

you on with His wounded hand to follow in His steps. If you could catch but a glimpse of the love in His eyes as He watches you, it would then be easy to go on trying, and not to be discouraged in the Christian life. For His eyes have the most amazing power in them. They can draw you

through any difficulty, and out of anything bad you ever get into. But you must give proper time, in your prayers, and on Sunday, to get a look right into His eyes. A hurried look is no use, as then your look and His *haven't time to get clinched together.*

The Pioneer of Faith and of Salvation.

A STUDY OF THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF JESUS AS PRESENTED IN
THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

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I.

1. ONE of the objects of the religious-historical school, which it pursues with great ingenuity and industry, is to *correlate* Christianity with other religions, to minimize its originality and to magnify its borrowings. Much is made of the dependence of the Fourth Gospel on Philo, of Paul on Stoicism or the mystery-cults, of the Epistle to the Hebrews on the Platonic doctrine of ideas, and even of Jesus on Jewish Apocalyptic. It is no interest of Christian theology to deny altogether any of these connexions; but it is its duty to challenge the too exclusive attention given to these relations, and so the disproportionate impression made of their influence. It is in the moral and religious realm that the uniqueness of Christianity lies; and the reality of the personal experiences of believers, dependent on, and reproductive of, the personal experience of Jesus, is the absolutely original contribution of Christianity to the religious and moral life of mankind. This reality transforms, and so invests with fresh meaning and new worth, any elements of religion or morals which, as an organism affected by its environment, the Christian faith may have borrowed; and it is its assimilation of what seem foreign elements that is a proof of its vitality.

2. Applying these general considerations to the Epistle to the Hebrews, we may observe (i.) how the Platonic contrast between reality and appearance, the heavenly substance and the earthly shadow, is resolved into unity in the personal experience of Jesus, and (ii.) how the personal experience of Jesus is the source and the pattern of

the personal experience of believers, so that they too, even as He, have risen above that contrast. He who is the Pioneer of their salvation (2¹⁰) is also the pioneer of their faith (12²); and through faith in Him, who is 'the effulgence of God's glory, and the very impress of his substance' (*ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ*, 1⁸), they possess the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen (*ἐλπίζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων*, 11¹). The disparagement of the image in comparison with the idea, characteristic of Platonism, the author of Hebrews does pronounce regarding the whole Levitical ritual system; but the salvation and the sacrifice of Christ do not belong to the inferior earthly order, but to the perfect heavenly order; and here man is in contact not with transitory appearance, but with eternal reality. We may apply to his standpoint Rothe's declaration that *the ethical is the ontological*. The author is the master and not the slave of the philosophy he uses for his own purpose.

3. While a false and wrong use was made of the distinction between the religion of Jesus and the Christian religion in order to depreciate the latter in comparison with the former, yet Christian theologians have made a profound mistake who, to assert the claim of the second, have ignored the worth of the first. Christ Jesus is both the object and the subject of faith, and He is the one only because He is the other; in His own sacrifice He realized the salvation which the believer receives from Him. We can escape an intolerable legalism, formalism, and externalism in dealing with this doctrine of the

Atonement only as we cease regarding it as a solitary, mysterious transaction between Christ and God, which has no analogy in the moral and religious experience of man; and we can make the doctrine intelligible and credible only as we interpret it, not only as a personal experience of Jesus, but as an experience of so typical and universal a character that it is to be reproduced in the believer. What Christ has done *for us* on His Cross is to be again done *in us* by the Spirit. Any doctrine of substitution is a legal fiction only, if it is not interpreted as a self-identification of Christ with man in grace, and of man with Christ in faith. Evangelicalism will never bully men, as is the manner of some of its representatives, into the acceptance of a doctrine which does not win them by its convincing, commanding moral and religious reality.

4. Herrmann in his religious classic, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, makes the 'inner life' of Jesus the power of God unto salvation; and the concentration of the interest of the Apostolic Age on the death and the rising again of Jesus does not justify any modern writer in his disparagement of 'the Synoptic Figure.' By the study of the 'inner life' of Jesus as thus disclosed (as also in the Fourth Gospel) we can learn much as to His relation to God and to man which gives an intelligible content to this sacrifice as not only the source but also the type of His salvation for men. And it is this that seems to me the most promising development in modern theology. In what has been called Paul's *faith mysticism* there is presented a close analogy between the experience of the Saviour and the Saved; our salvation consists in our having been crucified and having been raised to newness of life in Him (Ro 6¹⁻¹¹). It is a curious theological ineptitude which, instead of re-interpreting the previous chapters from this fresh standpoint, would resolve this vital into that legal conception. But Paul does not deal closely enough with the 'inner life' of Jesus to give full content to his own analogy. This the author of *Hebrews* has done; and it is in his interpretation of the Atonement from the standpoint of Jesus' personal experience that he has made his most valuable contribution to our understanding of the truth and grace of Christ.

II.

