

## QUESTION 44

### The Individual Species of Miracles

Next we have to consider the individual species of miracles: (1) the miracles Christ worked with respect to spiritual substances; (2) the miracles He worked with respect to celestial bodies; (3) the miracles He worked with respect to human beings; and (4) the miracles He worked with respect to non-rational creatures.

#### Article 1

##### Were the miracles Christ worked with respect to spiritual substances appropriate?

It seems that the miracles Christ worked with respect to spiritual substances were not appropriate (*miracula quae Christus fecit circa spirituales substantias, non fuerint convenientia*):

**Objection 1:** Among spiritual substances, the holy angels are more powerful than the demons (*praepollent daemonibus*), since, as Augustine says in *De Trinitate* 3, “The rational spirit of life that is a deserter and a sinner is ruled by the rational spirit of life that is pious and just.” But we do not read that Christ worked any miracles with respect to the good angels. Therefore, He should not have worked any miracles with respect to the demons, either.

**Objection 2:** Christ’s miracles were ordered toward manifesting His divine nature. But Christ’s divine nature was not going to be made manifest to the demons, because the mystery of His passion would have been impeded by this—this according to 1 Corinthians 2:8 (“If they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory”). Therefore, it was not appropriate for Christ to work miracles with respect to the demons.

**Objection 3:** Christ’s miracles were ordered toward the glory of God; hence, Matthew 9:8 says, “When the crowds saw” the paralytic healed by Christ, “they were struck with fear and glorified God, who had given such power to men.” But it does not belong to the demons to glorify God, since, as Ecclesiasticus 15:9 says, “Praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner.” Hence, as Mark 1:34 and Luke 4:41 report, He did not allow the demons to say anything that pertained to the glory of God. Therefore, it seems that it was not appropriate for Him to work miracles with respect to the demons.

**Objection 4:** The miracles worked by Christ are ordered toward the salvation of men. But certain demons were driven out of men with detriment to those men. In some cases this detriment was bodily; for instance, Mark 9:24-25 says that at Christ’s command, a demon, “crying out and violently convulsing [the man], went out of him; and he became like one dead, so that many said, ‘He is dead’.” Again, in some cases there is a loss of property, as when, according to Matthew 8:28-34, He sent the demons, at their request, into the pigs, whom they drove over the cliff into the sea; because of this, the citizens of that region “asked Him to depart from their district.” Therefore, it seems to have been inappropriate to work miracles of this sort.

**But contrary to this:** This had been foretold in Zachariah 13:2, where it says, “I will drive the unclean spirit from the earth.”

**I respond:** The miracles that Christ worked served as evidence for the Faith which He was teaching. But by the power of His divine nature He was going to exclude the power of the demons from the men who were about to believe in Him—this according to John 12:31 (“Now shall the prince of this world be cast out”). And so it was appropriate that, among other miracles, He should liberate those who were possessed by demons.

**Reply to objection 1:** Just as men were going to be liberated by Christ from the power of the demons, so through Him they were going to be brought into companionship with the angels—this

according to Colossians 1:20 (“Reconciling by the blood of His cross all things on earth and in heaven”). And so it was not appropriate for Him to show men other miracles with respect to the angels, except in order that angels might appear to men, as happened at His nativity, at His resurrection, and at His ascension.

**Reply to objection 2:** As Augustine says in *De Civitate Dei* 9, “Christ made Himself known to the demons only to the extent that He wanted to be known, and He wanted to be known by them only to the extent that it was necessary. But He made Himself known to them not as He was known to the holy angels, through His being eternal life, but through certain temporal effects of His power.”

And, first of all, when they saw that He was hungry after His fast, they determined that He was not the Son of God. Hence, in commenting on Luke 4:3 (“If you are the Son of God, etc.”), Ambrose says, “What does such an opening line mean except that he knew that the Son of God was going to come, and yet, because of the weakness of [Jesus’s] body, he did not think that the Son of God had indeed come?” But afterwards, having seen the miracles, he guessed, on the basis of a suspicion, that He was indeed the Son of God. Hence, in commenting on Mark 1:24 (“I know that you are the holy one of God”), Chrysostom says, “He did not have certain or firm knowledge of the coming of God. Yet he knew that He was the Christ ‘promised in the Law.’” Hence, Luke 4:41 says, “... because they knew that He was the Christ.” But the fact that they confessed Him to be the Son of God was based more on a suspicion than on a certitude. Hence, in *Super Lucam* Bede says, “The demons confess the Son of God and, as it says further on, ‘they knew that He was the Christ’. For when the devil saw Him weakened by His fast, He understood Him to be a real man, but when he failed to prevail over Him with his temptation, he was in doubt about whether He was the Son of God. But now, because of the power of His miracles, he understood or, better, suspected that He was indeed the Son of God. Therefore, he persuaded the Jews to crucify Him not because he did not think Him to be the Christ or the Son of God, but because he did not foresee that he would lose out by His death. For the Apostle says of ‘this mystery hidden from the beginning’, that ‘none of the princes of this world knew it, since if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory’.”

