MIRACLES AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

George A. Wells

C.S. Lewis, the scholar of English mediaeval and Renaissance literature who died in 1963 and is still widely respected as a Christian apologist, complained that academic biblical scholars simply assume that miracles cannot have occurred in the fashion reported in the New Testament. In a lecture quoted by A.I.C. Heron[1], he said: 'The canon "If miraculous, unhistorical" is one they bring to their study of the texts, not one they have learned from it.' In fact, as John Kent retorted, they did not rule out in advance the idea of supernatural events, but were able, without it, to give adequate and plausible accounts of how the biblical documents reached their present form, by means of a method 'based on questions of probability in terms of evidence', not 'on an *a priori* rejection of miracle'.[2] Conclusions concerning historical events of any kind are similarly based. 'No historians', says the historian R.J. Evans, 'really believe in the *absolute* truth of what they are writing, simply in its *probable* truth, which they have done their utmost to establish by following the usual rules of evidence'.[3] To this question of 'absolute' truth I shall return.

Heron, writing as a convinced Christian and as Professor of Reformed Theology at the University of Erlangen, Germany, is very respectful towards Lewis, but finds that he goes much too far in his criticisms, partly because of his experience of arbitrary exegesis in his own field of English literature – experience which blinded him to the 'qualitative difference between, for example, Wellhausen's detection of different strands in the Pentateuch . . . and the attempts of Shakespearian scholars "to cut up *Henry VI* between half a dozen authors and assign his share to each".' Hence he was incapable of appreciating 'the very considerable

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evidence that Paul did not write either Ephesians or the Pastoral Epistles and that these represent two different appropriations and expressions of Paul's legacy, long years after his death'.[4] Instead of what he called such 'tiresome, trivial' scholarship, 'overladen by historicism', Lewis, says Heron, wanted an 'unfolding' of the 'message of the Bible in a way that could catch and set afire the imagination of people in the twentieth century'.[5]

In recent years some apologists have appealed to quantum theory as vindicating their belief in miracles. C.H. Dodd's remark – that 'with the flood of fresh discoveries about the behaviour of matter, and of mind, we hardly know what is, and what is not, possible'[6] – is a hint dropped in this direction (as well as an approving nod towards claims of parapsychology). If 'possible' in this context means: naturally, not supernaturally occasioned, then there can be nothing that can be truly deemed miraculous, and strange occurrences can be no more than unusual. Hence, as Ernst and Marie-Luise Keller have said, 'there can be no question of the rehabilitation through physics of the biblical miracles in general, or of miracles as a whole (as would be the logical conclusion)'. They stress that this applies to quantum as much as to classical physics.[7] The laws of quantum theory, Dr. Mary Hesse has said, 'are not deterministic', as are Newtonian laws, 'but statistical, that is, they do not determine occurrences of single events, but only proportions in large classes of events', and 'according to quantum theory, this is not merely a question of *ignorance* of laws which may after all be fundamentally deterministic, but of irreducible indeterminism in the events themselves'. She adds:

> At first sight it might be thought that in theory, as far as isolated events are concerned, anything at all would be consistent with the statistical laws of quantum physics, even though perhaps very, very highly improbable... But statistical laws in science are in fact regarded as violated if events occur which

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according to them are excessively improbable, and in ordinary scientific contexts such violation leads to abandonment of the law, just as in the case of deterministic theories. There is no question that most events regarded as significantly 'miraculous' in religious contexts would, if they violate Newtonian laws, also be excessively improbable on well-established quantum laws, and therefore would be regarded as violation of these also. Thus, if we consider only the currently accepted theories of physics, the credibility of such miracles is no greater than in Newtonian theory.[8]

