

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

VOL. XXVIII.—OCTOBER, 1894.—No. 4.

REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THE FOUR GOSPELS AND THE FAITH OF CHRISTENDOM.

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THE four Gospels are the inner redoubts of Christendom. It is back to them ultimately that the Church will always go for the principles and justification of its faith. It is quite conceivable that the Christian faith might have perpetuated itself, if the Gospel message had never been committed to writing. The persistence of customs and unwritten faiths in the East is pledge of this. The Apostles promulgated the deeds, the sufferings, the resurrection of Christ, and His words by preaching. The oral Gospel was sufficient for the first generation of the Church, while eye-witnesses were still alive and the second coming of Christ was regarded as imminent. The churches, however, especially those at some distance from Judea, visited only once, or at best only occasionally, by an Apostle or apostolic helper, must have felt almost from the earliest times the need of an authoritative record of those things which were surely believed and fully established among Christians (Luke i. 3).

The four Evangelists of the New Testament give the oldest account of Christ in existence, and in general may be said to have been from time immemorial regarded as authoritative. Only a single saying of Christ is preserved in the other parts of the New Testament, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The few original sayings attributed to Him by the fathers are, all but two or three, improbable, if not manifestly spurious. None of these words add anything to the portraiture of Christ given by the Evangelists, nor is any work of Christ—His appearances after the resurrection excepted (1 Cor. xv.)—ascribed to Him which contributes a single feature to the genuine outlines of His life and labors. The delineation of the four Gospels is final. The portrait of our Lord is complete.

Compared, even, with the other writings of the New Testament, the four Gospels are of unique and supreme importance. The Christian