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MIRAGLES

Modern Revela-
tion Sustained

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MIRACLES.

BY ALVIN KNISLEY.

It is often announced by the enemies of new revelation that if Joseph Smith was a divinely inspired prophet, and the Book of Mormon really what it purports to be, it ought to be demonstrated to them as such by an open display of the power of miracles which we claim is associated with the gospel, for the benefit and confirmation of the Saints. They tell us that Christ performed them for this object; and that object being accomplished they ceased, and therefore if God has again visited the earth, they say they have equally the same right to see similar manifestations.

Now if the sole object of Christ's miracles was to convince unbelievers of the truthfulness of his Messiahship, then these parties may expect to see the same today if they are in existence. But if this was not Christ's object in exhibiting miracles, but rather for the candidates to whom they were administered, and for his disciples, the unbelievers just *casually* seeing them, then modern revelation deniers may or may not see them, and yet the message may be true.

That Christ's principal object in performing miracles was not for unbelievers is evident from the fact that he always required faith on the part of the recipient of the cure. Farther, the fact that he was so secretive about his miracles in trying to keep it from being spread abroad in many instances, affords strong evidence that they were designed only for believers or for his disciples. Again, his refusal

to give a sign where it was demanded by the Pharisees and other *unbelievers* is still more corroborative that they were not intended for those parties.

For proof of this see the following scriptural arguments: In Matthew 8: 1-4 we find (in the first year of Christ's ministry) that a leper came to him and desired to be cleansed. After Jesus had responded to his prayer he said, "See thou *tell no man.*" In Matthew 9: 30 it is recorded that after he had cured or restored the sight of two blind men, he "charged them, saying, see that *no man know it.*" After raising Jairus' daughter as found in Mark 5, it says "he [Christ] charged them strictly that *no man should know it,*" 43d verse. In Mark 7: 31-37 we read that after Christ left Tyre and Sidon and came into Galilee, one was brought unto him that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. After Christ had taken "him *aside from the*

multitude” and healed him, he “charged them that they should *tell no man.*”

The eighth chapter of Mark informs us that when Jesus came to Bethsaida a blind man was brought unto him to be healed. And after Jesus “*led him out of the town*” he healed him, “And he sent him away to his house, saying, *neither go into the town, nor tell it to any one in the town.*”—26th verse. In the next chapter we are told that Jesus cast a devil out of a boy, (his disciples previously failing in the attempt) and when he had accomplished this wonderful event, the record says (verse 30) “*And he would not that any man should know it.*” How strong this is! If Jesus wanted to verify the divine authenticity of his mission by miracles, why was he so private about it where circumstances permitted? Why did he not exhort them to publish it abroad if that was an entire proof of his Sonship?

People say if we will just show a sign they will believe. They tell us that they will embrace our doctrine, and that it would be the means of closing the mouths of those who are continually defying us to work miracles. I ask, What would they "believe" if we were to show them signs? Why they would believe(?) the Bible and that Jesus told the truth, when he said "these signs shall follow them that believe." If they believed the Bible as they should, they would believe our claim is right, without a sign.

It is claimed that the New Testament says that the spiritual gifts or signs were to be done away, and then these parties will turn directly around and tell us that if we will show them a sign they will believe we are right. What a dilemma they put themselves in when they say that if the New Testament says that the signs were to be done away, it would not change such

a divine declaration in the least, if we would work a miracle. The New Testament prediction would remain the same with regard to the cessation of miracles, and if we did work a miracle, it would not prove that the New Testament did not say so. So in order for the sign seeker to believe in our miracle, they would have to disbelieve the blessed little book which they inform us declares they were to cease. If the word does say that miracles were to be done away and we would perform any, it would either prove our miracles to be of the devil, or that the supposed divine statement of their cessation is false.

