

Readers of our time have one advantage over the people who lived before them, for all that is known on this subject may be read in the free libraries of most of our cities; and Mr. Gould's history is a very useful guide to the student in seeking for the material that will help him to come to a decision upon it.

Mr. Gould alludes (Vol. 3, page 109) to two points which press themselves upon all honest inquirers: (1) the impression on their minds that there must have been a real Jesus—a starting-point, a what may be called a Founder, a man, a fact, not merely an idea. (2) The difficulty of disposing of the arguments which tend to prove that no such real person was known in the first century. With our modern knowledge of the laws of nature and of man's constitution, it is simply out of our power to believe in the accounts given of Jesus and his doings as we find them related to-day in our New Testament. At the same time, many profess to believe all of them as true. In conversation, a gentleman recently told me he was opposed to me, but did not believe *all* the church said. On asking what he did believe, he said that "there are not three incomprehensibles, but one incomprehensible." Mr. Gould thinks it may make things more easy for us if Jesus is curtailed. "The intellectual conditions of the age rendered the growth of legend about his memory both inevitable and luxurious; and the process would be so much the more easy if, *as seems reasonable to conclude*, Jesus was known to only a small circle, and his missionary labor was untimely cut short." The issue of such a conclusion is, that Christianity, as we have it, is made up of Jewish and Pagan mythologies. The originality of Christianity has always been disputed. As Mr. Gould well puts it (Vol. 3, page 19): "The conclusion is that, without searching for the Jesus of Christian history, we find in the first Christian century, religious beliefs and usages which by themselves sufficiently account for the origin of the name "Christians."

It seems, however, reasonable for us, with our modern notions, to expect all the early historians to contain extensive references to the inauguration of the new religion, which, we are told by the Gospels, was addressed to every people by wonder-working missionaries. Long years ago, I remember how astonished I was at finding the inquiring and learned Plutarch was not aware that such an important sect as the Christians had any existence in his time! He travelled in Greece and Egypt, and long resided in Rome, flourished in 100, and lived to a good old age. We are told that his morality was excellent, but we are asked to make allowance for his philosophy and doctrines owing to the mythology of his time! His opinion of the Christianity and Christians of his time would have been interesting reading.

Dio Cassius wrote a history of Rome from the arrival of Æneas in Italy to the eighth year of Severus, and spent twenty years in collecting materials for it; but a writer on early Christianity in the Empire informs us that that talented and accomplished writer never mentions the Christians. This is the more remarkable since Pliny the younger is made to refer to them a hundred years before Cassius wrote his history. Perhaps he did not happen to read Pliny's description of them; or, what is more probable, Pliny had not written