

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

BULLETIN

No. 17

March, 1953

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This Bulletin is published annually by the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies, of which Professor John Macpherson, Victoria College, Toronto, is the Secretary-Treasurer.

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

The twentieth annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies was held concurrently with the fourteenth annual meeting of the Canadian Section of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis in Trinity College, Toronto, on the nineteenth and twentieth of May, 1952.

FIRST SESSION - MONDAY EVENING, MAY 19th, 8 p.m.

This opening session began with prayer by the President of the Canadian Section, S.B.L.E., Rev. Professor R. B. Y. Scott, who presided.

The Minutes of the 1951 annual meeting, having been published in the sixteenth annual Bulletin of the C.S.B.S., were taken as read.

Correspondence: Expressions of regret at inability to attend were received from Rev. Dr. George King, Rev. Canon Hiltz and Rev. Dr. Louis Shein.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report: The number of members was reported as 82, of whom 35 had paid the annual fee of one dollar for the year 1951-52. The Society lost, by death, Rev. J. Russell Harris; by letter of resignation, Rev. Mr. Dowker; by removal, Rev. J. W. E. Newbury. The financial statement showed a balance on hand of \$10.51.

Auditors: Prof. R. J. Williams and Prof. S. MacLean Gilmour were appointed auditors.

Nominating Committee: Professors Beare, Hay and Macpherson were appointed as Nominating Committee.

New Members nominated were:

Prof. J. W. Wevers, University College, University of Toronto
Prof. R. A. Ward, Wycliffe College, Toronto
Rev. John Short, St. George United Church, Toronto
Rev. Morrison Kelly, St. Andrew's United Church, Toronto.

Place of Meeting, 1953:

It was moved by Prof. Winnett, seconded by Prof. Andrews, that the incoming executive be directed to accept the offer, extended to the Society by Prof. S. McL. Gilmour, to hold its twenty-first annual meeting at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. Carried.

Following announcements regarding the Travel Pool and the program for Tuesday, the annual presidential address was read by the President of the C.S.B.S., Professor David Hay, under the title: "Miracles: A Theological Discussion". This paper was received with applause by the twenty-two members present.

After adjournment, refreshments were served by the College.

SECOND SESSION - TUESDAY MORNING, MAY 20th, 10:10 a.m.

This session, with an attendance of twenty-four, was presided over by the President of the C.S.B.S., Prof. David Hay.

Auditors' Report: This first report of the Auditors expressed dissatisfaction with the form of the Treasurer's report, and recommended that (1) there should be a better presentation, involving the use of a bound volume, (2) that the pages of the financial record be numbered, and (3) that there should be a consistent use of either typing or writing. The Auditors further requested that they be allowed to report at a later session. Granted.

Membership Standing: It was moved by Prof. Beare, seconded by Prof. Scott, that members who are two years or more in arrears in the payment of annual dues be denied the privileges of active membership, after due notification. Carried.

Additions to Membership: After nomination of Rev. Gerald Moffatt, of Lawrence Park, Toronto, and Rev. Dr. William Orr Mulligan, of Aurora, Ontario, it was moved by Prof. Beare, seconded by Prof. T. J. Meek, that these two, together with those nominated at the preceding session, be elected to the membership of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies. Carried.

Officers: On report of the Nominating Committee, presented by Prof. Beare, the following were elected to office, on the motion of Prof. Beare, seconded by Prof. Scott:

Honorary President:	Principal Kent
President:	Professor R. J. Williams
Vice-President:	Professor Feilding
Secretary-Treasurer:	Professor John Macpherson
Executive Committee:	Rev. Dr. G. H. Johnson, Prof. S. McL. Gilmour, Professor Parker

Date of 1953 Meeting: It was moved by Prof. R. B. Y. Scott, seconded by Professor Parker, that the date of the twenty-first annual meeting be May 21st and 22nd, 1953. Carried.

Invitation to S.B.L.E.: It was moved by Prof. Scott, seconded by Professor Barnett, that the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis be invited, through Professor S. McL. Gilmour, an Associate on its Council, to hold its next annual meeting outside of New York (December, 1953) on the campus of the University of Toronto. Carried.

The following papers were presented and discussed:

- (1) The Emergence in Israel of the Sacred Book - Prof. R.B.Y.Scott
- (2) Semitic Literary Forms in relation to the Book of Amos - Prof. W.E.Staples
- (3) Manasseh's Exile: A Reconstruction - Prof. J.W.Wevers

The Society adjourned for luncheon at 12:30 p.m.

THIRD SESSION - TUESDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 20th, 2 p.m.

The Society reconvened at 2 p.m. under the chairmanship of Prof. Scott, with twenty-five present.

Hospitality: It was moved by Prof. Meek, seconded by Prof. Winnett, that an expression of gratitude for hospitality enjoyed by the Society, together with an expression of congratulation on the attainment of Trinity's centenary, be conveyed to the Provost and Corporation of Trinity College. Carried with applause.

