

**THIRD PART, QUESTION 44**  
**Of (Christ's) Miracles Considered Specifically**  
*(In Four Articles)*

We have now to consider each kind of miracle:

- (1) The miracles which He worked in spiritual substances;
- (2) The miracles which He worked in heavenly bodies;
- (3) The miracles which He worked in man;
- (4) The miracles which He worked in irrational creatures.

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**Whether those miracles were fitting which Christ worked in spiritual substances?**

IIIa q. 44 a. 1

**Objection 1.** It would seem that those miracles were unfitting which Christ worked in spiritual substances. For among spiritual substances the holy angels are above the demons; for, as Augustine says (*De Trin.* iii): “The treacherous and sinful rational spirit of life is ruled by the rational, pious, and just spirit of life.” But we read of no miracles worked by Christ in the good angels. Therefore neither should He have worked miracles in the demons.

**Objection 2.** Further, Christ's miracles were ordained to make known His Godhead. But Christ's Godhead was not to be made known to the demons: since this would have hindered the mystery of His Passion, according to 1 Cor. 2:8: “If they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.” Therefore He should not have worked miracles in the demons.

**Objection 3.** Further, Christ's miracles were ordained to the glory of God: hence it is written (*Mat.* 9:8) that “the multitudes seeing” that the man sick of the palsy had been healed by Christ, “feared, and glorified God that gave such power to men.” But the demons have no part in glorifying God; since “praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner” (*Ecclus.* 15:9). For which reason also “He suffered them not to speak” (*Mk.* 1:34; *Lk.* 4:41) those things which reflected glory on Him. Therefore it seems that it was unfitting for Him to work miracles in the demons.

**Objection 4.** Further, Christ's miracles are ordained to the salvation of mankind. But sometimes the casting out of demons from men was detrimental to man, in some cases to the body: thus it is related (*Mk.* 9:24,25) that a demon at Christ's command, “crying out and greatly tearing” the man, “went out of him; and he became as dead, so that many said: He is dead”; sometimes also to things: as when He sent the demons, at their own request, into the swine, which they cast headlong into the sea; wherefore the inhabitants of those parts “besought Him that He would depart from their coasts” (*Mat.* 8:31-34). Therefore it seems unfitting that He should have worked such like miracles.

**On the contrary,** this was foretold (*Zech.* 13:2), where it is written: “I will take away... the unclean spirit out of the earth.”

I answer that, The miracles worked by Christ were arguments for the faith which He taught. Now, by the power of His Godhead He was to rescue those who would believe in Him, from the power of the demons; according to *Jn.* 12:31: “Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” Consequently it was fitting that, among other miracles, He should also deliver those who were obsessed by demons.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Just as men were to be delivered by Christ from the power of the demons, so by Him were they to be brought to the companionship of the angels, according to *Col.* 1:20: “Making peace through the blood of His cross, both as to the things on earth and the things that are in heaven.” Therefore it was not fitting to show forth to men other miracles as regards the angels, except by angels appearing to men: as happened in His Nativity, His Resurrection, and His Ascension.

**Reply to Objection 2.** As Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei* ix): “Christ was known to the demons just as much as He willed; and He willed just as far as there was need. But He was known to them, not as to the holy angels, by that which is eternal life, but by certain temporal effects of His power.” First, when they saw that Christ was hungry after fasting they deemed Him not to be the Son of God. Hence, on *Lk.* 4:3, “If Thou be the Son of God,” etc., Ambrose says: “What means this way of addressing Him? save that, though He knew that the Son of God was to come, yet he did not think that He had come in the weakness of the flesh?” But afterwards, when he saw Him work miracles, he had a sort of conjectural suspicion that He was the Son of God. Hence on *Mk.* 1:24, “I know who Thou art, the Holy one of God,” Chrysostom\* says that “he had no certain or firm knowledge of God's coming.” Yet he knew that He was “the Christ promised in the Law,” wherefore it is said (*Lk.* 4:41) that “they knew that He was Christ.” But it was rather from suspicion than from certainty that they confessed Him to be the Son of God. Hence Bede says on *Lk.* 4:41: “The demons confess the Son of God, and, as stated farther on, ‘they knew that He was Christ.’ For when the devil saw Him weakened by His fast, He knew Him to be a real man: but when He failed to overcome Him by temptation, He doubted lest He should be the

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\* Victor of Antioch. Cf. *Catena Aurea*

Son of God. And now from the power of His miracles He either knew, or rather suspected that He was the Son of God. His reason therefore for persuading the Jews to crucify Him was not that he deemed Him not to be Christ or the Son of God, but because he did not foresee that he would be the loser by His death. For the Apostle says of this mystery” (1 Cor. 2:7,8), “which is hidden from the beginning, that ‘none of the princes of this world knew it,’ for if they had known it they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.”

