

penitance had been, in a certain sense, obeyed, and the Deuteronomic régime was formally enforced by priests and prophets and accepted by the nation. Things had turned out, both for good and evil, far otherwise than the prophet of Jer 2-6 had prognosticated. Jeremiah is practically nonplussed; and through those twelve years of seeming success but inward chagrin, so far as we know, no 'word of Jehovah came' to His prophet.

This was the time of disillusion and inward test-

ing for Jeremiah—a harder trial scarcely could befall a prophet of God. Jehovah had 'set' him 'to pluck up and break down, to build and plant': twenty years have passed and so far he has effected nothing, either in the way of plucking up or new planting! Our prophet had to learn the emptiness of professional and ceremonial and political religion, *the worthlessness of everything else without the law written in the heart*. During twelve years of silence this lesson burnt itself into his soul.

Some Characteristics of Old Testament Miracles.

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1. *The Question of Evidence.*—In comparing the miracles of the Old Testament with the miracles of our Lord the first point of difference to the modern student would be the matter of evidence. One of his chief reasons for accepting the Gospel miracles would be that the Gospel records we possess go back demonstrably to the time when the miracles were wrought. But in the case of the Old Testament miracles no such demonstration, or even approximation to such demonstration, is possible. The Gospel miracles are far better authenticated than those of the Old Testament. It is also to be noticed that this demonstration, in the case of the Gospel, is founded on internal evidence. The records are the records of eye-witnesses, and we know them to be so, not because we have been told so by some one else, but because the marks of an eye-witness are clear in the records themselves.

2. *Internal Evidence—The Shunammite's Son.*—Still, from this point of view, the evidence for the old miracles is stronger than has sometimes been thought. And it is fair to look at the miracles from this point of view in the matter of evidence, because 'the criticism of the Old Testament which has marked the past quarter of a century has been pre-eminently an internal criticism.'¹ It has not been chiefly, or even considerably, the judging of Scripture by some external sources of information. Now some narratives of miracles in the Old Testament seem to be almost as completely beyond the power of invention, especially in that

age, and to bear the signs of the eye-witness as subtly and naturally, as even the story of the two men walking to Emmaus or the raising of Lazarus. One such narrative is that of the raising of the Shunammite's son.² First, the character of the woman is wonderfully suggested—a modest, determined, self-repressed woman, with a great capacity for love. Notice 'her standing in the doorway' to speak with Elisha, her love for her own home, and her own manner of life ('I dwell among mine own people'), the depth of emotion and desire expressed in her appeal to the prophet, 'Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.' Follow her on her journey—the preparations, the refusal to disclose the facts to her aged husband, the brushing aside of Gehazi, the insistence that Elisha shall return with her. Notice also how clearly the husband is sketched in—an old man, who evidently did not understand his wife, who had had no experience of children, and could only hurry the boy off to his mother, when he fell ill in the harvest field—'Oh, how unfortunate falling ill in this way! What am I to do with him? I don't know; I never did know what to do with children. Here, take him to his mother. She will know.' The life, too, is so beautifully and simply indicated—the position of the 'great woman,' the provision made for Elisha, the harvest work, the political influence of the prophet. And then the successive scenes—the Shunammite in the doorway of the little room conversing with Elisha; the woman and her dying

¹ J. A. Robinson, *Some Thoughts on Inspiration*.

² 2 K 4⁸.

boy; the hurried journey to Mount Carmel; the Shunammite at Elisha's feet with her despairing cry, 'Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?'; Elisha in his room alone with the dead; and the final scene of all, when with speechless emotion the mother fell at the prophet's feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and 'took up her son and went out.'

When we read St. Mark's account of the healing of the Lunatic Boy,¹ the vivid, personal touches carry an almost irresistible conviction that this record has come from some one who was there. The story of the Shunammite carries the same sort of conviction and for the same reason.

Of course all such miracles of the Old Testament are not characterized by the same fulness, the same striking marks, but neither are all such miracles of the Gospel. The healing of the sick man at the Pool of Bethesda is very scanty in detail, and was probably not witnessed by the man who records it.² One is satisfied to find *vraisemblance* and credibility, similar to that of the Gospel eye-witness reports, exemplified several times in the Old Testament, notably in the narrative quoted and in the stories of the widow at Zarephath and Naaman.³

3. *Allied Sort of Evidence—The Plagues and the Red Sea.*—There is an allied sort of internal evidence in the Plagues of Egypt and the Passage of the Red Sea. The power and artless vividness of these narratives have not been sufficiently appreciated. Attention has rather been concentrated on the overwhelming nature of the miracles themselves, with this surprising result that they are found to have the very closest connexion with natural phenomena. The result is surprising, because a fact that, at first sight, seems to support a sceptical view, is found, on further examination, to make for belief. For the connexion between the plagues and natural phenomena supplies the clue to the behaviour of Pharaoh; without it his conduct would be inexplicable. But if, when his land was smitten with a horror of great darkness, while the Israelites had light in their dwellings, he was able to recall the phenomenon of the *hamsin*, the

electrical wind (that produces a blackness equal to the worst of London fogs, while the air is so hot and full of dust that respiration is impeded), and that one characteristic of this phenomenon was that it moved often in a narrow stream, so that one part of the land was dark and the other light—then it is conceivable that he should have refused to acknowledge the controlling hand of the God of the Hebrews.

