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MIRACLES ARE NOT ONLY POSSIBLE BUT HAVE ACTUALLY OCCURED.

By

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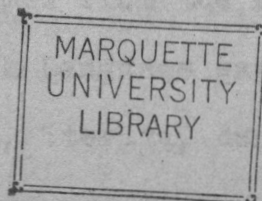
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Miracles! What are they? Are they possible? Do they actually occur? Can they be explained?

These and many similar questions occupy the minds of "Scientists" and the so-called "Higher Critics" of the present generation. The word "miracle" has been the proverbial "stumbling block" of the Materialists, Atheists, and others who cannot, or rather will not admit the existence of the "Supernatural". They attempt to explain Miracles by every hypothesis imaginable rather than admit the intervention of Divine Providence with the "established order". With such an unfounded belief in prevalence, I deem it not inappropriate to expound the belief and teaching of the Catholic Church upon this vital question; for no one can conscientiously deny that the Church has ever held any unreasonable or unscientific views upon questions of great import. With this in mind we can readily be assured of the sound, logical arguments that the Church advances in order to substantiate her belief in the Possibility and Actuality of Miracles.

Due to the brief space allotted it is necessary that we take for granted the existence of God. There are exceptionally few who actually deny the reality of a Superior Being. And should we catch these exceptionally few off their guard or during the more sane and serious moments of their life, it is doubtful whether they would actually refuse to acknowledge the existence of a God. Hence, I think that it is justifiable in the present thesis to grant the existence of a Divine Being, the Lord and Master of all things.

The word miracle comes from the Latin verb "mirari" signifying "to wonder". The greek Language explains the meaning of miracles clearly by the terms, "terata, dunameis, semeia" or "wonders

performed by supernatural power as signs of some special mission or gift and explicitly ascribed to God". There have been several definitions advanced as to what a miracle really is, but the clearest and most concise is that of St. Thomas Aquinas. Quoting: "A Miracle is a sensible effect produced by God, which transcends all the forces of nature". Or, the definition accepted both by those who believe in miracles and those who reject them as impossible, is the following: "A miracle is a sensible effect contrary to the ordinary course of the laws of nature and surpassing all created power". "Hence," says Otten, "if it can be shown that the given definition implies nothing that is contrary to reason, it must perforce be admitted that miracles are possible, since there exists a God of infinite power, Who can do whatever involves no contradiction".

Thus in reading the definition we find there are three elements or criteria by which we can recognize a true miracle. These elements are: 1) a sensible sign or effect, 2) produced outside the ordinary course of nature, and 3) wrought by God. We will consider each of these in their order.

It must be a sensible sign otherwise we are unable to know the fact. Reason makes it evident that we must have knowledge of what occurred before we can judge of the nature of the event. If in the ordinary course of our life we are able to perceive events that happen in accord with nature, then it is equally possible for us to perceive events that occur contrary to nature. If the death of a person is a sensible effect then his restoration to life is equally so.

Here we come face to face with the question of human testimony. We know that under some conditions human testimony can be certain and reliable. If a witness of an event is in a normal state of mind he

cannot but record the fact as he sees it. But unless he has some pre-conceived idea he will not lie for such an act is contrary to human nature and to no purpose. If the witnesses are numerous, as is frequently the case with miracles, it is inconceivable that the senses of all should suddenly be indisposed to record what actually occurred. Hence we may conclude, that we can trust human testimony if the witnesses have knowledge and veracity and if they are, but not necessarily so, many in number.

The second element is that a miracle must be an event other than that which ordinarily happens in accord with the laws of nature; for unless it is extra-ordinary it will not arrest attention. Here we meet with the phrase "laws of nature". The exact meaning of it is essential for the understanding of a miracle. We say that it is the law of nature for bodies to fall, for fire to burn, but in reality these are not the laws of nature but merely the effect of its laws. The laws are the will of the law-giver Who in this case is the Creator Himself. These so called laws of nature are nothing else than a predetermined force placed in matter by the Divine Will. Since matter is devoid of freedom it follows that these forces of nature act necessarily. Hence when an event occurs in another manner than is prescribed by the "Laws of Nature" we say it has an element of the miraculous. The event, however, must be inexplicable on natural grounds; in other words, if the event can be explained in no other manner except thru supernatural means or Divine intervention it is called miraculous. Thus the raising to life of a dead person is inexplicable on physical grounds and only accountable by Divine intervention.

The third element is that the event must be brought about by God alone. Since all natural laws were created by God it necessarily follows that He alone can suspend or modify them. It is evident

from the nature of the effect produced that no one but God could perform the act; e.g. who can restore life to a dead body, give sight to one born blind, cure the sick by a word, etc? No one but the Author of nature Himself.

Another criteria by which we may judge an event to be a true miracle is by attempting to discover the end for which it was performed. Judging from the wisdom and prudence of Almighty God we can readily see that no act of His is performed without a purpose. Hence no act of His is brought about for the mere amusement of His creatures. If the act points to Gods glory we may be assured that it is a true miracle. Many wonders seem to be produced by the Spiritualists, but these events cannot have God for thier author since the occurrences are of a trivial character and not infrequently blasphemous.

The chief reason, end or purpose of a miracle is the attestation of the Truth of Divine Revelation. Practically all if not every miracle can be accounted for either directly or indirectly as the affirmation of the Truth of Christ's Mission. During His stay upon earth He continually pointed to His miracles as a means of fulfilling His divine mission. Quoting St. John (ch.20.v.30.): "Many othersigns also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples which are not written in this book but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name".

We have Christ's own words proving that miracles are wrought to attest His Divine Mission. At the Resurrection of Lazarus we hear Him say: "Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard me, and I know 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". (John Ch. 11.)

What plainer evidence could we have for the purpose of a Miracle? We know that it is against the nature of God to perform an act without a definite end. But God could have no other purpose in mind than to prove the Divinity of His Son and ultimately "to strengthen faith, to make men holy and to lead them to God".

In order that an ambassador to another country may be recognized in the foreign land he must present his credentials. So it is with God. He wished to send His Divine Son on earth to teach His Gospel and bring men to salvation. But in order that men might know that Christ was the true messenger from God it is only to be expected that He have some sign wherewith to prove His Divine Mission. The credentials that God gave are His Miracles and Prophecies. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you will not believe me, believe my works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father". (St. John. Ch. 10. v. 37,38); Hence unless a miracle redounds to God's glory it cannot be a true miracle, for the purpose of a miracle, is to attest the Truth of His Divine Mission in order that thereby men might ultimately gain their eternal salvation.

We now come to a consideration of the division of Miracles. They are, according to St. Thomas, divided into miracles 1)above nature, 2)contrary to nature, and 3)beyond nature.

