

## THINKING ABOUT MIRACLES

We all see that people die and stay dead. For those who disagree to say that Jesus didn't stay dead, the burden of proof therefore is on them. It is up to them to prove the resurrection. (Because of the burden of proof they have to prove every miracle of Jesus and every other one they say happened individually.) They answer that the burden of proof is on those who deny the resurrection to disprove the resurrection! It is not. It can't be on both sides. If one and one is usually two and somebody says there is an exception then the burden of proof is on that person. Not every miracle of Jesus can be proven believable or proven taken on its own so clearly Jesus violated the rule that each individual miracle has to be verified and didn't understand it so we can consider his miracles to be superstitious legendary nonsense. If you assert that a miracle has happened then the burden of proof is on you no matter who else has proved it to themselves. To say, "I saw the Blessed Virgin in an apparition," is just as serious as somebody saying, "My friend saw the Blessed Virgin in an apparition." One is just as outrageous as the other. So the burden of proof is on the first to prove that he really sees the Virgin and separately on the second to prove that he or she is right to hold that the friend saw the Virgin. It is bigotry to believe in a miracle claim without proving it to yourself. It is not enough for the Church to prove it – you have to see the complete evidence and examine it for yourself. You stand alone in considering claims like that. If God wants us to believe in miracles then he must want us to go through all this! It is ridiculous to think that he does. A better belief is that miracles are mistakes or frauds and God had nothing to do with them. To say that a reported miracle by Jesus or anybody else may have happened or was possible is simply to say we should be gullible. Nobody teaches that one must verify miracles to oneself for it is such hard work and there are so many miracles reported.

If we say it is unlikely for a man to rise from the dead the believers are forced to answer that we don't know what is unlikely or not.

Suppose it's unlikely in principle for a miracle to happen. Not only is it too unlikely to be what can happen but it is as unlikely to be that which did happen. Can and did work together. You cannot say something did happen so that it does not matter how unlikely it is.

It is immoral to declare miracles to have happened or possible. Why? The believers do not really believe literally anything magical can happen. They are selective about what they want to believe. If we say that the dead are dead we have no right to say that if we believe that people can come back from the dead for how do you in Sweden know that it isn't possible or unlikely for all the dead in Australia to rise this moment? How can you say the dead are dead or that the dead don't return? Because of the consequences of miracles, they deny the uniformity of life never mind nature, the burden of proof is on the believers. And the burden doesn't get lighter with "small" miracles. Why? Because if we can't say the dead are dead because of our respect for miracles then how can we say that people need to study if God miraculously inspires a schoolboy or schoolgirl regarding the correct answer to a small question in an examination paper?

The believers may say, "The winning lottery numbers are in fact no more or less likely than any other combination. So we do not know what is likely." But that is a natural and earthy matter. Experience proves it. It is not the same as a supernatural - non-natural - matter. Experience cannot prove that a man can rise supernaturally. We deny we can just assume we do not know what is likely in the natural world. We affirm we must know it not assume it. And we can know.

The person who says they got a revelation from God that the world is to end next week and the person seeing the Blessed Virgin and getting a harmless message to repent from her, demand the same level of evidence. Why? Doesn't the first person have a more important message than the second? Yes the content is more serious but that is not the point. The method by which both messages came is equal in that it is supernatural. The two messages equally need to be proved reliable and supernatural because they claim to be supernatural. The point is not the importance of the messages but the medium of the message – that is, how the message was given. The content messages can have no importance at all unless the supernatural nature of the message can be proven and the supernatural can be proven reliable. Think of it this way, we can't listen to the world end message or the other one just because of what it says. The supernatural has to be proven to exist and be reliable before we can heed such a message. Therefore small miracles need to be treated as scientifically or sceptically as big ones.

If 1 plus 1 is 3 in a village in Spain that calls for as much attention and examination as 1 plus 1 being 3 in the whole of Europe would be. A miracle challenges the way things happen in the same way that that would challenge mathematics. For

example, if  $1 + 1 = 3$  is true anywhere it is true everywhere. It's a universal law. If somebody can instantly cure the incurable that means the diseases cured are no longer incurable and this becomes a universal law too.

Imagine that when two natural laws are brought together they result in a specific result that we will call result X. You could say that law 1 plus law 2 is equal to result X. If a miracle interferes with this then the two laws bring about a different result. It's the same scenario as  $1 + 1 = 2$  being changed to  $1 + 1 = 3$ . Believers say that this is wrong. Its law 1 plus law 2 plus miracle law 3 = a different result from X.

It's a matter of worldwide concern when any miracle takes place – though the world wouldn't be concerned it ought to be. The view that the bigger the miracle the greater the evidence is a mistake. True, you need almost unattainable evidence for a big miracle for its big but you are no better off with smaller ones. Why? The manifestation may differ but the nature of the event is the same, it defies what we know of nature. This evidence is so difficult and time-consuming to verify that clearly all believers in miracles are inferring that evidence isn't so important and if so, then we should believe crackpots who claim revelations about the end of the world!