrought, the Lord Jesus again and again appealed as evidence of His Divine mission. Thus, His forerunner, while languishing in prison and dismayed by his non-deliverance therefrom, sent two of his disciples unto Him with the inquiry, "art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" To which our Lord made reply, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleaned, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them" (Matthew 11:4, 5). The Lord there authenticated the Gospel which He preached by the supernatural works He performed: those displays of Divine goodness and power being the plain and irrefutable evidence that He was the Messiah "who should come," according to the unanimous

declarations of the Old Testament Prophets. On another occasion, after mentioning the testimony which John had borne unto Him, the Redeemer said, "But I have greater witness than of John: for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me" (John 5:33, 36). When the unbelieving Jews came and said unto Him, "How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me" (John 10:24, 25). If it be asked, How could any eye-witnesses of those mighty works refuse to believe if they were indeed proofs of His Divine mission? Because, since they rejected His teaching, God blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts (John 12:37-40). But others were convinced. Many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did (John 2:23); and on the feeding of the great multitude with five loaves and two small fishes, we are told, "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world" (John 6:14). Said Nicodemus, "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): such displays of Divine power demonstrated that His mission and message were Divine. Another striking illustration and exemplification of the value of miracles authenticating one employed upon a Divine mission is found in Acts 2. Less than two months after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and His subsequent departure from this world, we find the Apostle Peter declaring openly, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: 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 as ye yourselves also know" (v. 22). This was not said to a company of Christians in private, but to a vast "multitude" in Jerusalem (vv. 5, 6). It formed part of an appeal made to the whole mass of the Jewish populace, and it was not contradicted by them, as it most certainly had been if Peter were making an empty boast. The Apostle was reminding them that Christ had dispossessed demons, raised the dead, not in a corner, but in the most public manner. Those miracles were incontestable, and the significance of them could not be gainsaid: they were so many testimonies from God of His approbation of the One who wrought them. They declared and demonstrated that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah and Saviour. They certified His mission and doctrine. Much failure attaches to us at every point. Our paramount desire to enjoy intimate and unbroken fellowship with the Lord, though sincere, is neither as intense nor as constant as it should be. Our efforts after the realization of that desire, our use of those means which promote communion with Him, are not as diligent and wholehearted as is incumbent upon us. Our pressing forward unto the mark set before us is often most feeble and faulty. But there is no failure with our God: His purpose will be accomplished, He will perfect that which concerns us (Ps. 138:8).

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