

THE  
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

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ARTICLE I.

WORKS ON THE LIFE OF CHRIST.<sup>1</sup>

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THE numerous works published in Germany within the last ten or twelve years, some of the more important of which are given in the list at the foot of the page, show how deep the interest that is felt in the earthly life of our Lord. It confirms the fact, long since noticed, that the religious contests that agitate Christendom are centreing more and more

<sup>1</sup> Das Leben Jesu Christi. Von Dr. Joh. N. Sepp. Regensburg: 1853-1862. 6 vols.

Geschichte des Lebens Jesu Christi. Von Dr. J. H. Friedlieb. Breslau: 1855.

Das Leben Jesu Christi. Von Dr. Jordan Bucher. Stuttgart: 1859.

Francisci Xaverii Patritii e societate Jesu de Evangelii Libri Tres. Friburgi, Brisgoviae: 1853.

Geschichte Christus und seiner Zeit. Von Heinrich Ewald. Zweite Ausgabe. Göttingen: 1857.

Das Leben Jesu. Lehrbuch zunächst für akademische Vorlesungen. Von Dr. Karl Hase. Vierte verbesserte Auflage. Leipzig: 1854.

Lebensgeschichte des Herrn Jesu Christi in Chronologischer Uebersicht. Mit erläuternden Anmerkungen von Dr. F. W. J. Lichtenstein. Erlangen: 1856.

Wissenschaftliche Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte. Ein Compendium für Geistliche und Studirende. Von Joh. H. A. Ebrard. Zweite Auflage. Erlangen: 1850.

Das Leben Jesu nach der Apokryphen. Von Dr. Rudolph Hofmann. Leipzig: 1851.

around his person. We cannot be surprised that this should be so. Christianity is no system of abstract doctrine. Christianity is Christ. It exists because he exists; and cannot be overthrown so long as he stands in the pathway of the assailant. The enemies of Christianity are not ignorant of this; and it is against him that they direct their deadliest attacks. Let the faith of men in him be destroyed; let sceptical criticism envelope in doubt the great facts of his earthly life; let the Gospels be resolved into myths or fables, and Christianity becomes an empty shell—a mere abstraction. A belief in a Supreme Being may remain, but all that is distinctive in the Christian faith passes away. Whatever tends to undermine the historic credibility of his work in flesh, as narrated by the evangelists, smites our religion in its most vital part. It becomes thus a matter of deep significance to every Christian to know how far the evangelical narratives stand the fiery trial to which they have been subjected during the last quarter of a century. Assaults from every possible point have been made upon them; have they yielded to these assaults? We think ourselves fully warranted in saying that the historical accuracy of the Gospels never stood so well confirmed, and in such clear light, as to-day. Time proves all things; and it has shown that the objections deemed but yesterday by their advocates irrefutable and fatal are cast away by the assailants of to-day as frivolous and worthless. Strauss despises the rationalism of Paulus, and Bruno Bauer despises the myths of Strauss. Who shall follow Bauer, or what new weapons against Christianity the enemy may forge, we know not; but we doubt not the future will be as the past, and that the cries of victory, which have so boastfully heralded each fresh attack, and are now so lustily shouted in the Westminster Review and kindred journals, will speedily die away into the silence of defeat. "I am the truth," said Christ; and he is also "the same, yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

It is not, however, now our purpose to enter into any controversial points, but simply to give some account of

the books placed at the head of this Article. Whatever tends to make clear the events of the Lord's life, to determine the chronological order, to settle the geography, to reconcile any seeming discrepancies in the statements of the evangelists, and to illuminate their narratives by the general history of his time, is valuable, and worthy of our attention. While there are, and perhaps ever will be, questions which can be but imperfectly solved, owing to the scantiness of our data, still each new investigation, rightly conducted, affords fresh material for future study; and we approach slowly but steadily to juster conclusions and more definite results. It is interesting to know also what is doing in this respect in every part of the church; and therefore we have selected several works written by Roman Catholics. These are the first four mentioned above, which, for convenience, we place together. The remaining five are by members of Protestant churches, though occupying various theological positions, and representing different critical tendencies.

The author of the voluminous work first mentioned, *Leben Jesu*, von J. N. Sepp, is a Professor of History in the Royal University of Munich. This is the second edition, and is but recently completed. The first volume, divided into two parts, is occupied with the chronology of the Lord's life; and with *Uranology*, as he terms it, or the age of the world, and the time of the great Jubilee period which is to begin at the consummation of its present history. In this part of his book, as indeed everywhere, Sepp shows a wide and multifarious reading, and multiplies citations not only from the Fathers, but also from the Jewish Rabbis and the heathen philosophers and poets. It is, however, very noticeable that he too often permits himself to be turned aside from his main topic, and proceeds to discuss at great length some merely subordinate and unimportant point. Like most German scholars, he has never learned how to blot.

To understand, and rightly to estimate this work, it is

necessary to keep in mind the position which its author assigns to Christianity, considered in its relations to other systems of religion. He holds that heathenism in all its forms contained many elements of truth, and that these, purified and explained, go far to illustrate and confirm the scriptures. In his own words, heathenism is like a field covered with snow; but under it is slumbering a rich world of vegetable life, waiting only for the warm breath of spring to bud and blossom. All old religions he finds to be symbolic. Christ is he in whom their symbols find their explanation. In him all the religious life of antiquity is exhausted. He is the beginning and the end of all history. If therefore we would know how much is involved in Christianity we must not confine ourselves to the study of Judaism, but study the Messianic expectations of all nations. Gathering up all traditions, we must trace their relations to Christ. Thus Christianity is the total religion, illustrated and confirmed by the sacred records, the worship, and the history of every people.