**Reply to Objection 3.** The miracles which Christ worked in expelling demons were for the benefit, not of the demons, but of men, that they might glorify Him. Wherefore He forbade them to speak in His praise. First, to give us an example. For, as Athanasius says, “He restrained his speech, although he was confessing the truth; to teach us not to care about such things, although it may seem that what is said is true. For it is wrong to seek to learn from the devil when we have the Divine Scripture”: Besides, it is dangerous, since the demons frequently mix falsehood with truth. Or, as Chrysostom\* says: “It was not meet for them to usurp the prerogative of the apostolic office. Nor was it fitting that the mystery of Christ should be proclaimed by a corrupt tongue” because “praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner”†. Thirdly, because, as Bede says, “He did not wish the envy of the Jews to be aroused thereby”‡. Hence “even the apostles are commanded to be silent about Him, lest, if His Divine majesty were

proclaimed, the gift of His Passion should be deferred.”

**Reply to Objection 4.** Christ came specially to teach and to work miracles for the good of man, and principally as to the salvation of his soul. Consequently, He allowed the demons, that He cast out, to do man some harm, either in his body or in his goods, for the salvation of man’s soul—namely, for man’s instruction. Hence Chrysostom says on Mat. 8:32 that Christ let the demons depart into the swine, “not as yielding to the demons, but first, to show . . . how harmful are the demons who attack men; secondly, that all might learn that the demons would not dare to hurt even the swine, except He allow them; thirdly, that they would have treated those men more grievously than they treated the swine, unless they had been protected by God’s providence.”

And for the same motives He allowed the man, who was being delivered from the demons, to suffer grievously for the moment; yet did He release him at once from that distress. By this, moreover, we are taught, as Bede says on Mk. 9:25, that “often, when after falling into sin we strive to return to God, we experience further and more grievous attacks from the old enemy. This he does, either that he may inspire us with a distaste for virtue, or that he may avenge the shame of having been cast out.” For the man who was healed “became as dead,” says Jerome, “because to those who are healed it is said, ‘You are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God’ ” (Col. 3:3)

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**Whether it was fitting that Christ should work miracles in the heavenly bodies?**

IIIa q. 44 a. 2

**Objection 1.** It would seem that it was unfitting that Christ should work miracles in the heavenly bodies. For, as Dionysius says (Div. Nom. iv), “it beseems Divine providence not to destroy, but to preserve, nature.” Now, the heavenly bodies are by nature incorruptible and unchangeable, as is proved De Coelo i. Therefore it was unfitting that Christ should cause any change in the order of the heavenly bodies.

**Objection 2.** Further, the course of time is marked out by the movement of the heavenly bodies, according to Gn. 1:14: “Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven. . . and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years.” Consequently if the movement of the heavenly bodies be changed, the distinction and order of the seasons is changed. But there is no report of this having been perceived by astronomers, “who gaze at the stars and observe the months,” as it is written (Is. 47:13). Therefore it seems that Christ did not work any change in the movements of the heavenly bodies.

**Objection 3.** Further, it was more fitting that Christ should work miracles in life and when teaching, than in death: both because, as it is written (2 Cor. 13:4), “He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God,” by which He worked miracles; and be-

cause His miracles were in confirmation of His doctrine. But there is no record of Christ having worked any miracles in the heavenly bodies during His lifetime: nay, more; when the Pharisees asked Him to give “a sign from heaven,” He refused, as Matthew relates (12,16). Therefore it seems that neither in His death should He have worked any miracles in the heavenly bodies.

**On the contrary,** It is written (Lk. 23:44,45): “There was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour; and the sun was darkened.”