The following seven papers were then presented and discussed:

- (1) A Note on II Corinthians 3, 18 - Prof. G. Caird
- (2) The Divine Names in the Jacob Cycle - Prof. F.V. Winnett
- (3) The Mediator in the Dialogue of Job - Prof. R.J. Williams
- (4) Some Observations on the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Texts of Isaiah - Prof. Parker.
- (5) Pere de Vaux's Statement regarding excavations at Khirbet Qumran, published in the Manchester Guardian - Prof. R.B.Y.Scott
- (6) A Published Report on Some New Tablets From Ras Shamra - Prof. T.J. Meek
- (7) An Explanation of the Omission by Luke of John's Martyrdom in Acts 12,2 - Prof. S. McL. Gilmour.

Auditors' Report: In a final report, presented by Prof. Williams, the statement of finances presented by the Treasurer was certified correct.

The Session adjourned at about 4:45 p.m.

FOURTH SESSION - TUESDAY EVENING, MAY 20th, 8:15 p.m.

This session was under the chairmanship of Prof. Hay, and was open to the clergymen of the district, who had been invited by post-card. Some 75 members and visitors were in attendance. Following a statement by the chairman as to the aims of the Society, and a welcome to the visitors, Prof. Beare introduced Prof. T. W. Manson, of Manchester University, who then delivered a lecture on "Realized Eschatology and the Messianic Secret". At its conclusion, some questions were directed to the lecturer, at the invitation of the chairman, and the distinguished British scholar was then formally thanked by Prof. Caird, on behalf of the Society. Vigorous applause attended this expression of the Society's gratitude.

Membership: Two further nominations to membership were made: Prof. Russell Aldwinckle, and Prof. H. F. Woodhouse. These were then duly elected to membership in the Society.

It was moved by Prof. Beare, seconded by Prof. Barnett, that the Travel Pool be supplemented to whatever extent be found necessary, in order to ensure claimants fifty cents return on each dollar expended in travel. Carried.

It was moved by Prof. Scott, seconded by Rev. F. Jackson, that Prof. Dow be elected an Honorary Life Member of the Society. Carried.

It was moved by Prof. Gilmour, seconded by Prof. Scott, that the Executive consider a policy for the Society regarding Honorary Members, and that it report to the next Annual Meeting. Carried.

It was moved by Prof. Beare, seconded by Prof. Andrews, that the Executive be empowered to use its discretion regarding the extra financial responsibility involved in the visit of Prof. Manson. Carried.

This concluding session of the Twentieth Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies was adjourned by the chairman at about 10 p.m.

by

Professor David W. Hay

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What I have to say will be divided into three sections:

1. The Origin of the Problem
2. Relevant Biblical Attitudes
3. Suggested Lines for an Answer

1. The Origin of the Problem.

How do we come to have the problem of miracle on our hands? It was not always felt to be a problem, as we well know. Much later than Bible-times, miracle was regarded as something upon which faith could rest for authentication. I am not saying anything original in remarking that now the boot is on the other foot. Miracles are only digestible by those who already have faith, and even among these the process sometimes leaves difficulties behind. What has produced the change?

C. S. Lewis says ("Miracles", p.11): "If anything extraordinary seems to have happened, we can always say that we have been the victims of an illusion. If we hold a philosophy which excludes the supernatural, this is what we always shall say." For Lewis, that is to say, miracle is a fundamental problem only for those who deny the supernatural. He admits that there are problems of historical evidence also, but regards these as secondary to the major issue of the possibility of miracle. Two-thirds of his book is therefore occupied with a spirited polemic against naturalism in general, and only one-third is specifically about miracle. He regards the problem as one set by unbelief, not as a problem within faith. To have difficulties about miracle is a sign that one stands outside the Christian camp - indeed, that one inhabits the tents of wickedness.

No doubt much in this attitude is definable. In some respects I shall support it. But it is very incomplete and lacking in thoroughness. There is a deeper truth. The problem has not been raised by natural science or the secular outlook. It is a product of the development of religion, and, specifically, of the Christian religion.

May I call your attention to some words of A. A. Bowman, who was Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow? I quote from his posthumous work, "Studies in the Philosophy of Religion", (Vol.2, p.42): ".....the development of a secular standpoint can be understood only from the religious point of view. It is a phenomenon of the process by which religion advances beyond its own animistic beginnings." He says some striking things under the heading: "The Development of the Secular Attitude to Nature: if God is to be treated as God, Nature must be treated as Nature." As religion develops from animism, it purges its thought of God by distinguishing Him from the creation. "Indeed we may go so far as to say that nature is discovered by the same act of thought by which religion passes from the demons to the notion of a God" (p.43). "As time goes on,

the nature of deity defines itself less and less in terms of any external relationship to nature, and more and more in terms of an inner moral relationship with man; To the deeper consciousness of the prophet, in the hour of his spiritual crisis, the death-dealing terrors of nature, in which the primitive mind would have seen the very type of divine action, lose all religious significance. They have no message to convey to the spirit that calamity has crushed (I Kings 19). Neither the "great and strong wind" that "rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah", nor yet the earthquake that followed the wind, nor the fire that succeeded the earthquake could inspire the sense of a divine presence. Jehovah was not in these, but in the still small voice that came when nature's voice was hushed. For the fierce and disappointed prophet nature had become opaque to godhead, her most impressive forms impervious to the meanings with which in an earlier age they had been saturated...." "we have here the reflection of a phase of thought in which external nature was no longer capable of sustaining the inner meanings which religion was revealing to the heart and soul of man. The enfranchisement of the spirit in the world of religious values is at the same time a disfranchisement of nature. It is a revelation of the secular" (p.44f).

