

INTRODUCTORY

LESSONS ON MORALS,

AND

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

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LESSON V.

MIRACLES. — PART I.

§ 1. THE people who lived in the times of the Apostles, though they had not seen so much as we have of the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies, yet had seen them so far fulfilled in Jesus, as to afford good reasons for receiving Him.

But you may, perhaps, be inclined to wonder how they should need to search the Old Testament Scriptures for a confirmation of what the Apostles taught, if those Apostles really performed such miracles as we read of. It may seem strange to you, that men who healed the sick with a touch, and displayed so many other signs, far beyond human power, should not have been at once believed, when they called themselves God's messengers.

§ 2. I have said that the works performed by Jesus and his disciples were beyond the unassisted powers of man. And this, I think, is the best description of what is meant by a miracle. *Superhuman* would perhaps be a better word to apply to a miracle than *supernatural*; for if we believe that "nature" is merely another word to signify that state of things, and course of events, which God has appointed, nothing that occurs can be strictly called "supernatural." Jesus himself according-

ly describes his works, not as violations of the laws of nature, but as "works which *none other man* did." But what is in general meant by "supernatural," is something out of the *ordinary* course of nature ; something at variance with those laws of nature which *we* have been *accustomed to*.

But then it might be objected, that we cannot decide what does violate the ordinary laws of nature, unless we can be sure that we are *acquainted* with all those laws. For instance, an inhabitant of the tropical climates might think it contrary to the laws of nature that water should never become hard ; since he had never seen ice. And when electricity was first discovered, many of its effects were contrary to the laws of nature which had been hitherto known. But any one who visits colder regions may see with his own eyes that water does become solid. And any one who will procure an electrical machine, or who attends lectures on the subject, may see for himself the effects of electricity.

Now suppose Jesus had been a person who had discovered some new natural agent, through which any man might be enabled to cure diseases by a touch, and perform the other wonderful works which He did, and through which any one else might have done the like, this would soon have become known and practised by all ; just like the use of electricity, or of any newly discovered medicine ; and from his time down to this day every one would have commonly performed just the same works that he did. He might indeed have kept it to himself as a secret, and thus have induced some to believe that He wrought miracles. But so far from acting thus, He imparted his power first to the twelve

related by the Christian writers in the New Testament, but is a *common tradition among the unbelieving Jews at this very day*, who have among them an ancient book giving this account of the origin of Christianity. And there can be no doubt that this must have been (as our sacred writers tell us it was) what the adversaries of Jesus maintained from the first. For if those who lived on the spot in his time had denied or doubted the facts of the miracles, and had declared that the accounts of them were false tales, and that no miracles had ever really been wrought, we may be sure that the same would have been said ever after by their descendants. They would never have thought of rejecting the accounts given by their own ancestors, and preferring that of the Christian writers. If, therefore, any of the Jews among whom Jesus lived had denied the fact of his miraculous powers, it is inconceivable that another generation of Jews should have betaken themselves to the pretence of magic to account for miracles which had never been acknowledged at the time, but had been reckoned impostures by the very people among whom they were said to have been performed.

The Pagan adversaries of Christianity also seem to have had the same persuasion on this subject as the Jews, and to have attributed the Christian miracles to magical art. We learn this from all the remains that have come down to us of the ancient writings against Christianity, and of the answers to them written by Christians.

§ 3. Now suppose that in the present day any one should appear professing to be sent from God, and to work miracles as a sign of his being so sent, you would

naturally think that the only question would be as to the reality of the miracles ; and that all men would at once believe him as soon as ever they were satisfied that he had performed something clearly beyond human power. But men certainly did not judge so in ancient times. It was not then only one question, but two, that had to be settled : first, whether any sign had really been displayed which showed a power beyond that of man ; and secondly, whether this supernatural power came from God, or from an evil demon.

Now, after the former of these questions was decided, that is, after the fact of the miracles was admitted, the Jews were inclined still to doubt or disbelieve the religion which Jesus taught, because it was so different from what they had been used to expect ; and hence it was that the greater part of them attributed his miracles to magic. But others were of a more candid mind, (“ more noble,” as it is in our translation,) such as the people of Beræa. These, by carefully searching the Scriptures, satisfied themselves that the ancient prophecies respecting the Christ did really agree with all that Jesus had done and suffered. And this it was that convinced them that his miracles were wrought, not by evil spirits, but by the Divine power ; and thus they were brought to the conclusion that the “ kingdom of Heaven was at hand.”