A similar remark applies to the Passage of the Red Sea. All the secondary causes mentioned in the narrative are in operation to-day, to produce a similar result to that stated to have been produced in the time of the Israelites. A pathway through the sea is a natural phenomenon. And so this pathway must have seemed to the Egyptians. They ventured to follow, because a dry course was *not* something outside the range of their experience.

4. *Miracles unlike Natural Phenomena authenticated by Christ.*—But we come to miracles to which there is no natural parallel. There is a general agreement that the manna was not a natural substance; no satisfactory parallel to the cloudy pillar has been discovered; the water from the rock is clearly 'miraculous.' And it is just these miracles that our Lord stamps with the seal of whatever authority we allow Him. He shows that the sign of the manna was fulfilled in Himself, 'I am the Bread of Life.' At the Feast of Tabernacles He applied to Himself the symbol of water from the well of Siloam, specially designed to commemorate the water from the rock. He stood and cried, 'If any man thirst let him come to Me and drink.' At the same feast he claimed to fulfil the other great symbol of the Pillar of Fire, 'I am the Light of the World'; and in His conversation with Nicodemus He compares the elevation of the serpent on the pole to His own elevation on the cross. Moreover, every careful student will come to the conclusion that it is almost as impossible to dissociate the miracles from the history of the wilderness journey, as it is to dissociate His signs from the Gospel of Christ.

5. *Old Testament Miracles of Judgment.*—Turning from the question of evidence, the salient characteristic of many Old Testament miracles arises inevitably from the very scope of Judaism—they are miracles of judgment in the palpable sense. They are strokes of chastisement to induce repentance. The chastisement is not an end in itself, the repentance is not even an end in itself,

¹ Mk 9^{14f.}

² Jn 5^{1-17.}

³ If it be objected that such *vraisemblance* is not beyond the power of a skilful novelist, it may be answered (1) that for this purpose we must predicate the existence of a skilful novelist, and (2) that the same argument lies against New Testament narratives.

but God designs to bring a blessing in the only way possible, namely, through a judgment.

The signs of Christ are also for judgment, 'For judgment came I into this world,' but rather in the moral region. His signs constitute a crisis of faith and unbelief. And this is closely connected with their wider spiritual range, and deeper spiritual significance. Instead of the 'Lord of hosts standing pre-eminent over the gods of the heathen, answering by fire, the Saviour brings the fulness of blessing out of a disordered world.'¹ In the Gospel also the signs are more peculiarly part of the work, part of the message.

6. *Old Testament Ministers in the Name of God: Our Lord in His own Name.*—In the Old Testament the mighty works were wrought by God's ministers in the name of God. Our Lord works miracles in His own name. In the Old Testament they were to assert the sovereignty and helpfulness of God; in the Gospel they are the works of the Incarnate Son to show the restored supremacy of man. The minister is in a veritable agony that he may bring himself into harmony with the will of God: Elisha 'went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon him; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house once to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.'² While the Son of Man, who came to do the will of God, is at all times in exact coincidence with the Father's work, and raises the dead at a word, 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.'

7. *O.T. Miracles occasional.*—The miracles of the Old Testament are occasional. Not that miracles are an afterthought, or that, strictly speaking, there is any 'occasion' to God. 'The world and all its history is for Him necessarily one. His action which we contemplate now in one (general) mode, and now in another (exceptional) mode, is not in itself divided, though we are forced so to regard it. . . . What is unfolded to us in a gradual process of "becoming" in relation to an infinite mind simply "is." We are obliged to speak of the "purpose of

God's will," and so we are obliged to speak of His "special providence" or "miraculous working"; but the original phrase and the adaptation of the phrase to facts, are both accommodations.'³ But, in our ordinary sense of the word, the Old Testament miracles may be said to be occasional. In the Gospel, however, the 'essential point of the story is not that miracles were wrought, but that an innumerable multitude of them were wrought, and that the most striking feature in our Lord's action was the continual exercise of this miraculous power.'⁴ The signs of Christ recorded are but a selection from a much larger number, 'Many other signs, therefore, did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book.' And such an inexpressible fulness did there seem to be about our Lord's life, that the superb hyperbole is justified, 'There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself should not contain the books that should be written.'