**Reply to objection 3:** Christ worked the miracles of expelling demons not for the good of the demons, but for the good of the men, so that they might glorify Him. And the reasons why he forbade the demons from saying things that were relevant to praising Him were these:

First of all, to give us an example. For as Athanasius says, “He suppressed [the demon’s] speech, even though the demon was speaking the truth, in order to habituate us not to care about such things, even if it seems that what is being said is true. For it is wrong for us to be instructed by the devil, given that we have the divine Scripture.” Indeed, this is dangerous, since the demons often mix in lies with the truth.

Second, as Chrysostom explains, “It was not fitting for [the demons] to usurp the prerogative of the apostolic office. Nor was it fitting for the mystery of Christ to be proclaimed by a corrupt tongue.” For “praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner.”

Third, because, as Bede says, “He did not want the envy of the Jews to be inflamed by this. Hence, even the apostles themselves were ordered to be silent about Him, lest, once His divine majesty had been proclaimed, the working out of His passion might be delayed.”

**Reply to objection 4:** Christ came specifically to teach and to work miracles for the good of men, mainly with respect to the salvation of their souls. And that is why He permitted the demons whom He expelled to inflict some harm on the men, either in their bodies or with respect to their property. Hence, in *Super Matthaëum* Chrysostom says that Christ “permitted the demons to go into the pigs not because He was persuaded by the demons, but, first of all, to show the great harmfulness of the demons who lie in wait for men; second, in order that everyone might see that the demons did not dare to do anything to the pigs unless He permitted it; third, in order to show that the demons would do more serious damage to

those men than they did to the pigs, if the men were not protected by God's providence."

And for the same reasons He likewise permitted the one who had been liberated from the demons to be more gravely afflicted for a time, and yet He immediately liberated him from that affliction. It is also thereby shown, as Bede says, that "oftentimes, when we try to turn to God after sinning, we are battered with new and greater attacks from our old enemy. He does this either to produce a hatred of virtue or to avenge the injury of his having been expelled." In like manner, the healed man "becomes like one dead," explains Jerome, "because those who have been healed are being told, 'You have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God' (Colossians 3:3)."

## Article 2

### Was it appropriate for miracles with respect to celestial bodies to be worked by Christ?

It seems that it was inappropriate for miracles with respect to celestial bodies to be worked by Christ (*inconvenienter fuerint a Christo facta miracula circa caelestia corpora*):

**Objection 1:** As Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, "It belongs to divine providence to preserve nature and not to corrupt it." But as is proved in *De Caelo* 1, celestial bodies are by their nature incorruptible and inalterable. Therefore, it was not appropriate for any mutations with respect to the order of the celestial bodies to be worked by Christ.

**Objection 2:** The course of time is marked out by the movement of the celestial bodies—this according to Genesis 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"). So, then, if the course of the celestial bodies is changed, then the distinction among, and the order of, times is changed. But we do not read that this has been perceived by the astronomers (*ab astrologis*), who "contemplate the stars and measure the months," as Isaiah 47:13 says. Therefore, it seems that no changes were made by Christ with respect to the course of the celestial bodies.

**Objection 3:** It is more appropriate for Christ to work miracles while He is living and teaching than while He is dying, both because (a), as 2 Corinthians 13:4 says, "Christ was crucified through weakness, but He lives through the power of God," in keeping with which He worked miracles, and also because (b) His miracles were meant to confirm His teaching. But we do not read that Christ worked any miracles with respect to the celestial bodies during His life—just the opposite, we read in Matthew 12:38-39 and 16:1-4 that when the Pharisees asked Him for "a sign from heaven," He refused to give one. Therefore, it seems that it was not appropriate for Him to work any miracle with respect to the celestial bodies at the time of His death, either.

