



The Order
of
The Preparation
for
The Communion of Souls.
"All things are yours in Christ"

MIRACLES:
Past and Present.

This Pamphlet can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary,
Rev. G. Maurice Elliott, St. Peter's Vicarage, Cricklewood,
London, N.W.2, price 3d. (post free).

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The Objects of the Order are :

- (A) To re-affirm the belief in the " Signs and Wonders " which were an integral part of Christ's teaching, an inherent part of the life of the early Church, essential to the existence of Christ's Kingdom on earth, and promised to his followers in perpetuity.
- (B) To show that after centuries of almost total abeyance, these miracles are again being worked in our midst.
- (C) To foster that living faith, without which the works of the Spirit are rendered ineffective.

Those eligible for admission to the Order must be willing to express their belief in the eternal Sonship of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and members will do their best to further the objects of the Order by their devotion to Him.

MIRACLES PAST AND PRESENT.



We do not think that anyone will deny that a Christianity **without** "signs and wonders" is known only **outside** the New Testament and the Early Church. By the middle of the second century "signs and wonders" had begun to disappear. That was because, as Dr. Glover says, "the ministry of the spirit, the ministry of gifts was succeeded by the ministry of Office with its lower ideals of the practical and expedient." Had this not happened, "signs and wonders" would have continued. Our Lord said, "These signs shall **follow** them that believe." If, therefore, "these signs" have ceased it is difficult to resist the conclusion that "belief" has ceased, for the "signs" were to be the natural accompaniment of belief.

What were "these signs"? They were nothing less than a repetition of our Lord's miracles—"He that believeth in Me the works that I do shall he do also and greater work than these." It was clearly the intention of Jesus that His Church should be, as it were, an extension and expansion of His Incarnate life. He would do through His Body—the Church—what He did when in His physical body on earth. The branches in the Vine were to bear the fruit of the Vine and those that did not were to be cast away.

Happily there is proof to-day that the Vine is beginning once again to bear fruit, that "signs and wonders" are making themselves manifest, that faith is becoming active, and causing the Divine Sap to seep through the branches.

We have seen that "signs" were to be the natural accompaniment of belief. It may perhaps be well to ask—Why should "signs" follow belief? Do we need them? Is not faith enough? In attempting to answer that question let us face a very obvious fact. The fact is this: Nowhere in the New Testament is it suggested that we are to live "by faith alone." On the contrary it is stated that objective evidence or proof is to be expected and will be given. To make this point transparently clear we have only to ask, "Did the men and women of Holy Scripture live by 'faith alone'?" The only way to find out is to review the facts and allow the facts to speak for themselves. If we do so, we shall find that faith apart from "signs and wonders" is unknown. Indeed, it is the **objective** evidence that stimulates faith, and faith being thus stimulated works miracles.

We will now watch this dual interaction both in the New and the Old Testaments. Our object will be to show that faith is based on **knowledge** and a particular and vital kind of knowledge; it is based on objective evidence of spiritual reality and power.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews writes:—"By **faith** Abraham, when he was called, obeyed . . ." Heb., 11; 8. His obedience was due to his faith in the "call." What was the nature of the "call?" Was it the call of his "better self," or was it something **objective** and in no way connected with his subjective states of consciousness.

What are the facts? In Genesis 12; 1, we read:—"Now the Lord said unto Abram, 'Get thee out of thy country . . . unto a land that I will give thee.'"

"The Lord appeared unto Abram." Gen. 12; 7.

"The words of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision." Gen. 15; 1.

It is clear, then, that the "call" was **objective**, that he both **heard** and **saw** the Lord, and that his faith was shown in his obedience to what he had seen and heard.

Later on, he entertained three angels to whom he gave a hearty meal. Gen. 18. His faith was thus supported by "signs following."

We now take a New Testament character—Saul who was called Paul. Did Paul live by "faith alone?" **What are the facts?** In Act 9; 3 we read:—"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus; and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' And he said, 'Who are thou, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.'"

It is evident, then, that Paul, did not live by "faith alone." **He too saw and heard.** His faith was the outcome of his witnessing overwhelming **objective phenomena**, i.e., "signs and wonders," and he "was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

If we take any leading character in the Old and New Testament we shall find that none lived "by faith alone." There are always **objective** phenomena present to stimulate faith. Perhaps it would be more correct to say, that such phenomena stimulate a mere belief into an active faith.

