

Thus, we observe that both Teodor Botiș and the two historians and their book completely fit the words of Plinius Minor: “Happy is he who writes things worth reading, happy is he who does deeds worthy of writing, but happier is he who does deeds worth writing and writes things worth reading”.

The two coordinators of the *Theologians of Arad* collection, fathers professors Cristinel Ioja and Nicolae M. Tang, are also happy, because they initiated and supervise a singular project in the contemporary Romanian theological environment, an initiative for which they deserve to be congratulated and encouraged to be able to bring it to fruition. The representatives of the political-administrative and cultural county authorities in Arad must also be happy and congratulated, who understood the cultural, memorial and historiographical importance of the editorial project of the “Ilarion V. Felea” Faculty of Theology of the “Aurel Vlaicu” University in Arad and financially supported the printing of this volume and the other two appearing in the same collection. We are also happy, who take part in this editorial event, in this cultural feast, as happy will be those who will carefully go through the pages of this volume.

**Dr. Mircea-Gheorghe ABRUDAN<sup>2</sup>**

**Craig S. Keener**, *Miracles today: The Supernatural Work of God in the Modern World*, **Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2121, 284 pp.**

Craig Keener’s book, *Miracles Today: The Supernatural Work of God in the Modern World* is a chronicle of God’s contemporary miraculous interventions in the midst of His people and in support of His believers. It is a book made up of stories and evidence that aim to prove the reality

<sup>2</sup> Scientific researcher III at the “George Barițiu” Institute of History of the Romanian Academy in Cluj-Napoca.

of miracles. The primary purpose of this book is to supplement what the author presented over 1,100 pages in a previous book entitled *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*. This shorter addition addresses the reader who wonders if miracles like those in the New Testament still happen today.

Craig Keener is the F.M. and Ada Thompson Professor of Biblical Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary. His research focuses on the environment of the New Testament, the problem of the historical Jesus, ethnic and racial reconciliation and miracles. In this book, which is added to the other over 30 that he has published so far, the author expresses in an accessible language his interest in the wonderful works of God in the world and his conviction that they are possible and present even today. In fact, in the Introduction, Keener shows that in this work he does not wish to treat the theology of miracles, but their reality (p. xix).

In Part 1, Keener offers some insights that prepare the reader for the miracle accounts to come. As I have already said, this book is meant to be an updated addition to the author's first volume dedicated to miracles. Another goal pursued is to combat the ideas of the 18th century English naturalist David Hume, who denies the possibility of miracles. Keener defines a miracle as "a divine action that transcends the ordinary course of nature and so generates awe" (p. 3). He shows that miracles rarely violate the laws of nature and that, in order to accept them, there is no need to renounce the claims of science. With all the progress of science, the common people have not stopped believing in miracles and, for many people, the miracle is the one that opens the possibility of a relationship with God.

In Part 2, Keener presents a series of accounts provided by eyewitnesses of miracles, with the aim of combating Hume's claim that eyewitnesses to miracles are not credible. He shows that three quarters of the doctors in the United States believe in divine healing, even if the affirmation of this belief is not acceptable in the public space. The author cites testimonies from educated people, including non-Christians, who have experienced such healing and who are not likely to present the facts in a Christian partisan way. Keener states that "God acts in history not because all his people

have identical, precise theology. God acts. . . to show compassion on many of the needy and to provide foretastes of Christ's kingdom" (p. 39). At the end of this part, a lot of healings of newborn children are presented, thus discrediting the skeptics who attribute miracles to a mere reversal of psycho-somatic processes.

In the third part, the author responds to another category of objections that state that healings might be fake and that doctors who believe in miracles are ideologized. In this regard, Keener presents cases of healings that were either video-recorded, or documented in medical details, or rigorously researched according to the protocols of the Roman Catholic Church. Among the miraculously healed patients, the author mentions cases of paralysis, intoxication, brain death, hemorrhages and cancer. After presenting countless cases of people being healed in a way totally different from ordinary medical predictions, Keener reiterates the idea that assumptions always predetermine conclusions (p. 59).

The fourth part is dedicated to the presentation of some miracles that happened in the modern era and which are similar to the miracles performed by the Savior Jesus Christ. Thus, we read about the healing of the blind, the deaf, the paralytic and the lepers. In the presentation of these events, Keener also notes the effect of igniting or renewing faith in Jesus that the miracle had in some cases. In front of the assessments of skeptics who challenge the reality of faith healing, Keener lets the evidence speak for itself. He is aware of the fact that the detractors' desire to preserve their convictions is many times greater than the persuasive force of the evidence.

In the fifth part, resurrections from the dead are described. Here Keener presents such miracles that happened in Africa, Asia and the West. Many of these were witnessed by doctors or people known to the author's family. None of the resuscitations could be explained psychosomatically, and very few could be attributed to Lazarus Syndrome. It is true, the author points out, that resurrections do not happen often, but this does not mean that they do not happen at all.

The next section is dedicated to miracles performed on nature. Keener speaks of people who through prayer calmed storms, multiplied

food, brought rain, or found places with water for wells. Although the documentation is less here than in the other chapters, Keener also sees in these miracles the work of God to “protect his people, provide for them, to enable them to fulfill their mission, or simply to reveal himself” (p. 175).

The final part of the book is reserved for the theology of miracles. The author states that God does not owe anyone miracles and that they will not happen whenever someone wants them to. Also, in most cases, the natural element intertwines with the supernatural in very subtle ways that are often very difficult to notice. It takes faith and humility both to receive a miracle and to accept not receiving one.

The book is not an exhaustive work on miracles, but is rather a collection of stories intended to provide the sincere seeker with the evidence he looks for. Keener knows that there are materialists who do not want evidence and who “value their starting premise more than any amount of evidence” (p. 5). The presentation of new evidence is the author’s goal, and we can say that this goal has been achieved. The author’s primary intended reader is the open skeptic. The stiff skeptic will reject all evidence and consider miracles “anomalies” that will once be rationally explained. Nothing will convince them, and therefore the book is not addressed to them. But Keener hopes that the divine signs he records will attract the attention of those who wonder if a relationship with a God open to the world is possible. The book calls into question the prejudices regarding the way God manifests himself and, at the same time, plants the seed of hope in the reader’s heart.

**Rev. lect. dr. Adrian MURG.**