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THE BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF HUME'S ESSAY "OF MIRACLES"

It was Hume's original intention to include his essay "Of Miracles," or at least some version of it, in the Treatise; but, as is well enough known, he did not. He had made up his mind not to some time before December, 1737. Thus, writing Henry Home, Dec. 2, 1737, he tells of the omission and at the same time gives an explanation for it. Writes Hume: "[I] accordingly inclose some Reasonings concerning Miracles, which I once thought of publishing with the rest, but which I am afraid will give too much offence, even as the world is disposed at present."¹

Later, in the same letter, he humorously comments: "I am at present castrating my work, that is, cutting off its nobler parts; that is, endeavouring it shall give as little offence as possible." With a pull at Henry Home's lively, amiable leg, he then adds, "This is a piece of cowardice, for which I blame myself, though I believe none of my friends will blame me."²

To take Hume at his word, then, the essay "Of Miracles" was omitted from the Treatise for purely prudential reasons. "As the world is disposed at present" it is likely to give offense and so must be cut out: an explanation that, as far as I know, has not been taken exception to. Thus, Norman Kemp Smith, in his discussion of the essay in his introduction to the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, quotes the same passages from Hume's letter to Henry Home without query, quite as if they presented no difficulty.³

Clearly, though, they do present some difficulty. If a prudential fear of arousing religious prejudice and retaliation prevented, as seems indicated, the inclusion of the essay "Of Miracles" in the Treatise why did it not also prevent its inclusion, nine years later,⁴ in the

Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding or, as subsequently titled, the Enquiry?

Are we to suppose that in the intervening nine years, or eleven years counting from the date of Hume's letter to Henry Home, the world had become better "disposed"? We have good reason to think that, although religious toleration had broadened in the interval, it had not broadened quite that much. Moreover, we have good reason to think that Hume did not think it had or was all that concerned if it had not. As late as 1755, for instance, we find Hume, along with Lord Kames (the former Henry Home), under bitter attack in the General Assembly as infidels;⁵ and writing to Henry Home in April 1748, Hume says, "The other work is the Philosophical Essays [Concerning Human Understanding] which you dissuaded me from printing. I won't justify the prudence of this step, any other way than by expressing my indifference about all the consequences that may follow."⁶

But while Hume presents no reason except the very questionable one of indifference to prudential consequences for resurrecting and including the essay "Of Miracles" in the Philosophical Essays or Enquiry, Norman Kemp Smith here does have an explanation of his own. In almost the same place in the same introduction we have previously quoted from, he says that Hume wanted to ensure the popularity of the Enquiry. "He was anxious," he says, "that it should appeal to a wide public, and not merely to students of technical philosophy; and for this reason he also decided to include certain other sections which, on the eve of publication, he had omitted from the Treatise." He goes on to explain that the "nobler parts" of the Treatise that were cut off were "evidently theological in character; and of the kind in which the reading public would be likely to be most interested. These he now resolved to include in the Enquiry."⁷

This explanation of Norman Kemp Smith's in no way, of course, elucidates his previous quotations from Hume's letter to Henry Home, which speak of prudence and cowardice; nor does he seem to be at all aware of the irrelevancy and even incompatibility of the two. But be that as it may, one cannot entirely discount the claim that Hume was interested in appealing to the public. Both in his correspondence and in his autobiography he can be found expressing disappointment and even mild indignation that some work by another author has stirred up controversy and comment while some work of his has elicited only silence or apathy. His complaint that the Treatise fell still-born from the press is well-known. Nonetheless, it can hardly be supposed that Hume's interest in appealing to a wider public can account for what it is supposed to by Smith.

