

Jesus of Nazareth.

The four Gospels which the council of Laodicea in 363 decided by vote to be true and reliable come far from agreeing in their different versions; the printing press was unknown then, and the only way of multiplying copies of the gospels and epistles was by the pen, and this principally by monks. Very few of these copies were made from the originals. They were simply copies of copies and there are now in existence, no copies made nearer the time of Jesus than 500 years.

It is supposed that Mathew's gospel was written first and that Mark and Luke were copied more or less from it. They seem to have been somewhat uncertain as to Mathew's credibility, for they omitted several of the most wonderful parts, and rejected many of his most astonishing miracles. An able English writer, in referring to the reliability of the gospels, thus expresses himself: "The ordinary notion, that the four gospels were written by the persons whose names they bear, has no foundation in truth, and has now been given up by all Christian writers," and here the admission of Bishop Faustus is conclusive and shows that the Christian world has been all along kept in most strange and superstitious ignorance on this subject. Upon the same subject, the Rev. E. Evanson thus de-cants:

"Although the gospels are to be received as the compositions of the Jews, yet their compositions do nevertheless betray so great a degree of ignorance of the Geography, statistics, and circumstances of Judea at the time supposed, as to put it beyond all question, that the writers were neither Jews or inhabitants of Judea." Jacolliot, the eminent and learned French writer, in his Bible in India (p 280) says: "The life of the great Christian philosopher as transmitted to us by the evangelists, his apostles, is but a tissue of apocryphal inventions, destined to strike the popular imagination, and solidly to establish the basis of their new religion."

The following very pertinent argument is made use of by the Rev. T. Baring Gould in his "Lost and Hostile gospels." "It is somewhat remarkable that no contemporary, or even early account of the life of our Lord exists, except from the pens of christian writers." That we have none by Greek or Roman writers is not, perhaps, to be wondered at; but it is singular that neither Philo, Josephus nor Gustus of Tiberia, should have ever alluded to Christ or to primitive Christianity. Philo was born at Alexandria about 20 years before Christ and traveled extensively in Palestine and speaks of the Essenes he saw there; but he says not a word about Jesus Christ or his followers.

H. D. B.

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