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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THE HISTORICITY OF THE GOSPELS.

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ARE the Gospels true histories, to be received as such by candid students to-day? We may reply affirmatively, without touching the questions of scriptural inspiration and inerrancy. We may also answer in the affirmative, while acknowledging that the evangelic narratives are only outline sketches of the life of Jesus, fragmentary, and not always clearly consistent, accounts of the Founder of Christianity. The four books which are the literary basis of Christian faith and are immortal inspirations to Christian hope and love are evidently unlike the biographies that are issued from the modern press. They do not resemble the elaborate and finished lives of Napoleon and Lincoln, which, in five or ten bulky volumes, narrate chronologically, minutely, and with philosophical reflections the careers of those great men. The Gospels, while telling nearly all that is known of the most important Life ever lived, are exceedingly brief, sometimes apparently contradictory, and are wanting in discursive meditations upon the events described. Are there two biographies more unlike than Matthew's life of Jesus and Masson's "Life of Milton"? The first was apparently "the child of memory;" the second is the product of years of prodigious toil in libraries. In part at least the Gospels were spoken at the beginning as the personal witness of those who were acquainted with the Nazarene Prophet. What are the reasons which have led candid and studious men in all Christian ages to accept the Gospels as true? Within the compass of this article, little more can be done than to enumerate some of these reasons.

1. They give the *impression* of truthfulness, and so strong is this impression that frequently the best tonic for enfeebled faith is to read and ponder, with a reverent heart, these simple and self-evidencing narratives. The mere reading of one of the Gospels has sometimes exercised such a strong influence over the mind that the reader, without any further evidence, has believed the account to be true and has accepted Christianity. "The