In 1941, Alan Richardson, who became Dean of York, published what proved to be a very popular book on the gospel miracle stories and allowed that final judgement on their historicity and present-day religious value must be left to faith. But he was well aware of the limited value of a positive assessment of them on this basis, saying: 'Faith itself will wish to draw the discreet veil of a reverent agnosticism over the desire to dogmatize as to what was or was not possible, or what precisely happened on any specific occasion; faith alone can overcome the desire to find "proofs" . . . Each reader . . . will not wish to press his own conclusions upon others.'[9]

The New Testament scholar Austin Farrer followed this up (in an essay of 1953) with the claim that 'it is possible, through faith and evidence together, and through neither alone, to believe that Christ really and corporeally rose from the dead'. He went on to speak approvingly of 'the use of faith to confirm evidence'.[10] In response to this, another New Testament scholar, G.H. Boobyer, asked: 'How can faith confirm what honest historical research by men of faith has left doubtful? What would be the nature of a faith to which one could attribute a cognitive capacity so far-reaching and ultimate?' He adds that not even faith in Jesus can confirm gospel miracles, since their miracle narratives 'come to us in writing not direct from Jesus himself, but in

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secondary sources compiled by others'; and 'faith in Christ and the resultant personal experience of him can tell us nothing, or not much, about the personalities of the individuals who preserved the gospel traditions and the evangelists who compiled the gospels'.[11] Nevertheless, he backs away from scepticism, adding that 'despite its limitations, the faith attitude is a basic need alongside informed, thoughtful study of Jesus and biblical revelation... No great religious insight is reached ... save for the faith which is not earth-bound... There must be the faith which removes mountains, faith which comes from God.'[12]

The patristic scholar Maurice Wiles, who died in 2005, called the gospel miracles 'a crude and embarrassing problem'[13], for they may well 'prove too much' and 'leave us with a docetic Christ'[14] who only 'seemed' to have come in the flesh and experienced pain, as the 'docetists' ('seemers') attacked in 1 Jn.4:l–3 did in fact suppose. Wiles saw clearly, then, that a man who can raise the dead, walk on water and turn it into wine, and be resurrected after three days of death, is no more describable in terms of human character than Samson, Hercules or Venus. But Wiles says too that, if such feats jeopardize any understanding of him as possessing a real human nature, his susceptibility to pain and suffering, and to ordinary human needs, could well be held to prove too little, to fail to evidence his divinity. How difficult it was for doctrine to do full justice to both his supposed natures, human and divine, is illustrated by Clement of Alexandria's Christ who, as Wiles tells us, did not really need food and drink, but took them only to confound docetism. In sum, 'if the miracles were in danger of suggesting a docetic Christ, the sufferings were in danger of suggesting an Ebionite [purely human] one'.[15]

Boobyer's observation – that our evidence concerning the gospel miracles is very much less than even second-hand – is too often overlooked. Thus Donald Hagner, who believes with 'many others that the most *historically*

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satisfying explanation of the resurrection is the one held by the church', complains in a recent symposium that:

> the vast majority of the current flood of books on the historical Jesus . . . ask us to believe that those who were closest to Jesus, the disciples and the earliest believers in him, either fundamentally misunderstood him or misrepresented him in the most culpable manner. . . We are asked to believe, instead, that a relatively small group of scholars in the twentieth century, working with a set of presuppositions totally alien to the first century and with ideological commitments no less than those of Christian faith, know him better.[16]

It is of course quite true – as Thomas O'Loughlin points out in the same symposium – that the belief that 'events in the physical world can be explained rationally in terms of the processes of this world' is barely two centuries old, and is 'radically different from the beliefs of all early Christians who expected God to intervene in the world in wonderful ways'.[17] He gives Acts 5:19 as an example, where an angel is said to open prison doors. Today we are unwilling to believe that angels open prison doors. But according to Hagner, we are quite wrong to impose this scepticism on ancient documents, to allow 'no room for the transcendent in the sense of God truly acting in the historical process'.[18] He complains that, although there is some willingness to accept the healings and exorcisms in the tradition, as these 'can be construed as psychosomatic cures,. . .the so-called nature miracles, such as the feeding of the multitudes, the calming of the sea and walking on the water', also 'the raising of the dead by Jesus', not to mention his own resurrection, 'continue to be excluded from consideration'. This 'refusal to allow the possibility of the truly supernatural in concrete history takes away the entire interpretive framework that makes possible an adequate understanding of Jesus' and 'accounts for the wide variety of competing