**I answer that,** As stated above (q. 43, a. 4) it behooved Christ’s miracles to be a sufficient proof of His Godhead. Now this is not so sufficiently proved by changes wrought in the lower bodies, which changes can be brought about by other causes, as it is by changes wrought in the course of the heavenly bodies, which have been established by God alone in an unchangeable order. This is what Dionysius says in his epistle to Polycarp: “We must recognize that no alteration can take place in the order and movement of the heavens that is not caused by Him who made all and changes all by His word.” Therefore it was fitting that Christ should work miracles even in the heavenly bodies.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Just as it is natural to the

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\* Cyril of Alexandria, Comment. in Luc. † Cf. Theophylact, Enarr. in Luc. ‡ Bede, Expos. in Luc. iv, 41

lower bodies to be moved by the heavenly bodies, which are higher in the order of nature, so is it natural to any creature whatsoever to be changed by God, according to His will. Hence Augustine says (*Contra Faust.* xxvi; quoted by the gloss on *Rom.* 11:24: “Contrary to nature thou wert grafted,” etc.): “God, the Creator and Author of all natures, does nothing contrary to nature: for whatsoever He does in each thing, that is its nature.” Consequently the nature of a heavenly body is not destroyed when God changes its course: but it would be if the change were due to any other cause.

**Reply to Objection 2.** The order of the seasons was not disturbed by the miracle worked by Christ. For, according to some, this gloom or darkening of the sun, which occurred at the time of Christ’s passion, was caused by the sun withdrawing its rays, without any change in the movement of the heavenly bodies, which measures the duration of the seasons. Hence Jerome says on *Mat.* 27:45: “It seems as though the ‘greater light’ withdrew its rays, lest it should look on its Lord hanging on the Cross, or bestow its radiancy on the impious blasphemers.” And this withdrawal of the rays is not to be understood as though it were in the sun’s power to send forth or withdraw its rays: for it sheds its light, not from choice, but by nature, as Dionysius says (*Div. Nom.* iv). But the sun is said to withdraw its rays in so far as the Divine power caused the sun’s rays not to reach the earth. On the other hand, Origen says this was caused by clouds coming between (the earth and the sun). Hence on *Mat.* 27:45 he says: “We must therefore suppose that many large and very dense clouds were massed together over Jerusalem and the land of Judea; so that it was exceedingly dark from the sixth to the ninth hour. Hence I am of opinion that, just as the other signs which occurred at the time of the Passion”—namely, “the rending of the veil, the quaking of the earth,” etc.—“took place in Jerusalem only, so this also: . . . or if anyone prefer, it may be extended to the whole of Judea,” since it is said that “‘there was darkness over the whole earth,’ which expression refers to the land of Judea, as may be gathered from *3 Kings* 18:10, where Abdias says to Elias: ‘As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee’: which shows that they sought him among the nations in the neighborhood of Judea.”

On this point, however, credence is to be given rather to Dionysius, who is an eyewitness as to this having occurred by the moon eclipsing the sun. For he says (*Ep. ad Polycarp*): “Without any doubt we saw the moon encroach on the sun,” he being in Egypt at the time, as he says in the same letter. And in this he points out four miracles. The first is that the natural eclipse of the sun by interposition of the moon never takes place except when the sun and moon are in conjunction. But then the sun and moon were in opposition, it being the fifteenth day, since it was the Jewish Passover. Wherefore he says: “For it was not the time of conjunction.”—