"..... the discovery of the secular is a service which mankind owes to religion, and a service which was first rendered by religion in the interest of religion itself. It would be a fundamental error to explain the origin of the secular standpoint by attributing it to the development of physical science in modern times. The secular standpoint is not the product of science; science is its product. The part of the sciences has been to occupy the room so carefully prepared for them by religion in the interest of its own self-protection"(p.57).

Observe that Bowman is not denying that the study and propagation of science have extended the secular attitude and made it the dominant mood of our day. He is speaking of origins - dogmatically, philosophically, and historically. It is the impulse of transcendental or supernatural religion, seeking to preserve integrity in its thought of deity that has led to the distinction over against God of the non-divine or natural world. Religion has thereby opened up for man a world that he can explore, understand, and, he thinks, act in, without having to pay any attention to God. The secular world with which we are familiar today took its rise and could take its rise only within the orbit of supernatural religion - by aberration, of course. The Christian religion contains the proper corrective against this error in its doctrine of the divine immanence. But having, in the interests of religious truth, distinguished deity from the natural world, Christianity made the secular error a possible error, which has now widely become an actual error. In pagan days, Nature was a goddess, and was referred to in the feminine gender according to a custom that we maintain in our more literary and poetical moments. Apart from these moments we have abstracted all divinity from her, and have created a secular world for men to lose their souls in, if they will. It is often truly remarked that modern paganism is not paganism at all, Paganism was religious, and conscientiously religious. It was full of deities, in sky and air and earth and water. Modern secularism is the new phenomenon of irreligiousness. Bowman does good service in pointing out the further fact that secularism is a monster produced out of Christianity.

It must be kept in mind that the process of separating the divine from the natural, while radically initiated in Bible times, was not completed within the period of the formation of the canon. In a few mom-

ents we shall come back to this topic. In the meantime let us remark that the genius of the Reformation must be understood as a development of this distinction. The Reformation was not just a reformation. It was a revolution. I am not using the word as Roman Catholics use it, to mean merely that the Reformers were rebels against ecclesiastical authority. The Reformation was a revolution in a much deeper sense. It was a theological revolution, produced by a more radical application to the life of the Church of the distinction we are talking about. Even as regards holy things, Church-things, the very means of grace, the distinction between supernatural and natural was to be strictly enforced. Puritanism is the most marked expression of the "secularising" of the Church, so to speak.

Looked at in this way, the claim of the Reformers that they were simply reproducing the purity of the early Church is wonderfully naive. They were really distilling from Scripture what they believed to be its essential or quintessential spirit and purging the Church accordingly. The Protestant use of Scripture rests on principles elicited from Scripture, and is not simply an application of it at its face value.

Modern theological divisions have been produced by the same impulse of objectifying the world of nature and of man over against the supernatural. It is not for nothing that Karl Barth and his followers claim to be the genuine representatives in our time of the Reformation. It is not for nothing that Barth springs from Reformed origins. I have said that the Reformers drove home the distinction between the supernatural and the natural even with respect to the means of grace. But as far as the Bible is concerned, the impulse failed before the task was carried through. Despite the clear leadings in both Luther and Calvin, the latter especially, and all their successors, resided at this critical point. Protestantism became characterised by a complete confusion of supernature and nature in its attitude to the Bible.

What is Barth's theology save an application, massive, extensive and penetrating, of the distinction between the divine and the creaturely at all points of thought, within the Church and without it? His rejection of a "point of contact" is critical for his whole theology. He has been much misunderstood in this regard, and it is necessary to distinguish his standpoint from that of many of his followers. It is thought sometimes that Barth denies the doctrine of the divine immanence and that he has nothing to say regarding "secular" affairs. But of course he does affirm the divine immanence most strongly; he affirms a point of contact most strongly (but from God's side, not man's); he affirms an original revelation anterior to all special revelation; and he most emphatically believes that all human affairs, outside the Church as much as in it, are the sphere of the operation of Christ's sovereignty, the place where he is to be heard and obeyed. But all this is affirmed under the mark, rigorously maintained, of the distinction between supernature and nature and of the determining priority of the former.