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theories' produced by those currently questing after him; for without this 'framework', scholars are 'forced to use their imagination to construct new understandings' of him.[19] On this view, then, the wide variety of current interpretations does not result from any diversity of claims about him within the texts themselves, which afford 'a coherent and convincing picture', and 'one that is compatible with what we have come to know of the historical context in which he lived and worked'.[20] Certainly, in Jesus' time there were Jewish holy men such as Hanina ben Dosa and Honi the circle drawer who reportedly worked miracles, and pagans such as Apollonius of Tyana who healed the sick, cast out demons and raised the dead, also demigods such as Hercules, who could bring back the dead. In those days, miracles were how reality was, by many, perceived, and the acceptability of testimony at any time – including today – depends on the recipients' conception of reality at that time. This, while it does not, *pace* Hagner, vindicate ancient legends, does mean, as I will try to show, that there can be no *a priori* rules as to what is to be found credible and what is not.

But for the moment I revert to the significance of Boobyer's observation about the very indirect nature of the information recorded in the gospels. We do not, as Hagner claims we do, have records from 'those closest to Jesus', but only later documents which purport to say what such earlier persons believed, and which themselves are very much based on hearsay, and also allege very different things about him. Bart D. Ehrman makes the point well:

> Our first records of any of Jesus' public miracles were written thirty-five to sixty-five years after the fact, by people who had not seen any of these things happen, who were basing their stories on oral tradition that had been passed down for decades among people trying to convince others to believe in Jesus. And these records are absolutely filled

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with discrepancies, especially the resurrection narratives.[21]

O'Loughlin's paper, although in the same symposium as Hagner's, is in some ways a criticism of him and notes that 'many historians would hold that one must approach ancient sources with a "hermeneutic of suspicion", whereby one asks who was intended to be the beneficiary, in practical terms of power and influence, of a particular text, practice or statement'.[22] In the case of early Christian missionaries, one does not have to look far to discern the beneficiaries. If people are to give up all their goods in order to worship the one true God of the Christians, then – I again quote Ehrman – he must be 'shown to be superior to all other gods, the one who could in fact provide all that was needed for healthy and happy lives'. Hence the tales told of Christian missionaries in Acts of the Apostles (canonical and other); for instance, in the Acts of Peter, where the apostle raises a fish from the dead in order to convince onlookers of the power of God, and causes a malificent magician who is flying over the city of Rome to fall to Earth and so be killed.[23] G.W.H. Lampe has given an equally striking example from the apocryphal Acts of John:

> St. John... stands on a high pedestal at Ephesus, addresses the people, accuses them of being godless, and challenges them to call upon Artemis to strike him dead. If they should prove unsuccessful, he proposes to call on the Christian God to cause every one of them to die. They cry out: 'Slay us not thus; we know that you can do it'. Whereupon he prays that the evil spirit may be put to flight. The altar and image of Artemis are thrown down and the temple roof collapses on her priest. Every one of them acclaims the God of St. John.[24]

The same view of the missionary importance of miracles is taken by Ramsay MacMullen in his *Christianizing the*

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Roman Empire: miracles 'served as proof, not only of divine authority behind Christian teachings, but as a proof of God's unique claim to his title, whereas other supernatural beings deserved only to be called daimones'.[25] Lampe found 'one of the most tiresome features of a certain kind of Christian apologetic, common in the Church from the second century onwards' to be 'a tendency to assume that the truth of Christian doctrine may be proved by the ability of believers to perform apparently impossible feats'.[26] But even Jesus himself, according to Mt. 11:20-24, became angry because his audiences had not been impressed by his miracles; and he responds by promising them a terrible fate on the day of judgment.