The second miracle is that whereas at the sixth hour the moon was seen, together with the sun, in the middle of the heavens, in the evening it was seen to be in its place, i.e. in the east, opposite the sun. Wherefore he says: “Again we saw it,” i.e. the moon, “return supernaturally into opposition with the sun,” so as to be diametrically opposite, having withdrawn from the sun “at the ninth hour,” when the darkness ceased, “until evening.” From this it is clear that the wonted course of the seasons was not disturbed, because the Divine power caused the moon both to approach the sun supernaturally at an unwonted season, and to withdraw from the sun and return to its proper place according to the season. The third miracle was that the eclipse of the sun naturally always begins in that part of the sun which is to the west and spreads towards the east: and this is because the moon’s proper movement from west to east is more rapid than that of the sun, and consequently the moon, coming up from the west, overtakes the sun and passes it on its eastward course. But in this case the moon had already passed the sun, and was distant from it by the length of half the heavenly circle, being opposite to it: consequently it had to return eastwards towards the sun, so as to come into apparent contact with it from the east, and continue in a westerly direction. This is what he refers to when he says: “Moreover, we saw the eclipse begin to the east and spread towards the western edge of the sun,” for it was a total eclipse, “and afterwards pass away.” The fourth miracle consisted in this, that in a natural eclipse that part of the sun which is first eclipsed is the first to reappear (because the moon, coming in front of the sun, by its natural movement passes on to the east, so as to come away first from the western portion of the sun, which was the first part to be eclipsed), whereas in this case the moon, while returning miraculously from the east to the west, did not pass the sun so as to be to the west of it: but having reached the western edge of the sun returned towards the east: so that the last portion of the sun to be eclipsed was the first to reappear. Consequently the eclipse began towards the east, whereas the sun began to reappear towards the west. And to this he refers by saying: “Again we observed that the occultation and emersion did not begin from the same point,” i.e. on the same side of the sun, “but on opposite sides.”

Chrysostom adds a fifth miracle (*Hom.* lxxxviii in *Matth.*), saying that “the darkness in this case lasted for three hours, whereas an eclipse of the sun lasts but a short time, for it is soon over, as those know who have seen one.” Hence we are given to understand that the moon was stationary below the sun, except we prefer to say that the duration of the darkness was measured from the first moment of occultation of the sun to the moment when the sun had completely emerged from the eclipse.

But, as Origen says (on *Mat.* 27:45), “against this the children of this world object: How is it such a phenomenal occurrence is not related by any writer, whether Greek or barbarian?” And he says that someone of the name of Phlegon “relates in his chronicles

that this took place during the reign of Tiberius Caesar, but he does not say that it occurred at the full moon.” It may be, therefore, that because it was not the time for an eclipse, the various astronomers living then throughout the world were not on the look-out for one, and that they ascribed this darkness to some disturbance of the atmosphere. But in Egypt, where clouds are few on account of the tranquillity of the air, Dionysius and his companions were considerably astonished so as to make the aforesaid observations about this darkness.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Then, above all, was there need for miraculous proof of Christ’s Godhead, when the weakness of human nature was most apparent in Him. Hence it was that at His birth a new star appeared

in the heavens. Wherefore Maximus says (Serm. de Nativ. viii): “If thou disdain the manger, raise thine eyes a little and gaze on the new star in the heavens, proclaiming to the world the birth of our Lord.” But in His Passion yet greater weakness appeared in His manhood. Therefore there was need for yet greater miracles in the greater lights of the world. And, as Chrysostom says (Hom. lxxxviii in Matth.): “This is the sign which He promised to them who sought for one saying: ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign; and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet,’ referring to His Cross... and Resurrection... For it was much more wonderful that this should happen when He was crucified than when He was walking on earth.”

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### Whether Christ worked miracles fittingly on men?

IIIa q. 44 a. 3

**Objection 1.** It would seem that Christ worked miracles unfittingly on men. For in man the soul is of more import than the body. Now Christ worked many miracles on bodies, but we do not read of His working any miracles on souls: for neither did He convert any unbelievers to the faith mightily, but by persuading and convincing them with outward miracles, nor is it related of Him that He made wise men out of fools. Therefore it seems that He worked miracles on men in an unfitting manner.

**Objection 2.** Further, as stated above (q. 43, a. 2), Christ worked miracles by Divine power: to which it is proper to work suddenly, perfectly, and without any assistance. Now Christ did not always heal men suddenly as to their bodies: for it is written (Mk. 8:22-25) that, “taking the blind man by the hand, He led him out of the town; and, spitting upon his eyes, laying His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And, looking up, he said: I see men as it were trees walking. After that again He laid His hands upon his eyes, and he began to see, and was restored, so that he saw all things clearly.” It is clear from this that He did not heal him suddenly, but at first imperfectly, and by means of His spittle. Therefore it seems that He worked miracles on men unfittingly.