§ 4. If, then, any one should say to you, “ How great an advantage the people who lived in those days, and saw miracles performed before their eyes, must have had over us, who only read of them in ancient books ; and how can men in these days be expected to believe as firmly as *they* did ? ” you may answer, that different

men's trials and advantages are pretty nearly balanced. The people who lived in those times were not (any more than ourselves) forced into belief, whether they would or no, but were left to exercise candor in judging fairly from the evidence before them. Those of them who were resolved to yield to their prejudices against Jesus, and to reject him, found a ready excuse (an excuse which would not be listened to now) by attributing his miracles to the magical arts which in those days were commonly believed in. And again, though they saw many miracles which we only read of, they did not see that great miracle (as it may be called) which is before our eyes, in the fulfilment of prophecy since their time. They could see, indeed, many prophecies fulfilled in Jesus; but we have an advantage over them, in witnessing the more complete fulfilment of the prophecies respecting the wonderful spread of his religion.

LESSON VI.

MIRACLES. — PART II.

§ 1. “BUT can we of these days really find sufficient proof,” some one may say, “and such proof as is within the reach of ordinary Christians, for believing that miracles really were performed which we never saw, but which are recorded in books as having happened nearly eighteen hundred years ago?” Is it not expecting a great deal of us, to require us to believe that there were persons who used to cure blindness and other diseases by a touch or a word, and raise the dead, and still the raging of the sea, and feed a multitude with a few loaves?

Certainly these things are in themselves hard to be believed; and if we were to find in some ancient book accounts of some great wonders which led to no *effects that exist at this day*, and had nothing to do with the present state of things among us, we might well be excused for doubting or disbelieving such accounts; or at least none but learned men, who had the ability and the opportunity to make full inquiry into the evidence of such a book, could fairly be expected to trouble themselves about the question. But the case of the Christian miracles is not one of this kind. They are closely connected with something which we do see before us

at this day ; namely, with the existence of the Christian religion in so great a part of the world. A man cannot, indeed, be fairly required to believe anything very strange and unlikely, except when there is something still *more* strange and unlikely on the opposite side. Now that is just the case with respect to the Christian miracles ; for, wonderful as the whole Gospel history is, the most wonderful thing of all is, that a Jewish peasant should have succeeded in changing the religion of the world. That *he should have succeeded in doing this without displaying any miracles, would have been more wonderful than all the miracles that are recorded ;* and that he should have accomplished all this by means of *pretended* miracles when none were really performed, would be the most incredible of all. So that those who are unwilling to believe anything that is strange, cannot escape doing so by disbelieving the Gospel, but will have to believe something still more strange if they reject the Gospel.

§ 2. And it is the same in many other cases as well as in what relates to religion. We are often obliged to believe, at any rate, in something that is very wonderful, in order to avoid believing something else that is still more wonderful. For instance, it is well known that in these islands, and in several other parts of the world, there are great beds of sea-shells found near the tops of hills, sometimes several thousand feet above the sea. Now it is certainly very hard to believe that the sea should ever have covered those places which now lie so far above it. And yet we are compelled to believe this, because we cannot think of any other way that is not far more incredible by which those shells have been deposited there.

And so it is with the Gospel history. We are sure that the Christian religion does now exist, and has overspread most of the civilized world; and we know that it was not first introduced and propagated (like that of Mohammed) by force of arms. To believe that it was received, and made its way, without miracles, would be to believe something more miraculous (if one may so speak) than all the miracles that our books record.

§ 3. But some people may say that the ancient Jews and Pagans, who so readily believed in magical arts and the power of demons, must have been very weak and credulous men; and that therefore they may have given credit to tales of miracles without making any careful inquiry. Now there is, indeed, no doubt that they were weak and credulous; but this weakness and credulity would never have led them to believe what was against their early prejudices, and expectations, and wishes: quite the contrary. *The more weak and credulous any man is, the harder it is to convince him of anything that is opposite to his habits of thought and inclinations.* He will readily receive without proof anything that falls in with his prejudices, and will be disposed to hold out against any evidence that goes against them.

