

receiving the commands of Jehovah on the mount, while the wonderful works of their newly-found God were still in their minds, they turned their faces towards the past, and made a golden calf which should be to them the symbol of their invisible king. And many times after that, Israel found the purity of her faith too much for her, but each time, eventually, the better feeling of the nation manifested itself and the idolaters were made to pay dearly for their crime. Israel learned by bitter experience that Jehovah was a jealous God, who made the people pay hard and long for any violation of His revealed law.

H. J. FLOWERS.

THE TEN BEST BOOKS ON THE LIFE OF JESUS.

MODERN criticism set out to discover the historical Jesus. When the cry of "Back to Christ" was first raised, it was felt that the course of theology had been directed into a plain and simple path where it would be scarcely possible for it to miss the way. After the wearisome intricacies of the Christological debate, it seemed such a simple thing to turn to the New Testament and take a stand upon the facts of history. What could possibly be clearer, it was felt, than the portrait of Jesus drawn by the Evangelists in the Gospels? Yet when the experiment came to be made, it was soon found that the hopes of the optimists who had promised a simple and speedy reconstruction of faith on the basis of historical fact were doomed to swift disillusionment. The controversy about the facts and their true interpretation has been quite as acute as any controversy in the past about the metaphysical explanation of the person of Christ. The quest for the historical Jesus in modern times has been quite as hard and elusive a task as the quest for the Chalcedonian formula in the fourth century. It is only necessary to follow the record of recent investigation in such books as Weinel's *Jesus in the Nineteenth Century*, or Schweitzer's *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, to understand the nemesis which has fallen on the heads of the theologians who thought they were setting the Church a school-

boy's task when they urged it to seek the solution of its problems in the historical Jesus. The gulf that separates the Christ of Arius from the Christ of Athanasius, or the Christ of Luther from the Christ of Calvin is insignificant compared with the chasm which divides the Jesus of Harnack from the Jesus of Schweitzer, or still more the Jesus of Bousset from the Christ of Feine and Forsyth.

The first thing therefore that has to be said is that no satisfactory life of Jesus exists. Modern scholarship has failed in its objective. It has not produced a classic biography of Jesus. The highest praise that can be bestowed on the best modern attempts is that they are tentative experiments and that they succeed in illuminating some aspects of the immortal story. Matthew Arnold once said that "Jesus was above His reporters." He is certainly infinitely greater than any of His modern portraits.

The failure of modern scholarship may be illustrated by the experience of Dr. Sanday. Dr. Sanday set before himself as the goal of his life work the production of a biography of Christ. And he only succeeded in achieving two or three volumes of Prolegomena and an Outline. And we are still to-day, more or less, in the "Prolegomena" and the "Outline" stage.

The difficulty of course lies in the fact that the modern criticism of the New Testament has raised so many problems, and until some general agreement is reached with regard to their solution it is impossible to reconstruct the details of the history of the life of Jesus. Our attitude to the sources and the amount of credibility which we attach to their statements must inevitably affect our judgment and decision. And we have not yet even formulated any objective canons of historical criticism which will enable us to gauge with any exactitude the data presented to us in the four Gospels. The subjective judgment and feeling of the historian are almost always the controlling principle and the final court of appeal. And in the case of Jesus this must always be so. In the realm of history—and this is pre-eminently true in the case of its greatest personality—there are no such things as bare facts. The very statement of the fact is necessarily an interpretation of it. And the consequence is that we have, and are bound to have, different schools of thought, each with its own point of view and its own attitude to the facts. This

is true of course even of our canonical gospels—each of which is an interpretation and not merely a record of the life of Jesus.

We need not be surprised therefore if modern criticism has thrown up the most diverse accounts of Jesus. To Drews and Kalthoff, for instance, He is a mythical figure, created by the fortuitous concurrence of the religious and philosophical forces of the time. To the authors of *The Beginnings of Christianity* He is a great Jewish Rabbi with intense moral insight and fervour and a wide human sympathy. To most modern scholars of the Liberal School He is the supreme exponent of spiritual religion and the moral ideal. To others He is pre-eminently a social reformer. To one school of thought the significant fact lies in the Incarnation, while to another it is to be found in the death upon the Cross. Johannes Weiss and Schweitzer claim that the significant point in His teaching lies in His apocalyptic vision of the Kingdom. And all these presuppositions necessarily colour the efforts of these writers to get at the facts. What we find therefore, in most modern Lives and interpretations of Jesus, is a partial and onesided view of the historical data. Few modern scholars seem to have avoided the intellectual mistake of taking a fraction of the truth and stating it as if it were an exhaustive statement of the whole truth.

