

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE Nineteenth Century has undoubtedly sought out many inventions, but the learned woman cannot be claimed as one of them. She is the product neither of the present century nor of Western civilisation. The students of Jewish literature have recognised her presence throughout all the ages, and Jewish writers have celebrated her surpassing greatness in many a fugitive essay and many a fair-sized book.

But the woman of devotion, so far at least as Judaism is concerned, it has been left to this century to discover. No writer, until Mr. Schechter came, sang her praises or even recognised her presence. There were times in the history both of the Temple and of the Synagogue when she held a position of some importance. Yet, until Mr. Schechter published his learned *Studies in Judaism*, of which some notice has already been taken, no attempt had ever been made to give, even in outline, the history of woman's relation to public worship. Even yet it is almost virgin soil; for Mr. Schechter is forward to affirm that he has but scratched the surface of the subject. And that it is soil with a body in it, as the farmers say, has been made abundantly manifest by this short essay on 'Woman in Temple and Synagogue.'

The earliest reference to women in the public worship of God is found in Ex. xxxviii. 8. In a previous chapter (xxx. 17 ff.) we read that Moses was commanded to make a laver of brass to wash withal, that Aaron and his sons might wash their hands and their feet thereat. Then in this chapter we unexpectedly learn that the laver of brass was made 'of the mirrors of the serving women which served at the door of the tent of meeting.' Who were these serving women? The verse stands by itself. The Revisers have made a separate paragraph of it. No other mention is made of them here. And with the single and useless exception of 1 Sam. ii. 22, no mention is made of them afterwards.

It is surprising that these serving women, who surrendered their hand-mirrors to make the basin of brass for the priests, missed mention in the subsequent books of the Bible, for they touched the imagination of Jewish writers who came later. Philo is not exactly enamoured of the emancipation of women, and seeks to confine them to his 'small state.' But here he is full of their praise. 'For,' says he, 'though no one enjoined them to do so, they of their own spontaneous zeal and earnestness contributed the mirrors with which they had been accustomed to deck and set off

their beauty, as the most becoming first-fruits of their modesty, and of the purity of their married life, and, as one may say, of the beauty of their souls.' In another passage Philo represents these women as engaged in a glorious contest with the men, exerting themselves to the utmost so as not to fall short of their holiness. And in a later age Ibn Ezra endeavours to improve the passage by saying, 'And, behold, there were women in Israel serving the Lord, who left the vanities of this world, and not being desirous of beautifying themselves any longer, made of their mirrors a free offering, and came to the tabernacle every day to pray, and to listen there to the words of the commandments.'

But in what did the ministry of these serving women consist? If they were women who went up to the tabernacle to pray, as Ibn Ezra suggests, then Hannah belongs to the succession, and charmingly illustrates their order; for (1 Sam. i. 12) 'Hannah continued to pray before the Lord.' Not far from this is the suggestion of the Septuagint, that they were 'women who fasted by the doors of the tabernacle.' Some commentators think that their ministry consisted in performing religious dances accompanied by musical instruments. But the word that the writer employs (נְצַפִּי) suggests the thought of 'a species of religious Amazons, who formed a guard of honour round the sanctuary,' for it is the ordinary word for troops that enter upon military service.

There is an incidental reference in 2 Kings iv. 23, which shows that in the days of Elisha Jewish women were wont to attend at certain seasons some kind of religious service which the prophet conducted. The husband of the 'Great Woman' of Shunem says to her, 'Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? it is neither new moon nor Sabbath.' This service was held therefore on Sabbath, or at the Festival of the new moon. The new moon was from early times a special women's holiday, and was so observed in the Middle Ages. The Rabbis explain its origin by saying that when the

men broke off their golden earrings for the making of the Golden Calf, the women refused to add their trinkets, and 'for this good behaviour a special day of repose was granted them.' 'Some Cabalists even maintain that the original worshippers of the Golden Calf continue to exist on earth, their souls having successively migrated into various bodies, while their punishment consists in this, that they are ruled over by their wives.'