Let us see whether the facts prove that this is so. Did Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Balaam, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah, Samson, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha and the Prophets live by faith alone? Did Joseph and Mary, Our Lord, John the Baptist, Zacharias, Simeon, the Twelve Apostles, the Seventy Disciples, Philip, Ananias, Cornelius and the rest live by faith alone? What are the facts?

Angels visited Lot: **the Lord** appeared to Isaac: **Angels** met Jacob: Joseph received **messages from God**, and spoke as His mouthpiece: Moses saw an **angel**, and was constantly **spoken to by the Lord**: Aaron and Miriam saw the **pillar of the cloud**, and were **spoken to by the Lord**: all Israel witnessed **signs and wonders**. The Bible is simply full of such evidence. **God spoke to Balaam**, and **an angel** stood in his way: **a Captain of**

the **Host of the Lord** came to Joshua and an angel instructed him: the Spirit of the Lord "put on" Gideon (i.e., wore him as a garment, possessed him) and an angel instructed him: an angel visited Manoah and his wife: **the Spirit of the Lord** "put on" Samson as he did Gideon: **the Lord** spoke to Samuel: **the Spirit of God** came upon Saul: an angel was seen by David, and **the Lord** appeared to Solomon on several occasions: an angel touched Elijah, and gave him a message: Elisha saw a mountain full of horses and chariots of fire: the Prophets heard voices from heaven and were guided.

Our Lord promised that "signs and wonders" should follow belief, because they were not only necessary for the well-being of His Church, but were also the natural accompaniments of belief, just as fruit grows on the vine.

Now, many have held the opinion that miracles ceased after the Holy Spirit had been given at Pentecost. But a moment's reflection will refute this view. For it was **after** Pentecost that the **Lame Beggar** was healed, that many signs and wonders were wrought by the hands of the Apostles, that the sick folk "from the cities round about Jerusalem" were healed, that an angel opened the prison doors and brought out the Apostles, that Stephen saw Jesus, that Philip worked miracles, that Saul heard Jesus, that Ananias was spoken to by the Lord, that St. Peter healed Aeneas and raised the dead body of Dorcas to life, that Cornelius saw and heard an angel, that St. Peter "fell into a trance" and was shown that "God is no respecter of persons," and was subsequently delivered from prison by an angel, that an angel smote Herod, that St. Paul blinded Elymas, healed a cripple and exorcised a "spirit of divination," that "God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul, insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them," that St. Paul raised Eutychus from the dead, was visited by an angel, escaped ill-effects from the bite of a viper, healed the father of Publius and all who were diseased on the Island of Melita.

All these wonders happened after Pentecost.

It is sometimes urged that we to-day are living in an age of faith and have, as it were, outgrown the need for "signs and wonders." The theory is that these **objective** evidences of the Spirit's power were not part of Christianity, but merely a proof of its truth. They were bells ringing the people to church, and they ceased when the people had arrived. But there is not one word in the New Testament which supports such a view. On the contrary, it is clearly seen and shown that "signs and wonders" will always follow belief, because they are the natural accompaniments of it. They are not bells; rather are they part of the Divine Service.

We would here refer our readers to a remarkable book which has been enthusiastically recommended by the Bishop of London. "It was reserved for an Aberdonian Professor," the Bishop writes, "to point out that so far from being an excrescence on the Gospel story, the miracles form the heart and hope of the message. In a book called 'The Faith That Rebels,' which I have given the candidates for ordination to read, Dr. Cairns brings home this truth with astonishing force."

It may be asked, "How can anyone believe in miracles, and at the same time believe in the reign of law, i.e., the uniformity of nature?" In reply, we would suggest that all serious students of spiritual-science have long abandoned belief in any rigid, or closed, system of nature. Yesterday's miracle is to-day's natural law or, shall we say spiritual law? Who knows where "natural" ends and "spiritual" begins? Why should not all natural laws be spiritual laws, and all spiritual laws natural laws?

Were our Lord's Incarnation, Resurrection and Ascension due to natural or to spiritual laws? Was Jesus the product of evolution? Did mankind evolve Jesus? If so, there are many amongst us to-day who are nobler than Jesus. And if all is rigid law and uniformity, what becomes of human freedom? It is lost, and men are become automata. And what are the meaning and value of prayer? If there be such a thing as the

uniformity of nature (i.e., a closed system of nature), prayer has neither meaning nor value. "The flutter of a trembling prayer" cannot hope to "move the Mind that is the Whole."

