

And it was, no doubt, well for the truthfulness of the picture that the histories were not written down as soon as possible after the Crucifixion. The lapse of a few years allowed each event to assume its proper significance in the minds of the apostles; whereas, at the moment of its utterance, each word of Him who "spake as never man spake" would seem to demand a record, and each action as it was done. But what we have now is such a collection of memoirs as enables us, without having every word of Jesus registered and every deed chronicled, to see the spirit of all that He did; and his life is such that, when we come elsewhere on a saying which must apparently be attributed to Him, like this of the Talmud—"A son and a daughter shall inherit alike"—though we have not the words in a Gospel, we can feel that they are such words as might have been uttered by the Jesus whose history our Gospels record. The Gospels teach us the spirit of Christ, and the spirit of Christ is Christianity.

J. RAWSON LUMBY.

BRIEF NOTICES.

CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY GOSPELS. Vol. I. St. Matthew and St. Mark. *By G. Constantinos.* This Commentary, which is written in modern Greek and published at Athens, is interesting as shewing the position of New Testament studies in the most flourishing centre of learning in the Greek Church. It is interesting, too, especially for Englishmen, as bearing considerable traces of the influence of English scholarship. The writers most prominently quoted seem to be Alford and Wordsworth, and it is possibly something more than a coincidence that the German writers whose names are mentioned have all had their works translated into English. By the side of these modern writers the other most important element in the Commentary is that which is supplied by the Greek Fathers, Chrysostom, the Gregories, Theo-

phylact, and Euthymius Zigabenus. The quotations are generally well selected, and have the merit of being not too long. The same merit attaches to the Commentary as a whole, which certainly makes good its claims to be considered "practical." With no very profound thought or profound learning, and in some respects with a regrettable amount of inaccuracy, it is yet always clear, readable, and intelligent—if at times, as it seems to us, somewhat naïve. The work has suffered rather from its slightness. Thus a chronological table is given, but nothing is said as to the grounds on which the chronology is based. Not that there would have been much reason to complain of this, if it had been hinted that other chronological systems were possible. As it is, we have stated with dogmatic positiveness a system which is improbable in itself and opposed to the best authorities. Another portion of the work that is especially faulty is that which relates to the Greek text of the Gospels. We gather from the Preface that the text adopted is that of the Codex Alexandrinus, an unfortunate and unnecessary choice, considering that the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS. were equally accessible. It does not appear what has been done for the first twenty-four chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel, where the Alexandrine MS. is wanting. But on testing the correctness of the transcription in places where the MS. is available, there would seem to be really but little relation between it and the original. No less than six marked divergences appear in the first thirteen verses of St. Mark. We may say, in passing, that the Alexandrine MS. is antedated by nearly a century, the Memphitic Version and Old Latin postdated by as much. But no eccentricities in regard to the text will surprise us after reading the two following sentences. The closest examination of the 1,277 MSS. of the New Testament "discovered about 50,000 differences. All these, however, except fifty, are orthographical, and these fifty, all but ten or twelve, consist in transpositions of words. Of the remaining ten or twelve, two only relate to the Gospels, the rest to the Epistles, and these do not bear upon dogmatic teaching!" The theologians of Greece seem to need the lesson which is too much needed here in England—that so-called "popular" writing is no excuse for being inexact, that is, in point of fact, untruthful.

