

people. He is brought before the Sanhedrim and afterwards tried in the most public manner before the Roman governor. The governor's wife is warned about him in a dream. He is crucified, and when he expires miraculous darkness covers the earth for three hours, the earth quakes, the veil of the temple is rent in twain from the top to the bottom, the tombs are opened, and the bodies of the saints that slept come forth out of the grave, enter into the holy city, and appear to many. The Roman centurion and the watch are impressed, and say that this truly was the Son of God. But otherwise no impression is made, no notice of these tremendous events seems to be taken, no trace of them is left in general history,* no one apparently is converted, not even Saul. The Jews, of whose acts this was an overwhelming condemnation, are so little impressed that they think only of bribing the watch to confess that the body of Jesus had been stolen from the tomb.

We cannot pick and choose. The evidence upon which the miraculous darkness and the apparitions of the dead rest is the same as that upon which all the other miracles rest, and must be accepted or rejected in all the cases alike.

The Acts, like the Gospels, is anonymous, and if its author is identical with the author of the third Gospel, this shows that he was not an eye-witness of the Resurrection. An examination of its internal difficulties would be beside our present purpose, which is to ascertain the amount and the value of the ocular testimony to the miracles. It seems to be admitted that there is no positive and unequivocal evidence of the existence of this book till towards the end of the second century.

Is it conceivable that Providence would allow vital truth, or anything essential to our belief in vital truth, to be stamped with the mark of falsehood? The demoniac miracles are clearly stamped with the mark of Jewish superstition. To the imagination of the Jews at this period, spirits good and evil were everywhere present. They were with you in the lecture-room; they were with you in every function of life. From the fourth Gospel demoniac miracles are absent, not because that Gospel is supplementary, a supposition for which, as was before said, there is no sort of colour, but because the first three Gospels were written for Jewish readers to whom demoniac miracles were congenial, while the fourth Gospel was written for an intellectual circle to which they were not congenial, and perhaps at a later day. According to Mark, Jesus casts a legion of devils out of a man into a herd of two thousand swine, which forthwith rush down into the sea and are drowned. The comment of an orthodox writer of great eminence upon this astounding and repellent miracle is this: "That the demoniac was healed—that in the terrible

* Gibbon, who has not failed to make the point, though he has hardly pushed the argument home, observes that the preternatural darkness happened in the time of Pliny, the naturalist, and of Seneca, who wrote a collection of natural facts in seven books, and is not mentioned by either of them. Pliny, however, would be a boy at that date.