

# THE CHRISTIAN SITUATION MIRACULOUS

by Thomas Boys

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*Boys' argument that the existence and survival of the Christian church is itself a miraculous testimony to divine power, examining how the spread and preservation of Christianity against all odds points to supernatural origin.*

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THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION MIRACULOUS.

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M DCCC XXXI.

Price 6d., Twenty-five for 11s., or 2l. Per Hundred. TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND CHARLES JAMES, LORD BISHOP OF LONDON, &c. &c. &c. My Lord, When the writer of the following pages entered on a ministerial duty in the diocese of London, your Lordship was pleased to make some inquiries respecting his literary engagements: and he had accordingly intended to present to your Lordship, as they came out, the successive Numbers of a small Monthly Publication, which he has edited since the commencement of the volume for 1830, and in the columns of which the ensuing remarks, on the subject of miracles, made their first appearance. By so doing, he would have afforded your Lordship the best opportunity of judging concerning the nature of his pursuits and studies, as connected with his ordination vows; while he wished, by the same act, to express his sense of what was due to his Diocesan, in all matters that could come under his cognizance. Circumstances, principally of a private nature, prevented the execution of this design; in consequence of which the writer is the more induced to take the present method of bringing his labours before your Lordship. ’

But, even now, he might not have adopted this course, had it not been deemed expedient, in another quarter, publicly to inform your Lordship respecting the sentiments entertained by him, in common with other clergymen of the diocese, on the subject of miraculous gifts in the Church of Christ. While so many real evils in the Church are overlooked, cloaked, or denied, it seems, that to believe its present footing with respect to miraculous powers to be the same on which it was placed and left by Christ, is an offence that demands a formal notification to the episcopal chair: and it is one great object of the present address to appeal to your Lordship’s justice; and to beseech your Lordship, in receiving and considering such statements as may be made upon this subject, to exclude from your Lordship’s mind some associations which they have a natural tendency to produce, but which cannot be entertained without tending to prejudice and misconception; and that respecting your Lordship’s own clergy, to whom it must be sufficiently painful to be brought as offenders before your Lordship, but to be misrepresented, much more so. The opinion, that miraculous powers have never been entirely withdrawn from the Church, has

been connected, for instance, with a belief in certain miraculous occurrences, said to have taken place of late in Scotland. My Lord, this connexion may be just, or it may be unjust. In other words, those who hold the general truth may believe the particular occurrences, or they may not believe them: and there are some who have hitherto taken the latter alternative, at any rate waiting for further evidence than has yet come before them; willing to give it due consideration when it reaches them, ready to hail the facts when established to their satisfaction, but not indiscriminately receiving every unexamined statement, merely because they hold the doctrine. Again, the belief of miraculous powers still continuing in the Church has been connected with certain opinions on the subject of prophecy. But this is fair, neither to the prophetic question, nor to the miraculous. Each has its share of obloquy; and by attaching to each the burden of the other, both are compelled to carry double. Not, my Lord, that those who believe both shew any indisposition to maintain both: but it is not everyone that is so circumstanced.. There are believers in the miraculous character of the Christian dispensation, who are far from entertaining the prophetic views now prevalent, in all their particulars and consequences: there are other believers decidedly opposed to them. The pages of the Jewish Expositor will sufficiently shew, that the doctrine of miracles may be held by those, who by no means assent to all the opinions now prevalent on the subject of prophecy, however they may incline to think that on some points they are correct, and that they have been hardly dealt with by some of their opponents. Again, there are some who would connect the belief of miracles in the Church of Christ, and indeed the prophetic opinions at the same time, with the management and principles of the London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews. This, however, is only another instance of unfair association; the notion being altogether founded either on misconception, or on a total ignorance of facts. It is humbly hoped, therefore, that all such misconceptions will address your Lordship in vain: and that in holding what they conceive to be the correct and scriptural views on the unchanging character of the Christian dispensation, and therefore its miraculous character in the present day, any of your Lordship's clergy who are so circumstanced may be permitted to retain their belief without being subject to inferences, whether affecting themselves or others, that have no real foundation. But it may be permitted to offer a few remarks for your Lordship's consideration, respecting the alleged consequences of their doctrine, as well as its supposed connexion. It is said that if we assert miraculous manifestations in the present day, infidels will make a handle of the assertion, and, through modern miracles, attack the miracles of the scriptures. But surely, my Lord, ere we come to consequences of this kind the question to be first considered is, whether our allegation is correct. Consequences are not to divert us from the investigation or acknowledgment of truth: and indeed it is generally found, that where truth is fearlessly pursued, and at length openly proclaimed, the consequences, menaced by those who would resist the inquiry, do not follow. But meanwhile, both in point of theory and in point of fact, the alarm seems groundless. Jesus Christ, the Great Head and Universal Bishop of the Church, having placed it, with respect to miracles, on a particular footing, and on that footing left it, there are some who maintain that on this footing the Church still continues. Is it likely, is it possible, that infidelity should find any advantage here? Is it not rather to be apprehended, that the real advantage will be given by the opposite statement? by stating that Jesus Christ left his Church on a certain footing, but that this footing has since been altered; and by all the unsatisfying pleas, forced constructions, and tortuous inferences, by which such a form of doctrine is commonly and necessarily supported? It might be presumptuous to remind your Lordship, that in the wretched system of divinity which upholds such views, and in the

wretched arguments used in support of it, infidelity finds one of its chief advantages, as well as inquiring ignorance one of its chief stumbling-blocks. But let the appeal be made to facts. The writer has some opportunities of knowing what is actually taking place amongst infidels; and he is happy in being able to assure your Lordship, that he has heard of no instance where any advantage has really been taken of the allegation of miraculous powers in the Church, but that rather the contrary has happened. As the interesting occurrence, which gave occasion to the present controversy respecting miracles, has become generally known, religious professors, indeed, have caviled, but avowed infidels have bowed in silence, and scoffers have laid their hands upon their mouths. I have my information, my Lord, from an individual whose daily occupations take him much into the company of such persons, and who with joy and wonder has reported to me the fact. They have asked for the particulars, they have earnestly listened, they have been lost in wonder. Oh, my Lord, what if, amidst our alarm at infidelity, it should at last be found, that it is only some backwardness to declare the whole scheme of Christian verity on our part; that it is only the shearing Christianity of some rays of the wonder or the mystery which properly belongs to it; that it is only the substitution of a low system of doctrine, which is error, for a higher, which is truth; that it is only the poor, deteriorated form of religion which is now preached; that it is only some defect of statement; that it is only some unworthy compromise under the disguise of an allowable accommodation; that it is only the abandonment of doctrines which our fathers thought essential; that it is only our distrust of that Gospel which God has given us as an efficient instrument, accompanied by the substitution of another Gospel which is not another, and therefore utterly devoid of efficiency; that it is only the keeping back of that truth which comes, as our appointed weapon, from above, and the thinking that we can do the work better with weapons of our own; that has made so many infidels! Behold, we tell them of the wondrous works of the Lord: it is a new thing to them: and they are awed to silence. This, surely, from miracles alone, is all that we can expect. Here the proper office of miracles, acting by themselves, must terminate. Let the preaching of the Gospel, as in the first ages, be added to this, and at any rate we have no practical grounds of fear, that the one will hinder the other's success. But why dwell on the alleged consequences of our doctrine? Let us rather leave consequences to take care of themselves, and inquire, What is truth? What is the real state of the case? It is simply this. We maintain, as before said, that the Christian dispensation still possesses that miraculous character with which it was invested in the beginning by our Lord himself; or, in other words, that the Lord having placed and left his Church, with respect to miracles, on a certain footing, it remains on that footing now. Thus miraculous gifts are alleged, in the present day, on exactly the same grounds, my Lord, as many other articles and principles of faith, practice, and discipline; for instance, Episcopacy. Episcopacy is defended, and soundly defended, on this principle, that whatever arrangement took place, under the Lord or his immediate successors, in the primitive Church, that arrangement, if not set aside by the same authority, should be maintained. And it is hard to understand how miracles should now be denied in the Church, and Episcopacy maintained, by the same persons. How do we defend Episcopacy? By the plea of apostolic succession. "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." 2 Timothy 2:2. Here we trace the apostolic succession through four distinct degrees. 1. Paul the apostle; "thou hast heard of me," he says: 2. Timothy, who hadm "heard" of him: 3. The "faithful men," to whom Timothy was to commit what he had heard: and, 4. The "others also," whom they were to teach. Thus, finding the succession so clearly intimated, we make no hesitation in inferring

its continuance. On this footing the apostles placed the arrangement, on this footing they left it, therefore on this footing it still proceeds. But, next, How stands the case with respect to miracles? On grounds precisely similar: that the exercise of miraculous powers was left on a certain footing in the Church, and on that footing proceeded. First, it was so left. Miraculous gifts were to attend belief and admission into the Church by baptism; for our Lord said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe." Mark 16:16-17. Secondly, it so proceeded, still in the regular way of baptism and laying on of hands; for "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve." Acts 19:5-7. On this ground, then, of a certain arrangement in the Church being made and proceeding, we allege the succession of miracles, as we allege the succession of holy orders. On such principles, we call upon the Church to look for miracles in the present day: asserting at the same time, that if she see so few, this can be imputed only to her unbelief; but that nevertheless she has at no time been totally left, without some such manifestations of her Saviour's promised presence. Will it be said, that in drawing this parallel between the evidence for miracles and the claims of Episcopacy, the writer has been merely influenced by the unworthy desire of pointing an argument addressed to your Lordship? No, my Lord, there are further reasons: there is a real, a peculiar connexion between these two topics. They stand remarkably linked together, in the controversial history of our Church. The manner of this connexion I now proceed to detail, not as pretending to inform your Lordship, but for the service of those readers who may not have enjoyed the requisite opportunities of becoming acquainted with the subject.