But serious students of spiritual-science have long abandoned belief in the reign of law—as that word is commonly used. They have seen matter melt into apparent nothingness; they have seen spiritual laws break and shatter what are called natural laws. They are no longer unprepared for the discovery that both nature and human-nature are out-of-gear, and that what appears to be natural may be entirely unnatural.

Physical evil (i.e., disease, tempests, etc.), and moral evil (sin), may be unnatural, and only permitted to exist in order that they may be destroyed by man's use of spiritual law. There is nothing to disprove this; there is much to suggest its probability.

The Christian is certain of this, because he has faith in One who, being Lord of nature and human-nature, brought back both into gear again by healing diseases and calming raging seas.

But no argument will convince an unbeliever; only the Spirit of God can do that. It may however be emphatically asserted that to-day there is no known **reason** why anyone should disbelieve in what is called a miracle.

Dr. Cairns regards Our Lord's miracles as "fragments of heaven, parts of the new divine order appearing in this present world, **emergent islets of a new continent that is appearing** above the waters."

That "new continent" continued to emerge until the middle of the second century, when it became submerged because, "by compromise with the world the Church got out of touch with the pure Grace of God."* And as these "signs," these **proofs** of the Spirit and of power, subsided, the extraordinary moral tension also became relaxed, paving the way gradually for a morality which

* "The Faith That Rebels."

was adapted to a worldly life. The Church now has "its priests, its altars, its sacraments, its Holy Book and rule of Faith. But it no longer possesses the spirit and power."†

We have said that miracles are an integral part of the Gospel, and Dr. Cairns in his book has shown that Christ "gloried in the great deeds of blessing that God wrought through Him and His disciples."

The opinion that Our Lord attached but small importance to "signs" and "wonders" is not to be found in the New Testament. The mere fact of His saying that "these signs" and "the works that I do" and "greater works" shall follow belief, is clear evidence that He regarded them as being as inherent in His Message as a water-mark is in paper. They were more than hall-marks which might be removed, or filled in, or obliterated by time. They were actually part of the very substance of His message and the Church's life.

He of course refused to leap from a pinnacle of the Temple, or in any way to perform "signs and wonders" to satisfy mere curiosity. But He delighted in working signs, when and where they would aid and not hinder faith.

Faith is the essential thing, and it needs "signs" to arouse it into active life. The gospel of "signs" was, and still is, the sign of the Gospel.

It may however be asked, "How is it possible to reconcile this with Our Lord's words to St. Thomas—"Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed." There is no real difficulty, if only the reader will study the context. What did Our Lord mean by "not seen"? He could not have meant "not seen miracles," because St. Thomas had witnessed miracle after miracle. And what was meant by "believed"? Believed—what? Our Lord could not have meant "believed in miracles," because St. Thomas **did** believe in them, had seen them, and performed them.

† Harnack's "Expansion of Christianity."

Now it should be remembered that **all** the Apostles had doubted the Resurrection story. They thought Mary and the other women were mad; the Greek word used means "the wild talk of delirium." St. Thomas was not the only doubter; there were ten others! Yet these men had never lived "by faith alone," for they were constantly witnessing "signs and wonders." Bearing that in mind, it is surely impossible to believe that Our Lord, who worked these miracles, and gave St. Thomas and the other Apostles power to do the same, would even have suggested that it would have been better for them had they not seen. The words "and yet have believed," obviously refer to the fact that St. Thomas doubted the words of his best friends, just as they had all doubted the report given by the three women.

