

Editorial

The subject of miracles has come into prominence again and our first two articles in this issue address different aspects of the discussion. David Hume's criticisms of miracles are still frequently referred to in the literature and Paul Helm usefully sorts out the validity of one of his arguments and the weaknesses of others. C.S. Lewis's book *Miracles* is still the most widely recommended Christian treatment and Stuart Judge examines its dangers. Both Hume and Lewis operate within a 'Nature-Supernature' divide; the one to deny the supernatural and the other to affirm it. Both depend on an unacceptable view of nature as a machine that does things 'by itself' in accordance with mathematical laws. Edward Davis refreshingly demonstrates that Isaac Newton, who is frequently blamed for this 'Newtonian World-view' did not himself hold that view! He was more biblical than that.

The Bible of course does not express this mechanical view of the creation and as a result does not speak of miracles as 'supernatural'. What we call miracles are described as 'signs and wonders and mighty works'. There are other signs (a babe in a manger), other wonders (the sun and stars) and other mighty works (seed time and harvest). But the whole natural world is God's work and owes its existence and continuance to God's constant upholding. Natural Laws are merely our descriptions of the regularities that we discover in His activities—and which, thankfully, make science possible. Miracles then become those departures from the regular in which God attracts our attention to what he is doing in history. Sometimes we can trace scientific processes in these. Sometimes we cannot. In the Bible the regular (lawlike) and the irregular (miraculous) are intertwined and both seen as signs of God's power and control. It is urgent that we restore this picture in the public arena and undermine the illusion that scientists must hold to a clockwork view, however useful that may be as a methodological tool.

The Editors