In the first division we group all those events which no created circumstance could produce. Thus, the resurrection of a dead person.

In the second division are those events which occur contrary to what is expected; e.g. the Three Youths in the fiery furnace. When using the term contrary to nature we do not necessarily imply confusion or disorder. In our daily life we are continually counteracting

the forces of nature; in Chemistry, Physics, Biology, etc., but we never speak of these counteractions as an "infraction" upon the laws of nature as some men would seem to think.

The third division of miracles, those beyond nature, contain all the instantaneous medical cures. A surgeon may under ideal conditions, and with sufficient time and care cure a fractured limb. But no human being can under any condition effect the union of two broken bones by a mere word or gesture.

Thus far we have seen that there are three conditions necessary for an event to be truly miraculous, a sensible sign, contrary to the course of natural laws and, wrought by God. We have also seen that miracles can be placed under the following groups: 1) above nature, 2) contrary to nature 3) and beyond nature. We will now consider a few of the stock objections urged against the possibility of miracles.

Objections.

The majority of the objections urged against the possibility of miracles are the result of a misunderstanding of the term "Laws of Nature". These laws are in reality "the whole collection of similar uniform acts grouped under a general proposition". When viewing the objections separately we see that the authors misconstrue the meaning of "nature's laws" and consequently form a wrong construction upon the powers and limitations of nature. Quoting Hume's objection: "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle from the very nature of the fact is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined".

(Hume's Works. Ed. 1770, Vol. 3. P. 178).

In the strict sense of the term miracles are not a violation but an exception to the laws of nature. How can it be possible for a law giver to violate the laws which he himself has legislated? It is possible however for Him to suspend the law but a suspension is far from a violation. Hume further remarks that a "firm and unalterable experience has established these laws of nature". But this is a mere supposition without the slightest shred of proof to support it. Granting, for the sake of argument, that such is the case; is there any assurance that the future is guaranteed to be free from any interference? None whatever! Hence the objection is valueless. The statement that "the experience which established the laws of nature is firm" makes conspicuous the author's ignorance of things that have been established by facts. There are many events, as we shall see, which prove that the experience is not firm, but rather the contrary, that the "established order" is filled with many gaps and, consequently, proves not only the possibility of miracles but also the fact that they have actually occurred.

Another famous objection is that of Spinoza who claims that it is impossible to recognize a real miracle because we do not know all the forces of nature. That we do not know all the forces of nature I grant but that as a consequence our case should be the least weakened I deny. We know what nature cannot do and this is sufficient; for when a miracle takes place all the laws of nature are not brought into play nor suspended, but only one particular law in the one particular case. Thus, we may not know all the causes that bring about death but we do know that once a person has died no power on earth can restore him to life. But some that were dead have been brought back to natural life. Now to argue that no one was ever restored to

life, or that such a resurrection is not a miracle on the score that we do not know all the forces of nature would be preposterous and running counter to facts based upon the most authoritative and trustworthy testimony available. It is a medically established fact that once cellular life has ceased to function, the cells begin to decay and cannot again be restored to life. Now, is it necessary to know all the forces of nature to realize that cellular life cannot be brought back to activity? The answer is evident. As a matter of fact, "modern science scouts the belief in the resurrection of the dead as absurd". We need not know all nature's laws to understand that a dead man cannot come back to life. Hence it is not necessary to know all the laws of nature but only their effect in a particular instance. We know that fire burns, that sight cannot be restored to those born blind, that the dead cannot come back to life. Hence in certain cases when sight is restored to one born blind, or when one who has been dead arises, other things being equal, we are justified in inferring that the cause is beyond nature and natural explanation and that a miracle has taken place. Consequently Spinoza's objection is groundless.

Another argument urged against the thesis is that "miracles destroy the laws of nature". But upon close observation we find that the author of this supposed objection is ignorant of the facts involved. In case a miracle occurs all the laws of nature, with the exception of the particular law that is effected, remain intact. God concurs with every agent in the universe. Without His concurrence no created thing can act. But in the case of a miracle God withholds His concurrence. Hence the contrary effect takes place and we account for it on the score of "Divine Intervention". Thus when the Three Children were protected from the fire in the furnace, God in this particular instance withheld His concurrence. But if a miracle destroys

the laws of nature as our opponents suggest, then accordingly after the three children were protected from the flames, all fire should have lost its destroying power and ceased to burn; but fire today has the same energy that it possessed from the very beginning. Therefore miracles do not destroy the laws of nature. Hence the insignificance of the objection.

Neither are miracles a "repair of nature's defects" as some of our opponents seem to believe. We have previously seen that the purpose of a miracle is to attest that Truth of Christ's Divine Mission and as such must be worthy of God. Hence miracles are not a correction by God of some physical defect in nature. A miracle is not a repair of some flaw in Creation because of its very nature a miracle is a manifestation of God's sanction and seal to the Truth of the Divine Mission of Christ. Hence the objection falls short of power.

As a last resort our opponents seek to destroy the value of the evidence for miracles itself. But this is unreasonable. We have just as much evidence, if not more, for the miracles of Christ and the miracles of Lourdes as we have for any fact in history or any event of the present day. Why should we believe the fact that Caesar crossed the Rhine or that he was an Emperor any more than the fact that Christ arose from the dead, when the latter fact is far more evidentially and authoritatively established than the former? If our opponents wish to question the facts of miracles due to lack of evidence then we have a right to question all Historical facts that have ever been recorded. But this would be casting a shadow of doubt upon human veracity without sufficient basis. Hence the testimony for miracles cannot be questioned any more, in fact even less, than the facts recorded in profane history for the reason that miracles are extraordinary events and consequently arouse unusual attention,

thus causing miracles to have many witnesses. This objection along with all the others falls short of its destroying force and if they have any value whatever it is that they strengthen rather than weaken our case.

Part 1.

The Possibility of Miracles.

Merely to question the possibility of Miracles, according to Rousseau, is already an ungodly act. But we will spare ourselves from such an act of irreverance. We will not question, but rather establish the possibility of miracles. The most simple and clearest manner of establishing their possibility is from the definition itself. If we can prove that there is nothing contradictory in the definition of miracles, what is to prevent their possibility since there exists an Omnipotent God to Whom everything that involves no contradiction is possible? The definition accepted both by believers and unbelievers alike is the following: "A miracle is a sensible effect contrary to the ordinary course of the laws of nature (&) surpassing all created power". It is our purpose to prove that this definition involves no contradiction. But once we have shown that no contradiction exists we must perforce admit the possibility of miracles as long as there exists an Omnipotent God.