In these general statements we find little to which we object. Christ is the central figure of all history. He has ever been the Desire of all nations; and it is not strange that there should be in all the religious and mythological systems of antiquity types and symbols of him. But the great point is to read them aright. Here is needed not only wide and accurate knowledge, but sobriety of mind; and it is in this last particular that Sepp seems to us signally to fail. He everywhere finds allusions, analogies, and symbols. Does John Baptist say to the Jews, "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham;" here is the tradition of Deucalion and Pyrrha. The eucharist is foreshadowed in the heathen "mysteries," and only through our knowledge of them can we come to a full and clear apprehension of its meaning. In his chronological system these analogies play very important parts. Thus in the three and a half years of the Lord's ministry he finds a fulfilment of Dan. xii. 11, 12, where mention is made of the

twelve hundred and ninety, and thirteen hundred and thirty-five days; for, counting from the day of the baptism to that of the resurrection, he makes exactly twelve hundred and ninety days, and adding forty-five days, or to pentecost, he gets the thirteen hundred and thirty-five days. Again, there was an old Jewish tradition that the Messiah should be a pilgrim upon the earth as long as was Moses, or the space of one hundred and twenty years. This number he obtains by multiplying the number of years of Christ's ministry, three and a half, into the number of years of his life, thirty-four and two sevenths. In his Uranology the same principle rules. From the creation to the birth of Christ he makes a period of four thousand three hundred and twenty lunar years to have elapsed, or four thousand one hundred and ninety-one solar years. The former number, four thousand three hundred and twenty, he regards as one fundamental, and to be found in all the ancient chronological systems. It is the thread of Ariadne that leads us safely through all their mazes. It makes a holy and prophetic period, a great year of God. When Christianity in its present form shall have continued four thousand three hundred and twenty years from Christ's birth, then a new era will begin, another great year of God will dawn.

We have no space to controvert or to criticise the chronological speculations of Sepp. It may be well, however, to state the results he has reached in his chronology of the Lord's life. His birth was on the 25th of December in the year 747 of Rome, or seven years earlier than the vulgar era. He was baptized October, 778, being nearly thirty-one years of age. In this date of the baptism Sepp departs from the current tradition, which puts it upon the 6th of January. His death was on the 15th of April, 782, at the age of thirty-five, and his ministry continued three and a half years.

To geography Sepp devotes much less space than to chronology, although a visit which he made to the Holy Land in 1845-46, for the purpose of studying the sacred

sites, enables him to speak with some confidence. The results of this journey are now in course of publication, but have not reached us. To tradition as determining sacred localities he attaches little importance, except in the cases of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth; and complains that most of the Latin monks in Palestine are Italians and Spaniards, from whom little can be hoped in the way of topographical investigation. We add that he defends the present site of the Holy Sepulchre, thinks there was but one Bethsaida, and agrees with Robinson in putting Capernaum at Khan Minyeh.

So far as regards the harmony of the Gospels and the order of events, we find in Sepp much that is novel, but little comparatively that is solid or valuable. Sceptical upon some points, he is credulous upon others. It seems strange to meet one at this day who gives credence to the fables in the apocryphal Gospels respecting the youth of the Virgin Mary; yet he gravely relates that there was at this time in Jerusalem, under a vow of temporary virginity, a holy circle of deaconesses, who, under the supervision of the high priest, gave themselves to religious duties. In this circle the virgin was enrolled, and was educated in the temple, under the special care of Zacharias the priest, whose wife was a sister or a cousin of her mother. As usual Sepp finds here an analogy to the heathen custom of devoting the virgins to the service of the gods. At the age of fourteen Mary was at liberty to go home, but, of her own accord, took upon herself the vow of perpetual virginity. All this, and much more of the same kind, he relates as if it were veritable history. But of the fanciful character of his mind we need not seek further illustrations. While thus receiving much that the Protestant mind rejects as fabulous and unauthentic, Sepp in some points shows a decided tendency to scepticism in his interpretations. We give but a single illustration. The Lord's word respecting Jonah the prophet, that he was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, are explained as an allegory. Jonah is the

symbol of the Jewish people, and the fish the symbol of Nineveh. To the Jews God gave the commission to teach the nations, but neglecting this, he punished them by national shipwreck, and they were swallowed up by the Assyrians. After three days, or three generations, they were restored to their own land. In this figurative way is the account of Jonah to be taken, and as such the Lord uses it, and applies it to his own mission.

To one able to sift carefully this work, the large quantity of material he has gathered will yield much good fruit; but to the ordinary reader it will be but bewildering and almost useless.

The work of Friedlieb, the second in our list, is very unlike that of Sepp. He is Professor of Theology in Breslau, and is known to students of the Gospels by his "Arch-äologie der Leidensgeschichte," published at Bonn in 1843. As preliminary to the narrative of the Lord's life, he discusses briefly the character of the several Gospels, and the chronological and other questions bearing upon his subject. These discussions are marked by good sense, accurate statement, and freedom from prejudice. In his chronology he reaches the following results. The Lord's birth is put upon the 25th of December, 749 of Rome, five years earlier than the present era; his baptism, January the 6th, 780; and his death the 7th of April, 783. Thus his ministry continued three and one fourth years, and he was in his thirty-fourth year when put to death. In selecting the 25th of December and the 6th of January as the days of the nativity and baptism, he doubtless followed tradition, for it cannot be said that there is any other than traditional evidence; yet Friedlieb is by no means inclined to receive such apocryphal fables as are related by Sepp. He seems carefully to avoid saying anything respecting the virgin and our Lord which is merely legendary, or which has not some scriptural basis.

While in some important points we should be forced to disagree with him, we yet regard this Life of our Lord by Friedlieb as a very good and useful one. Indeed we ques-

tion whether there is in English for the general reader anything so good. It avoids the usual fault of the Germans, extreme prolixity, and is not hard reading through its excess of learning. We cannot accept his arrangement, placing the presentation of Jesus in the temple after his return from Egypt; nor that placing the election of the apostles and the Sermon on the Mount before the second passover of his ministry. But in the main the arrangement is satisfactory, and the grounds upon which it is based clearly stated. Strangely enough Friedlieb places Machaerus, where the Baptist was imprisoned, in Galilee, between Tiberias and Capernaum.

