

THE SIGNS OF EASTER

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And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.... And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:15,17,18).

When the Lord appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, He told them to go forth into all the world to tell the glad news to everybody who would listen to them. He promised that if they really believed in Him with all their hearts, they would be able to do great things, things which would be signs of their belief. They would be able to cast devils out of the minds of troubled people. They would speak with new tongues, that is, they would speak in many different languages which they had never spoken before so that everyone who heard them would understand, no matter what language he spoke. They would be able to pick up poisonous snakes without being harmed. Poisonous drinks would not hurt them. The sick people whom they touched with their hands would be made well again. All these signs, He promised, could be done in His name by those who believed in Him. This did happen; the disciples went forth to preach everywhere about the Lord, and as He had said, they were able to do great things in His name because He was working with them.

These things were signs, signs that the Lord is with those who believe in Him, for, of course, it was really the Lord who was doing these miracles. And the Lord does miracles for us, too, if only we believe in Him. In the New Church we are blessed to know what the spiritual miracles which the Lord can do for us are. We do not do the same things as the disciples did. We cannot pick up poisonous snakes and drink poisonous drinks without being hurt. We do not put our hands on people to make them well. We do not do exactly as the disciples did, because what they did were only signs, signs of the real miracles. For the real miracles are spiritual or heavenly, and in the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church the Lord tells us what these miracles are.

If we really believe in the Lord, if we read His Word and do what He says, then we will be able to cast spiritual demons out of our minds—we will be able to send away evil spirits who want us to believe wrong things, for we will know the truth from the Word. And if we know the truth, and understand and love it, we will try to tell it to others who do not know it. We will speak with new tongues, that is, new words and new truths. From the Lord, we will have the strength to fight off the devils—the serpents of hell—so that they cannot harm us. We will be safe from their poisonous ideas, as the disciples were safe from poisonous drinks. So we will be healed of our spiritual sicknesses, and will stop loving evil things, as the disciples could cure people of their sicknesses by touching them. All of these things will happen to those who really believe in the Lord, because the Lord will make them happen. But they cannot happen to those who do not believe, because such people do not want these things to happen. For it is only if we really believe in that Lord that will we want His help. So it is very important that we know and understand that the Lord is the God who made us, and that He alone can bring us into heaven if we will let His power work these miraculous signs in our spiritual lives.