

**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 water, 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 multiplieth 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.