The work of Bucher presents no very new or remarkable features. In his introduction of some two hundred and fifty pages he devotes considerable space to the creation and fall of man, the character of heathenism and of Judaism, and the work of Christ in salvation; the discussion being of course from the Roman Catholic point of view. In his arrangement of the events in the Lord's life he follows the same order as Friedlieb, and reaches the same chronological results. Like him he passes over in silence the traditional history of the virgin. The visit of the magi is placed soon after the Lord's birth, and before the presentation in the temple; the star which they saw was not an ordinary star, nor a conjunction of planets, nor a comet, but a luminous body created especially for its end of pointing the way to Jesus. As the murder of the innocents and the flight into Egypt took place immediately after the coming of the magi, the presentation was not till Jesus had returned, and his parents had taken up their residence in Galilee. This order, however, we may remark, seems to us to bring greater difficulties than it removes. Upon the much disputed point whether the Lord kept the paschal supper on the 14th or 15th of Nisan, he defends the latter, and argues that there is no real discrepancy between the Synoptists and John.

Of Patritius personally we know no more than is stated on the title-page of his book, that he is *e societate Jesu*. He

writes in Latin, and his work is divided into three books. The first, *qui est εἰσαγωγικός*, discusses the authorship and origin of the several Gospels; the second, *qui est συναλλακτικός*, gives a harmony of the Gospels, in Greek upon one page and in Latin upon the other, the Greek being that of the *textus receptus*, with Griesbach's emendations, and the Latin that of the Vulgate; the third, *qui est ἐξηγητικός*, contains full notes upon the various questions presented by the text. The whole extends to near twelve hundred pages, quarto.

There is in this book a great deal of patristic learning. For example, more than one hundred pages are given to an examination of the opinions of the Fathers, down to the fifteenth century, respecting the time of Christ's birth and the length of his life; and at the end these opinions are summed up in five very elaborate and useful tables. If his examinations have been thorough and his results are accurate (points upon which we have not sufficiently examined him to be able to express an opinion), all students of Gospel chronology are certainly deeply indebted to him for his diligence. Another dissertation, *De genere Jesu Christi*, extends to seventy pages. In some instances, however, the copiousness of treatment seems quite disproportioned to the importance of the subject, as where he gives fifty pages to the discussion of questions respecting the magi. In his chronology of the Lord's life, Patritius follows Sanchi Clemente, putting his birth in the year 749 of Rome, and his death in 782. To tradition in this matter he pays no regard, asserting that there has never been any fixed opinion in the church respecting the year when Jesus was born, and that the point is wholly open to investigation. He holds fast, however, to the 25th of December as the day of the nativity. To geographical investigations he pays much less attention, and rarely makes allusions or references to the more recent writers and travellers. We observe that in a few instances he criticises the elder Rosenmüller; but the later commentators are not noticed at all, or very briefly.

To one comparing this work, proceeding from the Romish church, with those of an earlier period, as for example that of Baronius, there is ample proof of progress. A more accurate scholarship has much weakened the authority of tradition by clearly showing that on very few points has there been anything like unanimous consent. Few now of her scholars care to defend the sacred sites along the Via Dolorosa, or to assert as historically certain that Jesus was born on the 25th of December. Such fables as that of the house of the virgin being transported by angels, to Loretto, which found in Baronius a defender, and is hesitatingly maintained in the Kirchen Lexicon of Wetzler and Welte, are passed over by him in silence; and the line of distinction between the apocryphal and canonical Gospels is in general clearly drawn. In harmonizing the several Gospels the writers of this church have always used much freedom, as they have not been restrained by any rigid theories of inspiration.

From Roman Catholic we turn to Protestant authors; and first to Ewald. "The History of Christ and of His Time" forms the fifth volume of his History of Israel. This work has all the peculiarities that mark the writings of its very learned and able author. To those familiar with them it is unnecessary to speak of his excessive arrogance, his indifference to the opinions of others, his love of paradoxes, his contemptuous and often abusive language to all who venture to differ from him. These faults are so glaring that none can overlook them. On the other hand, no one can deny him a most vigorous and original mind, a large and sound scholarship, a thorough knowledge of Semitic languages, indefatigable industry, and great firmness of purpose. Perhaps the best illustrations of both his moral and mental character may be found in the pages of his Jahrbuch, a review written almost wholly by himself, in which he publishes articles upon various points relating to Biblical science, and passes judgment upon all new works in this department. Very rarely are his decisions favorable, or his criticisms sympathetic and appreciative. Looking over

the first nine numbers of the Jarbuch we find very few instances in which he speaks of any author with praise. Most are dismissed with a few sharp, rough words.

Before we consider Ewald's "History of Christ" it is indispensable that we understand the position he assumes in regard to the origin of the Gospels. Among those who would apply the principles, if there be any such, of subjective criticism to the scriptures, he is prominent. To say nothing of his treatment of the writings of the Old Testament, he finds in the Gospels several distinct documents, which he supposes himself able to distinguish and classify according to the time when written. In his translation of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (Göttingen: 1850), he marks out to the reader's eye, by printing in so many varieties of type, nine various recensions of the Gospel history. A very brief outline of his theory, as given in his Jahrbücher for 1848-49, must suffice us.

At first the sayings of the Lord were not committed to writing by the disciples, but their most striking thoughts and expressions retained in the memory. For more easy retention they were arranged in groups of similar contents; in this grouping regard being had to round numbers, and especially to the number seven. Thus the seven parables now found in Matthew xiii. were brought together and arranged for more easy remembrance. The chief miracles and incidents of his life were arranged in a similar way, and thus preserved in the memory. The first written work was one containing a brief outline of some of the most prominent events arranged chronologically; as the baptism, the temptation, the crucifixion, and also some of his discourses with explanatory statements. Not improbably this work was written by Philip the deacon and evangelist. The second was a collection of his teachings and sayings as they had been remembered by the disciples, and which were arranged by the unknown compiler as best he could. Third, came Mark, whose work we now have in substance, and who in its preparation made use of the two earlier collec-

tions. The fourth was a work narrating the most important events of that history, and was a revision of the first. Fifth, followed the present Gospel of Matthew; and to this were soon added three works which Ewald finds it difficult accurately to distinguish, but of whose separate existence he is confident; and last of all the present Gospel of Luke.