Other attempts fail because they divorce criticism from faith or faith from criticism. There are some critical examinations which compel one to ask, Could these dry bones have ever been endowed with life? There are other works which, in spite of the faith and devotion that characterise them, fail to carry conviction because they rest on insecure foundations.

The conclusion to which we are driven therefore is that *every minister and theologian ought to construct a life of Jesus for himself.*

There are, it seems to me, three necessary qualifications for such a study.

(1) A man must have a background of personal faith. Every man finds in the Gospels the Christ of his own experience. "As a man is, so he sees." The defect in many modern lives of Christ is that they are written without real spiritual appreciation. Spiritual facts can only be spiritually understood. And it is for this reason that I find Papini so stimulating. His critical basis is often unsound—and I have to put notes of interrogation on almost every page—but he makes Jesus live again, and I feel

that in spite of his manifest defects and limitations he has given me a new vision of Christ.

(2) A man must also have a background of critical knowledge. Faith may become credulity if it is not tempered by scientific knowledge. It is necessary to be able to appraise the value of the sources and to apply historical tests to their statements.

(3) A man must have too a philosophical and theological background which will enable him to face the fundamental problems which confront him at almost every point of the story, and which the usual canons of historical research are quite inadequate to solve. His attitude to the miracles will be determined in the long run not by the material evidence but by his general conception of God and the Universe.

Granted the existence of these three qualifications without which nobody is properly equipped for the task, how is the student to begin his work and what materials is he to use ?

I. He cannot begin the task *in vacuo*. He must first of all make himself familiar with the work of his predecessors in the field of study—the pioneers and pathfinders who have already surveyed the ground and broken up the soil. The two most helpful books on this part of the subject have already been referred to—Schweitzer's *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, of which an excellent translation by Montgomery exists under the title *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, and Weinel's *Jesus in 19. Jahrhundert*, which has also been translated and expanded by A. G. Widgery, though it should be stated that the translation is very often inaccurate and unsatisfactory. Sanday's *Life of Christ in Recent Research* is also valuable, though it is slighter and less comprehensive.

If I had been asked to enumerate the epoch-making books on the Life of Jesus—the books which have left their abiding mark upon the history of thought—the task would have been comparatively easy. I should have selected the following :—

- (1) Strauss (both the earlier and later editions of the *Leben Jesu*).
- (2) Schleiermacher's *Leben Jesu*.
- (3) Renan's *La Vie de Jésus*.
- (4) Keim's *Jesus of Nazareth*.
- (5) Schenkel's *Das Charakterbild Jesu*.
- (6) *Ecce Homo*.

- (7) Bernhard Weiss' *Das Leben Jesu*.
- (8) Edersheim's *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*.
- (9) Réville's *La Vie de Jésus*.
- (10) Holtzmann's *Das Leben Jesu*.
- (11) Schweitzer's *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*.

If I had wished to extend this list I should have included the lives of Jesus by Neander, Ewald (in vol. 6 of the *History of Israel*, E.T.), Didon, Pressensé and Farrar. The books I have selected represent the most important of the modern schools of thought. All of them make important and vital contributions to the subject, and if we apply to them the dictum, "Theologians are generally right in what they affirm and wrong in what they deny," we shall find that not only are they indispensable to our purpose but that they throw the most brilliant light upon the particular aspect of the life of Jesus which they seek to emphasise. Treated with discrimination the exhaustive and monumental work of Keim is of invaluable service to the modern student.