Now all the prejudices of the Jews and Pagans were against the religion that Jesus and his Apostles taught; and, accordingly, we might have expected that the most credulous of them should have done just what our histories tell us they did; that is, resolved to reject the religion at any rate, and readily satisfy themselves with some weak and absurd way of accounting for the miracles. But credulous as they were about magic, the enemies of Jesus would never have resorted to that pre-

tence, if they could have denied the facts. They would certainly have been more ready to maintain, if possible, that no miracles had taken place, than to explain them as performed by magic; because this pretence only went to make out that Jesus, notwithstanding his miracles, *might possibly* not come from God; whereas, if they could have shown that He or his Apostles had attempted to deceive people by pretended miracles, this would at once have held them up to scorn as impostors.

§ 4. We read in the Gospel of John (chap. ix.), that the Jewish rulers narrowly examined into the reality of a miracle performed by Jesus, on a man that was born blind. This is exactly what we may be sure must have been done in the case of other miracles also; and if the enemies of Jesus could have succeeded in detecting and exposing any falsehood or trick, they would have been eager to do so; because they would have been thus sure to overthrow his pretensions at once.

It is plain, therefore, that the weakness and credulity of the people of those days would be very far from disposing them readily to give credit to miracles in favor of a religion that was opposed to their prejudices; and that, on the contrary, such persons would be likely, some of them obstinately, to reject the religion, and others only gradually and slowly to receive it, after having carefully searched the ancient prophecies, and found that these went to confirm it. Now this is just the account that our histories give.

It appears certain, then, that the unbelieving Jews and Pagans of those days did find it impossible to throw any doubt on the fact of the miracles having really been

performed ; because *that* would have enabled them easily to expose Jesus to contempt as an impostor. *Their acknowledging the miracles, and attributing them to magic, as the unbelieving Jews do to this day, shows that the evidence for them, after the strictest scrutiny by the most bitter enemies, was perfectly undeniable, at the time and place when they were said to be performed.*

LESSON VII.

MIRACLES. — PART III.

§ 1. THERE are persons, some of whom you may, perhaps, meet with, who, though they are believers in Christianity, yet will not allow that the miracles recorded in Scripture are any ground for their belief. They are convinced (they will tell you) that Jesus Christ came from God, because “never man spake like this man.” They find the religion so pure and admirable in itself, and they feel it so well suited to their wants, and to the wants of all mankind, and so full of heavenly wisdom and goodness, that they need no other proof of its being from heaven; but as for miracles, these (they will tell you) are among the difficulties to be got over: they believe them as a *part* of the religion, from finding them recorded in the Bible; but they would have believed the Gospel as easily, or more easily, without them. The miracles (they will say) were indeed a proof to those who lived at the time, and *saw* them; but to us of the present day, who only *read* of them, they are a part of our faith, and not a part of the *evidence* of our faith. For it is a greater trial of faith, they say, to believe in such wonderful works as Jesus is said to have performed, than to believe that such wise and excellent doctrine as He delivered was truly from heaven.

Now there is indeed much truth in a part of what these persons say; but they do not take a clear view of the whole subject of evidence. It is indeed true, that there is, as they observe, great weight in the internal evidence (as it is called) of Christianity; that is, the reasons for believing it from the character of the religion itself. The more you study it, the more strongly you will perceive that it is such a religion as no *man* would have been likely to invent; and of all men, a Jew most unlikely. But there are many different kinds of evidence for the same truth; and one kind of evidence may the most impress one man's mind, and another another's. And, among the rest, the Christian miracles certainly are a very decisive proof of the truth of Christ's religion to any one who is convinced (as you have seen there is reason to be) that they really were wrought. Of course, there is more difficulty for us in making out this point, than there was for men who lived at the same times and places with Jesus and his Apostles; but when this point *has* been made out, and we do believe the miracles, they are no less a proof of the religion to us than to those early Christians.

§ 2. It is quite a mistake to suppose that the difficulty of proving any fact makes that fact, when it is proved, a less convincing proof of something else. For example, — to take an instance formerly given, — those who live in the neighborhood of the places where great beds of sea-shells are found near the tops of hills, and have seen them there themselves, are convinced by this that at some time or other those beds must have been under the sea. Now a person who lives at a distance from such places has more difficulty than those on the

spot, in making out whether there *are* any such beds of shells. He has to inquire of travellers, or of those who have conversed with them; and to consult books, and perhaps examine pieces of the rock containing some of the shells; but when once he is fully satisfied that there are such beds of sea-shells, this is just as good a proof to him as to the others, that the sea must have formerly covered them.