We know, if the Bible is true, that those who do not even claim to have the spiritual gifts are wrong. It is not necessary to investigate their other claims, for if they teach that the spiritual gifts are not in their possession, they could not be otherwise than in error. So then, so far as

supernatural gifts are concerned, Latter Day Saints cannot be condemned, and are right theoretically. When the seeker after truth has arrived at this point it will greatly assist him in his theological researches as there are but few who make the extraordinary claim of supernaturalism. He can then soon "seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness." But I would remind Mr. "Seeker" not to get so anxious and credulous that he would allow anything that has a semblance of the church of Christ to be palmed upon him because they do wonders. Remember that Jesus says, "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and they shall show forth great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible they would deceive even the very elect."

If a doctrine is true in every other respect and the "signs" promised by Jesus attend it, accept it; but if you find one tenet

wrong, reject it though its advocates turn rods into snakes, make frogs come upon the land as the magicians of Egypt, or make fire come down from heaven. The latter, the Apostle John said, would be done in the last days, as found in the 14th, 15th and 19th chapters of Revelation. If those things are not done in the last days, then John and Jesus did not tell the truth in saying they would. If then, they are or will be done in the last days, the man who says "Show me a sign and I will believe" places himself in a dangerous position—a position to be deceived.

Isaiah says (8:19, 20) "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them." And Jesus says "He that is sent of God speaketh the things of God." An imposter will not teach a perfect doctrine. At least there is no case in history of which I am aware, where

a doctrine true in every respect was taught or invented by an impostor. When people test a twenty dollar gold piece their object is to find out whether there is full value in it. If there is, it is regarded as genuine. If not, it is not genuine. It is silly in the extreme to suppose that a man will try to counterfeit a twenty dollar gold piece and put twenty dollars worth of gold in it. Although it is possible, it is very improvable, as his work would be for nothing. The object of an impostor is to deceive and impose something spurious on the people; and in order to perpetrate his scheme effectually, he must have some truth mixed with it. Therefore when I say an impostor will not teach a perfect doctrine I mean *as a whole*. It is contrary to his principle. Another idea is, the counterfeit comes in existence secondly or after the genuine. There never was a religious imposition but what the defects could

be pointed out by the true servant of God. Mohammet, Swedenborg, and others taught doctrines that were in some respects true, yet they were impostors and their errors or defects are easily shown.

“But,” says one, “you said if a doctrine is true and the signs promised by Jesus follow it, accept it; and yet you reason that I should accept it without seeing the signs.” Most assuredly. But, I said miracles were not performed simply to make believers, but for the sick, and to confirm those who are believers, and consequently if you do see them, it will be by chance. When I ask people why they believe Christ performed miracles, they say, “Because the Bible says so.” Then if it is consistent that we should believe dead witnesses who lived over 1800 years ago, is it not much more or just as consistent that you should believe living witnesses? I can furnish testi-

monies of healing from home to over 3000 miles away—incontrovertible. Moreover I ask if a miracle has been done in the 19th century is it not possible to prove it to anyone without them seeing it? Certainly it is; and for anyone to object to believing it because they did not happen to see it, is a sign that they are something like the multitude that followed Jesus around; not for his sake, but evidently to get filled with the loaves and fishes.

Again I ask professed believers in the Bible why they believe baptism is for the remission of sins? They will answer, "Because the Bible says so." That is just exactly why I believe the spiritual gifts and signs follow us. Now if the people can believe the former without a sign, why not the latter? Now how did Jesus respond when a sign was demanded of him in order that faith might be exercised in his divine mis-

sion. In Matthew 12: 38-42 we read that after he had been teaching the multitude "certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered, Master, we would *see a sign from thee.*" But he answered and said unto them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall be no sign given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas," [Which was his resurrection]. "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here." Why will the men of Nineveh condemn "this generation?" Simply because "this generation" wont repent until they see a sign; and the men of Nineveh repented without signs at the preaching of Jonas. If it was inconsistent to suppose that they should have believed in him without signs, Jesus would certainly not have used such

language. He surely thought he had given them sufficient reasons to believe in him without miracles.