If the inner movement of the Bible has been correctly diagnosed in these terms, it is not surprising to hear the claim powerfully advanced on behalf of the Barthian system that it is the culminating articulation of Biblical religion. Personally I have no desire to make that claim for it, even though the system has arisen within the ranks of my own Church-allegiance. I shall have to set aside also, as a digression from our immediate purpose, the teasing challenge to say at what point one would attempt to call Barth's great scheme into question. But it is apposite to

call attention to the fact that this theological standpoint is characterised by a marked emphasis upon the miraculousness of the Christian faith. It speaks lovingly and copiously about paradox (although Barth himself more than thirty years ago said it was high time to give that term a rest), and is often so unguarded in expression as to lay itself open to a charge of complete irrationalism.

In so, it is no accident that Protestant theology and scientific secularism took their rise at the same time, and belong to the same epoch of Western thought. Surely Bowman's thesis is sound, and capable of fuller illustration than he gave it. It is not for nothing that there have emerged in our own age both a theology that carries transcendentalism to the limit and a secularism that is utterly irreligious. I am not saying that the theology lacks resources to cope with the secularism. The conclusion that it is my purpose to draw is that the problem of miracle comes into our hands out of this development. Its genesis is not to be found, as Lewis and many imagine, in a naturalistic impulse attacking the Christian faith. It arises in the inner development of the Christian faith itself. The analysis, necessary to Christianity, of the complex whole of human experience into natural and supernatural elements and their objectification over against one another has set up a dialectic that makes it difficult to bring them together again in thought without contradiction. I believe that the dogmatician has a task to do for the Church. Pace Lewis, he must face the problem squarely, as a problem internal to theology. Otherwise his conclusions, like Lewis's, will issue in a confusion of the initial concepts.

2. Some Relevant Biblical Attitudes.

If it be true, as I have claimed, that succeeding Christian ages have developed the Biblical perspective much further, it is not to be expected that we should view the miraculous in precisely the same way as the Bible-writers. We shall have to make discriminations that they did not make, and find clear principles, if we can, for the evaluation of the Biblical material. That there is a Bible within the Bible, just as there was an Israel within Israel, we are all now agreed. The historical principle demands that we face this fact. In saying, as I have said, that Protestantism represents a distillation, not a reproduction of Biblical religion, I have said something favourable, not unfavourable to it. My unfavourable comment was against the self-complacency which regards Protestantism as reproducing or even as attempting to reproduce the actual religion of the early Church. It also usually regards everything that happened in the second century and later as mere Greek degeneration and formalism. A distillation is right and necessary. It should not, therefore, surprise anyone if at the end we allege that there are miracles and miracles.

The points that I am going to refer to are all intended as examples of how the discrimination between supernature and nature works out. For reasons of space and time, none of the points will be dealt with as fully as it ought. I shall suggest only outlines.

(i) In Scripture the supernatural and the natural are not everywhere distinguished.

The radical distinction has been achieved in principle. If this were not so, there would have been no Bible. The Bible is not monistic. Our recent recovery of a more Biblical theology has come about by way of a rejection of the idealistic monisms that had well-nigh captured the Christian

Churches, and which were obliterating anew the distinction between the Creator and the creature, supernature and nature. To use a phrase of Lecerf's the Bible throughout conceives the creation as distinct from God but not independent of Him. The opening pages of Genesis are a magnificent expression of the reality of divine causation (although, of course, this term is not used), conceived of as creating and energising second causes in orderly relationships. The most explicit affirmation of the two that I am aware of in Hebrew literature is in the "Wisdom of Solomon" (II,15-20). The writer is saying that God punishes men by the very things with which they sin. Yet, in punishing the Egyptians, who worship beasts, God did not create special beasts for the purpose, but made use of existing ones.

"But for the foolish devices of their wickedness, where-with being deceived they worshipped serpents void of reason, and vile beasts, thou didst send a multitude of unreasonable beasts upon them for vengeance; that they might know, that wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished.

For thy almighty hand, that made the world of matter without form, wanted not means to send among them a multitude of bears, or fierce lions,

Or unknown wild beasts, full of rage, newly created, breathing out either a fiery vapour, or filthy scents of scattered smoke, or shooting out horrible sparks out of their eyes:

Whereof not only the harm might dispatch them at once, but also the terrible sight utterly destroy them.

Yea, and without these might they have fallen down with one blast, being persecuted of vengeance, and scattered abroad through the breath of thy power: but thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight."

The interest of this passage lies in its assertion that God can work special miracles, but refused to do so because he has "ordered all things in measure and number and weight". It cannot be argued that the Greek influences that the writer manifests in other places have produced this statement, for the orderliness of the creation is a marked theme of Genesis and elsewhere. Sometimes events are regarded as occurring by the orderly operation of second causes, as when the rain and the snow are said to water the earth and fertilise it (Isa. 55,10), or again an event might be regarded as occurring simply by God's "word" (Ps. 147,18). In the latter case, the mediation of second causes is assumed, as the rest of the psalm shows.

