

# 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.

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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  
affirm. Moscow done  
with I South of North

Materialism ruled out miracles + all religion  
Indeterministic physics called friend of religion

But not friend of Xty.  
[Greeks bearing gifts]

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

no one Sovereign

His plan: Gen 45:8 { So now it was not you who sent me hither, but God.

Ps. 135:6 { whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, + in ev, in v seas, + of deep places

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. He performed miracles he has told us about. Can we believe?

God Omnipotent Reigneth

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.

throughout

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 notions 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 an 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 have gone to Bethleh'm
- ④ no census before A.D. 6.
5. Quirinus was governor dur'g Herod's life time.

Sir Wm Ramsay  
{ chemist on heliens  
archaeologist

V.B.'s in pagan religions J. H. Thacker

V.B. important - essential / a 2<sup>nd</sup> best Xty  
> ✓ Res. is of supreme importance -  
stands out above all o<sup>r</sup> miracles.

I Cor. 15:17

if X<sup>t</sup> be not raised,  
your faith is vain



In Acts. Tenth apostle chosen as a witness 1 & Res.  
Every sermon mentions 1 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: || Mt. one angel outside sitting  
          || Mk. " " inside "  
          || Lk. 2 " " standy.

Requires merely average intelligence  
> Buttrick thinks it casts doubt  
on 1 Res.

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

1 & Res. is so outstanding, all 1 miracles  
are essential 1 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 - Pas. → = 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 & bless this Redeemed Presby  
Ch. & the Presby Ch. of America

✓ X<sup>n</sup> Ch. was begun in ✓ face of  
great oppo<sup>x</sup> 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 astiduously 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 thy 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 thy will  
Peace, peace, be still.