If we now ask upon what grounds this theory of the origin and growth of the Gospels rests, and by what arguments it is supported, we get no satisfactory reply. All that Ewald says in its support is based upon some supposed distinctions of style and manner in the several narratives of the evangelists as they now stand, and which, if real, could be more easily explained by other suppositions. Upon this narrow basis he builds his great superstructure, and shows his critical skill by piecing together his fanciful conjectures so as to give the "airy nothing" a show of learned solidity. To any one but a German "gelehrter" this would seem very like child's play, if the sacredness of the subject should not rather make us call it foolhardy presumption. How far Ewald believes the words of the Lord: "The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you;" or whether he recognizes any degree of inspiration on the part of the evangelists, or any special providential care determining what records of the Lord's life should be left to the church, we know not. To one, however, who has faith in the divine Sonship and mission of Jesus, and in the presence of the Spirit guiding into all truth, the simple narratives of the evangelists will be now, as they have been for so many centuries, their own sufficient evidence; and maintain their historic credibility against all negative criticism, if it were a thousandfold more acute than it is.

That a Life of Christ written from Ewald's point of view must be very unsatisfactory and defective, is apparent. He holds himself at full liberty to judge how much there is of fact in the evangelical narratives, and to separate the primitive kernels of truth from the later additions. Thus the

very definite account of the temptation as given us by the Synoptists, the leading of Jesus by the Spirit into the wilderness, and his continuance there for forty days, exposed to Satanic assaults, is supposed to have so much of a basis of fact as this: that some interval of time elapsed between the baptism and the ministry in Galilee, and that this was naturally regarded as a period of trial and preparation. This is all that was contained in the oldest and simplest version of the history. In the later versions the desert was specially mentioned and the wild beasts, because the place where John was baptizing, and where He was baptized, was near the wilderness; and the period of forty days was assigned, because in the Old Testament it was thought to have some typical reference to the Messiah. How completely are the Gospels stripped in this way of all their life and freshness and power! Portrayed by the pen of one of our negative critics, the actors in the sacred history would bear a relation to the living, breathing, moving figures that diversify the pages of the evangelists,—apostles, priests, scribes, pharisees, sadducees, publicans, kings, governors, courtiers, and beggars,—like that which “the boneless, watery, pulpy creatures,” that one has described as inhabiting Jupiter, do to the stoutly-framed, muscular, symmetrical bodies of flesh and blood that inhabit the earth. Happily the sound instincts of men crave something more solid than ideas; they need facts. To meet our need, God has given us in the scriptures a record of facts, and these we are to hold fast. All attempts to make facts the mere symbols or moulds of ideas, and therefore worthless when the idea is once possessed, will prove idle. The world wants no ideal, but the historic Christ; the Christ of the evangelists, not the Christ of the philosophers.

Fundamentally defective as Ewald's work is, it is not, however, without its value to those who can use it rightly. The views which he presents of the relation of the Jews to the Roman rule, the general dislike to Herod and his family, the wish of the more conservative that Judea might be

made a province, the steady growth of Messianic hopes, the internal divisions and spiritual weakness of Judaism, are very forcible, and help us to understand the troubled and stormy character of the time, as reflected in the pages of the evangelists. No writer has so clearly set forth the irreconcilable antagonism between the theocratic spirit of Judea and the despotic spirit of Rome; the Jew deeming himself the elect of God, and therefore head of the nations; the Roman resistless in military prowess, and actual conqueror of the world. Upon many points, also, more directly connected with the Lord's ministry, his observations are both just and sagacious. Into questions of chronology and geography he does not enter with any fulness. The Lord's birth, he thinks, was not later than in 746 of Rome, or eight years earlier than our era. Luke's expression that he was about thirty when he began his ministry, is to be taken in a large sense, as he was, in fact, some years older. His death took place in 786, thus making his life about forty years. Ewald, however, does not give them as exact, but only as proximate results. He interprets the passage, "This taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria" (Luke ii. 2), as meaning that it was made before he was governor. He thinks that the Lord did not eat the true paschal supper, but anticipated it. Capernaum, he identifies with Tell Hum, and finds two Bethsaldas mentioned by the evangelists. It is scarcely necessary to say that mere traditions, however venerable, find no favor in his eyes.

The Life of Jesus, by Hase, is a well-known work, of which that before us is the fourth edition. It aims to be, as the author tells us in his first preface, a purely learned and scientific biography. The learning, at least so far as it is shown by very full references to all that other men have written upon the subject, is ample, and will not be questioned; but what are we to understand by its scientific character? Science and scientific are, as most know, very favorite words among the Germans. No book on any subject has any value unless it is scientific. Not only their philosophy,

and their history, and their criticism, but also their theology, must be scientific, or they are nothing. But what does the term mean, as applied to the life of our Lord? Plainly all that science can demand of us here is to find and embody the true meaning of the evangelical records. If they affirm that Jesus was "the Word made flesh" for the salvation of men, we must take this as our starting-point, and judge them throughout in conformity with this fundamental fact. If they are consistent with this, if his life, as portrayed in them, is in harmony with its assumed supernatural conditions, they are scientific in the true sense, and in the only sense in which the term "science" as applied to them has any meaning.