**Objection 3.** Further, there is no need to remove at the same time things which do not follow from one another. Now bodily ailments are not always the result of sin, as appears from our Lord’s words (Jn. 9:3): “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, that he should be born blind.” It was unseemly, therefore, for Him to forgive the sins of those who sought the healing of the body, as He is related to have done in the case of the man sick of the palsy (Mat. 9:2): the more that the healing of the body, being of less account than the forgiveness of sins, does not seem a sufficient argument for the power of forgiving sins.

**Objection 4.** Further, Christ’s miracles were worked in order to confirm His doctrine, and witness to His Godhead, as stated above (q. 43, a. 4). Now no man

should hinder the purpose of his own work. Therefore it seems unfitting that Christ commanded those who had been healed miraculously to tell no one, as appears from Mat. 9:30 and Mk. 8:26: the more so, since He commanded others to proclaim the miracles worked on them; thus it is related (Mk. 5:19) that, after delivering a man from the demons, He said to him: “Go into thy house to thy friends, and tell them, how great things the Lord hath done for thee.”

**On the contrary,** It is written (Mk. 7:37): “He hath done all things well: He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.”

**I answer that,** The means should be proportionate to the end. Now Christ came into the world and taught in order to save man, according to Jn. 3:17: “For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him.” Therefore it was fitting that Christ, by miraculously healing men in particular, should prove Himself to be the universal and spiritual Saviour of all.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The means are distinct from the end. Now the end for which Christ’s miracles were worked was the health of the rational part, which is healed by the light of wisdom, and the gift of righteousness: the former of which presupposes the latter, since, as it is written (Wis. 1:4): “Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins.” Now it was unfitting that man should be made righteous unless he willed: for this would be both against the nature of righteousness, which implies rectitude of the will, and contrary to the very nature of man, which requires to be led to good by the free-will, not by force. Christ, therefore, justified man inwardly by the Divine power, but not against man’s will. Nor did this pertain to His miracles, but to the end of His miracles. In like manner by the Divine power He infused wisdom into the simple minds of His disciples: hence He said to them (Lk. 21:15): “I will give you a mouth and wisdom” which “all your adversaries will not be able to resist and gainsay.” And this, in so far as the enlighten-

ment was inward, is not to be reckoned as a miracle, but only as regards the outward action—namely, in so far as men saw that those who had been unlettered and simple spoke with such wisdom and constancy. Wherefore it is written (Acts 4:13) that the Jews, “seeing the constancy of Peter and of John, understanding that they were illiterate and ignorant men. . . wondered.”—And though such like spiritual effects are different from visible miracles, yet do they testify to Christ’s doctrine and power, according to Heb. 2:4: “God also bearing them witness by signs and wonders and divers miracles, and distributions of the Holy Ghost.”

Nevertheless Christ did work some miracles on the soul of man, principally by changing its lower powers. Hence Jerome, commenting on Mat. 9:9, “He rose up and followed Him,” says: “Such was the splendor and majesty of His hidden Godhead, which shone forth even in His human countenance, that those who gazed on it were drawn to Him at first sight.” And on Mat. 21:12, “(Jesus) cast out all them that sold and bought,” the same Jerome says: “Of all the signs worked by our Lord, this seems to me the most wondrous—that one man, at that time despised, could, with the blows of one scourge, cast out such a multitude. For a fiery and heavenly light flashed from His eyes, and the majesty of His Godhead shone in His countenance.” And Origen says on Jn. 2:15 that “this was a greater miracle than when He changed water into wine, for there He shows His power over inanimate matter, whereas here He tames the minds of thousands of men.” Again, on Jn. 18:6, “They went backward and fell to the ground,” Augustine says: “Though that crowd was fierce in hate and terrible with arms, yet did that one word. . . without any weapon, smite them through, drive them back, lay them prostrate: for God lay hidden in that flesh.” Moreover, to this must be referred what Luke says (4:30) —namely, that Jesus, “passing through the midst of them, went His way,” on which Chrysostom observes (Hom. xlviii in Joan.): “That He stood in the midst of those who were lying in wait for Him, and was not seized by them, shows the power of His Godhead”; and, again, that which is written Jn. 8:59, “Jesus hid Himself and went out of the Temple,” on which Theophylact says: “He did not hide Himself in a corner of the Temple, as if afraid, or take shelter behind a wall or pillar; but by His heavenly power making Himself invisible to those who were threatening Him, He passed through the midst of them.”