There was a time, as it is well known, when vital religion in the Church of England mournfully declined: and, at this period, our Dissenting brethren became the great depositaries of evangelical truth. From them, (and we ought ever most. thankfully to acknowledge the obligation,) when a revival took place, the evangelical body in the Church of England, which, indeed, had never lost the form of sound doctrine in its written formularies, received back the precious charge, which so happily had been preserved. The benefit, however, had one small drawback: namely, that evangelical religion, in the keeping of our Dissenting friends, had received some slight tinge of their peculiar sentiments; and that, in taking it back, we took the tinge at the same time. Now one feature in their sentiments, we know, is an objection to Episcopacy: in opposing Episcopacy, they naturally opposed the doctrine of apostolic succession: and in opposing the apostolic succession, they were, as naturally, led to discountenance the idea of miraculous succession, or the continuance of miracles in the Church from the apostles downwards. For, their object being to shew that the apostles were a class of men entirely sui generis, or of a distinct order, having no successors occupying a place in the Church correspondent to their own, they of course were desirous to make it appear that there was no correspondence in respect to miracles; and it became a necessary object with them to establish by argument, (exactly as some persons, even members of our own Episcopal Church, have unwittingly argued in the controversy now going on,) that miracles ceased with the apostolic age. With this tinge, then, amongst others, we have received back evangelical religion, from our Dissenting brethren, into the Church of England. Not, my Lord, with their objection to Episcopacy. No: we are all, all, sound Episcopalians. But I meant to say, with their objection to the doctrine of miracles in the Church of Christ. And thus, when we come to sift things to the bottom, one cause of the present rejection of miracles, and that by many

sound, decided, ardent Episcopalians, proves at last to lie (little suspected .by them indeed) in the rejection of Episcopacy itself! What a remarkable circumstance! Who would ever have expected that we should come to such a discovery as this! Do we not at once perceive a reason, why, while in some instances no objection to the doctrine of miracles is expressed by churchmen belonging to the general body, some evangelical churchmen are found opposing it with so much violence? The parallel, then, between the claims of Episcopacy and the doctrine of miracles in the Church, is drawn from no fanciful analogy, is urged to serve no temporary purpose: and there can be little doubt, if the question respecting the miraculous character of the Christian dispensation comes to be properly understood in all its bearings, and the points on which it really hitches to be felt, it will prove, in the end, to be neither more nor less, than a question between Churchmen and Dissenters. My Lord, there was no wish on our side of the question, needlessly to bring the controversies of what is usually denominated The religious world, before your Lordship. If, however, a public report to our Diocesan is to be made on all occasions, there are surely some things that will need to be reported, previous to the opinion that the Church continues on the footing on which our Saviour left it. Were the office of reporter to be delegated to the humble individual by whom your Lordship is now addressed, he would begin by reporting on another, and indeed a most mournful subject; a subject which lies heavy on his own mind, and which, day and night, has a place in his most anxious thoughts. In bitterness of spirit, that might perhaps discover itself by his words, and in grief of heart, which possibly he might keep to himself, he would commence his report by stating to your Lordship that there has appeared, alas, of late, in some departments of the religious world, a decided and by no means circumscribed taint of German Neologism. He would add, that some religious professors are implicated by participation; and, by indifference, nearly all. He could add, that some religious Periodicals, in the midst of their zeal against the supposed evil of the doctrine of miracles, have aided this really serious and crying evil, not only by neglecting to give due warning of its progress, but by superficial censure, favourable notices, and even decided recommendation, of pernicious and infidel writers, in one instance of an absolute blasphemer; or by the admission into their columns of essays containing materialism of a very gross kind. He would add, that, if a work can be shewn to contain the most abominable scepticism, it has been urged, and by many received, as a sufficient apology for it, that it contains some better things in other parts. He would add, that those who set themselves. to oppose these spreading evils meet with very little encouragement, even where, of all other human quarters, they would most wish to find it, namely, amongst those whom they suppose to be like-minded in religion with themselves; that they must make up their minds to prophecy in sackcloth; to be regarded by many, whom they count their friends, with coldness; to be defended by those who go a little farther, if they are defended at all, only on the plea, (as if they were in the wrong,) of their "good intentions;" and not to be openly, or by any overt act, supported even by the greater number of those, who, privately grasping their hands, breathe to them, as if afraid of being overheard, a whisper of encouragement. That any should feel a call to denounce miracles, or even to fulminate their bulls against the prophets, who can behold the spread of neology without sounding a single alarm, and, much more, can make themselves parties in the mischief, is strange indeed.

But, my Lord, some strictures, in the course of the ensuing pages, on the Religious world, as well as certain remarks in the present dedication, may cause the writer of them to be misapprehended. Indeed the very fact of his appealing to your Lordship from any individuals of that body, may seem, unless explained, to carry with it an expression of feelings which it was never intended to convey.

For himself he can at any rate answer, that the act in him implies no alienation of heart from his brethren like-minded in religion with himself; and to any other Party that may have previously adopted the same course, he can readily give credit for feelings corresponding to his own. He respectfully entreats, therefore, that in this matter he may not be misunderstood. Standing, however unworthy, in the ranks of the Religious world, he of course deems their views of evangelical truth to be substantially the right ones: and it is essential to the holding of this opinion in sincerity, (with whatever deference he may regard constituted authorities, in Church as well as in State,) that he must also deem all persons, whose views are opposed to those which he thus maintains, to be, so far, in error. In conclusion, he would rather attempt to express those sentiments of respect and attachment to your Lordship, which are felt in all sincerity by the body to which he belongs, than simply his own. Should your Lordship, by faithfully opposing the vices and sabbath-breaking of this great and guilty metropolis, incur, (as, from what we have already seen, may very possibly happen,) any considerable degree of public hostility, going on to general indignation and obloquy, it may be depended upon, as a certain consequence, that an extensive desertion of your Lordship will take place, on the part of many whom your Lordship may now regard as far better friends of the Church, than those churchmen who are generally called Evangelical. Many now pass as the Church's friends, my Lord, who are capable of the bitterest enmity against the least attempt to revive the Church's true doctrines, much more its true discipline. Meanwhile, from the ranks of those who are at present deemed not so well affected to their Church, and from both sides of the miraculous question, a new body of supporters would, under the same circumstances, doubtless come forward: men ready to follow their Bishop, as he follows Christ; and to stand by him, at all issues, for the Church of England, long after some who now call themselves its friends shall have evacuated its walls, and withdrawn from its defence.

Partaking with my brethren in these sentiments, I have the honour to remain, With great respect,  
My Lord, Your Lordship's most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

Thomas Boys. THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION MIRACULOUS. The importance of the present subject must plead our excuse for apparently deviating from our course as Jewish Expositors. When truth is at stake, we trust that we shall be pardoned in occasionally departing from our proper line of subjects for its vindication: and when error puts on a bold front, and comes forth with an air of challenge, we claim the privilege of opposing it. We would not meddle with what does not belong to us: but few will maintain that the watchman is not to give the alarm of fire except upon his own beat. Our readers will infer, from these remarks, on what terms we are disposed to take up the subject of miracles. Something has been said about discussion: and when those who bring forward unsound opinions talk of candid inquiry, of amicable investigation, and of discussion, as if they might be wrong or right, we always suspect their meaning, or rather condemn their sentiments which their words convey, because they seem to intimate that there is room for question and uncertainty in matters affecting the truth, wherein all is fixed and we generally find, that all such expressions of a wish for candid examination, are after all deceptive; and that in the advocates of error, with all their professed candour and impartiality, there is, after all, just as much positiveness and dogmatism, as there ought to be of confidence and decision in the champions of truth. But, be this as it may, we are for no "candid inquiry," or nice balancing of judgment, upon the present subject. We hold that those, who have of late so loudly proclaimed the age of miracles to

be past, are in a serious error; and we are not going to parley, to balance, to draw nice distinctions, or to plead both sides of the case; our present object is to vindicate the truth, and to expose false doctrine. The Socinian asks us to discuss his opinions: but we decline to discuss with him, or at any rate to discuss in such a manner, as to seem to admit, for one moment, that there is any question about the subject: and though we do not mean to say that all who deny the miraculous character of the Christian dispensation are Socinians, we certainly mean this, that they are decidedly, materially, and plainly wrong; and it is only viewing them on that footing, and dealing with them accordingly, that we can consent to meet them. However they may be borne out in this error, and in others, by the prevalent feeling of the times; however the low state of religion, faith and practice, in the professing world, may tend to give them general countenance, we lay substantial error to their charge. The notion that the age of miracles is past, we can regard in no other light than as a modern delusion a human tradition, widely prevalent indeed, but without antiquity in the Church. an innovation a worldly notion, adopted by Christians in these latter days, that is, since the Reformation. As such, we set ourselves against it: well knowing, in this bland and bitter age, the consequences; and not entirely, we trust, unprepared to meet them.