The three conditions necessary for a miracle, as we have seen, are: a sensible effect, i.e. it must be an event that can be perceived by the senses just as any ordinary daily occurrence; it must be an event contrary to the ordinary course of nature's laws otherwise it would fail to arrest the attention of men, for events in accord with nature are presupposed and expected to occur; it must be brought about by Divine power, for a miracle is considered to be a sign from God.

The first requisite is practically self-evident. If the senses of man are in a normal state they unfailingly tend to perceive the ordinary course of events or whatever tends to transpire before them. But if they can perceive the ordinary occurrences it follows that they likewise perceive events contrary to the ordinary course. Thus: The senses apprehend water running down hill; but were the contrary to take place the senses could just as readily apprehend water running uphill. Furthermore, the death of a person is a sensible effect but his restoration is equally so. Consequently there is no contradiction involved when we say that it is possible to witness an event contrary to the ordinary course of nature.

The second condition requires that in order for an event to be miraculous it must be contrary to the laws of nature. By the laws of nature are meant "so many uniform modes of action, invariably observed by natural causes in the production of their proper effects". E.g. it is a law of nature for fire to burn, for a stone cast into the air to come down; in reality, however, these are not laws but only the effects of laws. A law is "a principle of action rather than the act itself". For water to flow down hill is not a law but rather its effect. The law of nature is the "Will of the Divine Lawgiver as expressed in natural causes." But these causes are not free to act and hence can produce their effect only by the Will of the Lawgiver. Consequently the laws of nature are "objectively nothing else than the forces with which God has endowed His creatures, and by reason of which they must, when left to themselves always act the same way if placed under the same circumstances". Hence the constancy of nature's laws depend upon the Will of God.

But miracles are the exceptions to these predetermined forces. But human beings make laws and also the exceptions to them. Can God, the Divine Lawgiver, the Creator of all things, alone then be powerless to make exceptions to His own laws? The supposition is absurd. Hence the possibility for exceptions to the laws of nature.

Furthermore all finite causes depend for their action upon Gods continual concurrence. (In order to make the argument brief and concise I will quote directly from Otten's "The Reason Why"). "Finite causes depend for the exercise of their natural powers on God's active concurrence. Not only must God sustain the acting cause in being, but He must physically co-operate with its activity, so that He has a direct influence upon the effect produced. This follows necessarily from the dependence of the creature on its creator; for a being that is dependant in its essence must be dependent in its operation, else the effect would be superior to its cause which is metaphysically impossible." An automobile cannot be greater than its designer.

"Where natural forces are at work, the moment God withholds His co-operation, these forces are unable to produce an effect no matter what be the extrinsic condition". E.g. if an object is cast into the air the force of gravity will tend to bring it down. But were God to cease co-operating with the force of gravity the object would remain in the air. Furthermore God is at "liberty to withhold His concurrence, for as He freely established the course of nature's laws so can He freely interfere with the same. His concurrence is, indeed, a necessary condition without which natural causes cannot act, yet it depends altogether on His own free will whether in any particular instance that condition shall be put or withheld. Nature depends on Him, not He on nature".

Hence we see that it is in God's power to suspend a force and prevent it from bringing about its predetermined effect. But if this is the case then it is possible to have effects contrary to nature. But this proves the possibility of the second element of a miracle. Therefore as far as this condition is concerned, miracles are possible.

Thus far we have seen that the first two conditions of a miracle do not involve a contradiction. Hence a miracle is possible in as far as the two elements in the definition are in accord with reason. We will now consider the final condition necessary for a miracle. If we establish proof for this factor then no reasonable being can deny the possibility of miracles from the definition itself.

"The effect produced in opposition to the laws of nature must surpass all created power and be brought about by God alone". This is evident. The very fact that it is an effect contrary to the laws of nature proves that God alone can bring it about; for no one but God created these laws and hence no one but He, since He is the Law-giver, can make an exception to them. Furthermore just as the effects contrary to the laws of nature can be shown to come from God so also can the nature of the effect itself be shown to proceed from the same Cause. Thus: when a dead person is restored to life no one can claim it was the effect of nature for the very reason that it is an act contrary to the course of nature. No one but He Who originally created body and soul can again reunite them to their former union. But we know only God has the power to create. Hence only God can produce such an effect. But, as we have previously seen, such a condition is brought about only when God sees fit since all the miracles are wrought to further His Glory.

Hence we see that in the definition admitted by all there is nothing that is contrary to reason or beyond the power of an Omnipotent.

tent God. But to God that which is not contradictory is possible. But since this definition involves no contradiction we must admit that if God wishes to perform a miracle there is nothing to prevent Him. Hence miracles are possible.

Further more since God is Omnipotent and the forces of nature are not necessary miracles are possible.

The forces of nature are not necessary. God is a free acting Being. He created the Universe of His own free choice. There was no obligation on the part of the Supreme Being to create consequently He did it of His own volition. "Deus operatur per voluntatem et non per necessitatem naturae". (St. Thomas). But if God created the World of His own Free Will the world is not necessary. But there are certain laws in the Universe that act by a predetermined force. But since the creation of the Universe was not a necessity then the existing things in the Universe are not necessary. Therefore the laws of nature are not an absolute necessity.

We know that God is a necessary, self-existing Being. He is "Ens a se" and therefore infinite. All finite things are contingent. But contingent things depend upon a necessary Being for their existence and therefore upon God. But if the finite beings themselves are contingent their actions must also be contingent. Now we may ask just how far these actions or laws of the universe are necessary. These laws of nature are only conditionally necessary and only so when certain conditions are present. The conditions are: "1) the absence of impediment to or interference with the natural action of the agent; 2) the presence of the ordinary divine preserving and concurring influence". (Shalloo's "Scholastic Philosophy", P. 200.) Hence it is evident that in a particular case, God can modify the actions of a contingent being for a worthy purpose.

Hence we conclude that since the laws of nature are not absolutely necessary but contingent and depend for their action upon God, an Infinite Being, He alone can perform acts contrary to these contingent predetermined forces. Therefore it follows that miracles are possible.

Furthermore, God by the act of creation did not limit or exhaust His power for if He did He would cease to be God. But since His energies are infinite, and His powers not confined in creation there remain other means for producing effects beside those in nature. Hence, since God is infinite He can act independantly of the laws of nature. Likewise, since He cannot delegate all His power there necessarily remains some in reserve. But if God has power in reserve and can bring about effects without the natural laws then those acts effects are contrary and beyond nature and hence miracles are possible.

St. Thomas writes: "The Divine art of God is not fully unfolded by what God has accomplished in the natural order. Hence, He can work otherwise than the course of nature. Hence, again, it does not follow that if God act contrary to the course of nature He thus acts contrary to His own divine art".