To begin with, "Of Miracles" is not particularly designed for a wider public. Its argument against miracles in the first part, for example, is of a convoluted sort that could scarcely be fathomed or appreciated by most readers of a wider public. Furthermore, it is no more or less technical in its vocabulary and thought than several of the essays that do appear in the body of the Treatise; for example, "Of the Reason of Animals," Book I, Part III, Sect. XVI; "Conclusion of this book," Book I, Part IV, Sect. VIII; not to mention various sections in Books II and III. To be sure, an attack on people's belief in miracles could be expected to stir up more interest than an essay on the reasoning powers of animals. But Hume also wanted the Treatise to stir up general interest. He was sorely disappointed when it did not. Hence, dismissing for the moment the difficult claim of prudence and cowardice, one should have thought, even accepting what Norman Kemp Smith says, that Hume would have included "Of Miracles" in the Treatise instead of excluding it.

Furthermore, it is not the case, as Smith seems to imply, either that Hume excized from the Treatise whatever original parts of the essay were theological in character or that the essay is theological in character. Sect. V of Part IV, Book I, "Of the immateriality of the soul," obviously engages itself with theological topics; the immateriality and thereby the immortality of the soul is one; another is the so-called atheism of Spinoza's system. In the middle of the essay Hume explicitly tells us that he is dealing with the claims of "Theologians;"⁸ and in the concluding passages of the essay, his complaint about philosophy having to submit to a purported higher authority is ostensibly aimed at theologians and theology.

On the other hand, "Of Miracles" is only in one place at all theological in character. When at the very end of the piece Hume, with decidedly skeptical overtones, proposes that "Our most holy religion is founded on Faith, not reason" and only as a miraculous effect of faith are we able to believe that it was originally attended by miracles, he is, no doubt, touching on a theological thesis: that faith acquaints us with truths that reason cannot acquaint us with. But except for this one brief and extremely suspect flirtation with a theological topic, the essay wholly concerns itself with determining the sort of evidence that a miracle would have to have to be rationally believed in view of its being, by definition, a violation of the laws of nature, and the empirically suspect nature of all evidence so far proposed for miracles or that might be proposed for them. These topics lie entirely within the province of epistemology.

But anyway: if neither prudence, cowardice, nor an interest in stirring up public interest are able to account for the essay's omission from the Treatise and its inclusion in the Enquiry, what can? In our search

for an answer I would first of all propose that we take Hume's avowal of cowardice as having, for all its jesting exterior, a deeply-felt but not publicly expressible inner core of serious purpose, protest, and -- considered in the light of Hume's times -- heresy bordering upon blasphemy. When what Hume is saying impinges on religious belief and is likely to excite uncontrollable passion, he usually tries, by insinuating either an empty piety or a joke at his own expense, to misdirect the eye of those hostile to what he wants to say openly but dares not, while still providing those sympathetic or who might be sympathetic a clue or enough of a clue so that the truth, as he sees it, will not be entirely suppressed and philosophy thus silenced. Thus, the answer that we arrive at, if we arrive at any, should make sense of his avowal of cowardice but in a way that is not superficially apparent and that accomplishes a serious philosophic purpose.

I have presented one yardstick, though a not very precise one, for deciding whether the answer we arrive at is a good one or not. That answer, however, remains as unapparent as ever. But we know that there must be one. Hume was not given to acting on mere whim.

Though it may seem a long way around and rather an oblique one at that to arrive at the answer we want I suggest that our surest route to it is to ask where, in the Treatise, did Hume originally think to locate the essay "Of Miracles." It will turn out, I submit, that when this question is answered the pieces of our puzzle will all fall into place.

Now short of making it stick out like a sore thumb, he could not have intended to place the essay in either Book II or Book III. But where might he have fitted it into Book I? Not, clearly, anywhere in Parts I, II, or III. Part IV, though, is made up of what seem at first glance to be merely separate and disconnected

essays, all of a rather sensationalistic cast: section I, "Of scepticism with regard to reason;" section II, "Of scepticism with regard to the senses," and so on. Seen in this off-hand way, the contents of Part IV would seem to compose a veritable smorgasbord of intellectual tidbits. In this welter of variety and disconnectedness, one more tidbit could certainly find lodgement; and especially such a toothsome one as an essay on miracles. But while these speculations can find a place for the essay "Of Miracles" in the Treatise they fail completely to provide any serious philosophic purpose for its omission from the Treatise. What is obviously needed is a much more thorough analysis as to what Hume is up to in Part IV of Book I.