Hase, however, understands the matter differently. According to him, the faith of Christendom, that in Christ God became man, avails in science only as an idea by which the facts of his life are to be measured, and therefore the aim of science is to set aside this presupposition of faith. This means, if we rightly apprehend him, that, in order to a scientific examination of the Gospels, we must first wholly dismiss from our minds that interpretation which the faith of Christendom has for so many centuries put upon them, and, instead of regarding them as a history of Jesus, the God-man, must assume that he was simple man, and interpret them from this point of view. He tells us that the life of Jesus must be regarded as "a purely human life," or it cannot come at all within the scope of historical investigation. That Jesus was very man, and that therefore his life was a human life, we admit and believe. It is expressly taught us by the apostle: "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham: therefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." The Word, made flesh, came under the common conditions of humanity, even "to be tempted in all points, like as we are." But does this community of nature imply that he was man only? Was it impossible that the Son of God could become very man? So we understand

Hase to affirm. A purely human life, according to him, involves that Jesus should enter into being like other men, be begotten of an earthly father, and share in all the common experiences of the race. But how was it with sin? Was he sinless? This, Hase, though with considerable hesitation, admits, and attempts to explain, by saying that religious genius, like artistic, comes by birth; and that the humanity of Jesus, like that of Adam at his creation, was pure, and he preserved it pure. This, however, is no explanation of the difficulty. The fact remains that here was one "without sin." If this can be said of no one else of the human race, how was his life a purely human one? It, was certainly peculiar; was it not also supernatural? He was man; was he not also something more than man? This the church has always affirmed, and to deny it is to make the statements of the evangelists both unintelligible and contradictory. Into any dogmatic questions it is not our purpose to enter. We wish merely to show what the so-called scientific method of treating the gospel demands. We are to begin with the assumption that Jesus was merely man, and to interpret all the statements of the evangelists in accordance with this assumption. Of course we enter at once into a labyrinth from which there is no escape, except by the expedient of denying the historic accuracy of their narratives. We must pare down here and lop off there in order to bring our ideal Christ into a forced likeness with the real. Granting, on the other hand, what the evangelists everywhere assume, the reality of the incarnation, and this we affirm to be the only scientific method of dealing with their histories, all is plain. His life is consistent in all its features throughout; a life truly divine and truly human, because he is very God and very man. Denying this fundamental fact, no acuteness, no eloquence, and no sophistry can make the Gospels other than discrepant and unintelligible.

To us, we confess, there seems very little to choose between Hase and Strauss. The latter openly denies the possibility of a miracle. Of course the gospel affirms them, the

gospel, then, is false, and this ends the matter. "Jesus," says Strauss, "was a mere man, the son of Joseph; he wrought no miracles; he did not rise from the dead, nor ascend into heaven." "Jesus," says Hase, "was the son of Joseph, but he did work miracles; he did rise from the dead." Whither he went after his resurrection he declines to say. Now we are safe in saying, that of the disciples of unbelief whom the two may gather around them, the great body will go with Strauss. Hase stands in that half-doubting, half-believing position, in which no man stands safely, or will stand long. We cannot find firm footing midway upon a hillside; we must go up to the top or descend to the bottom. This he himself feels, and complains, in the preface to the last edition, that in this half-way attitude he finds no ardent and enthusiastic friends. Still, he congratulates himself that a German pastor had been led by this book into a freer study of the Lord's life and character, and hopes that, with God's blessing, it may serve also to restrain the arbitrary wilfulness of some. Why he should expect that his readers will be bound by the shadowy lines which he has drawn between the fabulous and the historic in the evangelists, and dare to go no further than he has done in scepticism, we do not understand.

As compared with Ewald, Hase seems far inferior in depth and earnestness of character. He makes the impression upon us, both in this work and in his Church History, of a very skilful rhetorician, a master of style, and able to use his materials in the most effective way, but without strong moral convictions, and of a shallow spiritual nature. There is something, difficult to express, but jarring and repellant in the whole tone of his writings, and especially in the book before us; and we cannot help feeling that he looks upon Jesus rather as a good literary hero, than as his Saviour from sin and death.

The translation of this Life of Jesus, by Mr. Clarke,<sup>1</sup> we

<sup>1</sup> Life of Jesus. Translated from the German of the third and fourth improved edition by James Freeman Clarke. Boston: 1860.

have not examined at length. It seems to be faithful, but can hardly be called elegant. The translator has omitted the literary references which follow the several sections in the original, and which, in our judgment, constitute its chief value, although he gives at the end a list of books sufficiently full for most purposes. We regret the translation, for the book satisfies no one, and establishes nothing, and its tendency must be to suggest doubts to the believing, and to make sceptics still more sceptical.

The work of Lichtenstein is in its spirit, as well as in its arrangement and purpose, very unlike that of Hase. It shows on every page that its author is one who believes in the inspiration of the Gospels, and has no disposition to resolve all supernatural statements into holy legends. His work is designed especially for clergymen, to aid them to give to their congregations a connected and consistent account of the Lord's life. To this end it is well adapted. Points of a theological character are passed by as foreign to its purpose, and much attention is given to the right arrangement of events. In the beginning is a chronological outline of the history compiled from the several Gospels, and with numerical references to the annotations or notes which make up the body of the book. In his chronology he agrees substantially with Friedlieb. The Lord's birth is put in July or December, he thinks the former more probable, in 749 of Rome; his baptism in December, 779, or January, 780; his death upon the 7th of April, 783. His ministry continued a little more than three years. The unnamed and much disputed feast mentioned John v. 1, he regards as a feast of tabernacles. It is in connection with this feast that he presents a new view respecting the Lord's ministry. It is generally agreed among harmonists that Jesus ceased to baptize and left the province of Judea in November or December following his first passover. Lichtenstein supposes that the whole period elapsing between his departure and this feast, a period of not less than nine or ten months, was spent by him in retirement, as not till

the imprisonment of the Baptist did he begin his work in Galilee, thus making his public life to have embraced, in fact, but little more than two years. This long interval of inaction is intrinsically improbable; and we do not think that his arguments, showing the feast to be that of tabernacles, are by any means convincing. We are still inclined to hold the early opinion that it was a passover, and that the ministry in Galilee began immediately after it.

In many points Lichtenstein follows in the footsteps of Dr. Hofmann, Professor of Theology at Erlangen, a man whose views are often original and profound, and who seems to have exerted a strong influence upon the minds of his students. At the beginning of his book he places a lecture of Hofmann's upon the characteristics of the several evangelists, which contains some valuable suggestions. He gives also at the end another lecture of the same critic upon the order followed by Luke, with special reference to the point whether this order is chronological. The conclusion reached is, that the promise of Luke to "write in order" means to write a connected historical account, and not that every event shall be narrated in the exact order of its occurrence. Both agree that the Lord ate the paschal supper at the appointed time, and that there is no discrepancy between the Synoptists and John. Lichtenstein devotes considerable space to the question: Who were the brethren of the Lord? and maintains that they were the children of Joseph and Mary, and his own brothers and sisters. The genealogy given by Luke is that of Mary.