We need hardly mention, that we have been led to take up this subject, by the interesting circumstance which has lately taken place, in the knowledge of all, in the very precincts of the metropolis; or rather, by the coarse reception which this occurrence has met with. Of the case in question, we are disposed to maintain, after a fair consideration of all that has been offered on the other side, physical, metaphysical, and (if it be not rather a wide use of the term;) theological, that its easiest and most rational solution is that which regards it as supernatural and miraculous. We say, after a fair consideration of all that has been offered on the other side: for such consideration has rather tended to confirm us in this view, by showing us how utterly insufficient, and we may say trumpery, are the various and contradictory solutions which have been attempted upon natural principles: indeed, we have heard of one person who has been convinced that the case is miraculous, by these unsuccessful attempts at solution. We hold, moreover, that if the science and philosophy of the present day were any thing more than a pretence, they would have come to the same conclusion. But the fact is, that these inferior elements of truth have of late become very assuming. Science and philosophy have recently attempted to dictate to faith and to religion; the consequence of which is, that for thus presuming to lay hands upon the ark, they have, in these latter times, been smitten with judicial fatuity and imbecility; and go about doting and paralytic, now uttering pointless impieties, now looking very wise, as is sometimes the case with idiots the pompous and drivelling idols of their besotted worshippers; so that they themselves need a miracle to bring them to a healthy state. In regard to the present controversy, accordingly, science and philosophy have fallen into great absurdities and contradictions (not however, we believe, by accident merely, but by appointment, that, in opposition to divine truth, their true character might come out and appear,) some of which, ere we have done with the present topic, we hope to exhibit in detail. But, before we come to the consideration of the particular case now agitated, it will be necessary that we should address ourselves to the general subject of miracles; that is, of miracles as forming part of the Christian dispensation, understanding by the Christian dispensation the present dispensation, which is the same that existed in the apostolic age. For one thing is clear: namely, that as we think upon this point, as we think upon the general subject of miracles as now forming part of the Christian dispensation, so shall we judge upon particular cases as they come before us. In other words, if we admit that, according to our Lord's promise, miraculous

manifestations may take place in the Church, then we are left at liberty to exercise our judgment, as to the merits of particular cases as they may arise: the case may be one of those miraculous manifestations, or it may not: our minds are at liberty to determine in the affirmative or negative; we are unbiased; and may form our opinion according to evidence and circumstances. But, if we do not admit this, if we have abandoned the general truth that miraculous manifestations may now take place; if we dislike and reject the promise of our Lord in its application to present times, then our minds are in a state to judge impartially respecting the particular case no longer: we are already committed against it: we are predisposed to the hostile reception, unfair examination, and final rejection, of all evidence: our mind is made up against the particular case before we have heard it: in other words, we are prejudiced; we are sealed against conviction; we must betake ourselves to any shift or sophism or subterfuge, rather than admit that a miracle has been wrought: we must exclaim, as it has actually happened in the present case, "We must believe any thing rather than believe a miracle;" we must come, as the evidence presses more and more, and all our pleas are detected, to the most distressful and lamentable expedients; we must appeal from the word of God to philosophy: we must run, for help against the truth, to those who profess it not; and escape into any hole, as even by jumping into a slough, rather than admit the miracle. In considering then, in the first place, the general subject of miracles, we purpose to discuss two questions:

First, How far is it true that the age of miracles is past?

Secondly, What peculiar reasons have we to expect miracles in the present day? With regard to the first question, How far is it true that the age of miracles is past? we may begin by observing, that this is a common saying; and, therefore, it is our first duty to call it in question. It is made questionable by that very circumstance: for whenever we hear a saying that circulates in common, the Christian's first duty is to suspect that it is a lie. We not merely suspect, however, the saying, that the age of miracles is past, but positively deny its truth. We hold it to be a figment. The religious world of the present day are in many respects behind their fathers, and this is one. We must here mention some of these things, in which we thus come short, together; in order to shew how the whole of them work the same way. The religious world, then, of the present day, fall short of those who have gone before them, in respect to the doctrine of scriptural inspiration. The doctrine of the primitive Church and of our fathers was, that the Holy Ghost, dictated the Scriptures the doctrine of their verbal and plenary inspiration. The doctrine of the religious world, according to its most approved and generally received standards, substitutes, to a less or greater extent, the idea of superintendence for that of dictation; so that the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Bible is wholly, or in part denied. The religious world of the present day fall short of those who went before them, in respect to the doctrines of grace: including those of predestination, of election, of final perseverance, and of God's absolute sovereignty in salvation as well as in nature and providence. The religious world of the present day fall short of those who went before them, in respect to the doctrine of regeneration, making it to be merely a new influence. The religious world of the present day fall short in respect to the doctrine of adoption. We may add, the religious world of the present day fall short in respect to the all-important doctrine of the absolute necessity of obedience to God's holy will. It is impossible to preach this doctrine, as it stands in the Bible, without being called "legal." The reason of this is, that we are at so low a point, at present, with regard to the doctrines of grace; in consequence of which, we are afraid to hear of the necessity of

obedience. We have no hold upon the hopes and assurances of the gospel; or only such a hold, that, when we hear of the necessity of obedience, we lose it. We are not clear in those views of justification and redemption, which so entirely separate works from all share in our salvation. If we were, we should not be afraid to hear of what God expects at the hands of his elect people; and a proper view of the love of God in Christ Jesus would enable us to look Moses in the face. This abject and panic fear of the wholesome doctrine of obedience, therefore, which now so commonly prevails amongst religious professors, was not the fear of Luther, of Latimer, or of men of that stamp, as is plain from their writings. The reason is, that they had higher views of evangelical truth. But we have declined from their faith, and therefore cannot bear their practical standard.

Thus on the whole, from all these circumstances, there now prevails, in the religious world, a system decidedly below that of our fathers. We know that, in making this assertion, we are holding a most offensive doctrine. We know that to speak in this way, is considered treason. We know that many will regard our statement with indignation, who can hear a neologian solution of one of the miracles of the Old or New Testament with perfect equanimity, or read an infidel gloss on Scripture, and recommend the book. But this we maintain. There may be exceptions: and we are not now speaking of the experience of believers, and their inward convictions of divine truth, which come much more nearly to the same thing in all ages of the Church: but with regard to the form of doctrine now generally taught and in acceptance, with regard to the standard beyond which nothing is openly tolerated, we maintain the modern system of the religious world to be a deterioration, we maintain the standard to be decidedly under the mark. The present, then, we allege, is one more of the points in which the deterioration has taken place; namely, the notion, now generally prevalent, that the age of miracles is past. And at length we have come to such a point, that we have made an arbitrary separation of what the New Testament joins together as meeting in the Church, namely, gifts and graces. These it is now the fashion to separate. Nay, there seems a disposition to oppose them, to set one against the other: for the claim of the Church to spiritual gifts is represented as necessarily adverse to spiritual graces, for instance, to humility; whereas the scripture recognises no necessity for any such opposition. Meanwhile, against all such novelties we assert and maintain, that the promises of miracles to the Church of Christ are general, and that modern adversaries have no right to limit them: and we further allege, that the surrender of a claim to miraculous power on the part of the Church is of an origin comparatively modern, that is, since the Reformation, (not that the example was set by the fathers of the Reformation themselves, far from it:) but that the surrender has never been universal, some claims to miraculous powers having been made by the Church in all ages: and also, that the miraculous powers have never entirely ceased, in point of fact. But before entering more particularly into what we have to allege on this subject, it may be well to state what we concede.

First, then, we concede (what indeed is obvious,) that the exercise of miraculous powers has, in these latter times, been less common and less public. It has sometimes been matter merely of private experience. At any rate, it has not been matter of such general notoriety and constant recognition, as in other ages of the Church. When we come to see how it has been met, we shall also see that nothing else was to be expected.

Secondly, we concede that miraculous manifestations have in these latter days possessed a less distinguished character than heretofore. That is, these last ages of the Church have not been accustomed to witness such extraordinary works as the raising of the dead, or the stilling of the

elements. But the proper solution of this circumstance is unbelief. We are on the same footing now, as when unbelief limited the miraculous operations of our Lord himself. "He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." Matthew 13:58. St. Mark's account may serve exactly to set before us the footing on which we now are: "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them." Matthew 6:5. That is, if we may be permitted to draw such a distinction as to the mighty works of our Lord, he limited himself to the performance of that sort of miracles, which were the least signal and extraordinary. And so also at the present time. In order to shew us that there is no diminution of power or mercy on his side, and that unbelief on our part is still the only obstacle, he now lays his hand on a few sick folk, and they are healed: it is of such mighty works that we now for the most part hear: it is not as when he said to the wind, Peace; or to the waves, Be still; or to Lazarus, Come forth; but we have enough to shew us that he, the Lord, on his part, is ready, and that we might have more, being limited by unbelief.

Having now stated what we concede, let us proceed to state, somewhat more in detail, what we allege. .

We allege, then, first, that the promise of miracles is couched in general terms, and, therefore, belongs alike to all ages of the Church, and ought not to be limited to the first. We refer more particularly to the words of our Saviour at the end of St. Mark's gospel, "These signs shall follow them that believe," &c.; and we might also quote the words of St. James, wher,; recommending prayer, and saying that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availed much," he goes on to shew how much it availeth, by the example of Elias. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." We really cannot see why the promise of our Lord, any more than the argument of St. James, can be taken otherwise than in a general application. This, then, is the footing on which the Church is left by the Lord, and by the apostles, as to miraculous powers: and it may safely be maintained, that where the New Testament puts any thing respecting the Church on a certain footing, and we have nothing elsewhere in the New Testament which alters it, then it is intended so to remain: the arrangement continues upon the footing on which the New Testament leaves it. Our readers will observe, we draw a decided distinction in cases where a change is actually made. Take, for instance, the community of goods, which prevailed in the Church of Christ at the beginning. This was the footing on which affairs were placed at first; but they were not left so; a change took place. We see reason to infer, from many expressions, for example, 1 Corinthians 11:22, Ephesians 4:28, 2 Thessalonians 3:10, that the original arrangement had been already set aside in the apostolic age. Here then we have a reason why it was not to go on. But we discover no such reason in the case of miracles: and therefore, having been once expressly given, and never expressly taken away, we hold them to be a standing ordinance of the Christian Church. It is easy to assert the contrary. It is easy to say, and to keep on saying, that the age of miracles is passed. But all this proves nothing; and amounts to a mere dictum, a human doctrine or tradition: and when a notion of this kind is pressed upon us without proof, as if the reception of it were to be forced by parrot-like repetition, we would remind those who thus urge it that the often saying of what is not proved amounts to no more than the saying of it once. Nay, and if it be repeated in terms of reproach, or even menace, surprised though we may

be, and grieved, yet the effect is only as if it were said in simple terms, namely, to leave the case as it was.