II. Most of the preliminary studies which are necessary to this investigation fall outside the scope of this article, and need only therefore be briefly mentioned. As an Introduction to the critical study of the sources Burkitt's *The Gospel History and its Transmission* is, for our purpose, *facile princeps*. It would be very useful to study some book on the principles of historical research, e.g. Langlois and Seignobos' *Introduction to the Study of History*. For the environment of the life of Jesus there is much valuable information in Edersheim's *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, though he is often tempted to make use of material which belongs to a later date. Montefiore's *Synoptic Gospels* is of the utmost importance on this point and on its positive side displays remarkable insight. The two volumes of I. Abrahams' *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels* contain a mine of useful information. Schürer's *Jewish People in the Time of Christ* and Bousset's *Die Religion des Judenthums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* are of course the standard authorities on this part of the subject. T. Walker's recent book on *The Teaching of Jesus and the Jewish Teaching of His Age* gives an excellent summary of the facts.

III. The next stage will be the study of the different portraits of Jesus drawn by the New Testament Evangelists. There are

two useful books in English on the Marcan picture. (1) W. H. Bennett's *The Life of Christ according to St. Mark*, which has as its main purpose "to present the impression of Christ which would be derived from St. Mark's Gospel by a reader who had no other source of information."

(2) J. M. Thompson, *Jesus according to St. Mark*, which confines its discussion mainly to the teaching. Thompson pays a striking tribute to the historicity of the narrative. "The more one studies this early record, the more convinced one becomes that it is a true biography in which no essential part of the figure has been left out and nothing is obviously disproportionate or out of drawing."

If we go further afield, the following books have an intimate bearing on the subject: M. Goguel's *L'Évangile de S. Marc et ses rapports avec ceux de Mathieu et de Luc*; Wellhausen's *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*; J. Weiss, *Das Aelteste Evangelium*.

Another fresh and stimulating book which has won high commendation from Dr. Rendel Harris—J. A. Findlay's *Jesus as they Saw Him*—gives an account of the portraits drawn by Matthew and Luke as well as that drawn by Mark. It needs to be read *cum grano salis*, but the discriminating student will find many valuable hints in it.

IV. In the next stage of the process it will be necessary to face the problems which the Gospel narrative raises. There are several books which deal with these problems as a whole. Among these I should give a high place to Fairbairn's *Studies in the Life of Christ*, because, though it addressed itself to the situation in 1880 and very much has happened since then, it contains a great deal that is relevant to the issues that confront us to-day. These *Studies*, as the author himself says, are not intended to be "exhaustive and critical discussions on the Gospel History, but, at most, attempts at orientation—at reaching points of view from which the life of Christ may be understood and construed." Still more important are Weizsäcker's *Untersuchungen ueber die evangelische Geschichte*, which, though it was first published in 1864, is still essentially modern in its method of investigation, and the interesting discussions in Von Soden's *Die wichtigsten Fragen im Leben Jesu*. Mention should also be made of Otto Schmiedel's *Die Hauptprobleme der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, and Barth's *Die Hauptprobleme des Lebens Jesu*. Of

the problems in detail, nothing need be said here either on the question of miracles or on the issues raised by the Teaching of Jesus because they are the subject of special articles. Of the other problems, probably the most important is concerned with the psychological study of the mind of Christ. The questions that it asks are: What were the motives that actuated Jesus? What were the guiding principles that shaped His life-purpose? What was it He set out to do? What place did He assign to Himself in the fulfilment of the design? Until some answer has been found to these questions, the facts in the Gospel narrative are a series of unrelated events without any unifying purpose behind them.

Modern literature on this theme is immense, and it is only possible to mention the most outstanding books. In English we have Garvie's *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus*, which sets out to determine "the mind, heart and will of Jesus as revealed in His words and works." Much of Denney's *Jesus and the Gospel* is occupied with the same theme, especially the chapters which deal with the "detailed study of the earliest sources as illustrating the self-consciousness of Jesus." There are valuable discussions on the leading points in Lake and Foakes Jackson's *Beginnings of Christianity*, though the conclusions which they reach are mainly negative. But it is on the Continent that the most striking contributions have been made. Baldensperger's *Das Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, first published in 1888, opened a new era in the study of the theology of the Gospels. Its main theme is that the Messianic consciousness of Jesus had its foundation in a pure spiritual unique sense of communion with God and developed through several stages before it reached its final climax. The most notorious—because the most advanced—treatment of the subject is found in W. Wrede's *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* (1901), which maintains that "The Messiahship of Jesus as we find it in the Gospels is a product of Early Christian Theology correcting history according to its own conceptions." The most valuable criticisms of Wrede are to be found in Oscar Holtzmann's *Das Messianitätsbewusstsein Jesu* (1902), and in a little book of Schürer with a similar title.