Paul tells the Corinthians that the work he had done among them 'was attended by signs, marvels and miracles' and so authenticated him as 'a true apostle' (2 Cor. 12:12). What, then, could be more natural than that post-Pauline Christianity should ascribe – as Paul had not – such ability to Jesus himself?

What is very striking is that the missionaries had difficulty in supplying evidence of miraculous occurrences contemporary with themselves – except, of course, in the case of exorcisms. In the Christian view, pagans worshipped gods who were devils, hence every heathen 'needed to be exorcised frequently and thoroughly before he could receive baptism'. Such exorcisms demonstrated 'the present activity of God's power and the efficacy of his Name'.[27] But in the case of other miracles, evidence for such 'present activity' does not seem to be forthcoming. Even Paul gives no details to support his claim that I have recorded, and probably meant it as no more than a reference to the speaking with tongues and other ecstatic behaviour that, he said elsewhere, characterized the Corinthian church. The missionaries typically set their miracle stories in the past – as did the authors of the stories told of the apostles in the Acts of Peter and Acts of John quoted above. Thus although Quadratus, probably the earliest of the apologists for Christianity in the second century, spoke of people

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healed or raised by the Saviour as surviving to his own day, he 'neither offered more detailed information about these people, nor claimed to have any knowledge of them'.[28] Similarly, Irenaeus spoke of 'raisings from the dead as experiences of the Christian community', but his wording 'does not suggest any claim to personal experience of such events'.[29] It was apropos of the late second-century situation of Irenaeus that Gibbon, in chapter 15 of his famous work, noted that 'a noble Grecian' promised Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, that 'if he could be gratified with the sight of a single person who had been actually raised from the dead, he would immediately embrace the Christian religion.' But this 'prelate of the first eastern church', somewhat remarkably 'thought it proper to decline this fair and reasonable challenge'. It is customary to regard Gibbon's as one of those vast learned works of which everyone speaks with respect, but which nobody can possibly read. It is indeed unquestionably learned – if it were less so it would be much less dangerous – but it is certainly not dull or unreadable.

In sum, 'the attitude of Christian apologetic to contemporary miracles is cagey'.[30] And anything could be asserted about earlier feats, since earliest Christianity was too obscure to have attracted attention. Hume generalized this as follows in his famous essay 'On Miracles' (Section 10 of his Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, 1748):

> In the infancy of new religions, the wise and learned commonly esteem the matter too inconsiderable to deserve their attention or regard. And when afterwards they would willingly detect the cheat, in order to undeceive the deluded multitude, the season is now past and the records and witnesses, which might clear up the matter, have perished beyond recovery.

The Catholic scholar J.P. Meier has noted that, 'as hard as it is for devout Christians to accept, the fact is that

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Jesus was simply insignificant to national and world history as seen through the eyes of Jewish and pagan historians of the first and early second centuries A.D. If he was seen at all, it was at the periphery of their vision'.[31]

There is in fact 'not a solitary reference to Jesus or his followers in pagan literature of any kind during the first century of the Common Era'.[32] Even Plutarch, a contemporary of many of the writers of the New Testament, and a man of extraordinarily wide interests, makes no mention of Christianity. His editors have repeatedly commented on this, which they find very strange. But whatever explanation may be offered for his silence, 'it is undoubtedly the case that no undisputed echoes of Christianity have been found in Plutarch's works'.[33]

Obviously, then, we should not take at face value Paul's claims that 'your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world' (Rom. 1:8) and 'from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has gone forth everywhere' (1 Thess. I:8). It is presumably from passages such as these that Fr. John Redford, writing for the Catholic Truth Society, inferred that 'Jesus of Nazareth. . .had become world famous within half a century of his death'.[34]

