

can upset it. If the miracles are disowned, our faith is shaky, perhaps doomed to a native outgrowth of earth.

Dr. Wace has not stopped to notice the preface of St. Luke: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us. . . ." It is therefore likely that the career of Jesus gave birth to many biographies which have not survived the persecutions. This is certain, however, that Luke had ample opportunity to gather a succinct history of our Lord, even although he had not been a companion of Paul, nor had frequented the cities of Judæa.

It is established that Luke is the author of the third Gospel, and it is known that his accesses to parties of information were abundant. What of the other Gospels? If one be true, does it follow that the other three are? Not altogether, for fertile fancies may have paraphrased the work with liberal additions of their own. Still, a close reading would detect what insertion was original and what was imitated. The histories are not exactly alike; it would be suspicious if they were. When Garfield was assassinated, many biographies were dashed off so rapidly as to signalize American swiftness of action. Now, if we overlook the scandalous volumes, the trustworthy ones differ in thousands of particulars; and if there was an error in one as to a date of a speech, who would say that the whole volume was unhistorical? There are seeming discrepancies in the Gospels; but, even if inspiration of a mechanical kind be threatened, who is so shallow as to conclude that the narrative is not genuine? The reports of Mr. Gladstone's speeches are not scrupulously correct as to every figure, and every word, and every punctuation; and he who would, because of these

puny defects, discredit the substance of the speech as reported, evinces an incurable stupidity. He is like the great apostle "who was born out of due season" for he should have lived in the first centuries, and have been a member of the broad-minded school of Masorites who spent their days in counting the number of times a dot, or a letter, or a word, etc., was used in the Scriptures.

The evidences for the three Gospels are produced; and admissions from hostile critics are collated. Altogether the production is very satisfactory. It avoids a treatment of many views for which the public have no relish.

Internal evidences are excluded formally. This is the only feature of the work whose wisdom can be called in question.

The mainstay of the reasoning is that the authors were either eyewitnesses of what they recorded, or had plenty of chance to verify any report. It is obvious, however, that the mere fact that they were contemporaries does not of necessity dissipate the legendary element which disfigures it in some eyes. For even in a curious and critical age, there are stories that arise, and when circulated catch the popular sympathy. The decisive point is the character of the writer. If, for example, Luke was a credulous, easy-going soul which hated matters of fact, it is likely enough that he interwove the historical with the romantic. But the reverse is true. The style is cautious and exact; it is of one to whom what he relates is true everywhit. Indeed, there is a shortness and dryness which are nauseous to those who are greedy for novelties. We venture to affirm that it would have been a greater miracle for an author so fastidious as Luke to have indulged in the mythical than that miracles were performed. He does not stand aghast at a wonder; and