We can commend this book to all who wish to examine our Lord's life in its critical aspects as well worthy of perusal. The discussions are uniformly conducted with ability, good sense, and fairness, and with competent learning. The article "Jesus" in Herzog's Real Encyclopädie is by this author.

The work of Ebrard, though entitled a Compendium for clergymen and students, has a decided polemic cast, and is an answer to the attacks of Strauss, Bauer, and others.

This second edition is much altered from the first, in order to meet the new forms of error which had in the interval become prominent. The author observes in his preface (1850) that, in the seven years preceding, the negative criticism had very much changed in character. Then the mythical hypothesis of Strauss was its last product; but this was antiquated, and now almost forgotten. The latest novelty was the hypothesis of F. Bauer and the Tübingen school, and this had cast all earlier ones into the shade. He therefore finds it necessary to notice this in considerable detail, though still devoting much space to Strauss and Bruno Bauer.

In his introduction Ebrard gives an outline of the history of modern criticism, dividing it into four periods, and enumerating the chief writers of each period; but this we must pass by. Nor can we dwell upon the distinction which he takes between chronology and akoluthie; or follow him in his examination how far the evangelists observe the order of time in their narratives. A careful comparison of the connecting particles and phrases used by them, as he has gathered them in his tables, shows very plainly that most of these are indefinite, and mark no immediate sequence. This part of the book is worthy of careful examination. But in the application of his principles to the history we cannot think Ebrard wholly successful. There are not a few instances in the Gospels in which we cannot determine merely from the connecting particles or phrases how closely one event followed another, but must determine it by the scope of the narrative; and here the exegetical tact of the critic is brought into play. In this tact Ebrard by no means excels; and his general arrangement is open to grave objections. We give his chronology of the Lord's ministry, and its divisions. The first year of Tiberius, in which, according to Luke, the Baptist began his labors, is not to be reckoned from the time of his colleagueship with Augustus, but from the death of the latter, when he became sole emperor. This was the year from August, 781, to August, 782, of Rome.

Toward the end of this year Jesus was baptized. The first passover following was that of 783, when he appeared publicly in Jerusalem and purified the temple. The summer of that year he spent in Judea, baptizing; in the autumn he goes into Galilee, and there begins his work. This work continued two years, and may be divided into two periods. In the first of these, Jesus appeared especially as a Rabbi, or teacher, announcing the approach of the kingdom of heaven, and warning the people to repent. It was at the end of this period that he chose his apostles and spake the Sermon upon the Mount; a sort of summary and recapitulation of all his teachings up to this time. In the second of these periods his labors have a more systematic and aggressive character. He organizes his disciples, and sends forth the twelve, and in every way presses the kingdom of God upon the people. At the end of this period the transfiguration may be placed. To this still another period may be added, extending from the transfiguration to the last passover, in which the Lord, withdrawing from the public at large, devoted himself chiefly to the instruction of the disciples. His death was at the passover of 786.

As Ebrard places the Lord's birth in 747 of Rome, he was thus at the beginning of his ministry thirty-four or thirty-five years old. But this is doing violence to the statement of Luke, that he was about "thirty years of age;" as his general use of language does not permit us to interpret "thirty" as a round number, which may embrace five years more or less. Nor is the order of the ministry in Galilee satisfactory; since it fails to exhibit that progress in the Lord's teachings and works which must have taken place. We cannot well believe that the teaching in parables could have come early in his ministry, and before the Sermon on the Mount. Plainly they were not spoken till he had chosen the twelve to whom it was especially "given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Nor can we believe that at the outset of his work the Pharisees accused him of being in a league with the prince of the

devils. This marks a later period, when their anger against him had been aroused by his great popularity, and by his sharp rebukes. Making the feast mentioned John v. 1, to be a feast of tabernacles, between it and the feast of tabernacles of the following year, he finds no events to be narrated, but the sending of the twelve and the feeding of the five thousand. But it is scarcely possible that the evangelists should thus pass over in almost total silence so long a period, and one in which Jesus must have been very active. That the labors of the Lord had several distinct stages, and that these may be clearly marked, we do not question, but the distinctions of Ebrard fail to set them forth with clearness.

The last portion of this work is given to an examination of various critical theories, having reference first to criticism of the evangelical history, and second to criticism of the evangelical writings. Here many points are discussed with vigor and acuteness; but except one is specially called upon to enter into these controversies, the whole is very tiresome reading. It is well known that every learned German must have his special "Richtung," and since the great minds that can advance anything both new and true are very rare, most must content themselves with some startling paradox, or some assertion or theory so audaciously false that it forces itself upon our attention. If the German theological world has nothing more important to do than to read Strauss and the Bauers, and write elaborate answers to their objections, then let it multiply books; but let us not forget that a church filled with the life and power of Christ is the only answer that will stop the mouths of these gainsaying men. An evil and adulterous generation wants proof, present and actual, that Jesus is the Living One, and that all power in heaven and earth is given into his hands, and it never will be content with critical theories. Let the church *be* his body, the habitation of God, the salt of the earth, and the light of the world; let it show forth his power in mighty acts, his holiness in holy living, and all these

questions respecting the authenticity, the inspiration, the credibility of the Gospel history, vanish forever. The very importance which we attach to these transient schools of negative criticism, shows the absence of those positive elements of faith and hope and courage, by which alone we can successfully meet our scoffing age.

To those, however, who are disposed to enter into these questions, this part of Ebrard's book will be valuable. As a polemic, he scorns no weapon that he can use, or finds at hand; and opposes his antagonists, not only with solid learning and strong argument, but also with wit and sarcasm and ridicule. Perhaps he uses the latter a little too often, and thus mars the impression which he would otherwise make. It is but rarely that a fool can be answered according to his folly, even if, as in this case, the provocation is great. A little coarseness, however, can well be forgiven in one who battles in so good a cause, and with such evident sincerity and zeal.