Against the advocacy of a 'hermeneutic of suspicion', Richard Bauckham, Professor of New Testament studies at St. Andrews University, Scotland, has made a substantial attempt (discussed in my 2009 book) to represent the gospels as 'eyewitness testimony'. He claims that, in our everyday life, 'to trust the testimony of others is simply fundamental to the kind of creatures we are'; and it was, in his view, the Enlightenment that has been 'inclined to minimize' this reliance on other people.[35] T.H. Huxley gave a fair summary of what the standpoint of the Enlightenment on this matter really is, when he wrote that 'the rule of common sense is prima facie to trust a witness in all matters in which neither his self-interest, his

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passions, his prejudices, nor that love of the marvellous, which is inherent to a greater or lesser degree in all mankind, are strongly concerned; and when they are involved, to require corroborative evidence in exact proportion to the contravention of probability by the thing testified'.[36] In this context he discusses the stories of Jesus feeding first 5,000 and then 4,000 with a few loaves and fishes, 'to the complete satisfaction of their hunger', and with fragments left over amounting to 'much more than the original store'.[37] What the gospels offer, he says, is 'two sets of discrepant stories, originating nobody knows how or when, among persons who could believe as firmly in devils which enter pigs', as in the story of the Gadarene swine. With no more evidence than this, Huxley confessed to feeling 'astonishment that anyone should expect a reasonable man to take such testimony seriously'.[38]

If I did not believe that things happen in a certain way, that some events are to be expected and others impossible, I should not be able to judge the compatibility of one hypothesis with another; and what I regard as a true belief must be compatible with my other beliefs. But when a belief is said to be compatible with others, it is really only the accordance of them all with an underlying notion of the natural order that is being asserted; and a given individual's conception of the order of nature is merely the result of his or her experience.

It follows that the quest for an absolute truth, one which is final and not subject to any possible revision, is vain. What we regard as true is relative to our understanding of things. A proposition appears true in proportion to the degree of its coherence with the general system of nature, as understood and codified by the experience and endeavours of the race. Its truth, therefore, depends on its relation to the established view of nature, and on the extent and elaboration of the latter. Since human experience has not yet come to an end, the established view of nature is

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never final, and every accepted truth may be revised as a result of future discoveries.

There are, then, no *a priori* rules for determining the credibility or otherwise of a belief. Our attitude to what witnesses report depends both on our premises and on our familiarity with the phenomena reported. That this is so is well illustrated by two examples which Hume gives in his 'Of Miracles', and I follow here the account I gave of them in my 1988 book. If, he says, all authors in all languages were agreed that, from 1st January 1600, there had been total darkness over the whole Earth for eight days, then the fact ought to be accepted as certain and its causes sought. But if all historians of England agreed that, on the same 1st January, Queen Elizabeth had died, was seen by her physicians and courtiers both before and after her death, and, after being interred a month, again appeared and reigned for a further three years; then we ought to reject this testimony and hold that she did not really die in 1600, but that the 'knavery and folly of men' led to the report that she did.

Now there is an enormous difference in the weight of testimony in these two examples. In the first the phenomenon is attested by the whole of mankind, in the second by a limited number of courtiers. Again, in the first example the witnesses need only to be aware of the difference between night and day, and so error could be due only to definite hallucination. A large number of people in the same circumstances, under the influence of the same emotions, may suffer the same hallucinations. But it is not possible that the whole race, scattered over the globe, ignorant of one another's doings, exposed at any given moment to a multitude of different conditions and emotions, should simultaneously be afflicted by a delusion of a kind seldom heard of even in cases of definite mental aberration. In the second example, however, a crucial item in the report is whether the queen was really dead. Even modern physicians are sometimes mistaken in this matter; courtiers and doctors of the past might easily have been.