And so also, in respect of the Christian miracles. The difficulty we may have in deciding whether they were really wrought, does not make them (when we *are* convinced that they were wrought) a less decisive proof that the Christian religion is from God.

But as for the difficulty of believing in anything so strange and wonderful as those miracles, you should remember, that every difficulty (as was observed before) should be weighed against that on the opposite side. Now, the difficulty of believing the miracles recorded in our sacred books is much less than the opposite difficulty of believing that the Christian religion was established without miracles. That a Jewish peasant should have overthrown the religion of the civilized world, without the aid of any miracles, is far more miraculous, — at least, more incredible, — than anything that our books relate; and it will appear still more incredible, if you remember that this wonderful change was brought about *by means of an appeal* to miracles. Jesus and his Apostles did certainly *profess* to display miraculous powers in proof of their being sent from God; and this would have been the greatest hindrance to their propagating a new religion, if they had really possessed no such powers; because this

pretence would have laid them open to detection and ridicule.

§ 3. But there is a distinction between our religion and all others, which is often overlooked. Almost all religions have some miraculous pretensions connected with them ; that is, miracles are recorded to have been wrought in support of some Pagan religion, among people who *already* believed it. But you will not find that any religion except ours was ever *introduced* — and introduced among enemies — by miraculous pretensions. Ours is the only faith that ever was FOUNDED on an appeal to the evidence of miracles. And we have every reason to believe that no such attempt ever did or could succeed, if the miracles were not really performed. The difficulty, therefore, of believing that the Christian religion was propagated by means of miracles, is nothing in comparison of the difficulty of believing that it could have been propagated without any.

Indeed, we have every reason to believe, that many *more* miracles must have been performed than are particularly related. Several particular cases, indeed, of our Lord's miracles were described ; but, besides these, we are told, in various places, of great multitudes of sick people being brought to him, and that " He healed them all." (Matt. xii. 15 ; xix. 2.) So also, besides particular miracles related as done by the Apostles, (Acts ii. 33 ; iii. 7 ; ix. 33 ; xiii. 11 ; xiv. 8 ; xxviii. 5,) we are told, generally, of their not only performing many miracles, (Acts viii. 6 ; xix. 11,) but also bestowing miraculous powers on great numbers of disciples. (Acts vi. 5, 8 ; x. 44 ; xix. 6.) And we find St. Paul, in one of his Epistles, speaking of it as a thing famil-

ially known, that miracles were “the sign of an Apostle.” (2 Cor. xii. 12.) And in all these books we find miracles not boastfully dwelt on, or described as something unusual, but *alluded* to as familiarly known to the persons to whom the books were familiarly addressed; that is, to the Christians of those days.

§ 4. But besides the accounts given in the Christian Scriptures, we might be sure, from the very nature of the case, that the Apostles could never have even *gained a hearing*, at least among the Gentiles, if they had not displayed some extraordinary and supernatural power. Fancy a few poor Jewish fishermen, tent-makers, and peasants going into one of the great Roman or Grecian cities, whose inhabitants were proud of the splendid temples, and beautiful images of their gods, which had been worshipped time out of mind by their ancestors; they were proud, too, of their schools of philosophy, where those reputed the wisest men among them discoursed on the most curious and sublime subjects, to the youth of the noblest families; and then fancy these Jewish strangers telling them to cast away their images as an abominable folly, — to renounce the religion of their ancestors, — to reject with scorn the instructions of their philosophers, — and to receive instead, as a messenger from heaven, a Jew, of humble station, who had been put to the most shameful death. How do you think men would have been received who should have made such an attempt as this, with merely such weak human means as preaching? You cannot doubt that all men would have scorned them, and ridiculed or pitied them as madmen.

§ 5. As for the wisdom and purity and sublimity of

the religion of the Gospel, this might have gained them some attention,—not, indeed, among the mass of the people, who were too gross to relish or perceive this purity and wisdom,—but among a very few of the better sort, if once they could be brought to listen to the description of the religion. And this, perhaps, they might have done if it had been taught by some Greek or Roman philosophers, famous for knowledge and wisdom. But the Gospel was preached by men of a nation which the Greeks and Romans looked down upon as barbarian; and whose religion, especially, they scorned and detested for being so different from their own. And not only did the Apostles belong to this despised nation, but they were the outcasts of that very nation, being rejected and abhorred by the chief part of their Jewish brethren.