Many passages in Scripture, however, can only be truly viewed if we regard them as representing a conflation or crisis of the supernatural and the natural. They leave us dubious as to what actually happened or whether anything happened at all. We are told that Uzzah was smitten before the Lord for touching the ark (I Chron. 13,10). The incident might be rationalised as due to a heart attack brought on by sudden movement, or as a case of apoplexy, or psychologically accounted for as the effect upon the victim's nervous system of the horror of touching a holy thing. (Cp. Ananias and Sapphira). More prosaically, we might simply aver that Uzzah was run

over by the cart. Perhaps the thing did not happen at all, and the report is due to later holy gossip. As far as the recorder's own attitude is concerned, most likely he was dominated by the early quasi-physical notion of the holy as a dangerous, directly-acting force. This early idea of the holy, not yet a spiritual idea nor a merely physical one, is perhaps the most outstanding instance of the crisis of which we are speaking. Leviticus 9, 24 and 10, 2 may be other examples, where we are told of a fire "coming out from before the Lord" and consuming in the former instance Aaron's sacrifice and in the latter Nadab and Abihu, who offered "strange fire". We can amuse ourselves, if we care, by looking for natural explanations of such incidents, and suggest that Nadab and Abihu had unwittingly prepared an explosive mixture. But our concern at the moment is of another kind. How did the writer conceive the event he was recounting? It is hard to doubt that the fire-passages are remnants of the days when fire, like the heavenly bodies, was regarded as itself divine. In the incidents named and similar ones, the fire is not conceived as a second cause, different from God, though created by Him and used by Him, but as a case of direct divine intervention. Or, more accurately, the distinction between the supernatural and the natural has in this instance not been made.

This stage of thought does not belong to the past alone. The tenacity with which popular and sometimes even more refined religious minds cling to miracles as direct interventions of omnipotence ought partly to be accounted for as a failure to relate the supernatural and the natural correctly. Such minds feel that to produce a natural explanation of an event is to deny divine causation of it and to dismiss God from His own universe.

The most controversial of the New Testament miracles should, it seems to me, be classified in this way as a crisis of the supernatural and the natural. They are generally referred to as the "nature-miracles". They might equally be called "miracles of supernature". Is our Lord's walking on the sea a natural or a supernatural event? Manifestly it is meant to be both. Supernature is naturalised and nature is rendered supernatural at one and the same time. What do we have here but a confusion of one category with the other, so that no clear idea emerges? We may have a clear picture of it in the imagination, by mentally superimposing the figure of a man upon the figure of water. But as I have heard Professor Kemp Smith point out, we can have seemingly clear pictures in the imagination behind which there is no clear idea. The example he used to take was that of the centaur, in which tradition presents us with a creature having a double set of intestinal organs. The visually clear image masks a completely confused concept. The situation as regards the nature-miracles seems to be analogous. The point will come up again later. Meantime our conclusion must be that both early and late in the pages of the Bible, the distinction so fundamental to it between the supernatural and the natural is not always carried through.

(ii) History in the Bible is not just factually conceived.

To say this is to say nothing new. One does not need to argue, except among the illiterate, that the Biblical historian did not write with the scientific discipline that a modern historian is expected to exercise. Whatever use a historian may make of his imagination, he must be carefully scientific in his methods. No doubt, the greater a scientist, the greater will be his use of imagination. An Einstein is rightly regarded as living evidence that science and imagination are inseparable partners. Perhaps one could defend history-writing as a science on the basis that it is the

discipline that lays most heavy demands upon a controlled use of imagination.

While it would be unfair to the Bible-historian to say that he sat loose to facts, it would also be remiss to deny that he was less factual in his use of imagination than the modern historian is permitted to be. The term fact, as we use it, is a product of the scientific age, despite the difficulty of delimiting exactly what a fact is. Facts are the goal of science, not its starting-point, and the scientist's success in "discovering the facts" hangs upon the success of his theorising. If we have difficulty in delimiting the term fact, the thing it stands for was much less determinate for the ancients. How far the early pages of Genesis are meant to be factual and how far fanciful is a question that we can hardly help asking, but it is really a false question. The authors had not our concern with "facts". Their matter includes so much symbolism with other more truly scientific and philosophical elements that we cannot without distortion place it in one category or the other. It belongs to a time when fact and fancy were not so consciously distinguished as they now are.

When Paul speaks of the rock from which the Israelites got water, he adopts the legend that it followed them through the desert, and says that that rock was Christ. How much of what he said did he mean? Of course he meant all of it. But it does not follow that he meant all that we are likely to import into his words. If Paul were to be questioned on the point, I doubt whether he would appreciate our problem about the factualness of his statement. I doubt whether he could extract his theological affirmation from its historical vesture. We must recognise that in the Bible incidents are not meant in the factual kind of way that we, because of the historical form of their narration, are liable to believe them to be intended.