Now in the "Introduction" to the Treatise Hume tells us that, among other things, he means to establish in a more definitive way than it has yet been established the science of man. In doing so, he proposes, he will have provided a complete foundation for all the other sciences. What he means by this, he hints, is not only that the operations of the mind on which all the other sciences are erected can be shown to fall under the jurisdiction of the science of man but also all their objects or subject matters. I shall not try here to substantiate this last, rather bold interpretation, which Passmore in Hume's Intentions calls the "Berkeleyian" interpretation and rejects,⁹ beyond citing the two following supporting facts or circumstances.

First of all, so conceived and only as so conceived, does the Treatise read in a way that coheres with the seemingly wildly extravagant claims that Hume makes in certain of his correspondence concerning what he has accomplished or means to accomplish. Thus, in his letter of 1734 to -- as Greig has it -- Dr. Cheyne, Hume speaks of a philosophic vision of some sort that was both new and breathtaking, saying, "After much Study, &

Reflection ... at last, when I was about 18 Years of Age, there seem'd to be open'd up to me a new Scene of Thought, which transported me beyond Measure...."¹⁰ Later, writing to Henry Home in 1739, he describes his principles as being wholly revolutionary, saying, "My principles are also so remote from all the vulgar sentiments on the subject, that were they to take place, they would produce almost a total alteration in philosophy."¹¹ These are not the sorts of statements he would have made were his philosophizing in the Treatise merely subsuming the mental operations of the various sciences under the science of man. That would have been a pedestrian undertaking that everyone had long acceded to and many engaged in. To account for these excited and exciting descriptions of it, his philosophizing in the Treatise had, assuredly, to subsume also under the science of man the subject matters of all the other sciences.

In the second place, such an astounding notion or endeavor, which seems to invert the natural order of things, does not seem quite so preposterous when we assume, as Hume and almost all the philosophers of his time assumed, that whatever we are directly aware of are only ideas or perceptions. On this assumption, what other subject matter could any science have but the subject matter of something like a mentalistic psychology and what could the science of man be but that same mentalistic psychology?

But be these things as they may, I shall only ask that, as a necessary parameter of the particular explanation that I mean to propose for the suppression and appearance of the essay "Of Miracles", this astounding interpretation of the Treatise -- the Treatise, let me emphasize not the Enquiry -- be, for the remainder of this paper, adopted, however much one may in fact disagree with it. Thus, it will be supposed that what

Hume is attempting to do in the body of Book I of the Treatise is to show that such indeed is the case; namely, that not only the operations but the subject matters of all other sciences are special cases of the subject matter of mentalistic psychology.

On this Berkeleian interpretation, Part I of Book I lays the foundation, as philosophia prima, for the assimilation of all possible scientific subject matters and operations to the subject matter of mentalistic psychology. Thus, in Part I it is purportedly discovered, as the initial empirical finding of the science of man, that whatever we can be aware of are only psychological objects, impressions and ideas, and that the operations of the mind, in that they merely repeat, compound, separate, and increase or decrease the vivacity of these same objects, cannot take us beyond them. Part II purports to discover, still as an exercise of the science of man, that the subject matters of all the particular sciences, both mathematical and matter of fact, consist of psychological objects and hence fall under the science of man, i.e., mentalistic psychology. Thus visual space is resolved into colored mathematical points, and colors, Hume notes, are by everyone granted to be psychological objects (the received opinion being, of course, that colors are merely secondary qualities). Part III carries out the same sort of undertaking with respect to various elements of the operations of the mind that, at first glance, would seem to resist psychologizing: the projected necessity or force that comprises the very essence of causal reasoning; the use of rules; correspondent truth relations, and so on. by the termination of Part III it would seem, therefore, that both in a most general way and in a more particular way relating to the specific branches of science, mathematical and matter of fact, the program of psychologizing

the subject matters and operations of all the sciences has been, by and large, completed.