In Matthew 16: 1-4 there is recorded an interview Jesus had with the Pharisees and Sadducees, similar to the one quoted in the foregoing. It is shown that they tempted him in the act of asking a sign. Jesus said (John 4: 48) "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." Thus it was wisest and most rational to believe without. In nearly, if not in every instance where the people demanded of Jesus a sign, he confronted them with the fact that it was not a good method to pursue, and farther he termed them a wicked and adulterous generation.

It is the height of absurdity for denominations, who deny spiritual gifts in this age, to claim that they were done anciently to make believers only: for if they were manifest for

that purpose we unquestionably need them now, as there are thousands of people who do not believe. "But," says one, "we have the New Testament now to convince them with." I reply, that does not alter the case in the least. They do not believe the New Testament, and if people would not believe living witnesses 1800 years ago, who delivered the New Testament orally, why would they believe the written testimony of dead witnesses? If God is no respecter of persons, and he performed miracles 1800 years ago to convince the unbelieving nations of the authenticity of his Son's mission, he will not expect the unbelieving nations today to accept the same message without the same evidence (miracles) to substantiate it. If he does not do them today, it is either because everybody believes, or because there are no believers at all, as a medium through whom to perform them; or else,

it is apparent he did not do them to make believers when the primitive organization of the church was effected. So down goes popular sectarianism on this point.

Common sense and the scriptures warrant the belief that if a man performs miracles under gospel influences and authorities it is a strong *presumptive* evidence that he is sent of God. Yet if he performs no miracles and brings a perfect doctrine, it should be accepted just the same. The message of Noah, and John the Baptist, who performed *no miracles* that we are aware of, was just as true and essential to the salvation of the human family as the message taught by Jesus, Peter or any other wonder worker.

New revelation deniers tell us that miracles were only given for the establishment of primitive christianity, and that purpose being accomplished, they therefore ceased; and the ser-

vant or ambassador of Christ after that was to be received without any miraculous exhibition. The same parties who make this claim admit that there was an apostasy from the original faith, and that christianity became extinct (on the earth). If they are correct in all this, why do they ask Latter Day Saints to authenticate their claims by signs now a days? The church the writer represents was organized in 1830 by Joseph Smith—over sixty years ago. It has been well established in the sense that I understand them to make use of the term. Miracles would be just as necessary for the *re*-establishment of the church as they would be for the *primitive* establishment; and if the church was disorganized as our opposers admit, it must of course therefore be reorganized before it could again exist. Then if miracles were to cease as soon as the church was established or *re established*, I ask

again (taking modern religionists on their own ground) Can we not prove the Book of Mormon and other church revelations true, in the absence of them.

Another prominent bulwark our opposers imagine they have which is unanswerable(?) to us, is found in the gospel as recorded by St. John, which reads, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written *that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ.*" Certainly they were; but why do they (who use this quotation to rebut Latter Day Saints claims) not believe it when it is written? If they believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that he told the truth when he said, "These signs shall follow them that believe," why do they not abandon the doctrine that says they do not "follow?" James also says "Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church,

and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord * * * and the Lord shall raise him up," etc. Why do they not believe that, when it is written? A failure to observe the foregoing injunction as found in James 5: 14, 15 would show that they do not fully believe what is "written." They profess to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, but they want a sign in order to believe what he said. If individuals are satisfied with "written" signs for the establishment of the primitive church, why not be satisfied with written signs for its re-establishment. I could refer them to Orson Pratt's works where there are quite a number of cases and well authenticated. I have not disputed what John says about the signs, nor do I now; but I claim they were not done mainly to make believers. Paul speaks of nine supernatural gifts in the 12th chapter of his first letter to the Corin-

thians, *one* of which was called the "working of miracles." What about all the rest? Were they to cease? For what purpose were they given? Let our would-be-wise religionists of the 20th century answer.