The eschatological outlook properly falls under the Teaching of Jesus, but the subject is of such vital importance in every attempt to reconstruct the life of Christ, that some reference

must be made to it in the present connexion. The modern debate has very largely turned upon the place of Apocalyptic in the vision of Jesus. On the one extreme we have E. Haupt and Wellhausen, who think that the references to the Parousia are later additions to the text of the Gospels and had no place at all in the original Teaching. On the other extreme we have Johannes Weiss and Schweitzer who think that from first to last the mind of Jesus was dominated by these ideas. The former view has been strongly advocated by Emmet and Dougall in their *Lord of Truth*, which is an attempt to reconstruct the life of Jesus and restate His teaching on the assumption that the position of Haupt and Wellhausen is established. Both extremes seem to me to be untenable—but there is no denying the fact that in this matter we are confronted with the most intractable problem in the Gospel narrative. One of the most helpful books on the subject is von Dobschütz *The Eschatology of the Gospels*, which attempts to give a mediating explanation; Charles's Jowett's lectures on *Eschatology*, and Leckie's *World to Come and Final Destiny* are indispensable to every student who is anxious to investigate this question.

There are two other issues upon which a man who essays the task of writing a life of Christ must come to some decision. The one is the question of the Virgin Birth, the other is the question of the Resurrection. Both fall under the head of miracle and come within the scope of another article. But they are too important to omit altogether when we are dealing with the literature of the life of Jesus. On the Virgin Birth the best books on the negative side are Lobstein's *Virgin Birth of Christ*; Soltau, *The Birth of Jesus Christ*; Cheyne, *Bible Problems*; and H. Usener's article on the *Nativity* in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. The best books on the positive side are those of Box, Thorburn, Knowling, and an article by Bishop Gore in his *Dissertations on the Incarnation*. In the case of the Resurrection the negative side is best represented by Schmiedel's article on the *Resurrection and Ascension Narratives* in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. The most notable attempts to find a natural explanation of the narrative are described in the *Lives of Christ* by Strauss, Renan and Keim. There is a good discussion of the various views in the relevant chapters of Fairbairn's *Studies* and Bruce's *Apologetics*. One of the best defences

of the orthodox position is in Schwartzkoff's *Prophecies of Jesus Christ*. Another book of great value on this side is Loofs' *Die Auferstehungsberichte*. Milligan's *The Resurrection of our Lord* used to be a standard authority on the subject, but is scarcely adequate for the modern discussion. Lake (*The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*) attempts to take up a mediating position, but the tendency of the book is in a negative direction.

The problems of chronology present very serious difficulties. The best modern treatment of the data is, I think, to be found in C. H. Turner's article on *The Chronology of the Gospels* in Hastings' Bible Dictionary. There is a valuable discussion of some of the main points in Sir W. Ramsay's *Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?* Hort's note on John vi. 4 also contains useful material from Patristic sources. Wieseler and Clinton are still the standard authorities on the subject, and Chwolson's *Das letzte Passamahl Christi* contains useful material for one of the most important problems.

V. So far I have assumed that our life of Jesus is to be constructed out of the Synoptic Gospels. But we are bound to deal with the problem of the Fourth Gospel. We cannot avoid facing the question—Is the Fourth Gospel entirely the romance of an idealist? Granted that its main purpose is theological and apologetic, yet it contains many historical elements, some of which have parallels in the Synoptics. What value is to be attached to the historical framework and how far are we justified in using its material for our purpose? Can we adopt, as so many writers do, its chronological arrangement? Can we trust its statements about the early ministry in Jerusalem? What about the date of the Crucifixion? Personally I think that a very strong case can be made out for a discriminating and scientific use of the historical data in the Fourth Gospel, but it is difficult to find a satisfactory winnowing-fan which will enable us to sift the wheat from the chaff with anything like conviction or precision. The literature on the subject is immense. The matter is discussed with more or less acumen in most of the Lives of Jesus. E. F. Scott's *The Fourth Gospel*, though it deals mainly with the discourses of Jesus and the theology of the Gospel, contains much that is valuable for enabling us to approach the problem. Spitta's *Das Johan. Evang. als Quelle der Geschichte Jesu* is a very valuable contribution to the question.