We allege, secondly, that the surrender of the claim to miraculous power in the Church of Christ is an innovation, a modern error; meaning by modern, as we have already intimated, subsequent to the Reformation. It may be right in this place to explain ourselves.

Mention has been made of the "errors of the Reformation:" but we should be cautious how we employ such a phrase, lest we appear to maintain that there was error in the Reformation itself. We believe there are some amongst us, who from their hearts think so; but we are not of their number. This however we hold, that certain errors gained ground about the time of the Reformation, or shortly subsequent to it; and that this notion, that the age of miracles is past, was one of them. We proceed to state what sort of errors we mean: simply premising this, that though different in character, we believe them all to have had a common origin; namely, that of opposing the errors of popery, as was done in some instances, without a due regard to the truth of scripture; the consequence of which was, that men were occasionally hurried into an opposite extreme, and thus, while resisting the errors which then prevailed, adopted others. We may observe, by the way, concerning the Church of England, that, with all its opposition to popery, so remarkably wrought into the whole substance and texture of its ritual, articles, and homilies, this seems to be one of its distinguishing excellencies, that it was remarkably preserved from the error we are now speaking of, that of going too far, and so running into the opposite extreme, while opposing the delusions of popery.

One error, of the description to which we now refer, is that respecting the rule of faith. Rome maintains, that scripture alone is insufficient. The true doctrine of the Reformation, in opposition to this, was the sufficiency of scripture, which our sixth article thus expresses: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." "Whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby," says the article: so that if any thing is read (expressly asserted) in scripture, or can be proved thereby (deduced by a just inference, comparison of scripture with scripture, &c.), that is to be believed. But persons who run into extremes are not content with this. They will not accept of proof from scripture, unless they have the exact letter. The Socinian, for instance, asks us to shew him the word Trinity. The sabbatarian asks us to shew him an express injunction to change the sabbath from the seventh day to the first. The baptist asks us to shew him the words, "Let infants be baptized." Thus, in former days, a thief was once taken before a magistrate in the country, for stealing blankets. The magistrate took down his "Burn's Justice," looked for the word "blankets" in the index, and not finding it, dismissed the culprit, because there was no law that met the case. Thus one error came in respecting the rule of faith.

Again. Popery had its superstitions respecting the angels. The Reformation opposed these superstitions, still recognizing the ministry and agency of the angels; which was the proper limit. But we have now got much further than this, so that the ministry of the holy angels is seldom spoken of, and scarcely holds a place in our theology.

Again, with respect to the authority of the Church. Rome represented it to be paramount, so as even to set aside that of Scripture. The true doctrine of the Reformation was, that the Church, and

the traditions of the Church, have no authority whatever as opposed to Scripture, or as setting Scripture aside: but that in the traditions of the Church as agreeing with the Scripture, that is, in the general sense, and experience of the people of God in all ages, in accordance with God's written word, there is the greatest authority, and this is always to be listened to. But false doctrine pushes opposition to an extreme, and denies any such authority to the consent of God's people in all ages in accordance with his word: so that under the pretence of the right of private judgment, and such feigned pleas, all their experience, and all their teaching in the interpretation of Scripture by the Holy Spirit in all ages, go for nothing, and all the labours of pious commentators enlightened by the same Spirit, are to be set aside; and in explaining the word of God we are to begin afresh, as if he had never taught any one till now.

Another error, which prevailed after the Reformation, is that respecting the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The doctrine of Rome is, that the body and blood of Christ are carnally and materially received in that sacrament by all who partake of the bread and wine. The doctrine of our Church is, that the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed (that is, not carnally and externally, but really, spiritually, and effectually, verily and indeed) taken and received; and that, not by all who partake of the outward elements, but by the faithful only; "verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper." Unbelief, however, runs into an extreme; and, not contented with denying the Roman Catholic notion of transubstantiation, denies that the sacrament of the Lord's supper is any thing more than a commemoration, denies the scriptural statement, denies that which is essential to the very nature of a sacrament, denies the inward and spiritual grace, denies that the body and blood of Christ are received at all.

Thus the Reformation, in all these particulars, advanced true doctrines in opposition to the errors of popery; but the times of the Reformation saw other doctrines prevail, which were only opposite errors. So then, we maintain, has it also happened with respect to miracles. The Roman Catholic Church claimed miraculous powers, and urged them in defence of its false doctrines, for instance, of image worship. Here, then, the reformers made their stand; denying the doctrines, and, with respect to the particular miracles alleged, accounting for them in different ways. Others, however, have since gone further, denying the existence of any miraculous powers in the church of Christ, and roundly, but most unwarrantably asserting, that the age of miracles is past. This did not the reformers. This was not their doctrine. On the contrary, we find miraculous answers to prayer, alleged and obtained by the reformers and old divines, for instance, Luther and Baxter. Subsequently, however, we have denied and renounced, and so wellnigh lost, miraculous powers altogether: and thus the attempt has been made to get rid of Roman Catholic error, by getting rid of that and the truth of the gospel at the same time: a sweeping method, as clumsy as it is dangerous; and one which, by its more general operation, has in many instances substituted infidelity for popery. Such we conceive to be the history of the notion, which has now been so long prevalent in the nominally Christian world, and which of late has been openly adopted by some Christian professors, that the age of miracles is past. From these causes our present low state as to miraculous powers in the Church of Christ. We conceded, just now, that we have less, in these latter days, of the public manifestation of such powers: we conceded that those manifestations which have taken place are not of the most distinguished kind (provided a distinction can be lawfully made:) but we say that this is because of the surrender or denial on our part, because less is claimed, and less is expected, than ought to be; that we have lost nothing, but what we

ourselves have given up; and that in all probability, as the doctrine of the Scriptures on the subject of miracles comes to be reconsidered in the Church of Christ, and better understood than it now is, with returning faith we shall have a signal and visible return of mighty works, such as properly belong to a miraculous dispensation, which the Christian dispensation is; the Lord stretching forth his hand to heal before all, and signs and wonders being done, as heretofore, by the name of his holy child Jesus; and that for the same purpose as at the beginning, namely, that his servants may speak his word with all boldness: Indeed it will be a happy thing for the Church of Christ, whenever she is fully recovered from all the errors into which her sons have fallen, by being hurried, through the ardour of their opposition to popery, into opposite extremes; for the effects of these errors are felt, and exert an injurious influence in the midst of us, even to this day. The erroneous notion of the ceasing of miracles which thus prevailed, has of late spread beyond its usual and proper sphere, the nominally Christian Church, and been very generally taken up by religious professors. Indeed, we hardly seem to be aware in what a position we have thus placed ourselves. We have placed ourselves on a lower footing than some, who in better days held the inferior ground, or occupied the position of opponents of sound doctrine. We have placed ourselves on a lower footing than some, whom we now denounce as worldly and as formalists; for we have met with persons of this description, who make no difficulty in granting that a miracle may be wrought, or has been wrought, if sufficient evidence be given. We have placed ourselves, in fact, on a lower footing than the members of the Jewish church. We have placed the Christian dispensation on a lower footing than the Jewish; for that always had its miracles, and always claimed them, whether in Egypt, in the desert, in the promised land, or in captivity. When this denial of miraculous power in the Church of Christ is pushed still further, and it is roundly asserted that there have been no miracles since the time of the Apostles, the assertor goes quite off the ground of the general Church; not only of those who believe in miracles as part of the Christian dispensation at present, but of many who deny them. Yet, if once it be asserted that no miracles can now be wrought, the assertion must come to this; there is no intermediate ground. There is no intermediate position which can long be occupied, between admitting that miracles may be wrought in the present day, and denying any miracles since the days of the apostles; and this, accordingly, is the point to which many seem to be converging in the present controversy. They have only to go one step further, and deny all miracles before the days of the apostles, (or, as it has of late been more guardedly but very intelligibly expressed by a neologian writer, "strenuously to assert the miracles of the Apostles," as distinguished from all others,) and they are already within the confines of open infidelity.

We allege, thirdly, that though miracles, as a standing ordinance of the Christian Church, have been so generally denied, yet that this denial has not been universal, but that there have always been some claims of miraculous power, or some allegations of miracles performed by believers, not only before, but since the Reformation. The Church of Christ has never entirely withdrawn from this claim. It would be an interesting pursuit to trace this truth, and exhibit it in detail, by a reference to the works of the reformers, and the standard divines of the Protestant Church. We recommend the undertaking, to those who have the requisite leisure, industry, and facilities; (advising them, however, not to trust to modern reprints and abridgments, in some of which there have been suppressions.) Nor, amongst miraculous cures in the Protestant Church of more recent date, is that which has recently called forth such a shout and burst of obloquy and rejection the only one, or the most extraordinary one, of which the report has reached us. And, with regard to

suppression, we have something more to say on that subject before we have done, at which our readers, perhaps, will marvel. But after all, there is enough before the public, or in books, without coming to what dishonesty or cowardice may have suppressed, to establish most satisfactorily the point for which we are now contending; namely, that the claim to miracles, in the Church of Christ, has never been totally abandoned.

