

History is His Story

Can you believe in **miracles**? If you want to believe in Christ, you'll have to believe in the Resurrection, a miracle. You'll likely also believe in virgin birth, Moses parting the Red Sea, Jonah, etc. The answer to belief in the miraculous can be found in the history of philosophy, a subject hardly anyone studies. Yet philosophy's ideas live on. Many scientists and modernists believe in Hume's ideas on rational thought, disproven as they are.

David Hume was a leading philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment (d. 1776). He said that the truth of something could be examined two ways—is it inherently true or can it be tested to be shown to be true (analytic and synthetic truth)? This principle of verifiability is contained in Hume's Fork, published in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 1738. Mathematical axioms were true by definition, hence inherently true. Other things require testing until they are made into scientific principles. But what if one wants to know, "Is there life after death?" Hume said, well, that's not true by definition, that's just a guess. Nor can it be tested (for correlation and causality). So it is not even untrue, it's meaningless. "Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion." Banish all belief in miracles. Hume's principle is often believed strongly by agnostics, scientists, and others who argue in scientific consensus to prove a principle. Many Christians were so intimidated by Hume's Fork and the authority of science that they tried to squelch every miraculous thing in scriptures. Medical conditions that might self-correct were ascribed to the miracles of healing by Jesus. David Strauss published a book, *Life of Jesus*, in 1835 to this end. But this attempt at "liberalism" nullifies Christianity.

The brilliant, Immanuel Kant (d. 1804), destroyed Hume's principle of verifiability in the 1780s. Mathematical truths, he pointed out were not true by definition. Mathematicians make assumptions and build theorems from there. And when math reaches a result, results are tested, just as with any scientific principle. But when we test, we come to an unsettling thought. Scientific laws are not truly verifiable. Test 1 million times with same result. But what if the 1,000,001st test shows a new result? Thus we can never acquire a Universal Unlimited Conclusion. We might say all swans are white. And they are in Eurasia and America. But when Australia was discovered—black swans. Hence scientists often alter Hume's Fork. Carl Sagan said science isn't foolproof, but it is "perfectible." Actually science is just good guessing. We've known all along that strong correlations can be found, but that doesn't define a casual relationship. (the stock market always goes up the year the NFC team wins the Super Bowl—well, or at least it worked that way for 17 years. Not a peep of causality!) You have to have both correlation and causality to make a good scientific theory. Neil deGrasse Tyson tried to say, "Science's big-time success rests on the fact that it works." But then physicists reminded him that Newton's classical mechanics was universally hailed as absolutely correct until 1905 when Albert Einstein showed that the assumption that "a frame of reference of rest could be defined" *cannot*. Physics had to re-write almost the entire book.

We simply need to realize that the scientific laws aren't necessarily the Laws of Nature. Can we find miracles? Well, if God knows the Laws of Nature which we do not, miracles are quite likely. Miracles are invalid only if our knowledge of causalities is so excellent that we can dismiss Divine Causality. Our talk of miracles might include things that are so rare that we find them "impossible" or that are contrary to science we know. God has no constraints outside of the physical nature we observe. The Author of this play does an amazing thing and at the time of His deeming, stepped into the play and changed everything with the birth of His Son. This leaves us puzzled in doubt like the man who begged Jesus heal his son. "Lord, I believe. Help Thou my unbelief." Doubt God? He can use that to lay out a case for trust in Him. When we can't figure out our situation, we can believe by faith (trust). Likewise if you have witnessed His presence in a miraculous way—a dream, a vision, a divine calling, a healing, a spiritual gift or maybe you're simply a dumb shepherd of Bethlehem,, talk to Him about it. Or if you don't think you have seen anything miraculous, Luther said you have. You've witnessed the most miraculous and mystic thing in experiencing the faith within yourself—an impossibility made possible. "God's not dead, He's surely alive, He's living on the inside, Roaring like a lion."—Newsboys.