THE OXFORD BIBLE FOR TEACHERS. (University Press.) A few months ago we noticed, with warm but deserved commendation, "The Teacher's Bible," published by Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode. And now already another Bible for Teachers lies before us—another,

and yet well nigh the same. Nothing can be more beautiful and sumptuous than this Bible, regarded merely as a book. At least in the small quarto form in which we possess it, it is a model of the printer's art and of the bookbinder's. It is a pleasure to look at it, and a still greater pleasure to handle it. But, after all, a book must be judged by its contents, and not by its external attractions. And, so far as contents are concerned, there seems at first hardly any difference between the Oxford and the London Bibles for Teachers. The resemblance between them, indeed, is somewhat suspiciously close, though possibly it admits of a very plain and easy explanation. Not only do they contain similar annotations, tables, lists, indexes, &c. ; but in the Index of Subjects, and again in the Concordance, we find some insertions and some omissions common to them both, for which it is difficult to account. It is not easy, therefore, to choose between them. We are not aware which of the two was the first in the field, or we should be tempted to give the preference to that. But if we must choose, we give our vote for that of Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode—mainly on this ground : that while their essays on the poetry, the music, the ethnology, the plants, the animals, the weights and coins of the Bible, are signed by such distinguished names as those of Mr. Cheyne, Dr. Stainer, Mr. Sayce, Sir J. Hooker, Canon Tristram, and Mr. Madden, the Oxford Bible guarantees its notes only by the dubious general assertion that they have been prepared or revised “by eminent Oxford scholars and professors.” Still the two are so nearly on a level, alike in their excellences and defects, that we would ask, Is there really any need for *two* Bibles for Teachers? It seems a waste of good work that two sets of scholars, whether eminent or not eminent, should be engaged in one and the same task ; and that the teachers of our Sunday-schools, who have so little to guide their choice, should be compelled to choose between books almost equally good.

THE THREE WITNESSES. *By Stephen Fenner, M.A.* (London : Longmans.) In this little volume—dedicated to the Dean of Peterborough—Mr. Jenner applies the method of Paley, in the *Horæ Paulinæ*, to the writings of Peter, James, and John, the three leading witnesses to the resurrection of our Lord. He sets himself to discover from the Gospel records the characteristic and distinguishing qualities of the apostles who were our Lord's closest personal friends. He then traces these same characteristic and individualizing qualities in the Epistles ascribed to them—in their references to special incidents in the life of Christ by which they were severally impressed, in

the forms which his teaching assumed in their several minds, in their peculiar idioms, their turns of thought and expression, in the very emphasis they lay on special words or facts. Having thus established the reality and trustworthiness of his witnesses, he cites and weighs their testimony to the Resurrection, and contends that it is worthy of all acceptance. The argument is conducted with much ingenuity and force. Mr. Jenner, indeed, is a solid rather than a brilliant writer, and from his style we should infer that he does not wield a practised pen; but he writes with plain sincerity, and suggests an argument which deserves more attention than it has yet received. Here and there, too, his assumptions are questionable. We doubt, for example, his identification of St. James, although it can plead the high authority and ingenious reasoning of Mr. Bassett. But his assumptions, as he himself points out, form no part of his real argument, and do not in any way detract from its force. To those who take an interest in Christian Apologetics, we can cordially commend this work as likely to be helpful to them, and suggestive.

THE LIFE OF OUR LORD, *by W. Ireland Gordon, M.A.* (Edinburgh: Blackwoods), is a compendium which not only those who conduct Bible-classes, but ministers and clergymen, will find very handy and useful. In a series of numbered sections, Mr. Gordon tells the story recorded in the four Gospels, mainly in the language of the Gospels themselves, piecing together their several details, noting their several variations, and adding to every variation or detail the name (within brackets) of the Evangelist whose authority he follows. At the close of each section he gives references to those passages in the Gospels on which the section is based. So that the student of any event in our Lord's history may embrace in a single glance all that the four Gospels record of it, and is enabled, if he wish to pursue the subject, to turn at once to the Chapters and Verses in which his materials are to be gathered. Many will find, as we have found already, that by using this small manual, they may save themselves much labour, and that many themes for consideration are started simply by seeing all that the Gospels say of any incident collected on a single page. The "Life" is preceded by a thoughtful essay on the characteristics of the Gospels and their authors—an essay the value of which is guaranteed by the approval of Dr. Sanday; and it is followed by "notes" so slight as to be rather a blot on what is otherwise a good and serviceable piece of work.