The last book on our list is that of Hofmann: *The Life of Jesus according to the apocryphal Gospels*. Its object is to gather up all in these Gospels relating to him, and fusing together the various statements, give a chronological and connected outline of events. Sometimes he quotes from them literally, at others gives only the substance of their accounts. All along he shows the relation between them and the canonical narratives; and in very copious annotations explains and illustrates the text by references to later traditions and to the Fathers. Thus many points important to the understanding of Gospel history are made plainer, especially those connected with the birth and infancy of Jesus. The work is laboriously and carefully prepared, and brings together a great mass of information from sources not readily accessible to scholars in this country. To one desirous of knowing what fables early began to get currency respecting the Lord, some of which are constantly reappearing in the patristic writings, and even now find a semi-belief in not a few portions of Christendom, the book will be very useful.

We observe that in some instances Hofmann is disposed to accept traditional statements, even when they seem at variance with the statements of the evangelists. One case of this kind occurs when speaking of the appearance of Jesus, after his resurrection, upon the mountain in Galilee. The language of Matthew (xxviii. 16), "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them," he thinks may better be translated, "They went up on Galilee, the mountain," etc. This mount of Galilee was, according to tradition, the northern summit of the Mount of Olives, and thither the eleven went. Aside, however, from the difficulty of thus interpreting Matthew, the tradition is not well confirmed.

Besides the light which the apocryphal Gospels throw upon the canonical, the comparison between them, must, to any impartial mind, go far to show that the evangelists were men enlightened by the Spirit of God. The contrast is marvellous. Let us compare the infancy of Jesus as it appears in the two accounts. The evangelists say simply that he was circumcised and presented in the temple as the law prescribed; he was worshipped by the magi; he was taken to Egypt, and thence to Nazareth. Of his life at Nazareth it is simply said: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." At the age of twelve he visits Jerusalem, and there takes the place of a pupil "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions." Returning to Nazareth, he was subject unto his parents, and "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." This is all we are told of him till he began his public labors. What wise silence, what holy reserve is here! Aside from the supernatural circumstances attending his birth, his infancy, to human eye, is like that of other children, his youth like the youth of other men. He exercised no miraculous powers; he did not, so far as we can judge, assume at all the office of a teacher, nor did his nearest acquaintances suspect what gifts of wisdom, knowledge,

and eloquence were hidden in him, or they would not have manifested so much astonishment as they did when he began to teach in public. He doubtless followed Joseph's occupation, and to his neighbors appeared as a God-fearing, pious, obedient, industrious youth. Not till he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, after his baptism by John, did the higher elements of his character come into manifestation. Then all saw in him the truth and power of God.

Turning to the apocryphal books, into what a different atmosphere do we enter. Here all is miraculous. Passing by all that precedes the flight into Egypt, what marvels meet us daily on every side. As they journey, they seek repose in a cave. Many dragons suddenly appear, but Jesus leaps down from his mother's bosom, and they worship him. Lions and other wild beasts go before him to point out the way. Being hungry and thirsty he commands a palm-tree to bend down its boughs laden with fruit, and a fountain to spring forth at its root. As he enters Egypt all the idols fall down in the temples, and he heals the son of a priest possessed with devils. Almost every day he works some wonder, healing now the sick and leprous; now setting free the enchanted, and frightening robbers; now causing water to flow from the ground in which his coat might be washed, and changing drops of sweat into balsam. After the return from Egypt, he went to Bethlehem, and his mother heals sick children by sprinkling them with the water in which he had been washed, and in the same way cures the leprosy. A portion of his garment made into a tunic preserves a boy from burning and from drowning. One is healed by lying in his bed; Judas Iscariot is delivered from the power of the devil; sparrows are made of clay, which fly away singing; dead children are brought back to life; garments are dyed of such colors as the dyer wishes; Joseph's poor carpenter work is made perfect; a single kernel of wheat produces enough for all the poor of the place. Of this unmeaning, or trivial, or extravagant character are the miracles of the boy Jesus, as found in these

books. Those which impute to him anger and malice, as some do, we purposely omit.

How shall this contrast be explained? Why is it that, according to the evangelists, the Lord put forth no act of miraculous power till his ministry began? Why did not, in their narratives, these supernatural signs distinguish his infancy and youth? Men adapting themselves to the taste of their times, or guided by their own sense of what was fitting, would never have consigned to utter silence these long years of childhood and youth. They would have found wonders all along the pathway of so wonderful a being. How much is there that we desire to know of that early life, not to minister to an idle curiosity, but to bring him more clearly and fully before us. The silence of the evangelists can be explained only by the fact that they wrote, not out of their own hearts, but under the direction of God. All that can cast light upon the work of Christ in our redemption is written for our instruction; and more than this we need not to know.

We regret that the account given of the books before us is necessarily so brief; but it nevertheless shows that we have much reason to be thankful to the Christian scholars of Germany for the zeal and industry with which they have devoted themselves to the study of the gospel narratives. Even the most sceptical and hypercritical have done something to advance our knowledge; at least they have provoked investigations which have added new defences to the points assailed. So far as accurate and profound learning, great acuteness, and, on the part of many, we may add, truly devout and Christian feeling, can fit them to portray correctly the earthly life of our Lord, they have done it successfully. Yet we confess that we are waiting for something better than they have yet given us. Breathing continually such an atmosphere of unbelief as surrounds them they become infected unawares. Ever listening to sceptical doubts and criticisms, it is very hard to have a hearty, simple, childlike faith. A feeling of distrust mingles itself,

perhaps often unconsciously, with their apologetics, and manifests itself in the haste with which they not unfrequently yield some contested point to a very weak assailant, and the alarm that seizes them at every new phase of infidel criticism. In no other country than Germany would a book like that of Strauss have filled the church with terror, as if the eternal foundations were sliding from beneath her feet.