We allege, fourthly, that miraculous powers have never entirely ceased in the Church, in point of fact. Luther prayed to the Lord, and raised a friend from his dying bed. Baxter alleges miraculous deliverances as of frequent occurrence, both to others (in his own knowledge; and in that of experienced Christians,) and to himself. "If it were convenient here," he writes, "to make particular mention of men's names, I could name you many, who of late have received such strange preservations, even against the common course of nature, that might convince an atheist of the finger of God therein." "Some in desperate diseases of body, some in other apparent dangers, delivered so suddenly, or so much against the common course of nature, when all the best remedies have failed, that no second cause could have any hand in their deliverance," "How many times have I known the prayer of faith to save the sick, when all physicians have given them up as dead. It hath been my own case, more than once, or twice, or ten times. When means have all failed, and the highest art or reason have sentenced me hopeless, yet have I been relieved by the prevalency of fervent prayer, and that (as the physician saith,) *Tuto>, cito>, et jocunde>*." Religious professors are not aware, in denying miracles, how totally they depart from those standard divines, for whom they express so much admiration, and of whom they consider themselves the followers. It is unquestionable that miraculous manifestations have occurred, also, in the missionary experience of the United Brethren; and we trust that in the history, whenever it appears, of that interesting and highly favoured community, the record will not be suppressed. Miraculous aid has been experienced, in the lives of pious divines of the continent. The history of Holland contains more than one interposition on behalf of the praying Protestants, in their wars with the Papists, that may properly be called miraculous. Instances nearer home have either been cautiously suppressed from the very first, or publicly recorded, looked at, and rejected, but in neither case set *>, cito>, et jocunde>*." Religious professors are not aware, in denying miracles, how totally they depart from those standard divines, for whom they express so much admiration, and of whom they consider themselves the followers. It is unquestionable that miraculous manifestations have occurred, also, in the missionary experience of the United Brethren; and we trust that in the history, whenever it appears, of that interesting and highly favoured community, the record will not be suppressed. Miraculous aid has been experienced, in the lives of pious divines of the continent. The history of Holland contains more than one interposition on behalf of the praying Protestants, in their wars with the Papists, that may properly be called miraculous. Instances nearer home have either been cautiously suppressed from the very first, or publicly recorded, looked at, and rejected, but in neither case set aside. Moreover, we hold that there is much in the private I experience of believers, for instance, in answers to prayer, which, in order to be deemed miraculous, requires but one circumstance, namely, to have taken place in public. We question if there be many, if any experienced Christians, who could not, out of their own experience, confirm this statement. Now, if the only thing wanted, to make a thing miraculous, be, that it should have taken place in public and not in private, before the eyes of all, and not merely in the experience of an individual, then, this is merely the want of a thing non-essential to the miracle, the matter of private experience is in reality miraculous already, and it is requisite only that what

has been performed for one, should be performed again before all, to make a generally acknowledged miracle. . In short, have we faith? But faith may be regarded as of two kinds, (though the two ought not, perhaps, to be so widely separated as they have been,) miraculous faith and saving faith. Consequently our question resolves itself into two: Have we miraculous faith? and, Have we saving faith?

First, Have we miraculous faith? As it is usual to say, that the age of miracles is past, so is it also usual to say, that the age of persecution is past. Perhaps there is about as much truth in the one saying as in the other; and they may very fitly stand side by side. The age of persecution is past, but how? The Church has withdrawn from persecution. The Church has lowered her faith and practice, below the persecution standard. The world has not withdrawn. The world is still the same. The world is as cruel, and as ready to persecute, as ever. And there are still some symptoms of the world's persecuting spirit, as there have been in every age; because, however the Church has declined, it has never, happily, been without those qualities, by which persecution is incurred. So also, with regard to miracles. The age of miracles is past, but how far past? Only so far as we ourselves have withdrawn from the expectation of miracles. The Lord's hand is not shortened, nor his word made void. But we do not seek the experience of his power. We seek it a little, and experience it a little. Did we seek it and look for it more, we might experience it more. But, at any rate, supposing the miraculous dispensations of former ages to be renewed, supposing this, have we faith to acknowledge them? Have we not? Then, let us pass on to the other question, and inquire, secondly, Have we saving faith? We ask it, on the supposition that we have none of the other, that we have no miraculous faith. And we make the supposition on good grounds, because there is enough in recent occurrences to shew, that if the Lord were now by his servants to work frequent miracles, there would be a very general disposition, we mean in the religious world, to reject them. Thus we have cast off miraculous faith, having been deluded into the idea that it is not wanted: and then comes the other, the awakening, the appalling, the all-important question, Have we, after all, enough left of saving faith? Have we enough left of faith to save our souls? Really this is a very serious inquiry, especially in an age like the present. The present is an age of retrenchment and reduction; and these sordid, deceitful, and beggarly principles have intruded themselves into our religious system. Yes, there is a general reduction of religion: there is a general retrenchment of piety: we have cut down godliness, we have cut down the standard of doctrine and practice, above all, we have cut down faith, to the lowest scale. This is the true history of our religious declension. It is part of the retrenching spirit of the age. We have placed our religion on a reduced establishment. The Christianity of many professors is now a very poor thing, and totally under the mark. In saying that we have thus retrenched and cut down faith, we mean to assert, that faith is now brought to the lowest standard possible. We have laid aside every kind of faith, we have given up every particular of faith, that we think we can do without. Oh, yes, to be sure we must have faith, in order that our souls may be saved; but then we will have the least possible, on which our souls can be saved; and therefore we lop off miraculous faith, as a superfluity, at once. We will have a faith, too, that will allow of an accommodation to the world. We are marvellous proficient, in the art of not committing ourselves amongst our unbelieving acquaintance. Therefore all talk of miracles must of course be sunk, or scouted; for, if maintained, they will commit us without fail. Then, then, recurs the other question, Have we, after all, saving faith? Reduced as it is by the dilution of worldly maxims, adulterated by science and philosophy falsely so called, mystified by human system, curtailed by modern qualifications and

retrenchments, have we faith enough left to save our souls? Oh, brethren, it is a serious thought, if you go on fighting against miraculous faith, under the fond idea that you are opposing superstition, enthusiasm, and fanaticism, till saving faith, the faith by which your souls are to be saved, is sweated down to nothing in the operation. And, as to those who would profit in argument, by the acknowledgment which truth compels us to make of the present low state of the Church with respect to miraculous manifestations, we would tell them, that perhaps a main cause of that low state is their unbelief: and it is rather too much, to bring down the miraculous experience of the Church, by unbelief, to the lowest possible point, and then to make the lowness an argument against all miracles.

We answer, then, with reply to our first subject of inquiry, How far is it true that the age of miracles is past? that it is true only in a certain measure, and through unbelief; so that the way to a higher degree of miraculous experience is always open. The promise to the Church stands good; but it is one of those promises which must be realized by faith; and it is not to be apprehended, unless it be mixed with faith in those to whom it is given. Such was the promise of the land of Canaan to the Israelites. The land was given to them, but they were told to go and take it. Had they possessed faith, they might have taken it; but they did not enter in, because of unbelief. Those who believed not, had not, but died in the wilderness. When miracles are wrought in the New Testament, we find it a question, whether the person interested believed; and therefore, now that there is so little belief, no wonder that we have so few miracles. But grace triumphed, at last, in the Israelites, and gave them the land by ultimately giving them faith to go and take it; and let us pray that grace may now also triumph in the Church, and restore to us the full experience of the Lord's outstretched arm, and miraculous power, by giving us faith to look and ask for it. In a word, the religious system which, while it admits some parts of divine truth, rejects the doctrine of miracles, is only one form of what we have already ventured to characterize as the "optional Gospel," that is, a Gospel in which we take what we like, and reject the rest. Thus, miracles being part of the Christian dispensation, if we deny them, we may, in the end, come to deny all. A man may say, indeed, "I will keep the doctrines of Christianity, (so far at least as I must,) because I cannot do without them, and my religion, without them, would be nothing: but I will not have the miracles, because I can dispense with them." He may say so, but he is not likely to rest in this position. Either he will advance and improve, or recede still further. Either he will return to the sound standard of faith, which regards the Christian dispensation as miraculous, or he will retrograde, till he comes at length to the final rejection of all!

Having now stated our sentiments as to the first question, How far is it true that the age of miracles is past? and having given a brief view of some of our principal reasons for thinking that it is true only in a very limited sense, and that the contrary opinion, as generally prevailing, is a modern error, a worldly notion recently adopted by the church, we now go on to our second question: What peculiar reasons have we, to expect miracles in the present day? meaning, we need hardly say, by our inquiry, to allege that which we ask, and to express our persuasion that such peculiar reasons, and those very powerful ones, do, exist. Not but that, in addition to these peculiar reasons, there exist some which are always the same. Human nature is still afflicted by the same bodily evils, for the relief of which so many miracles were wrought by our Lord himself. And why should he not still be pleased occasionally to relieve them (unless through infidelity we reject relief) by the same remedies? In this view, miracles might be looked for and experienced, as amongst the standing

ordinances, and indeed the standing means of grace, in the Church of Christ. Nay, our Lord himself seems to authorize the expectation, by teaching us that there is, in some cases, a sort of fitness and propriety in the relief of the bodily infirmities and sufferings of God's children by the exercise of his divine power. We say, in some cases, because in others it may not be fitting that the sufferer should be relieved; for example, in the instance of St. Paul, 2 Corinthians 12:7-9. On the other hand, however, when the ruler of the synagogue expressed his dissatisfaction at the healing of the woman, who had been so long bowed down, on the sabbath day, the Lord asked him, "Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" Luke 13:16. It is true that the point which our Lord principally establishes here, is the propriety of restoring the sufferer on the sabbath day. But he also urges the long duration of her affliction, eighteen years, and that in connection with her being a daughter of Abraham, and asks, Ought she not to have been healed, was it not right that she should be healed? clearly intimating a sort of fitness in her cure, and as it were, a suitability, and a propriety, in the deliverance of a daughter of Abraham from her infirmity, and from the power of Satan, by the greater power of the Lord. But, if there was such a fitness then, how can it be shewn that there is not the same fitness now; and that there would not now be the same suitability in the deliverance of God's people from their sufferings and infirmities, by the exercise of his power? With regard to possession, however, it will be asserted, perhaps, that this call for miraculous power exists no longer. We are disposed to maintain the contrary; and the subject is one, on which we can feel no objection to enter more fully; but it does not materially affect our present argument. Some may deny that there is any such thing as possession at present. Others perhaps would deny, if they dared, (but it would be a little premature,) that there was any such thing at the time of our Lord's coming. All we here maintain is, that there are many bodily sufferings and infirmities, for the relief of which it seems quite as fitting and suitable that miracles should be wrought now, as in the first ages of the Church. But we spoke of peculiar reasons; and some of these we now proceed to specify.