Wendt's book on the Fourth Gospel is of vital importance. Armitage Robinson has an excellent article on the *Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel* in "Cambridge Biblical Essays" (pp. 251-328). Askwith's book on *The Historical Value of the Fourth Gospel*, takes up a strongly conservative position. Garvie, in his *Beloved Disciple*, tries to untwine the different strands in the Gospel in order to reach the elements of objective historical value, and his book is very suggestive on many points. Schmiedel, in his *Johannine Writings*, takes up a negative position. Drummond's *Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* is particularly useful because it faces the question of historicity very frankly, though it accepts the Johannine authorship.

VI. We have now reached the point at which, having cleared away the preliminary difficulties and come to some decision on the debatable problems, and having collected our materials from the Gospels, we are able to construct an outline of the life of Jesus. Fortunately modern scholarship has produced a large number of outlines and short sketches to help and guide us.

Schweitzer has told us that "the ideal Life of Jesus of the close of the nineteenth century is the Life which Heinrich Julius Holtzmann did not write, but which can be pieced together from his commentary on the Synoptic Gospels and his New Testament Theology." We might parody that statement and say that the ideal "Life" for us at the same period is the Life which W. Sanday did not write but which is known to us from his *Outline*, his critical studies, his Bampton Lectures, and his volumes of Prolegomena. The *Outline* was originally an article in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, and it is probably still one of the best things of its kind. It discusses, briefly of course, but still with masterly ability, all the main points of interest, and in spite of the compression of style inevitable under the circumstances, it envisages with great clearness and lucidity and many gleams of insight the outstanding problems of the Gospel narrative.

Another article of great value is to be found in the Dictionary of Religion and Ethics by W. Douglas Mackenzie, which certainly deserves to be reprinted.

Quite one of the best modern Outlines is Piepenbring's *Jesus Historique* recently translated under the title *The His-*

torical Jesus. Originally in its first form it was intended to be a reply to Loisy, but in its later edition the controversial element became less pronounced and the positive statement more definite. In its concluding chapter it contains a very valuable comparison between Jesus and Laotze and Epictetus, under the title "The superlative Value of the Gospel of Jesus." I venture to prophesy that Piepenbring in its English dress will secure popularity and leave its mark on religious thought in England. Another book to which I should assign an even higher place in the hierarchy of this literature is Bousset's *Jesus*, which almost deserves to be regarded as a classic, though I am by no means prepared *jurare in verba magistri* or to accept anything like all Bousset's conclusions. There is a strong emotional element in the book which rises at times to real devotion and which finds its culmination in the concluding words, "we who occupy our place in the history of Jesus through the centuries can still feel his presence near us, with his trust in God and his nearness to God, his relentless moral earnestness, his conquest of pain, his certainty of the forgiveness of sins and his eternal hope."

To these I should add C. Anderson Scott's *Dominus Noster*, which an eminent theological scholar told me recently he regarded as the best modern presentation of Christ, and T. R. Glover's *Jesus of History*, which has secured a wider vogue than any book on this subject since Farrar. Then there is Dr. Stalker's excellent little handbook for the use of Bible Classes. Dr. Stalker is one of the men of our time who might have written a really great Life of Christ, as this Handbook and his *Imago Christi* prove. I remember how long years ago, when I was a student at Mansfield College, Oxford, Dr. Fairbairn once set one of the members of his Seminar—I think it was Sylvester Horne—to write an essay on the contrast between *The Imitatio Christi* of Thomas à Kempis and Dr. Stalker's *Imago Christi*, and it was this discussion that first brought home to me the difference between the mediæval and modern conceptions of Christ.

There are several books of this type which have aroused some interest in America. The most important are B. W. Bacon, *Jesus the Son of God*; Rush Rhees, *The Life of Jesus of Nazareth*; and E. D. Burton and Shailer Matthews, *The Life of Christ*, arranged for the use of Bible Classes.

I ought also certainly to have included Loisy's *Jésus et la tradition primitive* in this list, because it gives a general summary of the position which he reaches in his larger book on the Synoptic Gospels, and P. W. Schmidt's concise *Geschichte Jesu*.