We may here allude also to another point, the pride of literary reputation, which characterizes so many of the best German writers, even upon theological subjects. In too many instances it seems as if the author had chosen his subject as a mere stalking-horse by which to approach the public, or a pedestal on which he may stand while displaying his learning and acumen. And in cases where we have no reason to suspect this, the consciousness of authorship in many ways peeps out, challenging the sympathy or admiration of the reader. This, always offensive, is never more so than in a life of our Lord, or in commentaries upon his words. A sad, though doubtless unwitting, instance of this is seen in Stier, who while unfolding the teachings of Jesus, and oftentimes with rare depth and felicity, cannot help showing repeatedly his petty mortification that some of his fellow critics should think his labors unworthy of mention. Not a little of this is seen also in Sepp. Of the egotism of Ewald it is unnecessary to speak, since it is inwrought into the whole character of the man. Upon such sacred ground and in such a Presence let not the writer intrude himself upon our notice. Let those who seek a literary reputation seek it in legitimate fields, and let those only who can imitate the reticence of the evangelists engage in these high themes.

It is a matter of Christian congratulation that in regard to the main features of the life of Christ upon earth we are gradually arriving at more sure and definite results. The years of his birth and death are not yet, indeed, beyond dispute; but there is general agreement among chronologists that the former must be placed a little before the death of Herod, in the year 750 of Rome, and the latter about thirty-

three years later. We cannot far err if we say that he was born 749 u.c. and crucified in 783, and that his public labors continued a little more than three years. The topographical questions, which have been raised in connection with his history, are of very little importance, and interest us, not as casting any special light upon the evangelic narratives, but from the instinctive desire to give to every incident its "local habitation." The contest is still fiercely waged over the site of the sepulchre; nor is there entire agreement respecting the cave of the nativity or the place of the ascension. We do not yet know with certainty where Capernaum stood, nor whether there were two Bethsaldas or but one. Still Palestine has become to us in all its main topographical features a well-known land, and every year adds something to our knowledge. Very recently the examinations of Dr. Thomson have cleared up satisfactorily some difficulties connected with the miracle of the healing of the demoniacs in the country of the Gergesenes, and with that of the feeding of the five thousand in the neighborhood of Bethsaida. Robinson has pointed out with strong probability the site of Ephraim, and Barclay affirms that he has discovered the site of Aenon. So far as our Lord's life can be illustrated in this way, we have already gathered ample material, which needs only to be sifted and arranged. Nor in regard to historical questions has there been less success. It is becoming more and more clearly seen that the evangelists were not men ignorant of the general history of their times, nor did they indulge themselves in random statements. There are, indeed, points not yet wholly cleared up, and which probably never will be. We do not know how it was that both Annas and Caiaphas were high priests at the same time, nor the exact nature of the taxing decreed by the emperor Augustus. But the most thorough investigations go to confirm, and not to disprove, evangelic accuracy. The old objections that Lysanias was not the tetrarch of Abilene, nor Cyrenius governor of Syria, as stated by Luke, can scarcely be again repeated by any competent critic.

As to the asserted discrepancies between the evangelists, these also are dwindling away. Gradually the fact is becoming recognized, that no one of them proposes to follow an exact chronological order, but arranges his matter with freedom, having reference both to the spiritual condition of those for whom he especially writes, and to some principle of affinity in the matter itself. This is a great step gained, and except from those who stumble at the Gospels on dogmatic grounds, we shall not hear much more of the objections, that Matthew and Luke are at variance with each other, because one speaks of the Lord's flight into Egypt and the other is silent; and that Matthew on the one side and Mark and Luke on the other cannot be reconciled because the former speaks of two demoniacs and two blind men as healed, and the latter speak of but one. This style of criticism will vanish away and become as obsolete as the Osiander style of harmony. What is now especially needed is a commentator able to enter into the spirit of the several evangelists, and bring out with clearness that which is distinctive in the scope and arrangement of each. But this demands something much higher than learning, or acuteness, or fine exegetical tact. The first and chief requisite is spiritual discernment. He only who inspired the evangelists can give the power to interpret their words. They who come in their intellectual pride with their learned apparatus to the study of the gospel, as they go to the study of a heathen historian or poet, will miserably fail of their end, and find only the dead and unmeaning letter. Seeking to lay hold on Christ that they may set him up as a show for the world to wonder at, he now, as of old, vanishes out of their sight. Only to one who, like the beloved apostle, reclines upon his bosom will he reveal himself, and only in the light of this personal revelation can the records of his life on earth be read, and their meaning be discerned.

The time, we are persuaded, is near, when, the follies of all negative criticism having been fully exposed, we shall have a history of the Lord upon its positive side, which

shall show forth in a more comprehensive manner than has yet been done, the "treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hid in him." What a glorious theme is here! Starting from the fact, so often and distinctly declared in the scriptures, that by him and for him were all things made, we find in him the great Archetype of the creation, the Beginning and End of all the works of God. All worlds and all creatures were made for him, and all are what they are because he is what he is—the God-man, the Word made flesh. He is the image of the invisible God, and in him all things consist. What a field is open here for the investigations of Christian science. To learn the purpose of God in him; to trace the historical fulfilment of that purpose from the day when the foundations of the earth were laid, the long ages of preparation for him, the stages of his earthly life, his present priestly work, his future kingdom and eternal majesty; to discern how all history is a prophecy of him, how all nature is full of types of him, how every created thing reflects his image; to show how the universe stretches itself out around him as its centre, and rests upon him as its corner-stone, and the ages circle around him as the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last; this is the high calling of the church. It cannot remain unfulfilled; for the Spirit of truth is come to guide into all truth, and Christ is the truth.

It will be remarked by the reader that the works named above are but a part of those worthy of insertion. We might have added those of Neander (1845) and of Lange (1847), both of which have been translated, and are accessible to English readers, and the recently published works of Schleiermacher, Strauss, and Schenkel (1864). Of Renan's work, and the numerous replies it has called forth, we have no space to speak. In every part of Christendom the life of the Lord, and the history of the church during the first and second centuries, are subjects attracting to themselves the attention of all, more and more. The result must be the furtherance of knowledge and truth.