1. The miracles of popery. These have of late been revived with extraordinary frequency; and confidently appealed to, in support of Romanism as the one true faith. Is it unreasonable, then, to expect that the Lord will vouchsafe miracles, in support of the Gospel as opposed to Romanism? It matters not what may be the character of the popish miracles. The point to be borne in mind is, that they are alleged in support of popery. What are the reasons commonly given, why miracles were wrought by the Lord himself, while present in the flesh? One is, that he might confound the spurious miracles of the Jews. Therefore why should it be thought a strange thing, if he should now be pleased to confound in the same manner the miracles of popery, which is only rabbinism in a modern dress?

2. The bold front of infidelity. Consider how Christianity, in these days, is assailed, denied, reviled; and how criminally the open infamy is tolerated. Observe how those escape, while they only blaspheme Christ, who, the moment they assail earthly authorities, become subject to fine and imprisonment. The cause of the Lord being thus treacherously abandoned, by those who at the same time take such good care of their own, what wonder if the Lord should arise, and miraculously plead it himself? Taking miracles as signs, we are expressly taught, in the New Testament, that some miracles are for a sign to them that believe not, 1 Corinthians 14:22 : and if ever such signs were wanted, surely they are wanted now.

3. The slackness and timidity of the Church, in facing its opponents. While infidels and heretics swarm on all sides, they are not opposed as they ought to be. Some discover timidity. Where there is not this, we commonly have mere denunciation and invective, as if heresy could be scolded into orthodoxy. We have very little of the calm, regular, methodical detection and exposure of error. There appears to be a general paralysis, a general want of application and energy in this matter. It seems not at all unlikely, then, that the Lord, perceiving that there is none to help, may now interpose by his power, with mighty deeds; and so give his people that energy and decision which they now want. Nor, contemplating the present low and prostrate condition of the Church, and the rampant audacity of her ferocious antagonists, have we felt that we were by any means expressing an unwarrantable hope, in repeating the prayer of the first believers, "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." Acts 4:29-30.

4. The mixture, in the professing world. Within that professing world we discern the Church, but what a mixed multitude with it! There we behold not only the weak in the faith, but the low in the faith. There we discover every grade of false doctrine, and of deviation from the truth: till we come to some, who, under the cloak of a general profession, conceal opposition and dislike to the Gospel; and who keep up their connexion merely from selfish motives, to answer their private ends; or because they wish, alas, to keep their consciences quiet by supporting the semblance of being religious, while their hearts are given to their idols, and so to go on to the last moment; in which they succeed the more easily through the total absence of all church discipline, and through the approximation to them on the part of those who know better. And would no benefit arise from miracles here? What, we ask, in such a state of the Church, would be their effect? The answer is evident: to clear it: to draw a line: to bring out dissemblers in their true character. As often as we come to a miracle, (if miracles be openly restored to the Church,) we shall come to a place where the road forks, and a separation will take place; those who believe taking the right road, and those who disbelieve, and have enmity, and are afraid of committing themselves with the world, the wrong. Yes, they could go on with us while a religious profession required merely a few notions, and some easy sacrifices; but they can go on no longer, when it requires so great a thing as faith in a present God made manifest by miracles. What a clearing would thus take place! To such professors, each new miracle would come like a wave of the Goodwin upon a wreck, washing some off. It is very possible, in the present mixed state of the Church, that miracles may be sent for such a purpose. Those whose hearts are enmity against the Gospel, but who take up their ostensible position, not where they really are, but in some more qualified form of heresy, which counterfeits truth, and from which the truth may be more conveniently attacked than it could be if unbelief were openly professed: those who are more bitter against the doctrines of the Bible which they deny, than they are against all error: those who are parties in the tacit compact: those who are aiming to bring in heresy gradually, by attacking truth as enthusiasm, fanaticism, and superstition: those who make a general profession of evangelical faith, but impugn the inspiration of Scripture, and so all faith: those who teach a Gospel of tenets, and not of union with Christ, and justification and sanctification thereby: those who, on account of their wealth or station in life, assume an authority in the Church to which they are not entitled, and look down upon missionaries: those who but enough. Miracles would detect them all. Miracles restored to the Church would, at every new manifestation, be to them as a touch of Ithuriel's spear bring them out

make them start up, detected antichrists and then run shivering off, with mows and yells, to the ranks of the adversary.

5. The lowness of the religious standard. We mean the standard now generally professed and prevailing, which is very low. First, it is low as to doctrine. Miracles would answer a peculiar purpose here. Be it observed, miracles are not merely evidences of the historical truth of the Gospel, as they are commonly mistaken to be, but evidences of evangelical doctrine, evidences of salvation, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will ?" Hebrews 2:3-4. Hence, on one occasion, our Lord performed a miracle, to make known that he had "power on earth to forgive sins." Matthew 9:6. To this we may add another object of miracles, to make known that the Lord has power on earth to purify us from our sins; for his curing the diseases of the body, more especially the leprosy, which is a type of sin, was calculated to make us look to him, for the cure of our spiritual maladies. Miracles, then, are an evidence of salvation, of spiritual truth, of evangelical blessings, and of sound doctrine; and therefore miracles might, now, well come in, to raise our low ideas on all these subjects. But, secondly, the religious standard, now prevailing, is lamentably low as to practice. The line of distinction, between the Church and the world, is rapidly disappearing; and we are in danger of being again brought under the yoke of corruption from which we have fled. May we not hope it is time, then, that the Lord should again put forth his miraculous power, and deliver his people from the world, as once from Egypt, by mighty signs and wonders, and an outstretched arm? Truly we are now in a depressed state; and we need that the arm of the Lord should awake for our delivery.

6. The general forgetfulness or denial of the divine government and interposition. Divine interposition is of two kinds, providential and miraculous: and both these are sadly lowered, in the views of modern theology. A particular providence is now scarcely conceded. The whole theory is resolved into "fortuities" happily concurring, with some acknowledgment, perhaps, of a controlling power, but hardly that. In the meantime, while providential power is thus lowered to "fortuity," miraculous power is lowered to providential: nor is this the case merely with regard to alleged cases of modern miracles, (though we have had too much of it here,) but also with regard to the miracles of the Bible, concerning some of which we have a doctrine of this sort: that they were merely phenomena which followed in the natural order of cause and effect, and which would have occurred, at the same time and place, under any circumstances; and that the whole of the miracle was, that Moses was instructed to stretch forth his rod, or the priests to proceed with the ark, just at the time! Surely, when we, have come to such a sunken state, extraordinary manifestations of the divine power and presence may reasonably be looked for, to correct our views, both of miracles and of Providence. Surely we have need of such manifestations, to redress and rectify the whole scale, and to place our faith, once more, on a proper footing. We see that in the Appendix to the Christian Observer for 1830, Mr. Newnham, (whom, for reasons given in a critical notice of his work on "Superstition" in the Christian Review for April, 1830, we are compelled to regard as a materialist,) argues that the divine glory may be fully as much displayed by providential mercy, operating through natural means, as by miraculous interposition. This reminds us of a certain question, once proposed, to the following effect: If a man is brought to salvation by the circumstances in which he is placed, may not his salvation be spoken of as the work of God,

as much as if he had been brought to salvation by spiritual grace, especially and effectually imparted? (The design is evident; namely, to entrap the candidate into a concession that grace is nothing more than circumstances.) But, however plausible Mr. Newnham's theory may seem in a general sense, we must beware how we apply it to the existing state of affairs, as miracles are concerned. The Lord works by natural and providential means, and his operations are not acknowledged or recognized. The doctrine of divine providence is almost extinct. The world knows it not, and mock professors explain it away. Consequently, we need extraordinary interposition, we need miraculous manifestations, that the glory of the Lord may be revealed and publicly shewn forth. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory!" Had he so ordered, in his providence, that some one should bring good wine to the door the moment when it was wanted, this would have answered the purpose of supplying the guests equally well. But his glory was to be manifested, and therefore he turned water into wine by a miracle. And thus, if miracles were to be commonly restored, the glory of the Lord would now be manifested to a degree in which, through our blindness, the same object is not effected, by his divine government in nature and providence. This, then, is what we now want. The providence of God is overlooked or denied. Miraculous manifestations, such as we have to allege, are got over; while the leading Periodical of the religious world attempts to put them down with menace and intimidation, and threatens us with the tokens of its high displeasure, unless we "recant our errors." Surely, then, it is high time to expect and hope a more full manifestation of divine power, in signs and wonders so great and visible, that even our adversaries shall be forced to exclaim, "That thy name is near thy wondrous works declare!"

7. The probable and apparent approach of the latter-day glory. We do not now purpose to discuss the question, how this glory may come. Neither do we positively assert it to be now, (except in the Scriptural or true sense, in which it always has been,) at hand. Still we see tokens of its approach, at any rate too clear to be disregarded: and we would simply suggest to those who think it nigh, but acknowledge no miracles since the first ages of the Church, whether it be not probable, that one concomitant circumstance, as it approaches, may be miraculous manifestations of the coming consummation.

8. Missionary exertions. Tillotson (whom some will consider an authority) thought that on a renewal of such exertions in the Church, miracles might very possibly be wrought in support of them. Had he lived in the present day, when the work has actually recommenced, perhaps he would have been afraid to say so.