**But contrary to this:** Luke 23:44-45 says, "There was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened."

**I respond:** As was explained above (q. 43, a. 4), it was appropriate for Christ's miracles to be such that they sufficiently showed that He is God. But this is not as evidently shown by changes in lower bodies, which can also be brought about by other causes, as it is by changes in the course of the celestial bodies, which are ordered immutably by God alone. This is what Dionysius has to say in *Epistola ad Polycarpum*: "We must recognize that nothing in the order and movement of the heavens can be undermined (*posse perverti*) at any time or in any way unless such a change has as its moving cause the one who makes all things and changes all things by His word." And so it was appropriate for Christ to work miracles even with respect to the celestial bodies.

**Reply to objection 1:** Just as it is natural to lower bodies to be moved by the celestial bodies,

which are higher according to the order of nature, so, too, it is natural to every creature that it might be changed by God according to His will. Hence, in *Contra Faustum* 26 (and this appears as a Gloss on Romans 11:24 (“... contrary to nature you have been grafted, etc.”)) Augustine says, “God, the creator and founder of all natures, does nothing contrary to nature, since what He does in each thing is its nature.” And so the nature of the celestial bodies is not corrupted when their course is changed by God, whereas it would be corrupted if it were changed by any other cause.

**Reply to objection 2:** No perverted order of times is effected by Christ through a miracle.

For according to some authors, the darkness, i.e., darkening of the sun, which occurred during the passion of Christ, was caused by the sun withdrawing its rays, with no change made with respect to the movements of the celestial bodies according to which times are measured. Hence, in *Super Matthaenum* Jerome says, “It seems as though the ‘greater light’ withdrew its rays, lest it should see our Lord hanging [on the cross], or lest the wicked blasphemers should enjoy its light.” Now this sort of withdrawal of its rays should not be understood to mean that the sun has it within its own power to emit or withdraw its rays. For as Dionysius explains in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, the sun emits its rays by nature and not by choice. Instead, the sun is said to withdraw its rays insofar as it happens by divine power that the sun’s rays do not reach the earth.

On the other hand, Origen claims that this occurred by the interposition of clouds. Hence, in *Super Matthaenum* he says, “We must therefore suppose that many large and very dense clouds came together over Jerusalem and the land of Judea, so that it became very dark from the sixth to the ninth hour. Hence, I think 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 one as well. Or perhaps someone might want to extend it more widely, to the whole of Judea, because it says that there was darkness over the whole earth. This refers to the land of Judea, as may be gathered from 3 Kings 18:10, where Obadiah says to Elijah, ‘As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent to seek you— which shows that they sought him in the nations around Judea.’”

However, on this matter the one who should be trusted to a greater degree is Dionysius, who saw with the eyes of faith that this happened because the moon was interposed between us and the sun. For in *Epistola ad Polycarpum* he says, “We unexpectedly saw the moon finding its way toward the sun” while they were in Egypt, as it says in the same place. And he points out four miracles in this:

The first of them is that a natural eclipse of the sun by the interposition of the moon never occurs except at a time at which the sun and the moon are in conjunction. At the time in question, however, the moon and sun were in opposition, given that it was the fifteenth day [of the month], since it was the Paschal feast of the Jews. Hence, he says, “It was not a time of conjunction.”

The second miracle is that although, around the sixth hour, the moon had been seen together with the sun in the middle of the heavens, in the evening it appeared in its own place, i.e., in the East, opposite to the sun. Hence, he says, “Again we saw it”—i.e. the moon—“from the ninth hour,”—at which time it withdrew from the sun as the darkness ceased—“until evening, supernaturally restored to the sun’s diameter,” i.e., so as be diametrically opposed to the sun. And so it is clear that there was no disturbance of the normal sequence of times, since by the divine power it was brought about both that (a) the moon supernaturally approached the sun outside of the due time and that (b), withdrawing from the sun, it was restored to its proper place at the due time.

The third miracle was that, naturally speaking, an eclipse of the sun always begins from the western side of the sun and extends to the eastern side. This is because, in accord with its proper movement, by which it moves from the west to the east, the moon is faster than the sun in the latter’s own proper movement. As a result, the moon, coming from the west, overtakes the sun and passes it as it moves toward the east. By contrast, on the occasion in question, the moon had already passed the sun, and was distant from it by half of the circle, being opposite to it. As a result, it had to return eastward toward the

sun and reached it first in its eastern part, moving toward the west. And this is what Dionysius says: “We saw the eclipse itself beginning in the east and coming all the way to the edge of the sun”—for it eclipsed the whole of the sun—“and afterwards regressing.”