But if this is so, what is Part IV doing? What more remains to be accomplished? For one thing, several items, involving both the subject matter of the sciences and their operations, have not been psychologized and remain to be dealt with. For example, the demonstrative reasonings in mathematics have not been yet psychologized. Until they are, their seemingly objective nature must appear to transcend mere psychological human nature. Tangible mathematical points have not been psychologized, nor solidity. And concerning the science of man or mentalistic psychology itself in a most internal way, the self has not been and so can still pose as a possible subject matter that transcends the objects belonging to the science of man. In addition, the science of man, comprising all the operations carried out in Book I of the Treatise, would seem to be grounded in an objective interest in, and apprehension of, the truth. Clearly, its own origins need to be psychologized, else the existence of mentalistic psychology will rest on what does not pertain to it but possibly to some other science. Hence, instead of the science of man being the science of all sciences, it will be the dependent branch of some other science.

Besides these tasks still to be completed, dictating the existence of Part IV is the consideration that Hume's program is purportedly an empirical one, based on experimentation, observation, and induction. As such it cannot pretend to a priori certainty. Along the way Hume has consistently adduced what he thinks to be confirmations of his science of man's generalizations or principles and its overall claims. Except, though, for the one case of the idea of a shade of blue that had no antecedent impression, Part I Sect. 1, and in that case his motive was only to show that the first principle of

the Treatise was not a priori; he has not subjected his program and its purported findings to any disconfirmatory review. But empirical hypotheses are necessarily open to challenge and disconfirmation; and the more foundational the science they belong to, e.g. the science of man, the more open they must be to disconfirmation. It is part and parcel of Hume's moderate skepticism to insist on such theoretic prudence. Thus, what is still called for is a muster of the most authoritative objections that can be leveled against the conclusions that he has seemingly established and confirmed in Parts I-III.

Drawing on the items that have been left still to be psychologized and using them as spear-heads, as it were, of whatever unfriendly sallies might be launched against his system, Hume metes them out, according to their natural or historical affiliations, among what he calls "the sceptical and other systems of philosophy." Since neither Hume nor his contemporaries officially separated philosophy from science we may understand Hume to mean by the word "philosophy" not only what we mean but, indifferently, "science." Part IV, then, is the disconfirmatory battleground where his system must meet the challenges -- that is, the still unpsychologized objects or phenomena -- posed by all the various sources of scientific knowledge. These are arranged for the attack in an ascending order of real or reputed authority. Hence, working backward, as the science of all sciences and possessing therefore the greatest authority, the science of man is assigned the final and most powerful attack, which, if not successfully met, must demolish Hume's entire undertaking. Thus, in the penultimate section, VI, "Of personal identity," the self, which has throughout Book I seemingly preserved the status of something transcending the psychological objects of mentalistic psychology, being the "I" that has perceptions, will need to be psychologized -- and

presumably it is, there being analyzed into a heap of perceptions; and in Sect. VII, "Conclusion of this book," the very most internal challenge to the claims of mentalistic psychology to be the science of all sciences has to be met and repelled. This is that science's own pretension to a scientific, objective foundation or origin. The latter too has to be psychologized and in Sect. VII it is. Employing autobiographical introspection, as dictated by an empirical, mentalistic psychology, Hume presumably discovers that one engages in the science of man if and only if one feels like engaging in it.

As a sop to theology's then generally accepted claim to be the most authoritative of the sciences Hume allots it Sect. V in which to propose or attempt its own disconfirmation of his revolutionary thesis. The question it in effect poses is how can an immaterial and hence arguably immortal soul be a psychological object? A hilarious, very contrived equation of the theologian's system of a substrate, immaterial soul with the "horrid, atheistical" system of Spinoza tells the reader that Hume does not think the authority of theology is deserving of even polite consideration.

Next in authority, and answered in Sect. IV, is "modern science" with its impenetrable solids or atoms, tangible points, and primary qualities; of less authority, "ancient science," whose substances, physical antipathies and so on are psychologized in Sect. III; then, in Sect. II, the senses are heard from, source of the matter of fact sciences, with their presumably independently existing material bodies; and finally, as farthest removed from the empirical science of man, the source of the mathematical sciences, demonstrative reasoning, whose appearance of psychologically transcendent objectivity is resolved by skeptical argument into a mere sensation.