VI. We now reach the final and most difficult stage of all—the attempt to reconstruct a full and detailed biography of Christ. And it is here that the failure of modern scholarship is most obvious. As Dr. Sanday confessed, “To write the Life of Christ ideally is impossible. And even to write such a *Life* as should justify itself either for popular use or for study, is a task of extreme difficulty. After all the learning, ability and even genius devoted to the subject, it is a relief to turn back from the very best of modern *Lives* to the Gospels. And great as are the merits of these modern works there is none which possesses such a balance and combination of qualities as to rise quite to the level of a classic. What is wanted is a Newman with science and adequate knowledge. No one has ever touched the Gospels with such innate kinship of spirit as he: The ideal Life of Christ demands sound scholarship, passionate faith, and supreme literary genius. And one of these three qualities is always lacking and often two of them. Renan, for instance, to quote Sanday once more, “had all the literary gifts, a *curiosa felicitas* of style, an æsthetic appreciation of his subject and a saving common-sense which tempered his criticism. But even as literature his work is spoilt by self-consciousness and condescension and his science was none of the best.” Most *Lives* of Christ are too conventional—they are simply a modern *Diatessaron* of the four Gospels with a more or less accurate attempt to envisage the atmosphere and circumstances of the times. They are useful enough in their way for popular purposes and in their day have exercised an enormous influence. I refer to such *Lives* as those of Farrar, Geikie, Pressensé, Didon and David Smith. But they leave practically untouched the great problems raised by modern criticism and are totally inadequate to the modern situation. I say this in spite of the fact that in my early days I owed a great debt to Farrar for his vivid and graphic pictures of the scenes in the Gospel story. R. J. Campbell might have written a much more valuable book if he had been able to give more time to the subject and had not been compelled to allow the “homiletical method” to predominate

“in the treatment of the contents and the principles governing their selection.”

On the other hand the critical *Lives* of Jesus are, generally speaking, too cold and unconvincing. As I read them I feel anew the force of the plaint which Browning in his *Epilogue* puts into the mouth of Renan about the paling of the Star of Faith and the dimming of the Face of Christ.

“Who failed to beat the breast
And shriek and throw the arms protesting wide
When a first shadow showed the star addressed
Itself to motion and on either side
The rims contracted as the rays retired;
The music, like a fountain’s sickening pulse,
Subsided on itself; Awhile transpired
Some vestige of a Face no pangs convulse,
No prayers retard: Then even this was gone,
Lost in the night at last.”

Modern criticism in its radical form has overreached itself, and it has left the figure of Jesus so thin and attenuated that it affords no explanation of the origin of the Christian Church or the great experience of redemption. But the last word does not lie with radical criticism but with faith; and as Christians we are bound to subscribe to Browning’s confident prophecy—

“That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
Or decomposes, but to recompose,
Become my universe that feels and knows.”

The signs of the decomposition are writ large in radical criticism from Strauss to Lake and Foakes-Jackson. What indications are there that the process of restoration has commenced? I regard Headlam’s *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ* as the most notable contribution to the subject in England within recent years. It is incomplete, being, as the author says in the preface, only “a fragment of a large design.” In so far as it is polemical it is directed against the school of thought which holds that “the greater part of the contents of the Gospel tells us not what Jesus taught but what the Christian Church, which grew up after His death, thought.” The general conclusions which Headlam reaches are (1) That the subject matter of the Synoptic Gospels represents the traditions about Jesus which were current

in the earliest years of the Christian Church. (2) That it harmonises with what we know of the conditions and circumstances of the time. (3) That the teaching of Jesus is harmonious throughout. (4) That the narrative of the life of Jesus forms a consistent whole. The book does not deal at all with the Birth narratives, and breaks off at the commencement of the last journey to Jerusalem. It is greatly to be hoped that Dr. Headlam's episcopal duties will not prevent him from finishing a work which is a real contribution to the subject.

The best German critical *Life* is, I think, that of Oscar Holtzmann, which has fortunately been translated into English. One of the strong points about Holtzmann's book is that the polemical element is kept in the background. What Holtzmann sets out to do is to reconstruct the life of Jesus in the light of the results of modern criticism. Much of his detailed examination of the narrative is sound and illuminating. His weakness lies in the fact that he does not recognise any redemptive element in the generally accepted sense of the term—in the work of Jesus. Apart from this serious limitation, the *Life* is extremely valuable—in fact it may be said to be indispensable.