Thus we have seen that the definition of miracles involves no contradiction; that the laws of nature are not absolute and hence modifiable by the Creator; that God has an unlimited resource of power to produce effects by other than natural means. But this being the case there can be nothing to interfere with the possibility of miracles. Therefore miracles are possible.

Part 11.

Miracles Have Actually Occurred.

Having proved the possibility of Miracles we now come to the second part of the thesis, which deals with the proofs that miracles have actually occurred. In selecting the various miracles for discussion I have chosen the most prominent and convincing--"The Resurrection of Lazarus", "The Multiplication of the Loaves", and the greatest of all, "The Resurrection of Christ". However, to make the stand of miracles not totally dependent upon historical evidence, although it would suffice, I have chosen a present day miracle. By limiting the discussion merely to the miracles of Christ and the present day, I do not mean to infer that other miracles have not occurred during the intervening nineteen hundred years. For one could be justified in assuming that there never has been an age in which miracles have not occurred. As far as our thesis is concerned, our case is proven by the occurrence of only one miracle. The reason why I have selected the Miracles of Christ is because they are the most authoritative, convincing and reliable, and the best established evidentially. I have chosen a present day miracle to show that miracles still take place and thus prove that those of Christ were not mere jugglery or legends and myths. We will discuss the Miracles of Christ first; but before so doing, it will be advisable to prove the reliability of the Scriptures in order to be assured that they are true, historical reports and that the events recorded therein have actually taken place.

The Scriptures Are Trustworthy Documents.

The actuality of Christ's miracles can be more readily established if we prove that the Gospels are true, reliable, historical documents. However, once this point is established it will be folly

for any sane and reasonable man to object against the trustworthiness of the Gospel narratives. It is an admitted fact in philosophy that history can be reliable and give us perfect certitude if we are able to prove the authenticity and integrity of the work and the knowledge and veracity of the writer. Unless this statement is admitted we must be skeptical in regard to all past events; but this would lead to the destruction of human traditions and testimony. Hence it is only reasonable to admit that history under the above specified conditions can be trustworthy. But we maintain that the Gospels of the New Testament fulfill all these qualifications and that they therefore must be considered as true reliable historical documents. This statement is substantiated with the proof that the Gospels are authentic, that its authors are truthful, and that the works were neither falsified nor interpolated.

The Gospels are authentic. By this is meant that the works were written in the time to which they are referred and by the men to whom they are assigned. The years in which they were composed are as follows: The 3 synoptic Gospels were written before the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D., the Epistle of St. Paul was written during the years 51 A.D. to 64 A.D., the Acts of the Apostles were composed in the years 62 A.D. to 64 A.D., and finally the Gospel of St. John between the years 98 A.D. and 120 A.D. Upon reading the Gospels no one can doubt that the writer was not an eye-witness or that he did not receive the information directly from other eye-witnesses. Such a minute description of the times, places, circumstances, religion, customs, government and persons is given that only a contemporary of the time of Christ could yield such information. As a matter of fact, two of the Evangelists were eye-witnesses and two received the accounts from other eye-witnesses; what

better testimony could be available! Dr. F. Hettinger remarks: "Every word bears the story of personal experience; the minute and lucid details, the trifling incidents, the dramatic freshness and intuition, especially in the fourth Gospel, could only have emanated from eye-witnesses of the events". (From Otten's "The Reason Why").

Imposture during the lifetime of the Apostles is impossible for they would not have consented to the use of their name upon books they did not write. It is likewise impossible for imposture to have occurred after their death since the Christians would have risen in opposition to the introduction of teachings which were not taught to them by the Apostles. St. Justin, martyr, who lived about the year 125 A.D. states clearly that: "the memoirs of the Apostles, called Gospels were publicly read in the assemblies of the Christians even as were the writings of the Prophets". (Apol. 65,67) From this statement it is quite evident that the Christians of the second century regarded the Gospels as the authorized works of the Apostles. Reading the history of the early centuries we find that the Gospels have always been venerated and regarded as Apostolic writings. It is of interest to note that even the heretics of the second century, such as Basilides and Valentinus quote the Gospels in order to give Apostolic authority to their doctrines and teachings. Speaking of imposture or "Secondcentury forgeries" as some wish to make the Gospels, Professor W. M. Ramsay an acknowledged authority on archaeological subjects remarks: "For years with much interest and zeal, but with little knowledge, I followed the critics and accepted their results. In recent years, as I come to understand Roman history better, I have realized that in the case of almost all the books of the New Testament, it is as gross an outrage on criticism to hold them for second century forgeries as it would be to class the works

of Horace and Vergil as forgeries of the time of Nero". (The Church in the Roman Empire. A.D. 170, Preface 8).

The Gospels are neither falsified nor interpolated. Some men claim that in the course of time, additions were made to the original texts. But this supposition is not true since the early Christians and Ecclesiastics watched and guarded the writings of the Apostles with a jealous care. The Gospels were read publicly and if any substantial change would have been made the Christians would have risen in opposition at any such attempt. Besides, the Bishops, in whose care the writings were, would not tolerate any interference with the Sacred Scriptures. It is interesting to note that we possess manuscripts of the Testament which date back as far as the 6th 5th and even the 4th century and that these texts are substantially the same as those of the present day. If the works have been tampered with how can we account for this substantial identity? Finally, with the increase of books thru the ages interpolation became more difficult since it could be more readily detected. Hence it is evident that the Scriptures and the Gospels are neither falsified nor interpolated.

The authors are trustworthy, i.e. that the writers recorded the events as they actually happened. The events recorded in the Gospels are public occurrences and hence took place before the eyes of many and sometimes even thousands of people. Now if these events were untrue surely some of the people, especially the enemies of Christ, would have pointed to their falsity. But we have no record of any such objection. We know that the writers had knowledge of the events since, as ~~these~~ was already remarked, two were eye-witnesses and two received their information from other eye-witnesses. The objection that the Apostles were uneducated is a mere quibble; for all that was necessary to record an event was to have eyes to see the occur-

rences and ears to hear about them, now certainly the Apostles had these. Hence the folly of the objection.

The Apostles had no motive for deception. The only motives they could have had were either spiritual or temporal. But it certainly was not the former because with the Apostles were brought up in the Jewish religion and knew that God would not reward untruthfulness, and furthermore that they were undermining the religion of their fore-fathers since they were making a God of a man whom they must have known to be only a man. It could not be for a temporal motive for they were treated with contempt, imprisoned and even put to death for what they wrote; Neither did they retract any statement in order to avoid punishment. Hence they had no motive to deceive. Therefore we must admit that they have written a faithful account of what occurred.