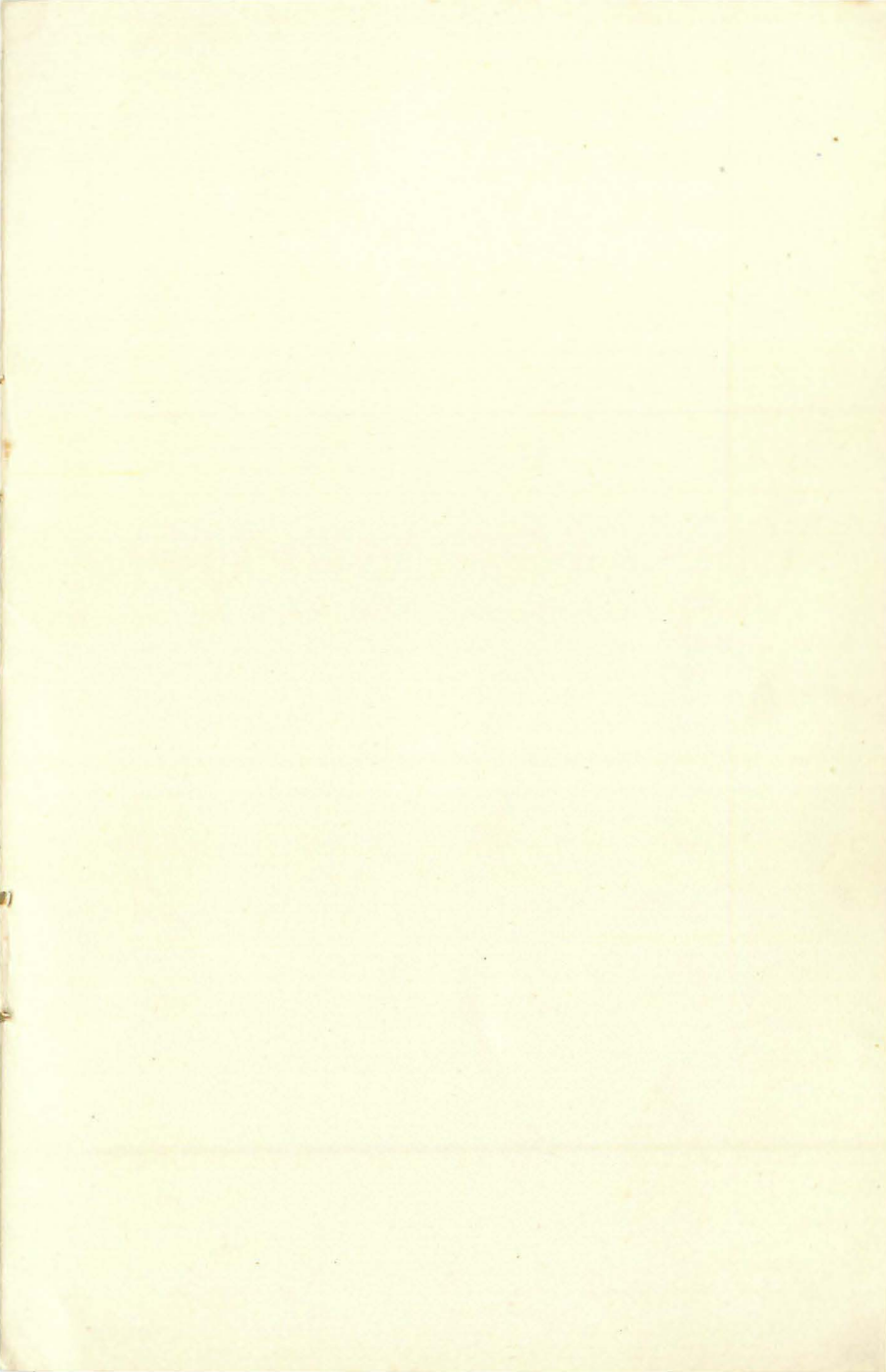
What Our Lord meant was this: "You would have been a happier man, Thomas, if you had believed your friends, and not insisted on seeing my wound-prints. Why did not you believe? You had seen me work miracles; you knew I had raised the dead: you had heard me say that I would 'rise again on the third day,' and yet when your colleagues told you that I had risen, you refused to believe them. Blessed are they who, knowing what you knew, and seeing what you have seen, can believe the word of their friends, let alone my own words, before they receive proof."

To sum up. . .

A Christianity without "signs and wonders" is only known outside the New Testament and the early Church. The "gifts of the Spirit" ceased when the Church became unworthy to receive them, i.e., when the Church lost faith.

Faith is re-appearing, and "signs" are following, and
"SIGNS SHALL FOLLOW."

G.M.E.



1914

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I hereby certify that the above named person is a resident of the United States and is qualified to become a member of the National Association of Women.

Signed _____

Secretary

1914

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN

1914

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

I (Mr. Mrs. Miss).....

wish to apply for Membership of the above Order.

I sincerely hold the belief expressed in the Rule of Faith, and I will
do my best to further the objects of the Order.

Signature.....

Address.....

MINIMUM SUBSCRIPTION 1/-

This form when completed should be addressed to:—

The Rev. G. MAURICE ELLIOTT, (Hon. Sec.), St. Peter's Vicarage, Cricklewood, N.W.2