This Shunammite of Elisha's history is a special favourite of the Jewish Rabbis. It was she and not her husband who discovered the character of Elisha. 'I perceive,' she said, 'that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.' Whereupon the Talmud makes the remark, 'From this fact we may infer that woman is quicker in recognising the worth of a stranger than man,' a remark, says Mr. Schechter, that is 'rather interesting as well as complimentary to women.'

No mention is made of women in the service of Solomon's temple. There is a passage indeed in the 'chapters of Rabbi Eliezer' which seems to say that the wives of the Levites formed a part of the regular temple choir. But the meaning is too obscure, and the authority is more than questionable. No doubt they attended the regular worship. And although they were excluded by the law from any participation beyond seeing and hearing, there is the testimony of an eye-witness that in one tender ceremony the rigour of the law was relaxed. When a worshipper brought a lamb for sacrifice, he laid his hands on the head of the victim and there confessed his sins. That privilege was denied to women. Yet we are told that if any woman greatly desired it, the authorities allowed the law to be forgotten for the moment, for a great right doing a little wrong, that they might 'give calmness of spirit to the woman.'

When the Captivity came to an end, and Ezra was found reading the words of the law in the audience of all the people, it is expressly stated that the women were present as well as the men.

Then in the Second Temple a special court was set apart for their use. In this court the great illuminations and rejoicings on the evening of the Feast of Tabernacles were held. But even then the women were only permitted to look on at a distance. Galleries were erected around the court, and the women were carefully confined to them.

In the synagogue their position was rarely more honourable. It is true that epitaphs have been found bearing such unexpected titles as 'Mistress,' or 'Mother of the Synagogue.' But, on the other hand, there was a tendency, at certain seasons, to exclude women from the synagogue altogether. This was protested against, and declared to be quite un-Jewish. But again, some Jewish scholars assert that the ancient synagogues knew no partition for women. Mr. Schechter is rather inclined to think that in this respect the synagogue took the temple for its model, and confined the women to a place of their own. Whether they sat side by side with the men or occupied a special portion of the building, he cannot tell. But he is sure that they were great synagogue-goers; for when one Rabbi said to another (after the manner of these Rabbis), 'Given the case that the members of the synagogue are all descendants of Aaron, to whom then would they impart their blessing?' the answer is, 'To the women who are there.'

But there is better proof than that. For not only were the women fond of the synagogue, they were fond of the synagogue sermon. 'Thus one woman was so much interested in the lectures of Rabbi Meir, which he was in the habit of giving every Friday evening, that she used to remain there till the candles in her house burnt themselves out. Her lazy husband, who stopped at home, so strongly resented having to wait in the dark, that he would not permit her to cross the threshold until she gave some offence to the preacher, which would make him sure that she would not attend his sermons again.'

Whether women should be allowed to pray, at least to pray in a language they could understand,

was long and fiercely debated among the Jewish doctors. They were not of course permitted to study the law, though 'many great women,' says Mr. Schechter, studied the law, and so became law-breakers. In all religious matters they were entirely dependent on the men, wives becoming 'a sort of appendix' to their husbands, 'who by their good actions ensured salvation also for them, *and sometimes the reverse*. There is a story about a woman which, put into modern language, would be to the effect that she married a minister and copied his sermons for him; he died, and she then married a cruel usurer, and kept his accounts for him.'

St. Paul will have it that the women must keep silence in the church. More polite, thinks Mr. Schechter, was the attitude of the Rabbis, but it reached the same conclusion. They quoted the thirteenth verse of the 45th Psalm, 'The king's daughter within the palace is all glorious,' and they emphasized *within the palace*, adding 'but not outside of it.'

Yet there was one privilege the women had, and it was never taken away from them. They had always the right to weep. The *daughters* of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah (Judg. xi. 40); and again, 'all the singing men *and the singing women* spake of Josiah in their lamentations' (2 Chron. xxxv. 25). Even when they were no longer allowed to sing, they were still permitted to weep. At last a public office was even found for them, and they were allowed to fill it to the end. It was the duty of tearing their hair and beating their breasts and weeping aloud at funerals. And sometimes they wept before the funeral came, tears that were unofficial, earnest, pitiful: 'But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.'