The fourth miracle was that in a natural eclipse the sun begins to reappear first in the part that was first covered; for the moon, coming in front of the sun, passes toward the east by its natural movement, and so it first departs from the western part of the sun, which it first covered. However, on the occasion in question, the moon, returning miraculously from the east to the west, did not pass the sun completely so as to be to the west of it; instead, after it reached the [western] edge of the sun, it reversed direction toward the east, and so the part of the sun that it covered last was also the first part that it left. And so the eclipse began in the eastern part of the sun, but light began to reappear first in the western part. And this is what he says: “Again, we saw the darkening and reemergence happen not at the same point”—that is, not in the same part of the sun—“but, on the contrary, at opposite points.”

In *Super Matthaem* Chrysostom adds a fifth miracle: “The darkness in this case lasted for three hours, whereas an eclipse of the sun is over in a short time, since it involves no delay, as those who have considered the matter realize.” Hence, we are given to understand that the moon was at rest under the sun—unless, perhaps, we prefer to say that the interval of darkness is measured from the instant at which the sun begins to be darkened until the instant at which the sun totally reemerges.

However, as Origen asks in *Super Matthaem*, “Against this the children of this world object: How is it that no one among the Greeks or barbarians recorded such a remarkable occurrence in writing?” And he replies that someone by the name of Phlegon “wrote in his chronicles that this happened during the reign of Tiberius Caesar, but he did not say that it occurred at the time of a full moon.” Thus, it could have happened that the astronomers living at that time throughout the world were not excited about observing an eclipse, since the time was not right, and they thought that the darkness in question had occurred because of a disturbance in the atmosphere. On the other hand, in Egypt, where clouds are few because of the serenity of the atmosphere, Dionysius and his companions were moved to make the aforementioned observations about this darkness.

**Reply to objection 3:** It was especially necessary to show Christ’s divine nature through miracles when the weakness associated with His human nature was most apparent. And that is why a new star appeared in the heavens at Christ’s nativity. Hence, in a sermon on the nativity Maximus says, “If you despise the stable, raise your eyes a little and gaze upon the new star in the heavens, proclaiming to the world the birth of our Lord.”

Now in the passion a still greater weakness appeared in Christ’s human nature. And so it was necessary for greater miracles to be made manifest with respect to the principal illuminators of the world. And as Chrysostom says in *Super Matthaem*, “This is the sign that He promised to give to those who asked for one, when He said, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet,’ signifying His Cross and Resurrection. For it was much more remarkable for this to happen after He had been crucified than when He was walking upon the earth.”

### Article 3

#### Did Christ appropriately work miracles with respect to human beings?

It seems that Christ did not appropriately work miracles with respect to human beings (*inconvenienter circa homines Christus miracula fecit*):

**Objection 1:** In a human being the soul is more important than the body. But Christ worked many miracles with respect to bodies, whereas we do not read that He worked any miracles with respect to

souls; for (a) He converted non-believers to the Faith not by His power, but by admonishing them and by working exterior miracles, and, again, (b) we do not read that He made any foolish people wise. Therefore, it seems that He did not appropriately work miracles with respect to human beings.

**Objection 2:** As was explained above (q. 43, a. 2), Christ worked miracles by His divine power, which properly involves operating quickly and completely and without the assistance of anything else. But Christ did not always heal men quickly with respect to their bodies; for instance, Mark 8:22-25 says, “Taking the blind man by the hand, He led him out of the town and, spitting on his eyes, He laid His hands on him and asked him if he saw anything. And, looking up, the man said, ‘I see men as if they were trees walking.’ After that, He again laid His hands upon his eyes, and he began to see, and was restored, so that he saw all things clearly.” And so it is evident that He did not heal him quickly, but instead healed him at first incompletely and with the assistance of spittle. Therefore, it seems that He did not appropriately work miracles with respect to human beings.

**Objection 3:** Things that do not follow upon one another need not be removed simultaneously. But as is clear from what our Lord says in John 9:2-3 (“Neither he nor his parents sinned, that he should be born blind”), bodily affliction is not always caused by sin. Therefore, it was not necessary to forgive the sins of men who were seeking bodily cures, as we read He did in the case of the paralytic in Matthew 9:2—especially because bodily healing, given that it is a lesser feat than forgiving sins, does not seem to be a sufficient proof that one can forgive sins.