9. The prayers of the Church for a larger effusion of the Holy Spirit. Prayers of this description having of late been largely offered, is it not possible that the Lord may give one token of his hearing and preparing to answer them, by miracles? Let us not be misunderstood. We do not mean to assert that, in a larger effusion of the Holy Spirit, miracles would constitute the most essential or the most important circumstance. We are well aware that we need other, and what may perhaps be soundly denominated higher things: that we need more grace, more faith, more hope, more charity; that we need more boldness and success in preaching, larger fruits of missions, to Jews and Gentiles, more spirituality and spiritual light, more conversions, more revivals. These, and suchlike, might be the most essential tokens of the larger effusion of the Holy Ghost. But it is highly probable that miraculous manifestations may accompany, or even precede them; and therefore, having prayed for the effusion, we ought not to be totally unprepared for such

manifestations, as one part of the answer to our prayers. When we hear of them, we ought not too readily to reject them, for they may be the very answer itself! and the disposition to reject them, the crying out, "Any solution rather than a miracle," the preferring rejection to acknowledgment, is totally out of place. In the Bible, we sometimes find the miraculous tokens of the Spirit's effusion, and the gracious tokens, occurring together; for instance, on the day of pentecost. On that day, great conversions were preceded by a great miracle. It is true, that the miracle produced no compunction in the hearers, no crying out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" till after the preaching of Christ crucified, but only amazement in some, and mocking in others, (and we have no wish to give to miracles more than their due place or importance). Yet the miracle came first. And why may not the same order take place, now, in answer to our prayers at least, if we expect any answer to them at all? Some, it seems, look for the gracious effusion only, not the miraculous. This is their mistake. A pentecostal prayer may well be expected to receive a pentecostal answer. Judging from prophecy, and from the past, we may pronounce it decidedly unreasonable, we mean, unscriptural, to expect an extraordinary degree of the gracious effusion, and none of the miraculous. True, it might be more convenient, we might have it more snug to ourselves, if we had merely more of what has been called the "ordinary" influence, more conversions, and in consequence more zeal for religious societies, &c. We might, then go on with the world, about as usual, without any thing embarrassing, without any thing to commit us: whereas, if we have miraculous manifestations, it brings us to an issue with the world at once, which some of us might find very inconvenient; and therefore it is not to be spoken of, but, as soon as we hear of it, must be put down with a high hand. We cannot, however, always have these things as we please. When our prayers are answered, they may be answered, as the Lord thinks fit, not according to our preconceptions or preferences. Hence miracles may come, and come by our asking, and take us by surprise. How are dissenting ministers deluding their congregations, when they preach against miracles, and hold monthly or weekly prayer-meetings for the effusion of the Holy Spirit! It is, indeed, a serious reflection, in the too prevailing disposition in the religious world, that here we may have been going on, for a long time, praying for the effusion of the Holy Spirit, and then, when the tokens of that effusion come, we receive them with a general shout of rejection, with a universal burst of scorn! We put this consideration to those of our brethren, who were the first to be active in promoting these prayers for the effusion of the Spirit in the Church of Christ. Is it possible that they can deny miraculous manifestations? Then may they be denying that, which their own efforts, which their own exhortations, their own solemn exhortations, were the means of procuring! It is an affecting thought. To professors, thus offering prayers for the Spirit, it might most truly be said, Ye know not what ye ask. Ye seek the boon, but when the tokens of it come, the bulk of you are in a frame rather to reject than to receive them!

Such, we conceive, are some of the peculiar reasons for expecting miracles. in the present day: 1. The miracles of popery; 2. The bold front of infidelity; 3. The slackness and timidity of the Church, in facing its opponents; 4. The mixture, in the professing world; 5. The lowness of the religious standard; 6. The general forgetfulness or denial of the divine government and interposition; 7. The probable and apparent approach of the latter-day glory; 8. Missionary exertions; 9. The prayers of the Church for a larger effusion of the Holy Spirit. Under these circumstances, well aware of the penalties denounced against such opinions, we cannot nevertheless refrain from expressing our conviction, that the views which admit of no miraculous manifestations in the present day are unsound and superficial, and that they may be traced to the want of just notions, and a due

consideration, of the present circumstances and prospects of the Church.

If then; in return for our two questions, it be asked, on the other side, what, after all, we now expect, we reply by stating, first, what we expect generally, for the Church in its present state; secondly, what we expect for individuals. First, then, as to what we expect generally, for the Church in its present state. On what footing were miraculous gifts placed and left by Christ, at his first coming? On that footing, we conceive, they still remain. If to hold this opinion be deemed a crime, we must take the consequences. If we now come short of this, we allege, that the Lord did not first withdraw his grant, but the Church withdrew her faith. And as to all the sayings about the age of miracles being past, and extraordinary gifts being limited to the primo-primitive Church, these having been so often repeated we must take the liberty of again repeating our reply to them, namely, that they are mere notions, mere dicta, mere traditions, mere figments, mere human inventions without warrant of Scripture. As to arguments in support of them, we look, but look in vain. The eye travels, in search of them, over a level without an object. None are given; and, prudently, none are attempted: for the strength of these notions lies in popular opinion, and in the assurance of a disposition to support them, in the world at large, and, unhappily, in a great part of the Church. We ask again, On what footing was the exercise of miraculous gifts placed and left by Christ?

We turn to the Scriptures, and there we certainly find what in some measure warrants the distinction of modern theology, between gifts and graces, but by no means the arbitrary separation to which that distinction has been urged. By gifts, we understand, for instance, the power of healing, the power of casting out devils, the power of speaking with unknown tongues, the discerning of spirits, &c., and by graces, (or, as they may more properly, perhaps, be called, fruits of the Spirit) truth, charity, meekness, joy, peace, &c. We can have no difficulty in admitting, also, that the gifts may be found in ungodly persons, as they were, probably, in Judas Iscariot: or in assenting to the distinction, that, with regard to graces, or fruits, every true believer, though of course with great varieties as to proportion and manifestation, must have more or less of each of them; but that, with regard to gifts, some may have one, some another, some more, some less, and some perhaps none. So far, we admit the distinction. As to the number of persons, who may have possessed miraculous power in the first ages, we certainly think that it has been limited too far. It is assumed, indeed, by Mr. Newnham, if we rightly understand him, that, after the disciples commissioned by our Lord himself, none possessed it but the apostles. This notion however, is perfectly groundless: and therefore all the reasoning built upon it sinks to nothing. Appeal has been made, indeed, to the saying of St. Paul, "truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you, in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds." It might as well, however, be pretended from this passage, that none but the apostles had patience. Though miracles are here spoken of as the signs of an apostle, it does not follow that the apostle alone wrought them. When St. Paul went to Corinth, others might work signs; and these, taking place at his coming, and attesting his mission, might be called signs of an apostle in that sense. Or, if anywhere the apostle was the only one that wrought signs, this might be because he was at a place where the Gospel had not yet been received, and, where he, consequently, was the only believer; and in the case of the Galatians, (Gal. iii. 5, if the apostle there alludes to himself,) miraculous gifts may have been suspended for a time, in consequence of their departure from the simplicity of the Gospel. Certain it is that miraculous gifts were conferred not only on the seventy sent forth by our Lord, (Luke x.

17, 19.) but on deacons, as Stephen, (Acts vi. 8,) and Philip, (viii. 6, 7.) And as the names of the deacons are first given, Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, &c. (vi. 5,) and then, in order, the history of the first two, viz. Stephen and Philip, and miraculous powers are attributed to each of these, it seems natural to infer, that the same powers were equally possessed by the others. Miraculous power being given to deacons as well as to apostles, this does away entirely with the notion of Mr. Newnham, that they were granted only to the apostles, as to an "extraordinary order of ministers," and therefore ceased with them. (Not that we ourselves admit the order of apostles to be extraordinary, any more than that of deacons.) Nay, the promise is to believers in general. For, after our Lord has given a commission to preach the Gospel, adding, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," he goes on to say, with an evident reference to the first part of the passage, "These signs shall follow them, that believe:" not merely, these signs shall follow you, the eleven, who go into the world, to bring them to believe and be baptised, but, These signs shall follow them. Therefore, the proposition, that none but the apostles had miraculous gifts in the primitive church, is altogether untenable. And it only shews the deceivableness of too many religious professors, that they can talk of the strength of an argument, which goes upon such baseless assumptions. With all that we know of the general ignorance of the Scriptures now prevailing, it was past expectation that such a delusion should succeed.

