

regarding the possibility of historical evidence for the occurrence of definite miracles, notably the miracles recorded in the New Testament. Miracles are looked upon mainly as events which differ from, or break through, the usual and customary order of things as testified by the accumulated evidence of living and trustworthy historical witnesses. There is indeed underlying the argument of Hume, in whose philosophy the idea of custom plays an important part, the conception of a universal, unalterable order without the assumption of which all human argument on things and events is impossible. But it has not been sufficiently pointed out either by Hume or by any of his successors, except in quite recent times, that this universal and unalterable order may possibly refer only to that restricted though increasing array of facts and events upon which our thoughts can profitably and usefully dwell in detail, and which form the object of such of our active mental enquiry as we can put to useful purpose in the regulation of the details of individual and social life. We are apt to overlook the much larger and wider array of facts and events in the face of which we must assume a merely contemplative and receptive attitude. In the age of Hume philosophers had only just begun to be impressed by the extraordinary fruitfulness which the knowledge of a few well-established relations in the region of physical science promised to have for the progress of human thought and culture. Since that age this knowledge has been enormously increased by the discovery of an additional small number of similar relations, by