

things as a natural man, how is he to know that the administration by the laying on of hands has imparted power or virtue to heal them? Or is it the work of imagination? Here would be left room for doubt. This testimony alone is not sufficient to rest upon. He should have the gift and power of the Holy Ghost resting upon himself to convince him that they were the servants of God, and that the gifts they exercise were from heaven. He might hear them prophesy many things that are to take place years in the future; but he would not wish to wait for their fulfillment to know whether they were of God; or, while he was waiting, he might be laid in the dust. He therefore needs something to convince him, beyond all doubt, that the individuals prophesying were filled with the Holy Ghost, and that their predictions were true and could be depended upon; and then, whether they come to pass or not in his day, he knows they will be fulfilled in their times and in their seasons; and so with all other gifts. He might see a miracle of any kind; he might see the laws of nature apparently overcome by a person calling himself a servant of God. How does he know he is the servant of God, or that he performs that miracle by the power of God? Have not devils and fallen angels power? Did they not have mighty power in ancient days? Yes. Could they not smite the earth with plagues, and turn water into blood anciently, as Moses the servant of God did? Yes. Could not the wicked magicians of Egypt perform great signs by casting down their staves, and causing them to appear like serpents, performing great, and marvelous things similar to those the Prophet Moses performed?

How is the natural man to judge? There is God on the one hand, and the Devil on the other; and if one is

to judge naturally of these things, he would not be sure that the person performing a miracle before him was really inspired of God. The gift and power of the Holy Ghost, as I have already observed, is the greatest evidence any man or woman can have concerning the kingdom of God. It is given expressly to impart to mankind a knowledge of the things of God. It is given to purify the heart of man, that he may by its power not only be able to understand its operations upon himself, but be able to understand its operations upon others also; and, indeed, if I could by any possible means independent of the Holy Ghost ascertain that a miracle was wrought of God, what particular benefit would it be to me?

Scores of miracles were wrought in ancient times; but how did they benefit the children of Israel? When they saw the waters of the Red Sea divided and the Egyptians overthrown in its depths—when they were brought up before mount Sinai and heard the voice of the trumpet out of the midst of the cloud and from the flaming mountain, proclaiming the ten commandments in their ears, and saw Moses go up in the midst of the fire—when they beheld all this display of the power of God, what effect did it have on the great majority who saw? Did it affect their conduct? No. Miracles had become a little common with them, and said they, What has become of this Moses? Perhaps they thought he had perished in the mountain. They might have imagined a volcano on the mountain, belching out its fires, accompanied by thunder and lightning; and that some person had artfully concealed himself, having a great trumpet, and through it pretending to give laws to Israel. They might have said, We will not be cheated by this pretended miracle; but while this thunder and storm is