When Frederick the Great demanded a short proof of the miraculous, 'The Jews, my lord,'

was the chaplain's ready reply. Year after year Professor Flinders Petrie has been making discoveries in Egypt, but few were they that took any interest in them. Then last winter he came upon a slab of black syenite, and read the words, 'The people of Ysiraal is spoiled, it hath no seed,' and the whole world was awakened into sudden and expectant interest. It is the Jews, my lord.

For a moment the interest was arrested. Is it really the Israelites that Merenptah boasts of spoiling? For Sir Peter Renouf said No; and said it with characteristic emphasis. But Sir Peter Renouf has found no following. Yes, it is the Israelites, say all the archæologists, and the expectant interest is back again.

But if it is the people of Israel over whom Merenptah glories that he has left them no seed, where did Merenptah find them? On this the archæologists are not agreed. Professor Sayce believes that Merenptah found them in Egypt. In last month's issue of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES he drew our attention to the fact that in the inscription which Professor Flinders Petrie discovered, the Israelites alone have no determinative of locality after their name. Therefore, they must either have been a wandering tribe of the desert, without any fixed habitation, or else they must have been located in Egypt. And then that he himself believed they were located in Egypt, he made very plain, when he said that 'the expression used in regard to them is a most remarkable parallel to what we read in Ex. i. 10-22'—the story of the Israelite oppression.

Now Professor Sayce does not think that the narrative in Exodus is in so bad a case that he must leap at the first scrap of corroboration that comes to hand. Doubtless he sees in this sentence 'a most remarkable parallel to what we read in Exodus,' because that is to him its best interpretation. But there are other archæologists who will not have it so. In the current *Statement* of the Palestine Exploration Fund, two considerable

articles are devoted to this subject. These articles are by men who do not always agree together. If it were a matter of Old Testament criticism, they would probably be found far apart. But Captain Haynes and Colonel Conder are at one in this. Both hold that, as Colonel Conder puts it, 'the text shows clearly that the people so ravaged were in Palestine, not in Egypt'; and both believe that, trifling as the discovery is, it will completely overturn our current conception of the date of the Hebrew Exodus.

Until the discovery of the Tel el-Amarna tablets, it was almost an accepted axiom that the Exodus of Israel from Egypt took place in the reign of Pharaoh Merenptah. But in the Tel el-Amarna tablets mention is made of a people called the Abiri. It is the king of Jerusalem who speaks of these Abiri. He writes to the king of Egypt about them. And what he says is that the Abiri have recently entered the land of Canaan as conquerors, and are carrying all before them. They have captured the Great King's fortresses, says the priest-king of Jerusalem, Aijalon is destroyed, Lachish, and Ashkelon, and Gezer are all taken; and even Jerusalem itself is at the mercy of these merciless invaders. Now these Abiri have been identified by Colonel Conder with the Hebrews. The progress of the Abiri is the conquest of the Promised Land under Joshua. And although the identification is doubted or denied by most, Captain Haynes unhesitatingly accepts it.

Now the Pharaoh of Egypt, to whom the king of Jerusalem wrote these letters, was not Merenptah nor any successor of his, but Amenhotep iv. (or Khu-en-atn, as he otherwise is known); and Amenhotep iv. reigned in Egypt nearly two hundred years before Merenptah. Well, if the Israelites were entering Canaan and even making their settlement there, in the days of Khu-en-atn, and if we are to give time for the Wandering in the Wilderness, then the date of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt must be placed yet earlier. Colonel Conder believes that it must be placed in

the reign of Tahutmes (Thothmes) iv., say 1406 B.C.; Captain Haynes believes it must be placed still earlier, in the reign of Amenhotep II., say 1424 B.C.

