

VI. BIBLICAL INTRODUCTION.

Historical Evidence of the New Testament.

By S. L. Bowman, A. M. S. T. D. Jennings and Pye, Cincinnati. Eaton and Mains, New York. 732 pp. Price \$4.00.

This is an elaborate treatise designed to meet the sceptical issues of the day which deny the historical character of Christianity during the first three centuries. No other work, it would seem, has proposed to traverse this territory upon just the lines and in the form here adopted. It attempts to deal fairly and exhaustively in the light of modern discovery and research. The period between the crucifixion of Christ and the time when Constantine the Great established Christianity throughout the Roman Empire as the religion of the state—the only period concerning which there is any question raised touching the historicity of Christianity. “There is no period in the whole range of ancient history,” the author aptly reminds us in the words of Rawlinson, “whereof we possess a more full and exact knowledge than we do of the first century of our era.”*

The method adopted is, first, to employ the testimonies of the adevsaries of Christianity in this period to confirm the statements of the apostolic writers, and thus prove the historicity of the sacred narratives; and, then, to use the testimony of the friends of Christianity, acknowledged to be authentic and credible, to confirm the testimonies of their enemies respecting the facts alleged in the historical part of the New Testament.

This mass of testimony is then re-confirmed by the new “finds”—not in the shape of documents only, but such relevant testimonies as have been gathered from monuments, arches, inscriptions, coins, superscriptions, etc., and from early Christian art.

Where important new witnesses have been introduced—as, for example, the monumental discoveries of Cava-

*Truth of the Scripture Records, American E., 383, Note 3.

lier de Rossi, Garrucci, and other Italian scholars who have illuminated the mysteries of the Catacombs and the early Christian art, or Dr. Heinrich Graetz, of Breslau, in his recent *History of the Jews*—there is given before the chapter dealing with such testimonies a pretty full epitome of the life and work of each of such witnesses.

Where use is made of such well-known works as Lardner's ten volumes of apologetic literature, for instance, the author has not infrequently made his own translations from the original languages in which the citations are given, and in all cases, where critical care seemed to call for it, he has wisely given the translation, and not the original, a place in the text, that the English reader might experience no break in the continuity of the thought; while the original of the citation is placed in a foot-note with proper references, that the scholarly reader may be able to examine it for himself.

A valuable *Appendix* makes accessible some important material which could not well be placed in the body of the work—e. g. Josephus's *Testimony of Christ*, with all the principal arguments, *pro* and *con*, respecting the genuineness of that famous passage; Pliny's *Official Letter* to Trajan; *The Logia* of our Lord, in Greek and its translation, etc. The *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, and the celebrated *Muratorian Canon* are quite fully described and quoted from.

In a survey of the ancient versions of the New Testament the author brings the evidence down to date, dealing, briefly, of course, with the so-called *Sinaitic Syriac Gospel* discovered in 1895 at the St. Catherine Convent, Mount Sinai, by Mrs. Lewis and her sister, of Cambridge, England. These versions are shown to go quite far in filling up the gap between the writing of the Gospels and the first Greek manuscript of them dating about 325 A. D.

In the *Excursus* is given the Jews' Authoritative Edict for expurgating all references to Jesus Christ, with particular reference to opprobrious language applied to him in the Talmud.

Some important historical and chronological *Tabular Exhibits* and a full and accurate *Index* add to the value of the volume.

The author has given us a scholarly, up-to-date, and, in the main, judicious treatment of the historical evidence, old and new, covering this vital, initial, critical period of the history of Christianity.

The binding of the book is not the best and a few typographical errors mar its pages, but, for the most part, the printing and press work are well done and the style and the type help to make the reading easy.

We cannot but hope that the author's wish, that the work may prove helpful to the youth of the rising generation who have perplexities of doubt about the historicity of the New Testament Scriptures, and consequently primitive Christianity, may be realized; and that many a pastor may find it satisfying to his own mind and helpful to him in dealing with such doubters.

GEO. B. EAGER.

Historical Geography of Bible Lands.

By John B. Calkin, M. A. Philadelphia. The Westminster Press. 1904. 189 pp.

The author of this little hand-book is not an explorer, not even a traveler, but is an educator, and author of "A Geography of the World." The book does not aspire to be a rival of such elaborate works as George Adam Smith's "Historical Geography of the Holy Land." It is intended as a text-book, or ready reference book, especially for Sunday school or Bible class teachers. Written by one who has had wide experience both in teaching and in training teachers, and who has achieved a recognized success in his work on world-geography, it is not too much to expect for it a kindred success in its department. It covers all the lands of the Bible, shows acquaintance with the latest and best literature of the subject, and presents in well-arranged, well-proportioned and systema-