It is sometimes objected that the Evangelists fabricated the Gospels, but this objection is well answered by the leader of the French Rationalists of the 18th century, J.J. Rousseau. Quoting: "Consider the gentleness of Jesus, the purity of His morals, the persuasiveness of His teaching; How lofty His principles! What wisdom in His words! How opportune, frank and direct His answers! How can the Gospel history be an invention? My friend, forgeries are not of this kind, and the acts of Socrates which no one doubts, are not so well attested as the acts of Christ. Besides, this only increases the difficulty. Far more inconceivable is it that several men should have combined to fabricate this book, than that there should have been one living original whom they described. No Jewish author could have fabricated the tone or moral teaching of the Evangelists. So powerful, overwhelming and inimitable is the impress of truth stamped upon the Gospel that its inventor would be a greater marvel than

its hero". (Emile, Book4).

Hence from the foregoing proofs we conclude that the Gospels are authentic, free from falsification and that its authors are truthful. Such being the case the Gospels are true, reliable, historical documents and the miracles they contain must be true for they are more certain than many facts in profane history.

Miracle No.1. " The Resurrection of Lazarus ".

Now that we have proved the reliability of the Scriptures, full confidence can be placed in its narratives. The first miracle that we will prove is the Resurrection of Lazarus. The Gospel gives a very clear and concise report of the miracle. Hence the reason for quoting it verbatim. The narrative is lengthy but I shall merely quote the essential parts. The following is a report of the miracle as found in the Gospel of St. John, Chapter 11: "Now there was a certain man sick, named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and of Martha her sister.-----His sisters therefore sent to Him (Christ) saying: "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick". And Jesus having hearing it, said to them: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it".-----When He had heard therefore that he was sick He still remained in the same place two days.-----Then therefore Jesus said to them(Apostles) plainly, "Lazarus is dead: And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe; but let us go to him".-----Jesus therefore came, and found that he had been four days already in the grave.-----Jesus therefore--cometh to the sepulchre;--- and a stone was laid over it. Jesus saith: "Take away the stone". Martha the sister of him that was dead saith to Him: "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days".-----They took therefore the stone away: and Jesus lifting up His eyes said: "Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me; and I knew that Thou hear-

-est me always, but because of the people who stand about, have I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me". When He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come forth". And presently he that had beendead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding bands, and his face was bound with a napkin; Jesus said to them: "Loose him and let him go." "Many therefore of the Jews who came were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in him".

This is the manner in which the Resurrection of Lazarus took place. Now let us see how the event conforms to the essential requisites of a true miracle. A miracle as we have seen must be a sensible sign, beyond the power of nature and produced by God. In regard to the first point there can be no question. It is evident that Lazarus was dead and buried. "Jesus therefore came, and found that he had been four days already in the grave." (St. John Ch.11.v.17). Martha the sister of Lazarus says: "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now four days;" (John Ch. 11. v.39). Hence we have positive evidence for the death and burial of Lazarus. Furthermore there were many witnesses present when He came back to life, so there can be no question of his resurrection. Even though it might be claimed that the witnesses were ignorant or simple people, the case is not altered, for only the ordinary powers of observation are necessary to see a dead man come back to life. Hence we conclude that the event in question was a sensible manifestation.

The Resurrection of Lazarus is beyond natural explanation. No power on earth or any created energy can reunite the human soul and body once they have been separated through ~~to~~ death. This is evident when we consider the effects of death upon the cell. Death causes the following results: "Coagulation of the cell plasm, arrest of the

phenomena of assimilation, arrest of disassimilation, decomposition of protoplasm by bacteria, elimination of gases, decomposition of the mineral principles, complete discontinuity through the arrest of life and finally no cellular life". (LeBec, "Medical Proof of the Miraculous", P. 13.) From this we see that it is in the course of nature for cells, deprived of life to disintegrate. Hence nature is powerless to restore life. Neither can the restoration of life be attributed to evil agencies because they were at one time created by God, the Supreme Lord, of all created things, and Who alone has power over life and death. Christ in order to prove that it was God Who restored life, called upon Him for power. If another power performed the Resurrection why should Christ call upon God and not upon this other unknown power? Hence the only Being Who can restore life is God Himself. Therefore the miracle fulfills the second requisite-- it is beyond any created power and inexplicable on natural grounds.

The point that now remains, is the purpose of the miracle. If we can show that it was performed for God then we have gained our point and proved that a true miracle has actually taken place. Upon reading the Gospel Narrative we note that Christ waited until Lazarus had been dead four days before He would perform the miracle in order to confirm the minds of the Jews that Lazarus was most assuredly dead. (St. John Ch. 11. V. 17.) Then again after Christ had gone to the sepulchre of Lazarus He waited until a large crowd had gathered in order to make known the purpose of the miracle to as many people as possible. For Christ, previously, speaking of the sickness of Lazarus remarked: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it". (St. John Ch. 11. v. 14.) When the crowd had gathered and the psychological moment had arrived Christ ordered the stone to be taken away, and then began to pray: "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". (St. John. Ch. 11. v. 41-42). Only after Christ had prepared the witnesses and prayed thus did He perform the miracle.

"Lazarus come forth". "And presently he that had been dead came forth". St. John Ch. 11. v. 43-44. We have seen that only God Himself could perform such an act. But Christ called upon God to perform a miracle in order to prove His Divine Mission. "That they may believe that Thou hast sent Me". Now unless Christ were the Son of God, and since only God can restore life, God would have testified to a falsehood. But this is impossible for it is against His nature and essence. Therefore the miracle was performed by God to attest and prove the truth of Christ's Divine Mission.

Hence we have seen that the Resurrection of Lazarus was a sensible sign, beyond natural explanation and performed by God to attest Christ's Divine Mission. But these are the essential requisites of a true miracle. Therefore the Resurrection of Lazarus is a true miracle in the fullest sense of the word.

Miracle No.2, The Multiplication Of The Loaves.

A remarkable fact about the miracle of the "Multiplication of the Loaves" is that all the Four Evangelists have recorded it. The event can be found in the following passages: Matthew Ch. 14. V.13-21, Mark Ch. 6. v. 30-44, Luke Ch.9 V. 10-17, and John Ch. 6. v. 1-15. I will quote the miracle as narrated by St. Matthew. Quoting: "Which when Jesus had heard, he retired from thence by boat, into a desert place apart, and the multitudes having heard of it, followed Him on foot out of the cities. And He coming forth saw a great multitude, and had compassion on them, and healed their sick. And when

it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying: "This is a desert place, and the hourⁿ is now past: send away the multitudes, that going into the towns, they may buy themselves victuals". But Jesus said to them: "They have no need to go: give you them to eat". They answered Him: "We have not here, but five loaves, and two fishes". Who said to them: "Bring them hither to me". And when He had commanded the multitude to sit down upon the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to Heaven He blessed, and broke, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up what remained, twelve full baskets of fragments. And the number of them that did eat was five thousand men, besides women and children. And forthwith Jesus obliged His disciples to go up into the boat, and to go before Him over the water, till He dismissed the people".