Let us take another example from a further miracle. When Mark relates the incident of the feeding of the five thousand (6,35ff.), what does he believe actually happened? What would actually mean to him? Does his interest lie in the multiplication of the bread as a physical event or in Christ's being the bread of life which cometh down from God out of heaven? What we have here is surely another example of crisis. If we attempt to press the question, we are forcing a distinction that Mark would not make. Since we are factually-minded people of a scientific age and are compelled to press the question, we shall have to agree that Mark's primary interest is with Christ the Bread of Life. St. John's long discourse on the theme establishes the fact that this is the actual interest of the incident. In other words, what we sometimes call the "second" meaning is in reality the primary meaning. It does not follow from this argument that the incident did not take place, but it does follow, I would suggest, that not everything in the incident as related is factually intended. The primary meaning, which is not factual in a naturalistic sense, is given a factual face, as might easily be done at a stage in which fact and fancy are not rigidly distinguished.

The same impulse is at work when a writer makes use of a record in his hands and gives it an embellished reproduction. It is commonly believed, for example, that Matthew heightens the miraculous element when reproducing Mark. A modern historian doing this would be accused of tampering gravely with his sources. In Matthew's conception, he is only enforcing what they contain. I have already remarked that the category fact is a product of our scientific age. A modification or addendum to this statement is necessary. One of the difficulties in defining the term fact is that facts differ in nature according to the sphere of discourse. A psycho-

logical fact cannot be described in quite the same way as a chemical fact. To identify the distinguishing feature of facts by the presence or absence of sense-experience is to yield the field to naturalistic assumptions, for the term fact carries the connotation of reality. Besides, it is to ignore the determining presence of psychical factors in sense-experience. When, then, one speaks of the Biblical historians as being not so factual in their writing, one is using the term factual in the popular, too-naturalistic sense. One should say two other things. Firstly, that they are rather concerned with another order of fact, the divine or spiritual; and, secondly, that they sometimes represent spiritual facts in a natural vehicle. This second point is so important that we are about to deal with it separately. The first point carries the implication that when a Matthew heightens the miraculous element or a John even invents miracles he is not fundamentally departing from the facts, but actually unfolding them. The procedure is "wrong" for us because we are so dominated nowadays by facts of the naturalistic order. We are not able to regard anything as really happening unless it manifests itself in a sensory way. I do not say that we are wrong in making this demand. Generally speaking, it is a necessary demand. We could not use the methods of a Matthew or a John, unless at the same time we explained what we were doing. The modern understanding of the nature of the historical forbids the representation of spiritual facts as if they were natural also. But if we could not use such methods without explanation, why lay Matthew and John under the same embargo? Might they not be using them without explanation, because in their age no explanation was required? In giving the affirmative answer we only need to add for purposes of accuracy that in their case the term method implies too much. They were not consciously adopting a method because in their day discrimination between the supernatural and the natural was not thoroughgoing. A spiritual fact could readily be reported in a naturalistic way. This point is closely related to one which we must now take up, viz. that there are two ways of representing spiritual truth, the historical and the theoretical.

(iii) The Bible-writers often express by a historical vehicle what we would express theoretically.

We touch here the fact that the Semitic and Greek minds handled metaphysical matters differently. The Greeks theorised, that is, they sought explanation by drawing out generalised concepts, as we do. The Hebrews, on the other hand, leaned more to the use of symbolical incidents. They did not conceive a truth and then illustrate it. To speak that way would be to suggest that they thought like Greeks. Rather one must say, exaggerating somewhat, that they did not "conceive" truth. One might almost say that they did not "think", for the term think signifies for us discursive procedure. An example or two will help.

The composite character of the passage seems to be immaterial. Exodus 33 gives us an account of the kind of communion that Moses had with God. Verse 11 says, "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Verse 20 says, "And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." In the incident that follows, we are told that Moses saw God's back. As general propositions, these statements are inconsistent. But they are not to be read as general propositions. They have reference to an incident, not necessarily historical in our "factual" sense of the word, in which the whole of Moses' communion with God is typified. To re-interpret the matter in our discursive mode of thought, what we have here is the affirmation that Moses' communion with God was direct ("face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend"), yet mediate

("There shall no man see my face."). God is not known by inference, but as revelation, as datum, that is, directly. Yet man, as a fleshly creature, cannot know God as a pure spirit meeting Pure Spirit. Mediation is required. To make Himself known, God takes a fleshly form. With great force, the double-sidedness of man's knowledge of God is brought out by the affirmation that what Moses actually saw was God's back. By expounding the incident in this way, or when dealing with the New Testament revelation by the fleshly Mediator, which is exactly parallel, we draw out a so-called Biblical "doctrine" of revelation. But in the Bible it is not doctrine. It is incident, combined with testimony, in which the theoretical element is at a minimum.

Is, then, Exodus 33 meant as the record of an incident, or is it a paradigm of the mode in which Moses received revelation? I have suggested the latter. The Hebrew mind worked so differently from ours that a writer would symbolically express truth in an apparent incident, or in an incident modified so as to become typical, without meaning it to be taken "factually", doing in this way what we do when we frame a principle in a general proposition. I do not mean that the Hebrews never formed general propositions. Exodus 33 itself contains them, and in the hands of Paul, for example, the theoretical element underwent marked development. But it is true to say of the greater part of the Biblical period that it contains a predominance of symbolic incident. Aetiology belongs to the same mode of thought.