From all these instances it is clear that Christ, when He willed, changed the minds of men by His Divine power, not only by the bestowal of righteousness and the infusion of wisdom, which pertains to the end of miracles, but also by outwardly drawing men to Himself, or by terrifying or stupefying them, which pertains to the miraculous itself.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Christ came to save the world, not only by Divine power, but also through the

mystery of His Incarnation. Consequently in healing the sick He frequently not only made use of His Divine power, healing by way of command, but also by applying something pertaining to His human nature. Hence on Lk. 4:40, “He, laying His hands on every one of them, healed them,” Cyril says: “Although, as God, He might, by one word, have driven out all diseases, yet He touched them, showing that His own flesh was endowed with a healing virtue.” And on Mk. 8:23, “Spitting upon his eyes, laying His hands on him,” etc., Chrysostom\* says: “He spat and laid His hands upon the blind man, wishing to show that His Divine word, accompanied by His operation, works wonders: for the hand signifies operation; the spittle signifies the word which proceeds from the mouth.” Again, on Jn. 9:6, “He made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon the eyes of the blind man,” Augustine says: “Of His spittle He made clay—because ‘the Word was made flesh.’” Or, again, as Chrysostom says, to signify that it was He who made man of “the slime of the earth.”

It is furthermore to be observed concerning Christ’s miracles that generally what He did was most perfect. Hence on Jn. 2:10, “Every man at first setteth forth good wine,” Chrysostom says: “Christ’s miracles are such as to far surpass the works of nature in splendor and usefulness.” Likewise in an instant He conferred perfect health on the sick. Hence on Mat. 8:15, “She arose and ministered to them,” Jerome says: “Health restored by our Lord returns wholly and instantly.”

There was, however, special reason for the contrary happening in the case of the man born blind, and this was his want of faith, as Chrysostom† says. Or as Bede observes on Mk. 8:23: “Whom He might have healed wholly and instantly by a single word, He heals little by little, to show the extent of human blindness, which hardly, and that only by degrees, can come back to the light: and to point out that each step forward in the way of perfection is due to the help of His grace.”

**Reply to Objection 3.** As stated above (q. 43, a. 2), Christ worked miracles by Divine power. Now “the works of God are perfect” (Dt. 32:4). But nothing is perfect except it attain its end. Now the end of the outward healing worked by Christ is the healing of the soul. Consequently it was not fitting that Christ should heal a man’s body without healing his soul. Wherefore on Jn. 7:23, “I have healed the whole man on a Sabbath day,” Augustine says: “Because he was cured, so as to be whole in body; he believed, so as to be whole in soul.” To the man sick of the palsy it is said specially, “Thy sins are forgiven thee,” because, as Jerome observes on Mat. 9:5,6: “We are hereby given to understand that ailments of the body are frequently due to sin: for which reason, perhaps, first are his sins forgiven, that the cause of the ailment being removed, health may return.” Wherefore, also (Jn. 4:14), it is said: “Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee.” Whence, says Chrysostom, “we learn that his sickness was the

\* Victor of Antioch † Victor of Antioch

result of sin.”

Nevertheless, as Chrysostom says on Mat. 9:5: “By how much a soul is of more account than a body, by so much is the forgiving of sins a greater work than healing the body; but because the one is unseen He does the lesser and more manifest thing in order to prove the greater and more unseen.”

**Reply to Objection 4.** On Mat. 9:30, “See that no man know this,” Chrysostom says: “If in another place we find Him saying, ‘Go and declare the glory of God’ (cf. Mk. 5:19; Lk. 8:39), that is not contrary to this. For He instructs us to forbid them that would praise us on our own account: but if the glory be referred to God, then we must not forbid, but command, that it be done.”

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### Whether Christ worked miracles fittingly on irrational creatures?

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IIIa q. 44 a. 4

**Objection 1.** It would seem that Christ worked miracles unfittingly on irrational creatures. For brute animals are more noble than plants. But Christ worked a miracle on plants as when the fig-tree withered away at His command (Mat. 21:19). Therefore Christ should have worked miracles also on brute animals.

