

Miracles and History.

Auburn Affirmation attacks miracles esp. V.B. & Res.
we should defend the Bible.

I Pet. 3:15 Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason.

Phil. 1:17: I am set for the defense of the gospel.

apologetics

Defend the whole. A general does not abandon half his positions to an invader. Easier to defend all. Bible teaches a system.
Sermon deals with one point: To justify miracles and to show their importance.

pre Russia wished against Moscow alone not South or North.

Materialism ruled out miracles + all religion
Indeterministic physics called friend of religion
But not friend of Xty.
[Greeks bearing gifts]

no one Sovereign

Bible does not teach indeterminism, but Sovereignty.
Not a haphazard world. God's promises are sure bec God controls the world.

His plan: Gen 45:8 { So now it was not you who sent me hither, but God. }
Ps. 135:6 { whatever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, + in ev, in seas, + as deep places }

God Omnipotent Reigneth

Miracles a part of God's plan. Unless God can do as he pleases, unless he controls the world, his promises are doubtful and miracles have no significance.

{ Can we Believe in God who performed miracles he has told us about? Can we Believe }

David Hume defines miracle as a "transgression
of a law of nature by a particular volition
of God."

Contrary to all experience
∴ never happened

cf. Archbishop Whately on Napoleon.

[note: some miracles are not such transgressions
others are. Red sea vs Res.
we must meet the difficulty.]

6 minutes to
end of argument

The miracles which are the stumbling blocks for so many are those which apparently break the laws of nature. To meet such objections to Christianity, one must grasp clearly what is meant by a law of nature. That we may avoid misunderstanding ~~the~~ the phrase could well be changed to "a law of physics." The reason is that no one can suppose a miracle to break a law unless the law in question be known, and the only laws which are known or are thought to be known are the definite results of modern science.

In the next place, before we can compare miracles and laws we ought to know how a scientist

comes by his laws. Now, without becoming too technical, let it be stated that the empirical data with which the physicist works, the observations which he actually makes, are inexact. His readings always include a variable error. This means that while empirical observation always fixes limits between which the law must be made, empirical observation never discovers any one law. The observations set limits, but the actual, definite, mathematical law depends on the choice of the scientist. He may choose a law for personal, or aesthetic, or moral reasons, but he chooses the law rather than discovers it.

thresholds

In the next place, the miracles which the Christian is interested in defending, lie outside the range of experiment. They do not directly concern the motions of hypothetical point-centers of force. Rather they are events of history, just as the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. Science has just as much and just as little to do with miracles as with Napoleon. No event of history satisfies the artificial conditions of a physics laboratory.

Finally, therefore, we suggest that in addition to experiment in a laboratory, the scientist in choosing which law he wants should first consult history.

and after determining by historical evidences what has happened should then choose his law within the limits of historic actuality. The non Christian scientist, so it seems to me, proceeds ~~by~~ a reverse and absurd method. He chooses his law to suit himself and then rewrites history to suit his law. I must say that I do not believe that physical science is so advanced as to be able to reconstruct history from laboratory observations.

Even in the case of more ordinary occurrences, the laws of physics do not describe what common opinion considers to be nature itself. The law

of the pendulum assumes that the mass of the pendulum is concentrated at a mathematical point and that it swings on a tensionless string from a frictionless point. No such pendulum has ever existed in the visible world. If then the swinging of the pendulum of a grandfather's clock occurs without being invalidated by a law of physics, a law well known and mathematically exact, why should the Resurrection of Christ be adjudged impossible through a law entirely unknown and never even approximated. Rather: just as the law of the pendulum has its limits set by real

occurrences, so this supposed universal law of physics, if it ever be formulated, will have its limits set by the historical fact of Christ's Resurrection.

The question of miracles therefore is not so much a scientific question as it is an historical question.

Some miracles relatively unimportant, > V.B. + Res. important

Aside & I desire to disbelieve in miracles, I attack on & V.B. centers on & acct in Lk 2:1- & Roman census.

- obj's:
- ① I was no census
 - ② I was, > it did extend to Palestine
 - ③ Even if it had, Jos + Mary wd I have gone to Bethleh.
 - ④ no census before A.D. 6.
 5. Quirinus was I governor durx Herod's life time.

Sir Wm Ramsay
chemist or helian
archaeologist

V.B.'s in pagan religions J. G. Macken

V.B. important - essential 1 a 2 best Xty
> & Res. is of supreme importance - stands out above all o^r miracles.

I Cor. 15:17 if X^t be not raised,
your faith is vain

In Acts. Truth apostle chosen as a witness / v Res.
Every sermon mentions / Res.

Better attested historically than most ancient history
500 witnesses - hallucinations for 40 days
& never again?!
5 written accounts (not 5 for Caesar's wars)
Change of Sabbath = required a tremendous C.

Discrepancies: Dr. Geo. S. Buttrick Madison Ave. Presby Ch.
"The X'n Fact & Modern Doubt"

Angels: || Mtr. one angel outside sitting
 || Mk. " " inside "
 || Lk. 2 " " standy.

Requires merely average intellig^z
> Buttrick thinks it casts doubt
on / Res.

To accept Xenophon, Thucydides, & reject Mt, Luke, Paul
is merely religious prejudice.

✓ / Res. is so outstandy, all / miracles
are essential / Xty., bec

Bible a record of God's redemptive acts for men
intervention in history. Hence to deny
miracles = to deny what God redeems.

Xty an historical religion. Philosophy & science
deal with the abstract or the repeated.

Xty insists on unique events. Once for all
Crucifixion - Res. → = a judgment
Stoics on Mars Hill.

We look back to past events: Creation, Flood,
Exodus, Crucifixion.

Look forward to Christ's return & the
Consummation.

Rethinking Missions removes significance from the past
but most obviously, as Dr. Mather said, has
no hope for the future. It does not look for
intervention but trusts forces now at work.

We trust God to intervene & in a less spectacular
manner to guide present history. We expect
God to guide & to bless this Reformed Presby
Ch. & the Presby Ch. of America.

✓ Xn Ch. was begun in ✓ face of
great oppo^x forces - persecution -
It was like a little boat launched
on a stormy sea. Today also
✓ Ch. of Xt is tossed by the billows of
a perilous present, & buffeted by the
waves of unbelief, is sailing to
an unknown future. Master,

Carest thou not that we perish?

We have established our Church in the face of
apostasy; we are confronted with a vindictive
law suit designed to embarrass us; we are
slandered by false rumors assiduously spread
by those who preach another gospel. Like a
little boat we launch on the ocean of the
unknown future, buffeted by the waves of
opposition. Master,

Least thou not that we perish
How canst thou lie asleep
When each moment so nighly is threatening
A grave in the angry deep.

The winds & the waves shall obey they will
Peace, be still.
Whether the wrath of the storm tossed sea,
Or demons, or men, or whatever it be,
No waves can swallow the ship where lies
The Master of ocean, of earth, of skies.
They all shall sweetly obey they will
Peace, peace, be still.