

among men where Christian brotherhood admits none, is inconsistent with the principles of Friends. The particular forms of complimentary speech that were in vogue at the time of the rise of the Society, however, may at present time be unobjectionable. The moderation and simplicity that deterred the early Friends from wearing mourning, and kept them from the follies of changing fashion, must do the same for us to day; but they do not require an adherence to any style of dress or any form of speech. What constitutes moderation and simplicity for one person, no other person may presume to say, but the practice of these virtues will follow as the natural result of striving to make one's life conform to one's highest conception of right.

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## THE GOSPELS.

### INTRODUCTION.

I invite the readers of YOUNG FRIENDS' REVIEW to a brief study of the Gospels. Let us try to read as they would read them who have somewhat the habit of students and whose minds are clear of any preconceived theories of their origin, or character. Let us read them, however, under the feeling that there is an eternal source of strength and power for righteousness that has always been influencing human character; that in all ages this power has evolved noble, pure and good lives from less noble, pure and good; that whilst no attainment in that which makes up the life of the perfect man is limited to any previous attainment, yet the noblest human character is an outgrowth of antecedent *human* character.

If possible we shall try to read the narratives as we would read and understand writings that have no claim to be sacred writings, recognizing, nevertheless, that the record of all good and noble action is inspiring; that the history of all pure and true lives is

sacred, in the fact that it tends to help us make our own lives sublime. Thus, while we shall endeavor to study the writings as we do other books, we shall not fail to remember that we do not read all books in the same spirit. As we recognize that the study of mathematics and the study of poetry, the study of music and the study of science, each requires for itself its peculiar mental attitude,—that of the mathematician, the poet, the musician, or the scientist,—so we shall endeavor to keep constantly in view that the Gospels are religious writings, and can only be properly understood by those that are imbued with their spirit and who endeavor to enter into sympathy with the power that evidently ruled in the noble life of Him who rose to spiritual heights unparalleled in human history.

### AUTHORSHIP OF THE GOSPELS.

When or by whom the Gospels were written the books themselves give little evidence. Only one of them—the fourth—in any direct way indicates the probable author. In John xxi, 20, 21, we are told that Peter, at the close of the last interview he had with the manifested Jesus, “turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned back on his breast at supper,” and 24th verse of the same chapter it is said, “This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, *and wrote these things*; and we know that his witness is true.” The disciple “whom Jesus loved” is mentioned in John xiii, 23, as “reclining in Jesus bosom at the last supper, also in xix, 26, as being present with the mother of Jesus at the time of the crucifixion. From this connection it has been inferred that John was the disciple “who wrote these things”—*i.e.* the fourth Gospel, since John, with Peter and James (the brother of Jesus) seem in the Gospels to have held a more intimate relationship with Jesus than did any other of his disciples. The evidence, however, that John was