Prima facie, in section I-VII, Part IV, all the sources of scientific or reputedly scientific knowledge have been given their disconfirmatory say and have been answered. Patently, however, one reputed source of knowledge has been uninvited to this symposium. The knowledge it purports to provide does not pretend to be scientific knowledge; it pretends to be the most certain sort of knowledge and was so accepted by most of Hume's contemporaries. Moreover, the objects falling under it would seem to be absolutely resistant to psychologizing. I have in mind, of course, revelation and revealed knowledge, with their Trinity, eternal hell and heaven, resurrection of the dead, and so on. As long as revelation and revealed knowledge were allowed to stand unchallenged, although the science of man might claim to be the science of all sciences, science itself could claim to deal only with second-rate illusion. The real and only important world would be the world depicted in revealed knowledge. And certainly that was not a conclusion that Hume, either as philosopher or man, could tolerate: as philosopher, because not a single of his philosophical principles was receptive to the existence of revelation and revealed knowledge; as a man, because it would entail acceptance of some of the things he most detested; for example, the belief he had been brought up in that most of mankind are condemned by predestination to eternal torment.

My speculation is that Hume originally intended Part IV of Book I to treat and defend the claims of his system not just against attacks issuing from the sources of scientific or reputedly scientific knowledge but also from the sources of all reputed knowledge. This would include revelation. My speculation is that one of the nobler parts cut out was initially, not the essay "Of Miracles" but an essay containing an argument similar to that in Part 1 of the essay "Of Miracles", only directed

against revelation and its objects. This is at least conceivable, for that argument undercuts as effectively belief in the items of revealed knowledge -- the Trinity, an eternal hell and heaven, final resurrection of the dead, etc. -- as belief in miracles. For these items also epitomize violations of the laws of nature.

One can see, however, the over-riding objections to carrying out an overt attack upon revelation and revealed knowledge, given Hume's time and surroundings. To do so would automatically expose him and his work to categorical dismissal and worse. Even his most religiously liberal friends would not countenance such an attack, Hume had to know.

As I reconstruct matters, Hume hit upon a way of carrying out this needed step in his program without risking the senseless dismissal or even destruction of himself and his work. Except for the miracles related in Scriptures, miracles were considered by the Calvinist contemporaries to be mere mummeries of the Roman church. Thus, in a letter to the Reverend Blair, 1761, Hume can say, "Miracle-working was a Popish trick, and discarded with the other parts of that religion."¹² Might he not, consequently, make the argument that a miracle cannot be believed in except that the falsity of its favoring testimony be "more miraculous, than the fact, which it endeavours to establish"¹³ stand proxy for an argument that says that the objects of revelation cannot be believed in except by supposing the falsity of their revelation to be more preposterous than their own existence? I opine that this expedient occurred to Hume and that it was in order to indicate the connection but not to indicate it so unequivocally as to draw down religious oppression of himself and his work that he has the resurrection of the dead play the leading role of a proposed miracle in "Of Miracles," always being careful, however, not to identify any case of such resurrection

with those depicted in the Scriptures but only with cases of his own devising; for example, the fanciful case of Queen Elizabeth. In attacking the credibility of these invented resurrections, though, he is in effect attacking the credibility of any resurrection, including those depicted in the Scriptures and hence, the latter presumably being the prime repository of truth and revealed knowledge, the credibility of revealed knowledge also.

But why, then, did he not carry through this ruse and insert "Of Miracles" into the place vacated in Part IV by an intended or actual essay which might have been titled "Of Revelation?" Clearly, on reconsideration, "Of Miracles" would be seen to be unable to play the role it would have to play in Part IV. Revelation may conceivably be a source of knowledge. Miracles simply are not a source of knowledge, whatever else they may be. It would be a conceptual confusion to treat them as such. Thus -- my claim is -- Hume was prevented by sensible prudence from inserting an essay on revelation into Part IV, which the pronouncements of his system actually demanded of him; he was prevented by the incompatibility of his essay, "Of Miracles", with the program being carried out in Part IV from inserting the latter there. So this nobler part too had to be cut off and in order to patch over the omission of an essay on revelation or its proxy Hume had to retitle Part IV so as to limit its scope to the sources of scientific knowledge rather than of knowledge in general; hence, its restricted heading, "Of the sceptical and other systems of philosophy" (emphasis ours).