1. In attempting a study of the several passages in which the personal experience of Jesus is dealt

with, we may first of all discuss the proofs he offers of the reality of the humanity of Jesus in 2¹²⁻¹⁸. At first sight the quotations from the Old Testament may seem arbitrary illustrations of the artificial exegetical methods then current; but if we study more closely the passages in their original context, and in the context given to them, that impression will be removed. It is not the word *brethren* in the first quotation, nor the word *children* in the third that asserts the link of a common humanity between Jesus and men: but each of these quotations relates to a personal experience, and it is such a personal experience that is quite unequivocally asserted in the second quotation. The first quotation, 'I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I sing thy praise,' is taken from Ps 22²², the same psalm as gave Jesus the words in which He uttered His desolation of soul (v.1). What the psalmist expresses his intention of declaring is the deliverance which God will accomplish for him; and the word *brethren* surely points, not to a common physical nature only, but to a common personal experience. While the former is the necessary condition of the latter; and the author of Hebrews, as the phrase 'blood and flesh' in v.14 shows, has the one in view, he does not, owing to the close connexion, exclude the other. The next quotation, 'I will put my trust in him,' is probably derived from Is 8¹⁷ (LXX); and it asserts the prophet's continued dependence on and confidence in God, even although He is hiding 'His face from the house of Jacob.' If we complete the next quotation, 'Behold, I and the children which God hath given me,' by the words following, 'are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion' (v.18), and recall that the prophet's own name and the names he gave his children were significant of God's dealings with His people, we find ourselves in the same atmosphere of moral and religious and not merely physical reality. It is a common personal experience in relation to God, and not only a common physical nature from God, that is the bond of union between Christ and mankind. The unity is that of *the sanctifier and the sanctified* (v.11), and this implies more than, although it must include, common *blood and flesh*. Again, the declaration in the v.16, 'For verily not of angels doth he take hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham,' even if

ἐπλανήθηται has not the fuller meaning of 'layeth hold to help,' need not refer exclusively to physical descent from Abraham, but may and probably does, include likeness in faith, as in Gal 3⁷, 'They which be of faith, the same are sons of Abraham.'

2. This line of interpretation is confirmed by the part assigned both to God and to Christ in this process of sanctification. (i.) There seems to be little doubt that the reference in the phrase ἐξ ἐνός is to God, and neither to Adam nor to Abraham, as the common ancestor either of mankind or of the chosen people. God has one purpose, and accordingly also one method in *Him that sanctifieth* and in *them that are sanctified*. *The many sons in being brought to glory are perfected through suffering*: and so it is in accord with the divine method of dealing that the pioneer of salvation should pass through the same experience (v.¹⁰). This interpretation gives a much fuller content to the phrase than if it meant only that God assigned to *sanctifier* and *sanctified* the same physical nature. (ii.) The clause 'he is not ashamed' as applied to Christ has also fuller value, if it means not merely the assumption in the Incarnation of a human nature, but the voluntary participation in all human experience. It is said of the *Pioneer of faith* that in enduring the cross, He despised shame (12²); and probably in the present passage there is a similar reference, as the entire context is concerned, not merely with the human nature, but particularly with the human experience of Christ. Father and Son alike willed the In-

carnation as a complete self-identification with distinctive human experience.

3. In insisting on this view we are simply affirming the standpoint from which all the references in this Epistle to the life and work of Christ are to be understood. Because this is its standpoint the Epistle is of so great value as a challenge of the sacerdotal and sacramentarian position. The Epistle does speak of priesthood and sacrifice, but only to assert the valuelessness of any official priesthood and any material sacrifice, and to substitute for them the priesthood of character perfected by experience, and the sacrifice of sympathy with man, and obedience to God. No objection could be taken to the tendency to emphasize the fact of Incarnation as central to Christianity, if incarnation were not represented as a physical process in itself through sacramental channels valuable and efficacious for man's salvation, but always as a moral and religious experience, even as it is represented in this Epistle. The atonement of God and man is not in the union in one person of human and divine natures, but in the genuinely and intensely human experience of the Son of God, His liability to temptation, His subjection to suffering, His exercise of obedience and sympathy, His endurance of all that may be involved in death. If this is what is significant and valuable in the Incarnation, its benefits will be conveyed to man, not by the material channels of sacraments, but by the spiritual channels of His grace and man's faith.

Literature.

HENRY FAWCETT.

Put the right biography into the hands of one whose face is turned to life and there is nothing better that you can do. Put the biography of Henry Fawcett into his hands. If Sir Leslie Stephen's is too large, take Winifred Holt's. Its title is *A Beacon for the Blind* (Constable; 7s. 6d. net). We are all blind, though not in the sense in which Henry Fawcett was blind. We are blind to truth and sympathy and sacrifice. And the value of the biography of Henry Fawcett lies in this, that where we are blind, he was clear-sighted.

The story of his life is told simply and yet

enthusiastically. A noble life it was, and the very reading of it, even the re-reading of it in this pleasant way, is uplifting. There is humour too. For Fawcett was an all-round man, with a weakness for political economy. The following anecdote refers to the time when he was a Fellow of Trinity College, before he was made a Professor and long before he became Postmaster-General.

'Such was the reputation for extreme opinions Fawcett and Stephen had given by their connection with Trinity Hall, that a certain country squire of ancient lineage and Conservative principles hesitated whether he dared send his son to the college where his ancestors had gained their learn-