To prove this to be a genuine miracle we will consider the event under each of the three necessary elements that constitute a true miracle. It is a sensible sign. This is clearly evident from the effects that have taken place: With "five loaves and two fishes, five thousand men besides women and children" were fed; the remains filled "twelve baskets". What greater exterior evidence could we request for a miracle? Most assuredly this event must have occurred; otherwise, how can we account for the fact that not one of these "five thousand men besides women and children" have ever denied it? How can we account for the fact that the four Evangelists have recorded the miracle? Hence the event in question was a sensible sign.

To realize that the "Multiplication" is quite inexplicable on natural grounds does not require an extraordinary knowledge of nature's laws. We are aware from past observations that the growth of vegetative matter demands considerable time. Vegetation requires

a definite amount of light, heat, moisture, soil and other necessary requisites that make up the compound. To grow barley, for instance, demands many weeks of time. Hence it is not in the nature of vegetative substances to spring into existence at a mere command. The same may be said for animal life. It takes many months before a fish arrives at an edible size. Hence it is preposterous to assume that nature of its own natural power can increase food a hundred times or more its original quantity within the space limit of five minutes, a day or even a week. But in the miracle of the "Multiplication" such an event has occurred and hence we must attribute the operation to a cause higher than nature.

Furthermore, not only is the instantaneous production of substance beyond natural explanation but the fact that "five thousand men besides women and children" were filled and yet "twelve baskets" of remains were to be had—more than the original amount. Upon the face of it the event is clearly physically impossible. To seek a natural explanation is futile. Let us consider for a moment just how many people could enjoy a light lunch with "five loaves and two fishes", then probably we will realize still more fully the stupendousness of the miracle. Five exceptionally large loaves of bread weigh about twenty five pounds. Two extremely large fish we shall say also equal about twenty five pounds. The total amount of food weighs fifty pounds. If we distribute this food to a group of men, each man receiving about eight ounces, which makes a light lunch, we will be able to feed only one hundred men. But Christ fed "five thousand men besides women and children" to a full meal and still had twelve full baskets of remains. Hence our fifty pounds and one hundred men dwindle into insignificance. Therefore it is plainly evident that to feed "five thousand men besides women and children" upon "five loaves and two fishes" is quite inexplicable on natural

and physical grounds.

If we prove the third point, namely, that God is the Author of the miracle and that it redounds to His Glory we have established all the requisites for a true miracle and are justified in the consequent conclusion. We have seen that the "Multiplication of the Loaves" is beyond the powers of nature. But ^{no} one except God could perform an act which demands an instantaneous increase in substance, because to God alone belongs the power of creation.

But what was the purpose of this Miracle? Its purpose like all the other miracles of Christ was to attest the Truth of His Divine Mission and to prove that He was really and truly the Son of God. The people who were present and witnessed the miracle believed and had faith in Christ, for after they had seen what Jesus did, remarked: "This is of truth the prophet that is to come into the world". (St. John Ch. 6. v. 14.) Finally Christ had preached that He was the Son of God. But only God can perform such a wonderful miracle as the "Multiplication". Hence if Christ were not the true Son of God then the Almighty would have given testimony to a falsehood. But this is contrary to the Essence of God. Therefore the miracle is genuine for it was wrought to prove the Divinity of the Son of God.

Hence, we conclude that "The Multiplication of the Loaves" is an actual miracle, since it was a sensible sign, wrought by Christ, witnessed by thousands, beyond natural explanation and attributable only to God as a proof of Christ's Divine Mission.

Miracle No. 3 "The Resurrection of Christ".

We now come to a consideration of the greatest and most marvelous of all miracles-The Resurrection of Christ. Upon this miracle rests the foundation work of the Catholic Church; for St. Paul writes: "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain,

and your faith is also vain". (1.Cor.Ch.15.v.14.) From these words it is manifest that too much importance cannot be attached to the Resurrection. The adversaries of the Catholic Church realizing the consequences resulting from an admission of Christ's Resurrection, and though implicitly aware of the futility of evading so conspicuous an event, nevertheless with unfounded prejudices and unquenchable hatred raging in their hearts, determine with the firmest resolve to destroy all the evidence in favor of Christ's Resurrection even at the expense of plunging the present and future generations into the sea of historical skepticism.

Disregarding the blasphemous objections of our opponents, we will proceed to prove beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt, that the Resurrection of Jesus is a true miracle. Christ before being taken down from the cross was indisputably dead. In confirmation of this truth we have the evidence of a Pagan Historian who unquestionably had no motive for recording Christ's Death, outside the intention of truthfully reporting historical facts. Tacitus writes: "Christ, the originator of that name (Christian) had been executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius". (Annals Ch.15.v.14.) In further testimony of Christ's death we have the statement of St. John who says that "blood and water" flowed from Christ's side. "But one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water". (St. John Ch. 19.v.34.) It is impossible for us to enter into the physiology of this phenomena but suffice it to say that it is a conclusive sign of death when "blood and water" flow simultaneously from ~~wa-~~a wound.

The Gospel reports the miracle of the Resurrection as follows: "But He rising early the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalen, out of whom He had cast seven devils". (Mark.Ch.16v.9).

"But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping. Now as she was weeping, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre. And she saw two angels in white, sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her: Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them: Because they have taken away my Lord; and I know not where they have laid Him. When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing; and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her: "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She thinking that it was the gardener, saith to Him: "Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and ~~ill-w~~ I will take Him away. "Jesus saith to her: "Mary! She turning, saith to him: "Rabboni" (which is to say Master). Jesus saith to her: "Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren, and say to them: "I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to My God and your God". Mary Magdalen, cometh, and telleth the disciples: "I have seen the Lord, and these things He said to Me". (St. John Ch. 20. v. 11-18.)

"Now whilst they were speaking these things Jesus stood in the midst of them, and saith to them: "Peace be to you; it is I, fear not". But they being troubled and frightened, supposed that they saw a spirit. And He said to them: "Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See my hands and feet, that it is I myself; handle, and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have". And when He had said this, he shewed them His hands and feet". (St. Luke Ch. xxlvv. 36-40).

From these passages it is evident that the Resurrection of Christ was unquestionably a visible sign. Hence there can be no dispute that this event does not fulfill the first qualification of a miracle--a sensible sign. Some opponents claim that Christ's Resurrection was only a spiritual Resurrection but this is false as

the various passages from Scripture can testify. The Catholic Church has meant by the Resurrection that " the mangled, lifeless body of Jesus that had lain in the grave, became whole and living again, glorified and spiritualized indeed, but still the same human body, endowed with new properties not ordinarily belonging to the natural body, no longer subject to the laws of matter, no longer subject to the law of death". (The Resurrection of Christ, is it a fact? by Marsh P. 18).