If, then, I have been correct in my speculations, Hume omitted "Of Miracles" from the Treatise for a perfectly good philosophical reason: it would not fit into the program being carried out in Part IV. This

leaves us with the task of explaining its appearance or resurrection in the Enquiry.

But that is not too difficult. For reasons that I have gone into elsewhere,¹⁴ by the time he was composing the Enquiry Hume had given up the attempt to establish the science of man as the science of all sciences, and in particular, he had given up the attempt to show that the subject matters of all other sciences belonged to the science of man. He had also, for reasons connected with his view that the geometer falls into paradoxes when he attempts to become too fine in his demonstrations,¹⁵ exchanged what might be called the rigorous, exact mode of philosophizing of the Treatise for a looser, more careless mode in the Enquiry. Thus, no all-embracing, tightly organized program is being pushed along in the Enquiry as in Part IV, Book I of the Treatise. Hume is therefore able to insert, without incongruity, "Of Miracles" -- surely a favorite essay of his -- into the careless, tolerant proceedings of the former. In doing so he satisfied the demands of prudence, since the negative import of the essay with respect to the credibility of revelation was well-hidden; he satisfied simultaneously the demands of philosophy, since that negative import, in the eyes of the initiated, would be understood as disallowing revelation as a source of knowledge.

At the very least, it seems to me, our answer to the questions posed makes coherent sense, satisfies the yardstick (such as it is) of credibility that we originally set up, and does not take unwarranted liberties with the facts so far as we know them. What we should also like, of course, is some independent confirmation; for example, corroboration on Hume's part, or, best of all, corroboration in the text of the essay "Of Miracles" itself. Obviously, any such corroboration will have to be somewhat veiled and problematic. If it

were not, the questions addressed by us would have had no reason even to be posed, their answer by the present hypothesis lying in plain, open view to everyone. But with that qualification, namely, that it will be veiled and problematic, I believe that corroboration of both sorts can be adduced; corroboration on the part of Hume himself and corroboration in the text of "Of Miracles" itself.

In the first regard, we have Hume's letter to the Reverend George Campbell, dated 1762, June 7. In this letter Hume recounts that, at the time he was composing the Treatise at La Fleche, having become engaged in a dispute with one of the Jesuits at the College over miracles, the famous argument of Part I of "Of Miracles" occurred to him and which employing, he says, "I thought it very much gravelled my companion; but at last he observed to me, that it was impossible for that argument to have any solidity, because it operated equally against the Gospel as the Catholic miracles." Mischievously, Hume adds, "which observation I thought proper to admit as a sufficient answer."¹⁶ Hume, it is true, explicitly attributes to his Jesuit "companion" and not himself the observation that the argument in Part I of "Of Miracles" subverts equally the revelations of Gospel and belief in "Catholic" miracles. There can be no doubt, however, that whether or not the dispute Hume recounts ever took place, Hume is letting it be known that when he composed that argument he understood full well its subversive implications regarding revelation and revealed knowledge. The patently ingenuous remark that "...it was impossible for that argument to have any solidity" can then easily be read as really meaning, "...it was prudentially impossible for that argument, as reflecting unmitigatedly on revelation and revealed knowledge, to be published." For only in a prudential sense of "impossible" was there anything impossible about the argument and above all,

certainly not, in Hume's view, in having any epistemic solidity. But nothing could be prudentially impossible about it except its being received with toleration by his Scottish contemporaries in the form of a straightforward refutation of revelation and revealed knowledge. As everyone in informed circles in Scotland knew at the time, even as late as 1697 a young Edinburgh student had been condemned to be hanged for blasphemy and the sentence executed,¹⁷ while in 1714 Simpson, professor of divinity at Glasgow, had been charged with heresy before the General Assembly of the Kirk and after repeated hearings had been, in 1726, suspended as professor, with the recommendation that he never again be permitted to instruct in theology.¹⁸