The application of what I am saying to New Testament miracles is helpful. Take, for example, the miraculous draught of fishes (St. Luke 5; St. John 21). In both Luke and John the incident is linked with the commissioning of the apostles. Undoubtedly, what we would call the allegorical or second meaning is actually the primary meaning. In Christ's power the Church can save multitudes. We ourselves would not think of expressing this truth in terms of fishes. We should speak directly of men themselves, isolating the work of the Holy Spirit from the deeds and words of men. The miracle does the same thing in another way. In the feeding of the five thousand, we find the same symbolism at work. According to Mark, Jesus said (6,37), "Give ye them to eat." When the disciples protest their insufficiency, He takes the little they have and multiplies it so much as to leave twelve baskets over. Once more, this is not an allegorical or second meaning, but the meaning of the report. One might almost say that it is idle to ask whether the incident happened. For myself, I think it better to say, No, it did not happen just so, in our factual sense of "happen"; although, again, the prime "fact" therein conveyed did happen and is continually happening. The difference is that we express theoretically what in the Bible is expressed in concrete symbol. Or, rather, to add one more modification that ought to be added, to cover the fact that we do not leave these things in the realm of theory, but regard them as events and existences: we have carried out more completely the process of abstracting nature from super-nature, using general concepts in order to do so, and are thus able to name events in the spiritual order as events without giving them a naturalistic form. Since the Bible-writers had not reached our stage of abstraction and discrimination, it is stupid to read their narratives in a prosaically literal way. Much would-be loyalty to the Bible is a profound abuse of its temper.

(iv) There is a fourth point closely related to the two preceding. It is the Biblical contrast between faith and sight. "We walk by faith, not by sight," said St. Paul (2 Cor.5,7). This is an expression of the truth, already referred to, that all our knowledge of God is mediate knowledge.

He only comes to us clothed in some worldly or creaturely form. The thing seen is the worldly form, and is cognised by our natural faculties. The God therein also "seen" is seen by "faith", which is a spiritual organ or response operating along with the exercise of the natural faculties. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation"; "The wind bloweth where it listeth" are sayings in this connection. Divine revelation can never be equated with a natural event or a nakedly natural apprehension. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father", and yet a Philip might see the medium, the Mediator, without anything being actually mediated.

Some of the miracles represent a confusion of this principle. They offer sight instead of faith. It is interesting to find indications that in such situations the effect produced is said to have been, not faith, but an irreligious belief in the supernatural. For example, when Jesus is said to have walked on the sea, they thought He was a ghost. Our Lord's refusal to work signs on request can be explained as a refusal to meet the demands of men who wanted to base their belief on sight - that is, who wanted the supernatural given to them as if it were something natural. They had already implicitly set their wills against the personal demands of faith, and therefore a sign could not in any case be to them an effectual sign (Cp. Luke 16,31). In all that the commentators say about the teaching of Jesus upon the Kingdom, not sufficient attention is paid to the fact that His teaching gave difficulty to His contemporaries because His was the major influence among His people in bringing about the abstraction of the natural from the supernatural. The signs of His Kingdom had to be a compound of flesh and spirit. The only way into the Kingdom was by the way of a faith which discerned the spirit in its fleshly accompaniments (1 Cor.2,14). To seek to have the Kingdom after the mode of fleshly sight was not possible for mortal man. Is it, then, wrong to suggest that miracles which represent spiritual events as if they were natural ought never, on Biblical principles, to be regarded in a "factual" way? To do so is to disregard the standing distinction between faith and sight.

3. Suggested Lines for Answering the Problem of Miracle.

Having arrived at a theological age that sharply distinguishes the supernatural and the natural, our problem now is to say how they are related. That they do occur together is for us, of course, a datum. While distinguishable in thought, they are inseparable in reality. Trouble only arises if they are treated as belonging to the same dimension. Sound theology has always recognised that the conjunction of the divine and the creaturely is a conjunction of incommensurables, and has named two major modes of the relation of God to His creatures by the terms immanence and incarnation.

(i) The divine immanence is the standing wonder of God's being the Creator and Sustainer of all things. A standing wonder is a standing miracle. A miracle ("mirum") is any event in which we are confronted by God, any event in which the supernatural is seen in relation to the natural. It does not by any means necessarily mean a rupture of the natural. On the contrary, since the natural is sustained by the supernatural, the very orderliness of nature is derived from supernature, and is part of the miracle of creation. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all" (Ps.104,24). The divine Wisdom, as divine, is wonderful, but not, as wonderful, irrational. It is the source of reason and of order. No less, the order of nature is wonderful, that is, miraculous.

