declared that He will allow the wicked to do miracles  
on behalf of falsehood.  
 This fire descends from heaven “in the sight of men.”  
The expression imports the opposite to secrecy. 2 Sam.  
xii. 12.  
 These words are added, then, to show the readiness of  
Satan’s agent to meet men’s jealousy and suspicions of  
imposture. Few now are willing to believe miracles.  
Wonderful things can, to all appearance, be performed  
by science and collusion. Hence they call for an open  
field as the scene of the wonder: there must be no room  
for electric wires, and the feats of legerdemain. This  
Deceiver meets the suspicions readily, confident in his  
powers. Out of the open sky above him, and with  
plenty of witnesses around, he calls for fire; and it  
descends into the earth.  
 Its effect is to seal up the godless for destruction.  
Elijah’s miracle of fire turned not Israel to Jehovah.  
But this will turn mankind to full and entire confidence  
in the False Christ and his coadjutor.  
  
 14. “And he deceiveth the dwellers on the earth by means of  
the signs which it was given him to do before the Wild Beast;  
saying to the dwellers upon the earth, that they should make an  
image to the Wild Beast, who hath the wound of the sword and  
recovered.”  
  
 Miracles are very powerful in producing faith in an  
object of worship. It is true, that where they have  
to encounter the natural enmity of the human mind  
against the true God, they are insufficient to overcome  
it by themselves. But, in the present case, that enmity  
exists not, and their native energy alone appears.  
 These miracles are only of God’s granting. He  
could stay them, if He would. He permits them, He  
gives efficacy to the attempt to work them. He gives  
warning beforehand, that all who have ears may hear;