**Objection 4:** As was explained above (q. 43, a. 4), Christ’s miracles were worked in order to confirm His teaching and give testimony to His divine nature. But no one can impede the purpose of his own work. Therefore, it seems inappropriate for Christ to have commanded those who had been miraculously cured not to tell anyone, as He clearly did in Matthew 9:30 and Mark 8:26—especially given that He ordered some others to publicize the miracles that He had worked for them. For instance, in Mark 5:19 we read that He told a man whom He had liberated from demons, “Go home to your people and announce to them what great things the Lord has done for you.”

**But contrary to this:** Mark 7:37 says, “He did all things well, and He made the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

**I respond:** The means to an end have to be proportioned to the end. But Christ came into the world and taught in order to save men—this according to John 3:17 (“For God sent His Son into the world not to judge the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him”). And so it was appropriate for Christ, by miraculously healing men in particular cases, to show that He is the universal and spiritual savior of all.

**Reply to objection 1:** The means to an end are distinct from the end itself. Now the miracles worked by Christ were ordered, as to an end, toward the salvation of the rational part [of the soul], and this salvation consists in (a) the illumination of wisdom and (b) the justification of men.

The first of these presupposes the second, because, as Wisdom 1:4 says, “Wisdom will not enter into a malevolent soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins.” But it was not fitting to justify human beings except for those who will it; for that would be both (a) contrary to justice, which involves rectitude of the will, and also (b) contrary to the notion of human nature, which should be led to the good by free choice and not by coercion. Therefore, Christ justified human beings interiorly by divine power, and yet not against their will. And this pertains not to miracles themselves, but to the end of miracles.

Similarly, it is by His divine power that He infused wisdom into His simple disciples; hence, in Luke 21:15 He says to them, “I will give you utterance and wisdom which all your adversaries will be unable to resist and to contradict.” This is not counted among the visible miracles as regards the interior illumination, but only as regards the exterior act, viz., insofar as the people saw those men who were simple and uneducated speak both wisely and confidently. Hence, Acts 4:13 says, “Seeing the

steadfastness of Peter and John, the Jews, having ascertained that they were illiterate and uneducated men, began to marvel.” And yet spiritual effects of this sort, even if they are distinguished from visible miracles, are nonetheless testimonies to the teaching and power of Christ—this according to Hebrews 2:4 (“... with God bearing them witness by many signs and wonders, and impartings of the Holy Spirit”).

Still, Christ did work certain miracles with respect to the souls of human beings, especially with respect to altering their lower powers. Hence, in commenting on Matthew 9:9 (“... rising up, he followed Him”), Jerome says, “The splendor and majesty of His hidden divinity, which shone forth even in His human countenance, was able to draw to Himself at first sight those who gazed upon Him.” And in commenting on Matthew 21:12 (“He threw out all the sellers and buyers ...”), the selfsame Jerome says, “Of all the signs that our Lord worked, this one seems the most wondrous to me: that one man, despised at the time, was able, with the blows of a single whip, to drive out such a large crowd. For something fiery and star-like radiated from His eyes, and the majesty of His divine nature shone in His face.” And in *Super Ioannem* Origen says, “This was a greater miracle than the one by which water was changed into wine; for in that one the inanimate matter subsists, whereas in this one the minds of thousands of men are subdued.” Again, in commenting on John 18:6 (“They drew back and fell to the ground”), Augustine says, “A single word, without any spear, pierced through, drove back, and scattered a crowd fierce in its hatred and frightful in its weapons; for God lay hidden in that flesh.” The same thing is involved in Luke 4:30, which says, “Jesus, passing through their midst, went on His way.” Commenting on this, Chrysostom says, “The fact that He stood in the midst of those who were lying in wait for Him, and yet was not apprehended by them, showed the power of His divine nature.” Again, John 8:59 says, “Jesus hid Himself and went out from the temple.” Augustine comments, “He did not hide Himself in a corner of the temple, as if He were afraid, nor did He hide Himself by moving behind a wall or a pillar; instead, after making Himself invisible by His heavenly power to those who were plotting against Him, He went out through their midst.”