If, therefore, they had come among the Gentiles teaching the most sublime religious doctrine, and trusting merely to the excellence of what they taught, it is impossible they should have even had a hearing. It is not enough to say that no one would have *believed* them; but no one would even have *listened* to them, if they had not first roused men's serious attention by working (as we are told they did) “remarkable [special] miracles.” (Acts xix. 11.)

§ 6. Afterwards, indeed, when the Gospel had spread, so as to excite general attention, many men would be likely to listen to the preaching of it even by persons who did not pretend to miraculous power, but who merely bore witness to the miracles they had seen; giving proof, at the same time, that they were not false witnesses by their firmness in facing persecution. And

this was certainly a good ground for believing their testimony. For though men may be mistaken as to the *opinions* which they sincerely hold, they could not be mistaken as to such *facts* as the Christian miracles, of which they professed themselves eyewitnesses; as the Apostles, for instance, were of their Master's resurrection. And it is not to be conceived that men would expose themselves to dangers and tortures and death in attesting false stories, which they must have known to be false. If there had been any well-contrived imposture in respect of pretended miracles, it is impossible but that some persons at least, out of the many hundreds brought forward as eyewitnesses, would have been induced by threats, tortures, or bribes to betray the imposture.

There were many, therefore, who received the Gospel—and with good reason—on such testimony as this, as soon as they could be brought to listen to and examine it. But, in the first instance, the Apostles could not have brought any of the Gentiles, at least, to listen to them, if they had not begun by working evident miracles themselves. A handful of Jewish strangers, of humble rank, would never have obtained a hearing among the most powerful and most civilized and proudest nations of the world, if they had not at first roused their attention by the display of some extraordinary powers.

LESSON VIII.

WONDERS AND SIGNS.

§ 1. It is plain, for the reasons which have been put before you, that the Apostles must have roused men's attention, and gained themselves a hearing, by performing — as our books tell us they did — many wonderful works. And these works, as well as those of Jesus, which they related, must have been such as to admit of no mistake either about the facts or about their being really superhuman. Else, surrounded as they were by enemies, and with men's prejudices opposed to them, it seems impossible they could have been believed, or even attended to. If, for instance, there were a report of some sick men having been miraculously cured by them, but such a report as to leave a doubt either as to the *fact* of the cure having taken place, or as to the *manner* of the cure, — that is, whether the man might not have recovered by natural means, — any such doubt would have been enough to have shut men's ears against them.

And besides this, it was necessary that the miracles should be both so numerous and so various in kind as to exceed the powers generally supposed to belong to magicians. For most persons seem to have thought that a magician might, through the aid of demons, be enabled

to perform *some* miracles, and not others of a different kind. We find it related, accordingly, that Jesus not only healed the lame and blind and sick, some present and some absent, grown persons and children, but also raised the dead, fed a multitude with a few loaves, stilled the waves and winds at his bidding, blasted a tree at his word, changed water into wine, &c. And this seems to have been no more than a necessary condescension to the weakness of men's minds in those days. They did not at once conclude that he must be a true prophet from his working *one* miracle; but said, "When [the] Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man doeth?" (John vii. 31.) So also Nicodemus says, not "No man can do *any* miracles," but "No man can do *these* miracles which thou doest, except God be with him." (John iii. 2.) And the disciples, who had witnessed so many miraculous cures, were astonished, we are told, at finding that Jesus had a command over the storm. "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" (Matt. viii. 27.)

And we find the same variety also in the miraculous gifts possessed by the Apostles, and bestowed by them on other Christians (as you may see in 1 Cor. xii. and elsewhere).

§ 2. You should observe, too, that it would not have satisfied men's minds merely to see some extraordinary occurrence, unless it were also something plainly *done* by the Apostles, as a *sign*, testifying that they were divine messengers. It would have been impossible for them, in the midst of adversaries, to take advantage of some remarkable event, calling it a miracle, and to explain it so as to favor their own pretensions.