And they both believe that either date will fit the statements in the Bible as no later date will fit them. There is one point in this complicated story upon which the archæologists are all agreed. They all send the Israelites down into Egypt in the time of the Hyksos or Shepherd kings. Then of course the Pharaoh who knew not Joseph was some king of a native dynasty, who had driven the Hyksos out. Give time for the Oppression to begin and to continue. Give a hundred and fifty years after the expulsion of the Hyksos—you cannot well give more—and you are landed at the earlier date exactly, at Amenhotep II., the Pharaoh of the Exodus, according to Captain Haynes.

Then, if Moses was born eighty years before the Exodus, he was born in the reign of Tahutmes (Thothmes) I. Now we know that during the latter part of that king's reign his daughter, whose name was Hatshepsut, had a considerable share in the government. She had authority and ability enough to carry out her own will, even to the upbringing at the Egyptian court of one of the Hebrew children. It is true that Josephus gives the name of Thermutis to that daughter of Pharaoh who rescued Moses. But if any weight must be attached to that, then Thermutis may be identified with Tahutmes, the family name of the dynasty to which this Hatshepsut belonged.

Again, if Amenhotep II. was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, and Amenhotep IV. the Pharaoh under whom the Israelites fought their way into Canaan, there lies between a period of forty years—the claim which the Bible makes for the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness. And it gives a reason for that wandering. For between these two Amenhoteps there came Tahutmes IV. and Amenhotep III. Now both these kings were warriors, ambitious and energetic. Under their

government no tribe or tribes could enter the land of Canaan, for they held that land securely as their own. But just as Amenhotep II. was incompetent enough to let the Israelites escape, so in the time of Amenhotep IV. Egypt was in a state of open rebellion, and the king had no thought to spare for the troubles of his subjects or allies in far-distant Palestine. The Israelites might emerge from their wilderness wanderings and take possession of the land, unhindered by the king of Egypt.

If these arguments, then, are good, and the Exodus occurred so early, the spoiling of the Israelites of which Merenptah boasts took place in the time of the Judges. It is true that the Bible contains no record of the expedition. But that is not conclusive against it, nor even a surprising circumstance. It is only by a passing allusion that we learn that Egypt attacked Philistia in Solomon's time, when Gezer was burned. No record whatever is found of the Hittite attack on Bashan, recorded on the Tel el-Amarna tablets. And finally, the king of Egypt need not have entered Palestine at all, or even sent an Egyptian army there; the 'spoiling' may have been wrought by the Philistines, his vassals in the land.

In the September number of *The Contemporary Review*, in the middle of the magazine, and surrounded by papers of moderate merit, there lies an article on 'The Historical Jesus and the Christs of Faith.' The author is Mr. David Connor, of whom we confess to knowing nothing, and the title is unattractive. For we have lately had efforts enough to prove that the Jesus of the Gospels and the Christ of our love are not identical nor even next of kin. If this were another of those—but it is not another. It is an able, temperate, and wholly reliable account of the two great issues concerning Jesus of Nazareth which mostly concern us now.

When Mr. Greenhough published that sermon on 'Certainties,' which he delivered in presence of

the Baptist Union of England; we ventured to say that the difficulty of our day is not to hold that we must have Certainties, but to know what Certainties to hold. And then we ventured to add that there seem to be just two facts we need to be certain about—the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. There is no evidence in this article that Mr. Connor has seen either Mr. Greenhough's sermon or the Notes in these pages upon it. But he comes to the same conclusion. He says that the two great issues concerning Jesus of Nazareth which mostly concern us now, are His historical personality and His presence in the Spirit.

Though these expressions seem wider, they are not really wider, as the readers of the Notes will know. But Mr. Connor manages his matter with very great skill and effect. First of all, he places himself in touch with that characteristic movement of our century, which is known by the double-tongued title of 'Back to Christ.' So far as that movement means suspicion or suppression of the theology of St. Paul, Mr. Connor will have nothing to do with it. Not that he will refuse us the right to criticise St. Paul and even reject his theology, if the historical method has driven us to that. But he will not permit us to claim the historical method and to shout out 'Back to Christ,' if our purpose is simply, or even supremely, to discredit the Pauline theology and get rid of the doctrine of the Atonement.