From all of this it is clear that when He wanted to, Christ affected the souls of men by His divine power, not only by justifying them and infusing them with wisdom, which pertain to the *purpose of the miracles*, but also by outwardly attracting them or by making them afraid or by stupefying them, all of which pertain to the *miracles themselves*.

**Reply to objection 2:** Christ came to save the world not only by His divine power but through the mystery of the Incarnation itself. And so in curing the sick He frequently used His divine power not only by curing in the manner of a command, but also by adding something that pertained to His human nature. Hence, in commenting on Luke 4:40 (“He cured all by imposing His hands on each one”), Cyril [of Alexandria] says, “Even though, as God, He could have driven out all diseases with a word, He nonetheless touches them, showing that His own flesh is efficacious in providing remedies.” Again, in commenting on Mark 8:23-25 (“... spitting on his eyes, He laid hands on him ...”), Chrysostom says, “He spat and laid His hands upon the blind man, wishing to show that His divine word, adjoined to His operation, works wonders; for the hand shows forth the operation, and the spittle shows forth the word which proceeds from the mouth.” Again, in commenting on John 9:6 (“He made mud with the spittle and rubbed the mud on the eyes of the blind man”), Augustine says, “With His saliva He made mud, because the Word was made flesh”—or, again, He did it to signify that it was He who had formed man “from the slime of the earth,” as Chrysostom says.

Concerning Christ’s miracles, one also has to take into account that He generally did the most perfect works. Hence, in commenting on John 2:10 (“Every man serves the best wine first ...”), Chrysostom says, “Christ’s miracles are such that they are far more splendid and beneficial than the works done by nature.” And, similarly, they confer perfect health on sick people in an instant. Hence, in commenting on Matthew 8:15 (“She rose up and waited on them”), Jerome says, “The health conferred by our Lord returns as an instantaneous whole.”

On the other hand, according to Chrysostom, it was because of his lack of faith (*propter infidelitatem*) that the contrary occurred specifically in the case of the one blind man (Mark 8:23-25). An alternative explanation is given by Bede, who says, “The one whom He could have cured completely and instantaneously by a single word, He instead cured little by little, (a) in order to show the great extent of human blindness, which can hardly come back to the light at all and only, as it were, by degrees, and (b) in order to reveal to us His grace, through which He supports each increase in our perfection.

**Reply to objection 3:** As was explained above (q. 43, a. 2), Christ worked miracles by His divine power. Now as Deuteronomy 32:4 says, “God’s works are perfect.” Now a thing is not perfect if it does not attain its end. But the end of an exterior cure that was worked by Christ is the curing of the soul. And so it was not fitting for Christ to cure someone’s body unless He was curing his soul. Hence, in commenting on John 7:23 (“... I made a whole man healthy on the sabbath”), Augustine says, “Because he was cured, he was healthy in his body, and because he believed, he was healthy in his soul.”

Now the paralytic was specifically told, “Your sins are forgiven,” because, as Jerome says in *Super Matthaeum*, “we are thereby given to understand that ailments of the body are frequently due to sin, and so perhaps his sins are forgiven first in order that once the causes of the ailment are removed, health might be restored.” This is why John 5:14 likewise says, “Do not sin any more, lest something worse should happen to you.” As Chrysostom puts it [in commenting on this passage], “We learn that his ailment had been born of sin.”

Also, as Chrysostom explains in *Super Matthaeum*, “Even though, to the degree that the soul is more important than the body, forgiving sins is greater than curing the body, nonetheless, because the former is not seen, He does the lesser work that is more manifest in order to prove the work that is greater and unseen.”

**Reply to objection 4:** In commenting on Matthew 9:30 (“See to it that no one knows”), Chrysostom says, “What He says to that other man, “Go and declare the glory of God” (cf. Mark 5:19 and Luke 8:39), is not contrary to what He says here. For He instructs us to stop those who would praise us on our own account, whereas if the glory is instead referred to God, then we should not stop them, but should instead enjoin that this be done.”

#### Article 4

##### Did Christ appropriately work miracles with respect to non-rational creatures?

It seems that Christ did not appropriately work miracles with respect to non-rational creatures (*inconvenienter fecerit Christus miracula circa creaturas irracionales*):

**Objection 1:** Brute animals are more noble than plants. But Christ worked some miracles with respect to plants, e.g., when the fig tree dried up at His word, as reported in Matthew 21:19. Therefore, it seems that Christ should have likewise worked miracles with respect to brute animals.