This has often been done, indeed, in support of some religion, or some doctrine, which men already believe, or are inclined to believe. The Pagans were, many of them, ready enough to attribute anything wonderful to a miraculous interference of Jupiter or some of their other gods. And so, also, Mohammed easily persuaded his followers that some of his victories were miraculous, and that God sent angels to fight for him. He was a great warrior, and his followers, being full of enthusiasm, and eager for conquest, glory, and plunder, often defeated a very superior force of their enemies, and gained victories, which may be rightly called wonderful, though not more wonderful than several which have been gained by others. It is not strange, therefore, that Mohammed should easily have persuaded them that their victories were miraculous, and were a proof that God was on their side.

§ 3. In all times, indeed, men are to be found who call any extraordinary event miraculous, and interpret it so as to favor their own views and prejudices. If a man's life is preserved from shipwreck, or any other danger, in a remarkable manner, many people speak of it as a miraculous escape. Or if a man loses his life in a remarkable manner, or a plot is discovered by some curious train of circumstances, or, in short, if any extraordinary event takes place, there are persons who at once will call it a miraculous interference, and a *sign* of the Divine favor or displeasure towards some of the parties concerned.

§ 4. But it is very rash to pronounce in this manner as to any remarkable event that occurs. A mere *wonderful occurrence*, of itself, *proves* nothing ; but when a

man *does* something that is beyond human power to do, or *foretells* something beyond human foresight, and makes this a testimony of his coming from God, it is then, and then only, that he is properly said to offer a miraculous proof. And accordingly the works performed by Jesus and his Apostles are called in Scripture, not merely (as they really were) *Miracles* (that is, *wonders*), but *Signs*; that is, miraculous *evidence*. (Mark xvi. 20.)

For instance, that a violent storm should suddenly cease, and be succeeded by a complete calm, is something extraordinary; but of itself proves nothing. But when the disciples heard Jesus give his command, and rebuke the wind and waves, which immediately became still, they justly regarded this as a *sign* that God was with him. (Matt. viii. 26.) So also, that a person seemingly dead should suddenly revive and rise up, is indeed a wonderful event; but, of itself, is merely a wonder. But when Jesus told the child of Jairus, (Luke viii. 54,) and the widow's son of Nain, (Luke vii. 14,) to rise up, and each of them did so at his word, these became proofs of his divine mission. These were among the "works which," as he said, "bore *witness* of Him." Again, if any one who is opposing some particular religious sect or system, should suddenly lose his eyesight, it would be very presumptuous to pronounce at once that he was struck blind as a divine judgment. But when St. Paul rebuked Elymas, and declared that the hand of the Lord was upon him, and that he should become blind, and immediately a darkness did fall upon him, (Acts xiii. 10, 11,) the Roman governor justly regarded this as a *sign*; and believed accordingly in what Paul was teaching.

§ 5. Anything wonderful, in short, is then (and then only) a miraculous sign, when some one *performs* or *foretells* it, in a manner surpassing human power, so as to make it *attest* the truth of what he says. And this may fairly be required of any one professing to be a messenger from Heaven. For if a stranger were to come to you professing to bring a message from some friend of yours, you would naturally expect him to show you that friend's handwriting, or some other such *token*, to prove that he really was so sent. And so also, when a man comes to this country as an ambassador from some other country, he is required first to produce his "*credentials*," as they are called; that is, papers which prove that he is no impostor, but is really commissioned as an ambassador. And it is equally right, that men professing to bring a message immediately from God should be required to show what may be called their "*credentials*"; that is, such miraculous powers as God alone could have bestowed, as a sign or token, to prove the reality of their divine commission.

§ 6. But credulous and superstitious people often overlook this rule; and are ready to interpret as a miraculous sign any remarkable occurrence, — such as a victory, or a famine, or a thunder-storm, or a sudden recovery from sickness, or the like, — when these are so explained as to favor, or at least not oppose, their prejudices, and the religious belief they are already inclined to. The Apostles, however, found no such prejudices in their favor. They would never have been allowed to explain in their own way anything strange that might happen. On the contrary, all the superstitious credulity of the people was *opposed* to them. And instead of

men's being ready to cry "Miracle!" when anything extraordinary occurred, and to interpret it in favor of Christianity, the Apostles found the most credulous men disposed rather to attribute the Christian miracles to magic.

In order to gain converts, therefore, or even to obtain a hearing, they must have shown (as our books tell us they did) many mighty works, evidently performed by them, as "the Signs of an Apostle."