The Resurrection of Christ is beyond natural explanation. Much exposition upon this point is not necessary for it has already been pointed out that it is impossible for the powers of nature to reunite a human body and soul once they have been separated by death. But this event is still more inexplicable on natural grounds since it was a "Self-Resurrection". To attempt a natural explanation would result in a contradiction of terms. A person who has died^d is deprived of all actual and potential powers and to say that he could rise by his own natural powers is absurd. Hence Christ's miracle is beyond the possibility much less the probability of a natural explanation.

We know for certain, as was previously explained, that no one but God could perform such a miracle as the Resurrection. Since God alone can be the Author of such an event He must have had an object in view because God of his very nature does not bring about any action without a definite purpose. This purpose was to place the final seal upon the Truth of Christ's Divine Mission. Hence we say the object of Christ's Resurrection was to prove His divinity and at the same time make manifest our Redemption thru His power over life and death. The Resurrection was the crowning work of all His labor as God-Man. Finally, Christ's Resurrection"has vanquished death for us and our resurrection is now as certain as His".

Hence we have seen that the Resurrection of Christ was a sensible sign, for many have seen and conversed with Him after His Resurrection; it is beyond natural explanation because nature cannot reunite a separated body and soul; it was wrought by God to attest the Divinity of His Son. But these are the essential credentials of a true miracle. Therefore the Resurrection of Christ is unquestionably a true miracle.

Miracle No. 4. The Cure of Pierre De Rudder.

Because of the wonderful supernatural cures that have been wrought at the grotto, Lourdes during the past six decades or more has attracted considerable attention not only to the world at large but to scientific and Medical men as well. It is not my purpose to enter into a discussion of the origin and history of this miraculous spot; but suffice it to say that ^{to} the "Higher Critics", Atheists and Materialistic Medical men it is an object of insurmountable difficulty and a matter of regret, because it is a living obstacle, and a barrier in the path to the propagation and spreading of their system of philosophy. No natural explanation can account for the cures that have been effected here. Lourdes is such an object of interest that annually hundreds and thousands of tourists visit it either for curiosity, pilgrimages, or for the intention of being cured. It is a living witness of God's Mighty power and influence over man and the Universe. It is a testimony of His Divine love and concern for man's temporal and spiritual welfare.

Should any one be skeptical as to the cures that are effected, he is privileged to investigate any or all the documents at Lourdes that are at the disposal of any inquirer. The authentic cases thus far recorded number over 3,350. Of this sum 265 are nervous cases, 17 are cures from cancer, 164 from tumors, 464 from brain affections;

48 blind received their sight, 31 deaf and dumb received the faculties of speech and hearing; 173 are cures from joint diseases, 112 from bone diseases, 133 from rheumatism and 538 from tuberculosis in all its forms. (Hist. Critique). These however are only the authentic cures, but should we add all the cures that have occurred at Lourdes the number would be beyond 7,000.

The reason for considering a present day miracle, as I have previously remarked, is merely to prove that miracles actually occur even in our own day. To establish this point^{if} is sufficient to prove only one instance in which a cure was effected in a manner inexplicable on natural grounds. For this purpose I have chosen the case of Pierre De Rudder who had suffered a supparating fracture of the leg for a period of nine years and while one day calling upon Our Lady of Lourdes for help was suddenly cured. Strictly speaking the miracle did not occur at Lourdes but at the shrine of Oostacker-lez-Gand, a sight dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes. This however does not alter the case since the place, where the miracle occurred, has an indirect bearing upon Lourdes. The reason why I have chosen this particular occurrence is because it is the clearest and most convincing argument in favor of the reality of a present day miracle. In order to give the exact data I will quote the conditions of the case as recorded by Dr. LeBec, President of the Bureau Des Constatations, Lourdes.

"Pierre De Rudder, of Jabekke, between Bruges and Ostend, at the age of 40 had his left leg broken by a falling tree on Feb. 16, 1867".

"As a result both bones of the left leg were fractured at the level of the upper third. Dr. Affenaer reduced the fracture and placed it in a starch splint. After some weeks, as the patient had

considerable pain, the apparatus was removed".

"The condition then discovered was as follows: A large ulcer on the dorsal part of the foot; a wound, having a gangrenous aspect at the level of the fracture, in which could be seen fragments of bone bathed in pus; a fragment of bone of several centimetres in length was removed".

"Dr. Affenaer attended the patient for some months. Dr. Vassenaere and other medical men of Bruges and Brussels were also called in consultation. All were agreed that the fracture was incurable, and that amputation of the leg was ^{ine}evitable. This the patient refused". (Le Bec, Medical Proof of the Miraculous, P.119-20).

After a year De Rudder left his bed. He was soon able to move about and apply bandages to the leg himself. However the leg remained extremely mobile. The lower limb could be turned-"the heel forward and the toes backwards" (Le Bec P. 120). Whenever the leg was bent the "extremities of the bones would be made to project in the wound" and "when the limb was extended these extremities remained separated by a space of three centimetres". (Le Bec P. 120). In this state he hovered for a period of eight years in spite of the fact that he was under continual medical observation in the person of Dr. Verriest. His condition remained ever the same.

"Dr. Van Hoestenberghé dressed the wound about the middle of December 1874, and stated that the leg was always in the same condition; he could twist the leg, turning the heel forward, could make the osseous extremities stand out in the wound, and see that they were necrosed. He verified the fact that when the limb was extended there was always a separation of three centimetres between the two fragments". (Le Bec P. 121).

As a last resort De Rudder determined to visit the shrine of "Our Lady of Lourdes" in order to implore her aid. He arrived at

the Grotto in a fatigued condition. Here he found that the pilgrims "were accustomed to go three times around the grotto, and he determined to follow them at any cost. While he was on the third round, he was seized with deep emotion; all at once he dropped his crutches, walked by himself and went to kneel before Our Lady's statue. He had been suddenly and radically cured." (De Grandmaison P. 144).

Dr. Boissarie commenting on the cure writes. "The leg and the foot, which a few moments before were very swollen, had become normal; the plaster and bandages had fallen off of themselves, the two wounds had cicatrised and the fractured bones had suddenly united". (De Grandmaison P. 145).

This occurred on April 7. The following day April 8, Dr. Affenaer, who had attended the patient immediately after the fall nine years previous, after subjecting him to a thorough examination exclaimed: "Pierre, you are perfectly healed. Your leg has consolidated very effectively. No human means could avail to make you walk again; but where doctors fail, Mary is powerful. Seeing such a prodigy, unbeliever though I was, I feel faith grow upon me". (see the account of Scheerlinck, Hippolyte Lucas.)