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But let us equalize the testimony by supposing that some remote settlement of people in the sixteenth century reported that the sun had set an hour before its time. This gives two improbabilities – that of some irregularity in gravitation, and that of a person being restored to life. It is obvious from Hume's remarks that he is too sceptical about the existence of supernatural entities to countenence supernatural influence in either case; and that, being relatively ignorant of celestial mechanics, he is prepared to entertain rather imprecise natural causes to account for an alleged gravitational irregularity. (There is, he says, considerable evidence for 'the decay, corruption and dissolution of nature'.) On the other hand, he is equally confident that resurrection from the dead cannot be effected by natural determinants but would constitute a 'signal violation of the laws of nature'. In this case, he not only disallows supernatural influence, but his greater familiarity with the phenomena of life and death has led him to assume that the relevant laws of nature are completely and finally known. And being also well acquainted with the human character, he felt justified in attributing the report to 'knavery and folly'. Malcolm Muggeridge once noted that Pascal (whom he was much given to adducing) 'found it quite ridiculous that anyone should suppose that rational processes could lead to any ultimate conclusions about life'. Surely today no rational person believes that ultimate conclusions about life can be reached by any process.

Hume, then, claims too much in supposing that he had 'discovered an argument. . .which. . .will with the wise and learned be an everlasting check to all kinds of superstitious delusion'; and he has repeatedly been criticized for this overconfidence. As Antony Flew has said: 'Hume tends to take it for granted that what in his own day he and all his fellow persons of good sense firmly believed about the order of nature constituted not just well-grounded, yet always humanly fallible opinion, but the definitive and incorrigible last word.' Flew adds that he is thus even 'betrayed into rejecting as downright impossible certain

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reported phenomena which the progress of abnormal psychology and psychosomatic medicine has since shown to have been perfectly possible'.[39]

J. Houston, Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Divinity at Glasgow University, claims in his 1994 book, reprinted in 2007, that 'shortcomings' in Hume's case 'leave us free to consider whether reports of putative miracles can contribute to a case for theism'. The thesis of his whole book is a positive response to this question, and argues that such reports 'can have apologetic value';[40] for if there is any reason to think that, on a particular occasion a god, in furtherance of some divine purpose, 'so acted that generally obtaining patterns in events' did not, on the reported occasion, obtain, then we might believe that, on the occasion reported by Mark and expanded by Matthew, Jesus did in fact walk on water.[41] Houston's formulation here is commendably tentative, and at the end of his book he expressly denies that certainty – other than on the basis of an accumulation of probabilities – is essential to faith.[42] Hence he can say that 'perhaps' at the wedding feast in Cana the requisite carbon atoms were created either *ex nihilo* by God, or by his 'undetected supply of a great quantity of energy' so as to turn water into wine.[43] Such a proposal that a god has acted miraculously may be regarded as 'promising-looking if it would effectively account for a good deal, including a good deal which is otherwise not easy to account for'.[44] Houston then applies all this to the gospel reports of Jesus's resurrection and preceding ministry:

> Take the case of a teacher whose words *sublimely illuminate the human condition* and who has previously been the subject of *well-attested* reports saying he was involved in events contrary to natural law in ways which suggest he may thereby be divinely approved. Then suppose that this person is further reported, *by reports of some weight*, as having been resurrected, putatively miraculously,

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> after having been put to death by his enemies. In such circumstances reasonable people may perhaps be justified. . .in concluding that God may well have raised him up. . . Even if the reports of putative miracles are not so strong as to justify belief, they may still give some support, add some probability, to the theistic hypothesis.[45]

I have emphasized those clauses and phrases in this passage on which Houston's argument here depends, and which clearly result from wishful thinking. Jesus' teaching, as given in the gospels, has repeatedly been shown to be quite unoriginal, to include ethically unacceptable maxims (e.g. 'do not resist evil', Mt.5:39, and hate your own parents, siblings, wife and children if you are to be his disciple, Lk. 14:26) and to be replete with false expectations (e.g. Mt.24:29–34). The authors of these reports were not eyewitness of what they report, but – as Strauss long ago observed, followed as we saw by Boobyer, Ehrman, and indeed many others – persons who had received their information from others, and also who show, by the whole tendency of their writings, that they were disposed to do anything rather than to try the traditions they received by a critical test.

