

**THE GOSPEL HISTORY FOR THE
YOUNG, BEING LESSONS ON THE
LIFE OF CHRIST ADAPTED FOR
USE IN FAMILIES AND IN
SUNDAY SCHOOLS, VOL. I**

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The Gospel history for the young, being lessons on the life of Christ adapted for use in families and in Sunday Schools, Vol.I by William F. Skene

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BY

WILLIAM F. SKENE, D.C.L., LL.D.

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PREFACE.

THE author feels that this little work requires explanation, and perhaps apology, as the production of a layman. Its history is very simple. The author has for many years taught in a Sunday-school open to children of all Churches. The teaching is therefore unsectarian, and consists in the main of the Scriptures only, chapters in the Bible being read and then explained in conversation with the children. The author has always held that the best basis for imparting religious instruction to children is to make them know their Bible well. He found, however, that though they thus became well acquainted with separate chapters of the four Gospels, and their meaning, they did not acquire any clear conception of the order of the events, or of the course of our Saviour's life. He therefore, during the last few years, gave the senior class a course of lessons on the life of Christ, and the

present work consists of these lessons printed very much as they were delivered, in the hope that they may be of as much use to other young persons as they appeared to be to those who heard them.

In one sense the author thinks this little work supplies a want. He does not think the so-called Lives of Christ which have been published during the last few years are of much use to the young. However ably compiled and beautifully written, their language does not make the same impression upon them as the terse and graphic descriptions of the Evangelists. Nor are the numerous Commentaries on the Books of the New Testament of much greater use to them. The form in which they are compiled, consisting of annotations on individual verses, is not well adapted for this purpose, and the author has derived little advantage from them. The form this little work takes is to select from one of the Gospels the most full and striking narrative of each of the events of our Saviour's life in their order for perusal, and to append to it a general explanation of the passage selected. The author has not thought it necessary to indicate the grounds upon which the order of the events has been arranged, which is the result of a careful

study of the narratives of the four Evangelists, and their bearing upon each other; and, although he is familiar with the results of recent criticism, both by German and English writers, upon the authority and truth of the Gospels, he thought it out of place to lay before young people the reasoning by which he arrived at the conclusions upon which the work is based. What, therefore, may appear simply assumptions on his part are in reality the result of much study of the subject. Thus, in connection with the origin of the Gospels, the author has not overlooked what is perhaps the latest exposition of the subject, viz. that contained in the very striking and able article on the Gospels in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* by the Rev. E. A. Abbot, D.D., but, after careful study of that article, he came to the conclusion that the ingenious theory of their origin there given is not tenable. He considers that the Gospels as we now have them were the first written Gospels, and were the work of the authors whose names they bear, and that they were preceded by oral teaching only. He very much agrees with the views of the Archbishop of York in his extremely able Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels, and with those of Canon Westcott in his Introduction to the

Gospel of St. John, both published in the *Speaker's Commentary*.

In delivering these little lectures, the author did not scruple to make use of the writings of others where they suited his purpose, but, as he is anxious to avoid loading his pages with footnotes or references, he must abstain from any special acknowledgment of them, with the exception that he ought to mention the assistance he has derived from the very able papers which have appeared from time to time in that most valuable periodical, the *Expositor*.

With these remarks he can only commend his little work to those for whom it is designed.

W. F. S.

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