Interestingly enough -- especially since, so far as I am aware, nothing much has been made of it -- the opening paragraph of "Of Miracles" also tilts the argument of Part I, not so much toward miracles as toward revelation and revealed knowledge. For in the second paragraph Hume says that the argument he is about to present in Part I is similar to an argument of Dr. Tillotson's which he has just summarized in the first paragraph. In that summary he has Tillotson arguing that "a weaker evidence can never destroy a stronger; and therefore, were the doctrine of the real presence ever so clearly revealed in scripture, it were directly contrary to the rules of just reasoning to give our assent to it."¹⁹ Hume can say this without too much fear of religious persecution because the real presence was denied by the Scotch Calvinists and because he is able to hide behind the skirts of the strict orthodox party's contention that reason is deceptive and that religious truth rests on faith and grace alone -- the piety with which he concludes the first paragraph.²⁰ At the same time, he is clearly alerting whoever might be dispassionate enough in religious matters to follow an

argument to its end to the subversive implications of the argument in Part I of "Of Miracles" with respect to revelation and revealed knowledge. Were it not for the title given the essay, for example, most readers, I think, would find themselves somewhat surprised to learn at the end of the second paragraph that the topic that is going to be addressed is not revelation and revealed knowledge but the much less controversial one of non-scriptural miracles and prodigies.

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1. Hume, The Letters of David Hume, ed. J.Y.T. Greig (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), Vol. 1, p. 24.
2. Ibid., p. 25.
3. Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, ed. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1947), p. 45.
4. That is, from the date of the publication of Book I of the Treatise.
5. Greig, op. cit., p. 224; letter to Alan Ramsey, dated June 1755.
6. Ibid., p. 111.
7. Smith, op. cit., p. 45.
8. Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, eds. Selby-Bigge, Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 240.
9. Passmore, Hume's Intentions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), p. 13.
10. Greig, op. cit., p. 13.

11. Ibid., p. 26.
12. Ibid., p. 350.
13. Hume, Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, eds. Selby-Bigge, Nidditch (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 116.
14. This author, "Two Main Questions Concerning Hume's Treatise and Enquiry," The Philosophical Review, 333-350. (Vol. LXXI, No. 3, July 1972).
15. Hume, Treatise, p. 109.
16. Greig, op. cit., p. 361.
17. See W.L. Mathieson, Scotland and the Union (Glasgow, 1905), p. 220.
18. Ibid., p. 224.
19. Hume, Enquiry, p. 109.
20. This piety, so nicely tailored to placate the fierce, orthodox party of Scotch Calvinists, but which rather notoriously failed to do so, was obviously not calculated to placate the more liberal type of churchman who insisted on the reasonableness of Christianity; and, in fact, it sometimes added fuel to the latter's already burning irritation; see, for instance, William Adams, An Essay of Miracles, (London: E. Say, 1752) pp. 112-113:

The remainder of this Essay [Hume's Essay of Miracles] is little more than a rude insult on the Scriptures and the Christian religion. For fear his readers should mistake his meaning, and not apply his argument where he intended, the author proceeds, with a smiling grimace, to tell us, that our most 'holy religion is founded on faith, not on reason, and 'tis a sure method of exposing it to put it to such a trial as it is by no means fitted to endure.'

It should be added that prior to this outburst Adams has been engaged in a good deal of careful exegesis and tight argumentation, much of which became the staple of later critiques of Hume's Essay of Miracles, as in John Leland's A View of the Principal Deistical Writers, "Letter XVIII" and "Letter XIX", the fifth edition, vol. I. (London, 1794).

It was, though, the fierce, orthodox party of Scotch Calvinists which Hume had to take prudential account of, not the liberal churchmen of Scotland (rather few in number in the thirties and forties) or England (who, though numerous, were not fierce).