**Objection 2:** Punishment is justly inflicted only for some fault. But there was no fault on the part of the fig tree on which Christ found no fruit when it was not the season for fruits. Therefore, it seems that it was inappropriate for Him to make that tree go dry.

**Objection 3:** Air and water lie between the heavens and the earth. But as was explained above (a. 2), Christ worked some miracles in the heavens, and, similarly, within the earth, when the earth was moved at the time of His passion. Therefore, it seems that He should likewise have worked some miracles in the air and in the water—as by dividing the sea, as Moses did or, again, by dividing a river, as Joshua and Elijah did, or by bringing about thunder in the air, as was done on Mount Sinai when the Law



was given, and as Elijah did in 3 Kings 18:45.

**Objection 4:** Miraculous works belong to the work of governing the world through divine providence. But this sort of work presupposes creation. Therefore, it was inappropriate for Christ to use creation in His miracles, viz., when He multiplied the loaves. Therefore, His miracles with respect to non-rational creatures do not seem to have been appropriate.

**But contrary to this:** Christ is “God’s wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:24), of which Wisdom 8:1 says, “She orders all things delightfully.”

**I respond:** As was explained above (a. 3), Christ’s miracles were ordered toward the power of His divine nature being recognized in Him for the salvation of men. Now it belongs to the power of the divine nature that every creature is subject to it. And so He had to work miracles with respect to every genus of creatures—not just with respect to human beings, but with respect to non-rational creatures as well.

**Reply to objection 1:** Brute animals are closely related in genus to men, and this is why they were made on the same day as men (Genesis 1:24-31). And since He worked many miracles with respect to human bodies, it was not necessary for Him to work any miracles with respect to the bodies of brute animals—especially since, with respect to sentient and corporeal nature, the same considerations apply to human beings and [other] animals, in particular terrestrial animals.

On the other hand, since fish live in water, they differ to a greater degree from the nature of human beings; this is why they were made on a different day (Genesis 1:20-23). Christ worked a miracle in the copious catch of fish, as we read in Luke 5:4-10 and again in John 21:6, and He also worked a miracle in the case of the fish which Peter caught and in which he found a shekel (Matthew 17:26).

By contrast, the fact that the pigs jumped over a cliff into the sea was not the working of a divine miracle, but was instead the work of demons, with God’s permission (Matthew 8:28-34).

**Reply to objection 2:** As Chrysostom says in *Super Matthaicum*, “When our Lord does anything like this in the case of plants or brute animals, do not ask how it was justifiable to dry up the fig tree, given that the time was not right. For to ask such a question is foolish in the extreme”—viz., because there is no sin or punishment in the case of such things. “Instead, look at the miracle, and admire the one who worked the miracle.”

Nor does the creator inflict any injury on the owner if He chooses to use His own creature for the salvation of others; instead, as Hilary puts it in *Super Matthaicum*, “We see in this a proof of God’s goodness. For when He wanted to give an example of salvation as procured by Himself, He exercised His mighty power on the human body, whereas when He presented to those who are contumacious a figure of His severity, He indicated the form of their future by condemning the tree”—and, as Chrysostom notes, in particular a fig tree, “which has the most moisture of all trees, in order that the miracle might be seen as all the greater.”

**Reply to objection 3:** Christ did indeed work miracles in the water and in the air that were appropriate for Him, e.g., when, as we read in Matthew 8:26, “He commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm.” However, it was not appropriate for Him who had come to recall all things to a state of peace and tranquility to cause a disturbance in the air or a division of waters. Hence, in Hebrews 12:18 the Apostle says, “You have not come to a manageable and accessible fire, or to darkness and gloom and a tempest.”

On the other hand, as regards His passion (Matthew 27:51-52), “the veil was rent” in order to show the unfolding of the mysteries of the Law; “the tombs were opened” in order to show that through His death the dead are given life; “the earth quaked and rocks were split” in order to show that the hardened hearts of men were to be softened through His passion and that the whole world was to be changed for the better by the power of His passion.

**Reply to objection 4:** The multiplication of the loaves was not worked in the manner of *creation*; instead, it was worked by the addition of extraneous matter that was *converted* into bread. Hence, in *Super Ioannem* Augustine says, “By the same means by which He multiplied a few grains into harvests, He multiplied the five loaves in His own hands.” Now it is clear that grains are multiplied into harvests by *conversion* [and not by *creation*].