

#### IV. MIRACLES

##### A. Statements of the Doctrine

Charles Hodge, in Volume 1, pp. 617-618, of his *Systematic Theology*, states:

According to the Westminster Confession, "God, in ordinary providence making use of means, yet is free to work without, above, or against them at pleasure." In the first place, there are events therefore due to the ordinary operations of second causes, as upheld and guided by God. To this class belong the common processes of nature; the growth of plants and animals, the orderly movements of the heavenly bodies; and the more unusual occurrences; earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and violent agitations and revolutions in the human societies. In the second place, there are events due to the Influences of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men, such as regeneration, sanctification, spiritual illumination, etc. Thirdly, there are events which belong to neither of these classes, and whose distinguishing characteristics are, First, that they take place in the external world, i.e., in the sphere of the observation of the senses; and Secondly, that they are produced or caused by the simple volition of God, without the intervention of any subordinate cause. To this class belongs the original act of creation, in which all cooperation of second causes was Impossible. To the same class belong all events truly miraculous. A miracle, therefore, may be defined to be an event, in the external world, brought about by the immediate efficiency, or simple volition of God.

Archibald A. Hodge, in his *Outlines of Theology* Revised Edition, p. 275, states:

A miracle is (1) an event occurring in the physical world, capable of being discerned and discriminated by the bodily senses of human witnesses, (2) of such a character that it can be rationally referred to no other cause than the immediate volition of God, (3) accompanying a religious teacher, and designed to authenticate his divine commission and the truth of his message.

J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., in Volume 1, p. 176, of his *Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), states:

A miracle is (1) an extraordinary event, inexplicable in terms of ordinary natural forces, (2) an event which causes the observers to postulate a super human personal cause, and (3) an event which constitutes evidence (a "sign") of implication much wider than the event itself.

Millard J. Erickson, in Volume 1, pp. 406-408, of his *Christian Theology* writes:

By miracles we mean those special supernatural works of God's providence which are not explicable on the basis of the usual pattern of nature.