How do Protestants know *without new revelations* that they are keeping even one tenth of the ordinances commanded by Christ for his people's observance? It lies beyond their power to prove that the New Testament is a sufficient guide for his church during future ages; it contains not the most remote intimation to that effect. No; it nowhere says that revelation was to be ended with the Apostle John. Were the men inspired who selected the epistles and other books which compose the New Testament? No, not one of them; it is not so claimed. Then, I ask, how do Protestants know that in their selection of the manuscripts supposed to be written by the apos-

ties, that they got just the number that contains all the law of God? In 1 Corinthians 5:9 we are told by Paul that he had written an epistle to that church previously to the one he was then writing—the one known in the New Testament as “First Corinthians.” In Jude it is intimated that he had written an epistle called the “Common Salvation.” Paul also speaks of the epistle to the Laodiceans. None of these are now to be found in the Bible. They were no doubt equally inspired with what we have. If so, and it is true that “All scripture given by inspiration is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,” etc., would it not be important to have those books that would greatly help to “thoroughly furnish us unto all good works?” Indeed, how do those know, I therefore ask, who take the Bible as their ONLY rule of faith and practice, but what there are numbers of ordinances

spoken of in the missing books referred to, which effect their salvation to the same extent that it is effected by those they are now pleased to observe.

If it be said they were uninspired, I ask, How do they know those are inspired which they now have? There are none of the books of the New Testament that mention the names of the other books that were to finish up the canon of scripture. If God would have named, in his epistle, or specified all other books that were to form the rule or guide for the church in future ages, then uninspired compilers might have known just what books were genuine. They would then have known the very number; yes, more, the very ones that were required to serve the purpose for which they wanted them. But alas! Jude does not do that, neither do any of the other writers of the New Testament. So the New Testament is only known (?) to be

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complete by tradition. If all the revelations God has given to the human family in the past are necessary for his people in future ages, we certainly cannot expect to be guided rightly with a part of them.

Some learned divines argue that there is enough in the Bible for the salvation of the human family. They must admit that if we had it all we would have to much, or more than enough. So according to their teaching God gave a little too much; that is if they are right in believing—or according to their belief—that a part is enough. But, I must remind these gentlemen who unhesitatingly denounce everything purporting to be inspired but what happens to be bound up with the number of books called the Bible; thus if a part of God's revelations are sufficient for us, it certainly needs a new revelation to tell us which part it is. But, if it is true on the other hand that ALL

of God's revelations are needed now, we need a new revelation to supply the deficiency. Take it either way, new revelation is absolutely necessary! Hence all those who take the Bible as a sufficient guide, repudiating all coming under the head of new revelation, are greatly jeopardizing their eternal welfare. Christ has said "Search the Scriptures, but he never has told us that we should rely wholly upon them—that is, they did not intend that we should put our dependence on them to the extent that we would not be willing to receive any scripture or communication he might see fit to give us in the future. God does not give all his revelations at once, as every body knows who has read the Bible; but as Isaiah says, "He gives line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little."

Even if we had *all* the revelations that God has ever given to man, bound up into one book

it would not be enough to fill the requirements from the time the last was given, henceforth. Revelation not only brought to the church the law by which they were to be governed collectively, but it also brought law for certain individuals and for certain branches of the "body," and it was applicable only to those to whom it was directed, and oftentimes could be obeyed by no one else. For example, God called Paul and Barnabas to the ministry—not by a revelation that had been given to somebody else; no, it only applied to Paul and Barnabas and could only be obeyed by them. Also revelation was given to rebuke certain churches sometimes; it told them numbers of things of infinite importance to them that they could not find out by the written word or the scriptures which were given for the church collectively in the past.

Taking it for granted that the little book called the New Testa-

ment contained all the inspired writings of the christian dispensation, it would not be the New Testament in reality—that is, it would not be the real absolute gospel of Christ as delivered by inspired servants of God eighteen centuries ago. It took more than the mere word to constitute the New Testament in the apostolic age. Paul says, “Our gospel came not unto you in *word only*, but in *power* and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance.”—1 Thes. 1:5. If the “word” then, required the attendance of the Holy Ghost in order to be constituted the New Testament it would not be the New Testament in the absence of the Holy Ghost. Then if we can not be saved without the New Testament now, the inference must be fairly drawn that we need the Holy Ghost manifesting itself in power now.