However, the distinction, mentioned above, we admit. Graces must be, all, in each believer. As to gifts, it is enough that they be in the Church, though not in every individual: so that, being exercised by some, they may be believed and recognized by all. But when again the distinction is pushed still farther, and men tell us, according to the received opinion, and out of their own minds, without warrant of Scripture, that gifts and graces also differ in this respect, that graces are permanent, but gifts were to last only for a time, we there join issue at once; we deny the fact, and call upon them for a proof: still standing to our former allegation, and maintaining, that the exercise of spiritual gifts was left on a certain footing by our Lord; and if any say that it is not on the same footing now, we ask them, Why not? Accordingly, what was experienced then, we look for now. Of course, there are some other limitations, about which a reasonable mind will make no difficulty. For instance, it is not pretended that those who possessed miraculous power, possessed them, of necessity, in constant exercise. St. Paul left Trophimus at Miletum, sick, 2 Tim. iv 20. So also at the present day. Supposing a believer to possess the gift of healing, it does not follow that he is to exercise it on every sick person he sees; nor would it be scriptural to question his possessing it, because of his not doing so. And this consideration will afford an answer to a very strange objection; namely, that if the Church now possessed such miraculous power, believers would never die. To this we answer, You might as well urge the same objection against the miraculous gifts of the apostolic ages, and ask how any came to die then. But let us, for a moment, suppose the case to be as you imagine. Suppose the gift of healing were exercised in behalf of every sick believer, so that death by sickness never took place. Still there would remain two kinds of death, befitting the Christian. There would be death by natural decay the curse of death by sickness, which is judicial, and partakes of the nature of an execution, being removed: and there would be death by martyrdom, which may yet again, and that sooner than we think, become the door of honourable exit for the multitudes of Christ's armies, in the final convulsions. But we are not brought to this. Such speculations are uncalled-for. It is not pretended that gifts of healing are, when present, in constant exercise. And therefore, as some believers, very possibly, died of sickness, in the first ages, when miracles were wrought by the apostles themselves, so some may

still die, whenever there shall be a general display of the same miracles, now. On similar grounds, we might answer many other objections to miracles in the present day. Try whether the same objections might not be made, with equal force, to any miracles. Try whether they might not be made, with equal force, to the miracles of the apostolic ages, and even to those wrought by a greater than the apostles; and consequently, with no real force whatever. So such objections have been answered already; and this has brought the extraordinary retort, that we make the truth of scriptural miracles dependent on those now alleged. Surely this is the strangest sort of reasoning that ever was heard of. Observe how it is employed. We allege, that miraculous powers for healing the sick, are not entirely withdrawn from the Church in the present day. You answer, Then men would never die. We reply, The sick were healed in the first ages, yet men died then. You, terribly alarmed, begin to cry, Help! Fire! Wolf! as if we were really attacking the miracles of Scripture; when, in fact, we are only arguing that there are other miracles, which Scripture does not record, indeed, but promises. We really cannot see how this argument of ours goes to weaken the miracles of Scripture in the least: unless, indeed, there be any weakening in your mind. If you feel something, which weakens your view of the New Testament miracles, if you cannot have your unbelief excited by hearing of miracles in the present day, without feeling the same unbelief extend to the miracles of the Bible, that is another question. But it is wonderful, that men who can see no danger to the records of scriptural miracles in explaining away a miracle of the early church (which milner records, believing) exactly in the way that neologians explain away the miracles of the Bible, should see so much danger in our alleging that miracles and revelation go together now, as well as when Christ came, and before. The real question is, whether the doctrine, that miraculous power is not entirely withdrawn from the Church, is true or false. If false, shew it; by substantial proof, not by imaginary consequences. If true, you need not be afraid of its hurting the truth of Scripture; for all truth harmonizes and goes very well together, and the truth of to-day will confirm the truth of former times. Meanwhile, the facts, in each case, stand on their own basis. And all difficulties respecting such miraculous powers as the Lord may now be pleased to vouchsafe to any of his people, as to circumstances, such as when, and how far, and on behalf of whom, they are to exercise them, how they are to be led, or prompted, to the discernment of the proper seasons and opportunities, when the power is to be expected from on high, and the like and many such difficulties might be suggested must be met in the same way; namely, by answering that on what principles the Lord was pleased to order these things in the beginning, on such principles he may be pleased to order them now: and we certainly think that we may give this answer, without any compromise of scriptural miracles, or scriptural truth. With these explanations, then, we own our belief, that on the footing upon which it was placed and left by Christ himself, the doctrine of miraculous power in the Church still remains. The correct view we conceive to be, that miracles belong to the ordinances, or standing means of grace, bequeathed by Christ for the use of his Church in all ages; but that the benefit of them is not to be had but by faith, and this a peculiar faith, of which miracles are the object; and, also, that we have little experience of miracles now, because such faith, as well as saving faith, is low. If, on the one hand, any, professing to hold these views, allege false miracles, or miracles in support of false doctrine, try abominable experiments, &c., we can only say, "What is the chaff to the wheat?" "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream: and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." When we hear of extravagances, we are sorry for them: but the truth stands as it did. Nay, the extravagances themselves, if any have really occurred, may, in fact,

be an evidence that there is some truth in the matter; for where there is truth, there it is that the devil sets up his counterfeits. If, then, on the one hand, any professing to hold our views have fallen into extravagances, we regret it: but if, on the other, any, opposing them, deny all present miracles, we tell them, that they bring the very existence of any present Church of Christ into question: for these signs shall follow them that believe. We have stated why we look for miraculous manifestations; and also why, in these days, we look for them in larger abundance. The argument against us, from their rarity hitherto, (twisted into an argument of their non-occurrence,) we deem to be altogether fallacious: and the fact of their rarity we can view only as one sad token, among many, of our present low, prostrate, sunken condition. We proceed to state our expectations, in the second place, as to miraculous gifts conferred on particular persons.

Such gifts may come at once: and on this subject we have, at present, nothing more to say. But they may, also, come gradually: and that, it may be, much in the following manner.

We can easily suppose the case of a believer, in whom meet the three following things: 1. A confident and simple faith that the declarations of Holy Scripture are truth, (not as the tergiversations of modern philosophy and science, falsely so called, would take them, but as they are plainly meant to be understood;) 2. A disposition to watch, record, and habitually recognise in all things, the particular dealings and manifestations of Providence; 3. A belief, and habitual experience, of particular answers to prayer. Some professors, it is to be feared, contrive to get on, very well satisfied, without anyone of these three things: but they are only such things, we trust, as many, many have realized, without any name for miraculous gifts. We suppose the individual to have attained to these three things. He goes on, then, in the way of faith, observance, and experience; and therefore in the way of assurance and confirmation. He finds answers to prayer becoming more and more express, distinct, and discernible. He finds particular providences to grow continually more marked, intelligible, and wonderful. He finds his faith in the truth of Scripture more and more disposing him to form scriptural expectations (as those previously formed are more and more realized) more and more establishing him in the sense and assurance of a good foundation, and a firm, footing, beneath him more and more enlightening him with spiritual discernment as to things to be looked for, according to the written testimony, or not to be looked for more and more revealing to him the Lord Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, waiting to be asked, willing to hear, and resolved to grant, if need be, by extraordinary means. Scriptural promises, and the scriptural representations of the true character of all things, visible and invisible, fill his view, as if they had been first spoken but yesterday; and the cavils and objections of modern philosophy and assumption vanish from his field of sight. The clearness of his experience, as to particular providences, establishes him in the continual expectation of something yet more marked; and something yet more marked, continually occurring, confirms him yet farther determines, by independent proof, constantly coming from without, that he is under no delusion and serves as a waymark, from time to time, to prove him no wanderer by a strange path. As he proceeds, his communication with the unseen realities of the eternal world becomes daily clearer, by prayers on his part, and by answers from above, He observes that he obtains these answers for himself: and he has by this time observed another point, a most material one; that he obtains them also for others. The answers, thus obtained, seem sometimes more, sometimes less dependent on circumstances; so as to come, occasionally, in a way that is apparently very direct, and not at all contingent, or in connection with second causes. He is now already so far advanced, that if he

were to speak of his experience, it would raise an outcry: but so it would have happened at the beginning. He finds now, that, being moved to pray according to God's will, he can get what he asks; and this, increasingly, in a way more signal, more graciously evident, more as a distinct thing. Now, accordingly, there commences a difference of this sort: that these more evident answers to prayer shall begin to cease to belong to the ordinary course of his devotions, and to his daily experiences of divine goodness in answer to conditional petitions; and shall come out, more and more, in the detached and figured character of special manifestations; limited to particular times; preceded by special encouragements to prayer and pleading in the Spirit, and by special and gracious assurances, with thanksgiving, of the answer not yet received; and standing apart from his daily supplies and helps from above, as extraordinary from ordinary; so that he shall know in himself, that this is no common thing. At times, not being particularly stirred up, and having no peculiar call from without, to seek peculiar mercies, he goes on in the ordinary course of his daily services at the throne of grace, receiving daily mercies as usual. At other times, being particularly led to ask, he obtains what he asks discernibly and roost assuredly, and still with that same clear and thankful expectation and earnest, before receiving. Another feature of the case is, that what he obtains, he obtains only in a particular way: in the name of Jesus Christ, particularly pleaded to that end. Another, again, that he finds the practical tendency of this his belief and experience to be according to holiness, and towards holiness: so that while, pleading the Name which is above every name, he obtains extraordinary answers, he also, pleading the same Name, finds peculiar aid against the sins which most easily beset him, and grace given him to make head against them, to crucify them, and to cast them out: yes, the old enemies, the old hateful sins, that seemed to be ingrained and cankered into his very core, so as to form part of himself, and so that he once was almost disposed to submit, and to give up the conflict against them as hopeless: he now is enabled, by prayer, to take godly vengeance of these, and to gain the greatest victories over the foes that most mightily oppressed his soul. Thus he proceeds, and finds help in grace and personal sanctification (the essentials,) and help in extraordinary answers to prayer (the concomitants,) advancing together. Not that sanctification is the source of such answers. They are of faith. "His name, through faith in his name, yea, the faith which is by Him," is the source of all extraordinary answers to his extraordinary petitions; not any holiness more than any power of his own; for such answers come not by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith. Having advanced in his experience so far, where is he to stop? Now, be it observed, in order that any believer, setting out with the three qualifications which we commenced by specifying, and he who has much less can hardly claim the name, may have the same experience which we have now described, only one thing is requisite; namely, that he should proceed upon the principle of constantly expecting, and seeking to realize, something more and higher than that which he has yet attained to. And what is this, but a standing principle of the Gospel? In regard to things warranted, and in the way of God's purposes, it is a standing principle of the Gospel, that we are to go on expecting more than we have hitherto realized: and we have already given our reasons for maintaining, that it is in the way of God's purposes to continue miraculous influences in his Church, and that a peculiar expectation of them, in the present day, is warranted abundantly.

\*The preceding remarks must not be regarded as in any way intended to set forth the sentiments of the Committee of the London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews. According to the arrangement on which the Jewish Expositor was placed at the commencement of the year 1830, the Committee are in no degree responsible for what the Editor publishes.

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