

*Neglected Factors in the Study of the Early Progress of Christianity.* By the Rev. JAMES ORR, Professor of Church History in the United Presbyterian Theological College, Edinburgh. London: Hodder & Stoughton. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. 235. Price, \$1.25.

This is a very suggestive volume on some aspects of the early history of Christianity which are often overlooked. Gibbon and other writers following him have greatly minimized the influence of Christianity in the early centuries. Our author proceeds to show that the new heaven greatly affected pagan society, that it had a far greater influence than has heretofore been admitted. The principal evidence on this subject he finds in the invaluable testimony of the Catacombs. "I think I am justified," he says, "in speaking of the Catacomb discoveries as a 'neglected factor' in the study of early Church history—one which only recently Church historians have taken the trouble to refer to at all, and of the bearings of which even yet they show generally a most inadequate appreciation."

Besides the glowing account of the early Christian writers, there has, he says, been opened to us within recent years another book of surpassing interest, the pages of which are constantly being more clearly deciphered by skilled interpreters, and which promises to throw a flood of reliable light on just such problems as we are dealing with. It is surprising that these discoveries have not been made more use of by Church historians."

The author does us the honour to refer several times to our book on the Catacombs for facts and arguments on this neglected side of Church history. He shows that there was an extension of Christianity laterally or numerically in the Roman Empire far beyond what most historians have been willing to admit. He shows, too, that there was an extension of Christianity vertically, or as respects the different strata of society—that while of course, the great body of the Church were of the poor or of the middle classes, there were those of Caesar's household and those of high rank and station who were also the disciples of Jesus. We have long since pointed this out by numerous examples in the epitaphs of the early Christians in our book on the Catacombs. Dr. Uihorn, in his "Conflicts of Christianity and Paganism," also does us the honour of quoting extensively from our book on this subject, as does Dr. Whedon in his "Commentaries."

Dr. Orr proceeds to demonstrate the intensive or penetrative influence of Christianity on the thought and life of the empire. This is especially seen in the effect of Christianity on morals and legislation, in the elevation of woman, the abolition of slavery, the amelioration of criminal law, which, like the laws of Draco, was written in blood, and in many other respects. This, too, we have previously shown by many examples of early Christian inscriptions.

*Canadian Battlefields, and Other Poems.*

By LIEUT.-COL. J. R. WILKINSON.  
Methodist Book Rooms, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax. Pp. 292.

We confess that we are not very greatly in sympathy with the glorification of war. We believe that both in Canadian and American literature too much emphasis has been placed upon the unhappy collisions on the field of battle of our kindred peoples. As the grass has grown greenly on the graves of our fallen heroes, so should we veil the memories of these unhappy strifes and rejoice in the growing love and brotherhood of the neighbouring nations.

"Let us then uniting bury  
All our idle feuds in dust,  
And to future conflicts carry  
Mutual faith and mutual trust."

As a gallant soldier the writer records the heroism of Chateauguay and Beaver Dams, of Lundy's Lane and Chryslers Farm, of Stony Creek and Queenston Heights.

But not all his poems are of war. "The love of home, the song of nature, the mystery of creation, the impenetrable depths of infinitude" furnish themes of many of his songs. The longest poem, "The Flight of Time," is one of epic grandeur. It sweeps from the creation through the great events of history and the realms of space to the final consummation when time shall be no more. "Armageddon" is a striking poem in which the final conflict between Christian and Moslem shall take place on the plains of India. These closing lines breathe a more tranquil spirit:

O charity! unfold thy pure white wings,  
Teach us to suffer and to forbear;  
To hurl no darts, no evil, bitter stings,  
For life is needful and full of care.

Then fold us, fold us, in thy pure white wings,  
Shield us from ourselves, and let us see  
Only good in others, and the joy that brings  
Peace to us in life and in eternity.