I think that probably the best attempt to reconstruct the life of Jesus in Germany is D. A. Schlatter's *Die Geschichte des Christus*, which is really intended as an introduction to a New Testament Theology, because it supplies what is lacking in Holtzmann. Schlatter sees that the Gospels cannot be isolated from the rest of the New Testament, and that no *Life of Christ* is satisfactory which does not provide in His Person an explanation of the later experience of the Christian Church. Hence he regards the preaching of the Kingdom and the death upon the Cross as the two outstanding events in the Gospel narrative. Unlike Holtzmann, Schlatter frankly abandons any attempt at chronological arrangement and is content to discuss the events without trying to fit them into a chronological framework. After the negative efforts of so many modern scholars, it is refreshing to find that it is possible to make, what must be regarded as a conservative reconstruction, on the basis of sound criticism.

Among the writers of the last generation a high place must be assigned to the *Life* by Bernard Weiss. It takes up a mediating position, though inclining to the conservative point of view. "Moderately orthodox" is the description which Weinel

gives to it. It certainly does not deserve the scathing criticism which Schweitzer has passed upon it.

Now we come to the almost impossible task of selecting the ten best books out of the mass of material at our command, a great deal of which has had to remain unmentioned in this article owing in part to the lack of space and in part to the writer's ignorance.

We must make the list as representative and catholic as possible and not fall into the mistake of choosing only the *Lives* that are more or less in agreement with our own point of view.

We must start the list with a book that will form a fitting introduction to the investigation, and of those that are available, Schweitzer seems to me to be the best, though it is always necessary to remember that his estimates are biassed by his own particular theory and that he weighs everything in the scales of Apocalyptic. Weinel is a good second and might stand as an alternative.

Of all the books that have been written in English on the subject, there is only one that can claim to be a classic—*Ecce Homo*. *Ecce Homo* is not technically speaking a *Life* of Jesus at all. But there is so much first-class material in it that I think it ought certainly to have its place in our list.

Then I think we should do well to find room for two outlines or sketches, and it seems to me that Sanday and Bousset will probably be the best selection, as they represent different schools of thought. I should place Piepenbring *proxime accessit* and possibly as an alternative for Bousset.

We ought also to have a book which deals specifically with the problems connected with the *Life* of Jesus, and probably Fairbairn will do as well as any.

Of the larger *Lives*, Headlam must certainly have a place in the list, and I think Oscar Holtzmann and Schlatter as well.

For the fourth place I hesitate between Keim and Bernhard Weiss, but I think it will be wise to choose Weiss lest our list should seem to be overweighted on the critical side.

For the last place I want to select a different type of book. None of the *Lives* in our list so far kindle the emotions or set the heart aflame with love and adoration, and none except Schlatter and Weiss emphasise the redemptive activity of Christ. But such a book is difficult to find. With some hesitation I select

Papini. If Denney's *Jesus and the Gospel* had been a Life of Christ, I should certainly have included it, but it does not belong to this category at all. The Life of Christ can only really be written by a "twice-born" man, and Papini certainly is that. He is a child in matters of criticism; in fact his general bent is anticritical. But he makes Christ live as few others do. The ideal *Life*, it seems to me, would be a fusion of Papini and Oscar Holtzmann. But at present that kind of fusion has not taken place. The discords are more apparent than the harmony, but out of these discords a harmony will eventually ensue.

Here then is the final list. It is inadequate and unworthy of the great figure of the Christ, but it is the best that I can make.

A. An Introductory Study :—

- (1) Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*; or Weinel, *Jesus in the Nineteenth Century*.

B. A Classic Exposition :

- (2) *Ecce Homo*.

C. Two short outlines :

- (3) Sanday, *Outline of the Life of Christ*.

- (4) Bousset, *Jesus*; or Piepenbring, *The Historical Jesus*.

D. A book dealing with the problems :

- (5) Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ*; or Denney, *Jesus and the Gospel*.

E. Four larger Lives :

- (6) Headlam, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*.

- (7) Oscar Holtzmann, *The Life of Jesus*.

- (8) Schlatter, *Die Geschichte des Christus*.

- (9) Bernhard Weiss, *The Life of Christ*.

F. An Emotional Life :

- (10) Papini, *The Story of Christ*.

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