If we have wandered away from Christ, let us by all means return to Him, only let us return in sincerity and in truth. Let us pass by the Patristic writings, and even the Epistles of St. Paul, that we may reach the authentic Jesus. Let us hear Him speak of Himself, that we may at last understand what the apostles have to say about Him. Let us vividly see who He was, that we may know and appreciate what He is. The return to Jesus is irresistible to-day. It is also wholly legitimate. Its results have proved its efficacy and its truth.

For, says Mr. Connor, 'there is no mistaking the change which the recovery of the historical Jesus has effected in the view men take of Christianity. This revolution, for such it is, has vivified theology and brought the flush of a new life into its face. It speaks with an anticipating accent of victory, and no longer dreads the hustling of the opposing spears. Literature hushes its scorn when the Christ once more walks abroad and draws the eyes and hearts of men. There were times, not many years back, when the figure of Jesus was so sicklied and featureless to the mass of men, that to hear of an actual Galilee where the Son of Man had lived and thought gave a kind of shock to faith. We may feel, like the great French critic, that the recovery of the Holy Land has been as a fifth gospel—a new key wherewith to unlock the treasure-house of the past. But it was not always so. And the change that has come over our thought is so vast that only the course of years will give us its measure—

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive.'

Then it means something that cry of 'Back to Christ.' And it has done something. But how has it done it? By 'mere dry scholarship'; for assuredly there is no other way. When the Christ had been dissolved into a featureless terror, and the craving heart conceived a 'Mother of God' to put in the empty place, then scholarship came and brought the Redeemer back, the Man of Nazareth,

As he lived and loved
Sublimely mild, a spirit without spot.

No doubt; there was first the period of anxiety and distress. For it was a revolution; and every revolution has its terrors. Scholarship, which was then called criticism, seemed to withdraw the unreal or terrifying Jesus of the Middle Ages, only by dissolving Him into myths and tendencies. But that stage went past. It was found to be a greater miracle that the Church should create the Christ, than that the Christ should create the Church. Jesus was discovered to be historical.

It is scholarship that has done it, 'mere dry scholarship,' and we must not disdain its service. 'The study of environment has been a main factor in the restoration of Jesus. Instead of the maimed and arbitrary conceptions formerly brought to the evangelic narrative, we have now a wealth of local colour which freshens up the well-worn tale, and sets it in its primitive light. We understand the conditions under which the Prophet of Nazareth had to work, the force of the currents He had to strike across, the malignity of hate which was sure to rise in sceptic and conservative alike against the enthusiasm of fresh inspiration. The brilliant one-sidedness of Hausrath's volumes on *The Time of Jesus* has given place to Schürer's laborious and monumental work, from which we can build up in confidence that historical, geographical, and social background which was lit up by the figure of Christ. The Galilean hills are green again, the lake sleeps placid in the sun, the townships are astir with busy life. The Judæan fields are white unto harvest, and the towers of the Holy City are flashing beneath an Eastern sky. In the north, Pharisaism moulds the people into fine and varied types of character, simple-hearted natures prone to welcome the gracious Son of Man. But its burden is heavy, its heart is stone; and over against it are the masses of the despised and sinful, from whom the men of the Torah turn their faces. The Sadducean priest holds sway in the south,—astute, diplomatic, sceptical,—with those worldly eyes that have never looked on the face of God and death. And round them all circles the Roman eagle, ready to poise himself for the last fell swoop.'