**Objection 2.** Further, punishment is not justly inflicted save for fault. But it was not the fault of the fig-tree that Christ found no fruit on it, when fruit was not in season (Mk. 11:13). Therefore it seems unfitting that He withered it up.

**Objection 3.** Further, air and water are between heaven and earth. But Christ worked some miracles in the heavens, as stated above (a. 2), and likewise in the earth, when it quaked at the time of His Passion (Mat. 27:51). Therefore it seems that He should also have worked miracles in the air and water, such as to divide the sea, as did Moses (Ex. 14:21); or a river, as did Josue (Josh. 3:16) and Elias (4 Kings 2:8); and to cause thunder to be heard in the air, as occurred on Mount Sinai when the Law was given (Ex. 19:16), and like to what Elias did (3 Kings 18:45).

**Objection 4.** Further, miraculous works pertain to the work of Divine providence in governing the world. But this work presupposes creation. It seems, therefore, unfitting that in His miracles Christ made use of creation: when, to wit, He multiplied the loaves. Therefore His miracles in regard to irrational creatures seem to have been unfitting.

**On the contrary,** Christ is “the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24), of whom it is said (Wis. 8:1) that “she ordereth all things sweetly.”

**I answer that,** As stated above, Christ’s miracles were ordained to the end that He should be recognized as having Divine power, unto the salvation of mankind. Now it belongs to the Divine power that every creature be subject thereto. Consequently it behooved Him to work miracles on every kind of creature, not only on man, but also on irrational creatures.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Brute animals are akin generically to man, wherefore they were created on the same day as man. And since He had worked many miracles on the bodies of men, there was no need for Him to work miracles on the bodies of brute animals. and so much the less that, as to their sensible and corporeal nature, the same reason applies to both men and animals, especially terrestrial. But fish, from living in wa-

ter, are more alien from human nature; wherefore they were made on another day. On them Christ worked a miracle in the plentiful draught of fishes, related Lk. 5 and Jn. 21; and, again, in the fish caught by Peter, who found a stater in it (Mat. 17:26). As to the swine who were cast headlong into the sea, this was not the effect of a Divine miracle, but of the action of the demons, God permitting.

**Reply to Objection 2.** As Chrysostom says on Mat. 21:19: “When our Lord does any such like thing” on plants or brute animals, “ask not how it was just to wither up the fig-tree, since it was not the fruit season; to ask such a question is foolish in the extreme,” because such things cannot commit a fault or be punished: “but look at the miracle, and wonder at the worker.” Nor does the Creator “inflict” any hurt on the owner, if He choose to make use of His own creature for the salvation of others; rather, as Hilary says on Mat. 21:19, “we should see in this a proof of God’s goodness, for when He wished to afford an example of salvation as being procured by Him, He exercised His mighty power on the human body: but when He wished to picture to them His severity towards those who wilfully disobey Him, He foreshadows their doom by His sentence on the tree.” This is the more noteworthy in a fig-tree which, as Chrysostom observes (on Mat. 21:19), “being full of moisture, makes the miracle all the more remarkable.”

**Reply to Objection 3.** Christ also worked miracles befitting to Himself in the air and water: when, to wit, as related Mat. 8:26, “He commanded the winds, and the sea, and there came a great calm.” But it was not befitting that He who came to restore all things to a state of peace and calm should cause either a disturbance in the atmosphere or a division of waters. Hence the Apostle says (Heb. 12:18): “You are not come to a fire that may be touched and approached [Vulg.: ‘a mountain that might be touched, and a burning fire’], and a whirlwind, and darkness, and storm.”

At the time of His Passion, however, the “veil was rent,” to signify the unfolding of the mysteries of the Law; “the graves were opened,” to signify that His death gave life to the dead; “the earth quaked and the rocks were rent,” to signify that man’s stony heart would be softened, and the whole world changed for the better by the virtue of His Passion.

**Reply to Objection 4.** The multiplication of the loaves was not effected by way of creation, but by an

addition of extraneous matter transformed into loaves; hence Augustine says on Jn. 6:1-14: “Whence He multiplied a few grains into harvests, thence in His hands He multiplied the five loaves”: and it is clearly by a process of transformation that grains are multiplied into harvests.