8. *O.T. Signs fulfilled in Christ.*—What was true of prophecy,⁵ that its intended fulfilment was to be looked for far beyond the prophets themselves. In facts and times of Christ, was also true in its measure of signs. They were fulfilled in Christ. We have already mentioned those He claimed to fulfil—the Manna, the Water from the Rock, the Pillar of Fire, the Serpent in the Wilderness. This gives us a clue to the interpretation of others, so that we may see in the Plagues of Egypt the great truth of the Sovereignty of the Lord as exemplified by Jesus Christ in an act of sympathetic helpfulness when He turned the water into wine; we may interpret the Passage of the Red Sea in the light of our Lord's sign, when He walked on the Sea of Galilee; and we cannot miss the message of the raising of the dead, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'

9. *Progress in Christ.*—In fulfilling the signs, Christ carried them up to a higher level. Just as He declared the fulfilment of the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' to be 'Thou shalt not be angry,' embracing not only the act but the motive, the antecedent thought, so He got rid of the limitations of the Pillar of Fire in 'I am the Light of the World,' and deepened and widened its

¹ Westcott, *Some Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles*, p. 28.

² 2 K 4^{33f.}

³ Westcott, *Gospel of the Resurrection*, p. 41.

⁴ Wace, *Some Central Points of Our Lord's Ministry*.

⁵ 1 P 1¹².

symbolic teaching *by opening the eyes* of one born blind. There is a progress in signs.

Thus we speak, as we ponder on the successive revelations of God. But 'My Father worketh even until now, and I work.' For God there is no distinction in time between the Old and New Covenant. Pharaoh and Naaman are as real, as *living* persons, as St. John, or our nearest neighbour. 'For God all is one and at once.'

'To your question now,
Which touches on the workman and his work.
Let there be light, and there was light: 'tis so;
For was, and is, will be, are but is;
And all creation is one act at once,
The birth of light: but we that are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and
make
One act a phantom of succession: thus
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time.'

Recent Foreign Theology.

The Date of Galatians.¹

A DOUBLE interest attaches to this acute, comprehensive study. It is a fresh illustration of the admirable work which is being done by Roman Catholic Continental scholars on the New Testament. As a rule, their standpoint is that of Zahn rather than Loisy. On certain points their results are almost a foregone conclusion. But within these limitations, as any one familiar, *e.g.*, with Bardenhewer's *Biblische Studien* will admit, contributions are being made which deserve serious attention and gratitude from their Protestant fellow-workers in this field. Dr. Steinmann's monograph is one of the best specimens of this class. His subject is not mixed up with any serious dogmatic problem; and although he is no more successful than his Roman predecessors in minimizing the conflict between Peter and Paul, the methods of his essay are both scientific and attractive.

Furthermore, the book is welcome as a powerful statement of the North Galatian theory. Since Dr. Schmiedel's exhaustive article in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, nothing of equal rank has appeared, the main difference between the two essays being in their object of attack; while the Zürich scholar devoted himself to a refutation of Professor Ramsay, Dr. Steinmann concentrates most of his fire upon the special theory of his fellow-churchman, Dr. V. Weber. The full statement of his views is reserved for a further essay on the

Leserkreis, but the present study of the date lays the foundations for the North Galatian destination, and lays them on the whole with convincing skill.

The introduction sketches the history of the problem (pp. 1-15). Dr. Steinmann displays a minute acquaintance with the literature, but his list of the adherents of the North Galatian theory needs supplementing; he has failed to include scholars like Professor G. G. Findlay, Professor G. H. Gilbert, Bousset, and R. Knopf. The succeeding pages (16 f.) give the author's chronology, namely, Paul's conversion (A.D. 36-37), journey to Jerusalem on the business of the collection (44 A.D.), apostolic council (50-51 A.D.), second tour (51-54 A.D.), third tour (54-58), and imprisonment at Caesarea (58-60 A.D.). Galatians is dated in 54-55, from Ephesus, perhaps rightly. But some of the chronological arguments seem rather shaky. Dr. Steinmann, for example, holds that Stephen's murder could only have happened under the rule of a procurator like Vitellius, who was more likely than Pilate to have connived at a Jewish breach of the law; and this very precarious assumption naturally obliges him to date Paul's conversion too late. Then he argues that the journey of Ac 11⁸⁰ could not have taken place till after the events of Ac 12 (p. 37 f.). This may be so. But the language of 12²⁵ cannot be taken to support it, and Luke's order of narrative at this point is so vague that no conclusion can safely be based on the language of Acts alone. In the following sections (p. 53 f.), the identity of Ac 15 and Gal 2¹⁻¹⁰ is vigorously defended. Dr. Steinmann takes the *αἵροις* of Gal 2² to represent the entire Church

¹ *Die Abfassungszeit des Galaterbriefes*. Ein Beitrag zur neutestamentlichen Einleitung und Zeitgeschichte. Von Dr. Alphons Steinmann. Münster i. W. 1906. M.3.60.