Although, then, Hume did not finally settle the question of the plausibility of miracles, his failure to do so gives no purchase to Houston's arguments, undogmatic and tentative though they are. It is perhaps significant that John Earman, who entitled his discussion of Hume's account of miracles 'Hume's Abject Failure', finds 'nothing attractive either intellectually or emotionally, in the theological doctrines of Christianity'.[46]

Notes

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[3] Evans, R.J., *In Defence of History* (London: Granta Books), p. 219.

[4] Heron, p. 97f.

[5] Ibid, p. 86.

[6] Dodd, C.H. *The Founder of Christianity* (London: Collins, 1971), p. 32.

[7] Keller, E. and Marie-Luise. *Miracles in Dispute. A Continuing Debate* (London: SCM, 1969), pp. 172–174.

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[9] Richardson, A. *The Miracle Stories of the Gospels* (London: SCM, 1941), p. 130.

[10] Farrer, A. 'An English Appreciation'. In *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. H.W. Bartsch, vols. 1 and 2 bound as one (London: SPCK, 1972) I, pp. 212–23, pp. 220f.

[11] Boobyer, G.H. 'The Gospel Miracles. Views Past and Present'. In *The Miracles and the Resurrection*, by I.T. Ramsey and four others (London: SPCK, 1964) pp. 31–49, pp. 45–47.

[12] Ibid, p. 48f.

[13] Wiles, M. 'Miracles in the Early Church'. In Moule, 1965, pp. 221–234, p. 225.

[14] Ibid, p. 234.

[15] Ibid, pp. 230–32.

[16] Hagner, D.A. 'An Analysis of Recent "Historical Jesus" Studies'. In *Religious Diversity in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. D. Cohn-Sherbok and J.M. Court (Sheffield: Academic Press, 2001), pp. 81–106, pp. 91, 106.

[17] O'Loughlin, T., 2001. 'The Early Church', In *Religious Diversity*, as cited under Hagner above, pp. 124–142, p. 135.

[18] Ibid, p. 87.

[19] Ibid, p. 89f.

[20] Ibid, p. 91.

[21] Ehrman, B.D. *Jesus Interrupted. Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (And Why We Don't Know About Them)* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), p. 173.

[22] O'Loughlin, p. 138.

[23] Ehrman, B.D., *Peter, Paul and Mary Magdalene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 61f.

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[24] Lampe, G.W.H. 'Miracles in the Acts of the Apostles', and 'Miracles in Early Christian Apologetic'. In Moule, 1965, pp. 165–178 and pp. 205–218, p. 205f.

[25] MacMullen, R. *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 108.

[26] Lampe, p. 165.

[27] Lampe, p. 216f.

[28] Lampe, p. 209.

[29] Wiles, p. 222.

[30] Lampe, p. 215.

[31] Meier, J.P. *A Marginal Jew. Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (New York and London: Doubleday 1991) p. 7f.

[32] Ehrman, B.D. *Jesus. Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 49.

[33] Mackay, B.S. 'Plutarch and the Miraculous'. In Moule, 1965, 95–111, p. 109.

[34] Redford, J. *Did Jesus Exist?* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1986), p. 12.

[35] Bauckham, R. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses. The Gospels as EyewitnessTestimony* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Cambridge, U.K.: 2006), p. 476.

[36] Huxley, T.H. *Science and Christian Tradition* (London: Macmillan, 1894), p. 226.

[37] Ibid, p. 200.

[38] Ibid, pp. 203–04.

[39] Flew, A. Edition of David Hume's 'Of Miracles' (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1985), p.14.

[40] Houston, J. *Reported Miracles. A Critique of Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 156, 158.

[41] Ibid, p. 134.

[42] Ibid, p. 256.

[43] Ibid, pp. 122f.

[44] Ibid, p. 148.

[45] Ibid, p. 161, emphases added.

[46] Earman, J. *Hume's Abject Failure. The Argument Against Miracles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. viii.

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