We speak also of "the miracle of regeneration", consistently with the religious principle that all divine action is marvellous. Yet regeneration is a constantly recurring event, so regular and orderly in its mode of operation as to provide a commonplace for theological, that is, rational explication. Regeneration may be regarded as a special case of immanence linked with the incarnation. It rests upon the operation of the Divine Spirit, immanent in man, which, after being silenced by sin, becomes vocal again when the same Spirit confronts man in Christ (Romans 8,16).

The majority of the miracles in the New Testament can be brought under the head of the divine immanence operating in an orderly way in a similar connection with the incarnation. Miracles of healing and of exorcism no longer give much hesitation to an age like ours made familiar with psychomatic medicine and depth psychology. Provided the supernatural and the natural are preserved each in its proper dimension, there is no difficulty in affirming the reality of the miraculous. Trouble does arise in alleged incidents - if they be intended as incidents - in which the distinction in dimension is lost, the supernatural being represented as natural and the natural as supernatural. It seems to me that in such cases we have something theologically impossible, and that the reports are being misinterpreted.

(ii) The relation of the supernatural to the natural which theology describes as Incarnation must be seen to be something quite distinct from immanence. Liberal christologies habitually fail to see or to accept the difference. They are all efforts to understand our Lord's Deity in terms of God's indwelling in a man - that is to say, after the mode of immanence. In the result, Christ becomes distinguished only in degree from the rest of us, and the doctrine arrived at is ultimately unitarian. Incarnation means a relation of the supernatural to the natural of a different order. The notion of immanence means that the creaturely order is distinct from yet dependent upon the Creator, as second cause to First Cause. Incarnation means that, in addition to this relation, God's Son added Himself to the creaturely by way of a special union, traditionally called "hypostatic". There is no analogy for this union. Immanence is no analogy of it. But absence of analogy does not make it impossible, nor irrational. To find an analogy for it - that would be irrational! Short of an affirmation of this miracle, we cannot encompass the historic Christian faith, expressed so well in Newman's adoring wonder that:

"..... a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine -
God's presence, and His very self
And essence all divine."

If we have really learned to distinguish the supernatural from the natural, we have all the grounds laid for saying that such an event really could take place. If we deny it, the reason can only be that we are determined to insist upon monistic presuppositions that are really not axioms but assumptions.

Sometimes inferences are drawn from the idea of Incarnation which, to my mind, are not valid. It is often argued, for example, that since Christ is a new fact in history, breaches in the natural order as commonly experienced are to be expected, and that therefore the nature-miracles, far from being difficulties for faith, are just the kind of events that we ought to look for from One in whom a new relation of supernature to nature was found. But the argument is seriously deficient. If the new relation was

to show itself in this way, one must ask why it did not do so continuously, instead of in a few incidents that can, in any case, be accounted for in a much more simple and straightforward manner. But in fact the argument makes a grave breach in christological principle. If in the Incarnation the Divine Son consented to relate Himself to the Father in a creaturely way, we must not look in His life for actions that no creature could perform. There must at all times be a certain hiddenness about His Deity, and our knowledge of it must be that of faith, not of sight. Popular religion clings to these miracles because it is not content with faith. It wants to have sight.

Incarnation as defined will require two events of a special character. If Incarnation means a special conjunction of the divine with the natural, the beginning and the end (or transformation) of this union will be marked by corresponding events. The Virgin Birth and the Resurrection-Ascension require a special category, not to be confused with the nature-miracles or any other kind of miracle. Each of these events has special problems of its own, and this fact is in itself an indication that we are on the right track from a systematic point of view in handling them separately. The historical evidence for the Virgin Birth is dubious in the extreme, to use a mild expression. But the dogmatic considerations are powerful. As for the Resurrection, it seems to rest on objective sight and to conflict with the principle that we walk by faith. One is compelled to ask, What part did the Holy Spirit play in the Resurrection-appearances (But see Acts 10,41)? On the other hand, we have to affirm that knowledge of the Resurrection could not have been arrived at by faith. The divine victorious transformation of the flesh, as an objective event in time, could not be known as historical without corresponding manifestation. There are contending points here that need explication.

To state summarily the argument of this third section, I believe that there are three kinds of miracle that have a legitimate place in dogmatics: the miracle of creation (or of immanence); miracles of regeneration of body and soul in relation to the Incarnation; and the two special hypostatic miracles of the Incarnation.

The more general conclusions of the paper might be stated as follows;

(i) The problem of miracle is one which necessarily arises from within the boundaries of faith, because of faith's need to put the supernatural and the natural into distinct categories. It is false to regard it as arising from the attacks of unbelief. It may have been noticed that all the considerations I have brought into play are theological considerations. They have not been derived from the statements of natural scientists or philosophers.

(ii) There are principles and apprehensions within the Christian faith that enable us to deal with the problem.

(iii) The effort to substantiate the "factuality" of the Biblical narratives is often a case of disloyalty rather than of loyalty to the Bible.

(iv) The Christian principles used in the discussion give all necessary guidance for discriminating among miracles on the point of "factualness".

(v) The term miracle is a complex one, corresponding to the complexity of the modes of divine action.