But the recovery of the historical Christ is more than the recovery of His environment. It is also the recovery of His teaching. This was the express intention of those who first cried 'Back to Christ.' And they have gathered more than they strawed. For not only is the teaching of the Master separable from St. Paul's,—the words of any man who has aught to utter are separable from those of another,—but now it is seen that the teaching of Jesus

Himself met the special intellectual standing of the men who heard Him speak, and can only be understood when we have considered what that intellectual standing was. 'He came upon a definite stage and era of the world when men's minds were full of notions of their own. If a newcomer is to get a hearing at all, he must speak to men in their own language, relate his message to their inherited notions, purifying them till they catch something of the lustre of his own great thought. Therefore the teaching of Jesus is simply studded with expressions, for which the ordinary reader can provide only a loose meaning. We read but a few pages of the Gospels before we stumble on expressions like these: "waiting for redemption," "looking for the consolation of Israel," "the kingdom of God," "the Son of Man," "the Son of David," "the last days," "the end of the world," "the wrath to come," "the days of refreshing." Jesus is constantly playing on these popular ideas, now purifying them of their carnality as He fills them with His spirit, now rejecting them utterly, now using them as the almost poetic symbols of "thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls." But only as we are familiar with the intellectual atmosphere in which He moved, only as we grasp the ideas in the terms of which He expresses His message, can we understand the incidence of His words, and feel the inward pressure of His thought. When we treat the teaching of Jesus as if it had no life and unity of its own, as if it could be interpreted out of relation to the thought of its own day, we are simply involving ourselves in "an immense literary misapprehension."

So, then, this is the great attainment of the nineteenth century in respect of religious truth. It has rediscovered Christ. Over the intervening centuries it has stretched its hand, and taken the hand of the century into which Jesus came. It has seen with that century's eyes; it has heard with that century's ears. And the gain is very great. Never more can the stiff features of the ecclesiastical Christ cover the gentle face of the Man of Nazareth. Never more can men throw

themselves upon the words of Christ with untrained zeal, and hurry off with the first superficial meaning. The gain is very great.

But is it quite so great as they make it? We can see the sower go forth to sow, and we can trace the fortune of the scattered seeds. We can stand on the side of the hill, and watch the very features of an undying Sermon on the Mount, and we know the meaning of 'give to him that asketh thee.' By the aid of the historical instinct we are gathered at the foot of the cross, and, behold, the superscription is written in English now, as well as in Hebrew and Greek and Latin. The gain is great; but *is it quite so great as they make it?* We have rediscovered Jesus; have we rediscovered Christ?

For, in the first place, is it so certain that to the men of the first century He was fully and finally known? Three writers have left us a picture of the historical Socrates—Xenophon, Aristophanes, Plato. Do they give us a final account of him? Have not we ourselves better means of establishing the greatness of Socrates than they had, as we trace the rise of the Socratic schools, and appreciate the contribution of Greece to philosophical thought? Or take our own Shakespeare, and try to work back to what this new theological method would call the bare historical conception of him. Shut your eyes to his influence in every fibre of the language you employ to discourse of him. Get back to the Shakespeare as he lived and thought, as he looked to the nobles who patronised and the managers of theatres who employed him. Sir Walter Scott has done this for us with unerring instinct in his Elizabethan novel, *Kenilworth*. Only once does the poet appear, brushing against Earl Leicester as he issues from the Court. 'Ha, Will Shakespeare,' exclaims the Earl, 'wild Will! thou hast given my nephew, Philip Sydney, love-powder; he cannot sleep without thy "Venus and Adonis" under his pillow! We will have thee hanged for the veriest wizard in Europe. Hark thee, mad wag, I have not forgotten thy matter of

the patent and the bears.' That is the bare historical conception. Is it final or is it satisfying? Not thus does a great thinker abide our questions and yield up his deepest secret.

But if the after-influence of our greatest men is needed to enable us to estimate their life and personality, much more is it so of Jesus Christ. He warned His first disciples against the tyranny of His earthly life or doctrine: 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' 'I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.' 'The world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me.' 'It is expedient for you that I go away.' 'He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father.'

Moreover, we know that an early disciple laid aside his knowledge of the earthly life of Jesus, and resolved that though he had known Jesus after the flesh, yet now henceforth he would know Him so no more. St. Paul was not dependent on the local colour of the events through which Jesus passed to Calvary. There seemed to him no necessity that after his conversion he should go up to Jerusalem to those who had been apostles before him; for it had pleased God, he says, 'to reveal His Son in me.'