But one sect in order to evade the force of this argument has sought shelter in advocating

that there is no such a thing as the "mere word;" that the Spirit ceased to produce the gifts that were found in the primitive church; that it will no more inspire God's servants to deliver the word orally, but that these things all ceased having served their purpose, and from thenceforth the Spirit works through the Word. Now, for this position I have up to date of writing failed to find one single sound argument in support. The sect who claims this is the Campbellites or Disciples. Whatever other end they can have in view than accounting SOMEHOW for the verse quoted in the foregoing (which is so detrimental to their creed) in order that their mistaken followers and others might not so soon detect the error of their doctrine, I am unable to tell. Of the people who read the New Testament but few ought to be misled, it is so glaring. If God will use his Spirit to convert

souls to him by operating it through the mediumship of the New Testament, why will he not do the same or convert them by using his servants as mediums for his Spirit? In the absence of scriptural ratification I would have the same right to believe one, that they would to believe the other. But, as I have already shown, the scripture is not silent about this matter.

Now if they are right in their assumption that the New Testament is really the *New Testament*, then Paul must have referred to that book in its complete form when he said "Our gospel came not unto you in word *only*." Hardly could he have referred to that; for it was not then yet all written, and he certainly did not mean that *part* of the New Testament came unto them in word only. The new testament existed before it was *ever written*. It would exist now if it never had been written. Then if the new testament before it was

written, came unto them in power and in the Holy Ghost; and if the Holy Ghost ceased to be given, it is unfair to argue that it comes through the *written* word in power, or that the written word is enabled by it to come to us in power—therefore the written word is NOT the New Testament. It is ONLY the “mere word.”

But how would the Disciples simplify their position? How does the Spirit operating through the bare word make it any clearer to the reader? I fail to see that it could make a bit of difference whether there is any Spirit there or not; because the Spirit, in order to do the reader any good, would have to act on his heart, that is, strive with him and prepare him to receive the truth or written word. But as soon as this is admitted, it must be conceded that it does not work *through the word*. I can, without any difficulty, conceive how the Spirit could make clear

the unwritten word—the oral word. It could, by resting upon the servant of God, influence him to speak with power; to speak with assurance; to speak the truth; to speak to the understanding of the people, and to speak the mysteries of the gospel that he *could not* otherwise. Remember the WORD referred to is not literal Spirit, but the result of the moving of the Spirit upon a person. Of course it may be argued that the Spirit could empower the servant of God to make clear the written word, to speak or write the truth etc. I admit that the Spirit *did* do that with the authors of the New Testament. I farther admit that it was made most too plain to suit some theories. But why argue that the Spirit continues to work with the word after it is made plain and “clear?” How could it (the Spirit) make it any clearer after it is written once? It is easily perceived that that argument is foundationless

and will hardly endure careful examination.

Protestants only know the New Testament to be true by TRADITION. Tradition is very uncertain. It taught Pope Innocent at the Third Council of Carthage in the year 404 A. D., to reject as spurious a number of books that previously formed a part of the collection. Those books were evidently thought to be genuine by the men who selected them in the year 397 A. D., tradition taught them to receive them into the canon; which tradition taught Pope Innocent afterward to eliminate them from the number which he regarded by tradition—with the knowledge that tradition afforded him—as genuine. Eventually one of the “harlot” daughters of the old Mother began to think that the old Mother had collected most too many, and she sat in judgment and excluded a number, or about half a score more because tradition taught her

that they were not genuine. The number retained by her, is the English translation of the Bible which Protestants profess to believe and revere so highly.

How can it be proved that this last Bible referred to, contains the very amount and all the scripture we need? Who, without new revelation, can honestly and truthfully answer yes? If tradition was so uncertain in the former cases, is it not possible, yes more, *probable*, that it was in the latter case? If tradition is to be relied on, would it not be MORE reliable three or four hundred years after Christ than it would be *over a thousand* years after Christ? As the Protestants retained some that the Catholics retained, and excluded some that the Catholics retained, is it not propable that they would have retained some that the Catholics rejected, had they had access to them?



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