"On April 9th Dr. Von Hoestenberghé determined to go and see De Rudder. He found him busy gardening, and the cripple of yesterday began jumping about before him to show how thorough was his cure".

"He examined the leg and noted in conclusion: 'No shortening- a scar¹¹ below the knee-another large one at the level of the foot'". (De Grandmaison). P. 145-146).

This case is unquestionably a miracle; nature and science are too inadequate to utter a word in explanation. Dr. De Grandmaison remarks: "The cure had undoubtedly been effected and the conditions were such as science is unable to explain, since the consolidation

of the bones over an inch apart came about in the space of some minutes, whereas for more than eight years, in spite of all medical treatment, the fracture had become compound, while there was considerable suppuration and necrosis of the bones". (Twenty cures at Lourdes, P. 146.)

On March 22, 1898, twenty three years after the cure De Rudder died of pneumonia. Fourteen months after his death Dr. Van Hoestenbergh had the body exhumed and with the existence of Drs. Deschamps and Rayer amputated the legs and upon examination found that "the tibia^e were of precisely the same length, in spite of the fact that a fragment of necrosed bone had exfoliated from the left leg. The broken bones, after uniting by callus, had assumed the same contour as those of the healthy leg". (De Grandmaison, P. 146.)

For a period of nine years the two bones on De Rudder's left leg were separated by a distance of three centimetres when suddenly the bones united and the leg resumed its normal size and strength. This means that bone substance sufficient to fill three centimetres of space was suddenly supplied. Where did this matter come from? Nature is unable to account for it; consequently we must seek elsewhere for an explanation. But before so doing let us briefly consider the natural process of bone healing, then we will be able to realize more fully how incapable nature is to effect a cure such as De Rudder's.

"Fractures are cured by the formation at the extremity of the two osseous fragments of a slender layer of cartilage, of a thickness less than a millimetre, which is solidified gradually by the disposition of calcareous salts. This cartilaginous layer grows and ossifies in proportion as the salts mineralize the deeper portion in contact with the bone. Beneath the cartilaginous layer appear capillary vessels which carry the salts necessary for this minerali-

zation".

"The two cartilaginous coverings of the upper and lower bony fragments gradually approach each other, finally they meet and the callus is united. The scar acquires solidity and strength, by being mineralized, and this is effected by a deposit of lime which the blood furnishes. This phosphate is derived by the blood from the food, and it is only after chemical elaboration by digestive secretions that the blood is able to absorb this salt and carry it to the capillaries of the callus". (Le Bec, P. 21-22).

The following is a series of changes that food must undergo before it arrives at the fracture:

- "1. Introduction of food into the intestine.
2. Action of intestinal secretions and ferments upon the food.
3. Liberation of phosphate of lime.
4. Absorption of the phosphate by the blood.
5. Transportation by the blood to the cells, forming the new bone.
6. Deposition of the salts about the cells". (Le Bec, P. 26.)

Hence we see that the natural process of healing a fracture is far from being instantaneous as was the case of De Rudder. It is naturally impossible that a large deposit of phosphate of lime, such as was necessary for De Rudder's fracture could possibly come from natural sources. The natural growth of bone necessary to heal a fracture requires several months. Besides, there is no part in the human skeleton where such a quantity could be stored. The problem is insoluble by any natural explanation.

Thus far we have seen that the evidence for the cure of Pierre De Rudder fulfills the requisites of a true miracle. It was a sensible sign, for he lived nine years with the fracture and 23 years

after the disappearance of it. Medical men have dispaired his cure but after April 7, 1875 have given their testimony and certified to the reality of a sudden cure and the complete return to normality. We have seen that the event is beyond natural explanation. The healing of a fracture demands time but in the case of De Rudder there was a complete absence of time, -the cure being effected within the space of about a few minutes.

Furthermore "when the following conditions are found in one case it may be considered a supernatural cure:

- 1) The proved existence of a serious lesion in the tissues, or a loss of substance: for example a wound, osseous caries, or tubercles.
- 2) The proved existende of cicatrization effected either instantaneously or in a time manifestly too short for the normal processes of cure.
- 3) The permanence of the cure and the re-establishment of functions for a sufficient length of time, mere amelioration being thus excluded". (Le Bec, P. 12).

But all these conditions have been verified in the case of Pierre De Rudder. Hence the supernatural character of the cure.

We have given the testimony of several doctors proving the existence of a serious lesion; we have given a verified account of the proved existence of cicatrization effected instantaneously; and finally we have given the evidence and date of De Rudder's death proving that the cure remained permanent 23 years - the remainder of his life, along with the fact that from the time of his cure to the date of his death all functions again resumed their normal activity.

There remains now but one more point before we pronounce the cure to be truly miraculous, and that point is - the purpose of the miracle.

In reading the history of Lourdes we find that it is dedicated to Our Blessed Mother. All cures are brought about thru Her supplication. (See authorized documents at Lourdes in proof of this statement). But we know that these cures are outside the natural order and that no one but God could bring them about. But Pierre sought the aid of "Our Blessed Lady." Now unless Our Blessed Lady is actually and truly the Mother of Christ, God would be working a miracle to testify to a falsehood. But this is contrary to God's nature and impossible to Him on account of His essence. Hence we conclude that since only God can effect such a cure the event proves that Mary is really the Mother of God and that aid sought thru Her supplication is granted. Consequently the purpose of the miracle is the veneration of the Mother of God. Hence the third requisite is fulfilled.

Thus we have seen that Pierre De Rudder's cure was a sensible sign, beyond natural explanation and wrought by and for God. But these are the requisites for a true miracle. Therefore the cure of De Rudder is a true miracle.

Conclusion.

The preceding discussions have verified the fact that nature is contingent and that she depends for her exercise upon the Divine concurrence of an Omnipotent God; furthermore, that God has an unlimited reserve of power and consequently can bring about effects without using the means that nature employs. It has likewise been made evident that certain events which have occurred conform completely to the definition of miracles; that they are beyond natural explanation and that they have God for their cause. But since this is the case it therefore follows that --- MIRACLES ARE NOT ONLY POSSIBLE BUT HAVE ACTUALLY OCCURED.

In regard to Miracles the Vatican Council of the Catholic Church teaches the following:

"If any one shall say that Miracles are impossible, and therefore that all the accounts regarding them, even those contained in Holy Scripture, are to be dismissed as fabulous or mythical; or that Miracles can never be known with certainty, and that the Divine origin of Christianity cannot be proved by them, let him be anathema".

FINIS.

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