Once more, they speak of the nineteenth century and the first, as if these two, and they alone, knew Jesus Christ. Dr. Fairbairn (Mr. Connor reminds us) publishes a volume on the *Christ in the Centuries*, and its aim is to show that He is only known in the first and the nineteenth. But what of the centuries that lie between? Jesus Christ had followers in these centuries; had they no knowledge of Jesus Christ? They did not know Him after the flesh as we do; had they no knowledge that was able to make them wise unto salvation? 'There are some who tell us,' says Mr. Connor (and in a note he refers to Dr. Stalker's *Imago Christi*), 'that the *De Imitatione Christi* will not long retain the admiration of an

age which boasts a feeling for historical balance and perspective. Certainly the Christ of that moving and pathetic book has scarcely any actual lineaments at all. Here is no wise and gracious Rabbi, striking out brilliant aphorisms which touch to admiration even the literary *dilettante*. A lonely sufferer fills up the picture, from which almost every other feature of historical reality has been blanched away. And yet the writer of the *Imitatio* has done a peerless work. His age had little time for imaginative delight in the broad-eyed teaching of the Galilean hills. But it clung, with all the strength of a trust that was often next to despair, to the Crucified One, who, for men's comfort and sustainment, trod "the King's highway of the Holy Cross." It is the reflected image of this Son of Man, caught from the fleeting face of mediæval Christendom, that is seized and fixed for us in that immortal book. It reveals an actual human lot, and the living Christ of faith who answered its longings. "And so," as George Eliot has said, "it remains to all time a lasting record of human needs and human consolations: the voice of a brother who, ages ago, felt and suffered and renounced—in the cloister perhaps, with serge gown and tonsured head, with much chanting and long fasts, and with a fashion of speech different from ours—but under the same silent, far-off heavens, and with the same passionate desires, the same strivings, the same failures, the same weariness."

Thus there is a Christ besides the Christ of the nineteenth century and the first—the Christ of all the centuries between. He was often but a faint reflexion of the Jesus of the evangelists. The local colouring was all worn off. Historical anachronisms had taken its place. Yet did this Christ of the centuries meet the necessities of sin-stained men and women, opening a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, offering an abundant entrance into His eternal kingdom and glory. The return to the historical Jesus is not in vain; but let us not be persuaded that it has made the living Christ and the revealing God of none effect.

There is just one historical fact we must all retain—the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The return to the historical Jesus has not restored us that, for the centuries had never lost sight of it. It seemed for a time indeed as if the new method were about to take it clean away from us. This was the aim of its earliest advocates, and this was their confident boasting. But the historical method has become more scientific since the days of Strauss and Baur. And the restoration of the local colour to the events of Jesus' life has not only given probability to His death and resurrection, but made them almost inevitable. We thankfully receive all that the historical method has to give us; we jealously watch lest it carry anything away. 'The mischief,' says Mr. Connor, 'of the bare return to the historical Jesus is that it threatens to deprive us of the living Christ and the revealing God; the antidote to it is contained in that clause of the Catholic creed, "I believe in the Holy Ghost."'

Dr. Trumbull's new book, *The Threshold Covenant*, and the notes upon it, have caused much searching of heart. We publish this month the earliest three of many contributions received. It is a subject that demands earnest and painstaking study. If Dr. Trumbull's matter does not exactly fit our mould, we need not decide exactly that there is something wrong with his matter. If it were an isolated instance, or even if it were a contrary tendency, we should be held more excusable if we rejected it without examination. It is one of a thousand instances of the same ancient practice, and it is wholly in line with the recent discoveries of archæology. Again, if it were a matter of extreme opinion, on one side or the other, it would be comfortable to say that criticism or anti-criticism had carried the author away. But Professor Cheyne, the Critic, says, 'You are very convincing about the Passover Blood.' And right across the page, Professor Hommel, the Archæologist, says, 'Your explanation of the Passover is much more satisfactory than taking *pesakh* in the sense of "to pass by."'