

has vanished into heaven, to lay hands upon the Samaritan converts, and to build up the first Christian Church outside Jerusalem. Henceforth, to the Christian heart, the Samaritan is no more the "stranger," but a "fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God."

HENRY BURTON.

THE HOLINESS OF JESUS CHRIST.

II. BUT would it therefore be true to say that, in realizing in this manner the perfect holiness of Jesus Christ, we break the link which binds Him to our humanity, and that this character, which raises Him to such a height in our eyes, is gained at the cost of another more precious still to our hearts; that so He would cease to be like us, our Brother, the Son of Man, in the full meaning of that expression?

By no means, for this holiness, however absolutely perfect, has, none the less, characteristics perfectly human, and which clearly distinguish it from the holiness of God.

1. The holiness of God is unchangeable, it cannot grow. Like God Himself, it *is*. That of Jesus rose step by step till it reached its final perfection. Is it not said of Him as a child, and again as a young man, that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man"? This development was not merely in appearance; it was a profound moral reality, since it is said that this progress was accomplished not in the eyes of man only, but of God.

Perhaps you think that this idea of progress implies the fact of sin? Not so; it is possible to grow

in pure goodness, to climb, like the angels, without ever stumbling, the steps of the ladder of light which leads upwards to Divine glory. Thus it was that Jesus advanced in goodness. He took possession, in the name of his Father, of all the provinces of human life which opened successively before Him ; in the beginning, of that of the family, which was the first which offered itself to Him, and which He embraced in his loving heart, watering it in his childhood with his prayers and intercessions ; next,—of that period in youth when the sentiments of patriotism begin to shew themselves in a young and noble heart,—of his own nation, which to Him was altogether like his own family. From that time the determination to labour at realizing the great promises of which it was the object became his heart's vocation. Finally, at the age of thirty years, at the time of his baptism, having then reached the full maturity of his powers, He saw opening before Him a domain wider still. The world itself was the field which He felt Himself called upon to cultivate by his words, to water with his blood, and to fertilize for the glory of God by his spirit.

Thus did love grow, and thus did devotion increase, in the heart of Jesus, but without the existence in it of any germ of hatred to be extirpated, or of any selfish tendency to be repressed. To open his heart with growing sympathy to the ever-increasing number of the creatures whom his Father gave Him to love, until at last He felt that the whole human race was laid upon his heart, and that He had become Himself its living centre—this was the nature of his progress ; a pro-

gress of the most real and positive kind, of which the final stage was marked by that name, *Son of Man*, which He adopted as his favourite title, and which He drew from out of that inward feeling of tenderest sympathy for the human race which He had made his family.

As the task He had to fulfil with regard to mankind became more and more clear to his inward eye, so did He devote his whole life and person more and more exclusively to it; and this is a second aspect of the progress which was to work itself out within Him. Jesus, in his last prayer, uttered those remarkable words which no forger—and certainly no forger putting arbitrarily into the mouth of his hero the theory of the Logos—would have attributed to Him, “For their sakes I sanctify myself.”¹ How, it has often been asked, could He have been called upon to sanctify Himself, if He was not stained with sin? The answer is that to sanctify does not mean to *purify*, but to *consecrate*. *Holy* is not opposed to *impure*, but to *profane*, common, not sacred, natural. Jesus sanctified Himself by offering to God step by step all the elements of his being, as they gradually developed themselves within Him; all the powers of his body and soul, as they one by one came into play; and all the varied domains of existence, as He came to set his foot upon them.

In childhood, no doubt, He played; for “as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. . . . He was in all points like as we are, yet without sin.”² Now play, without being impure, is nevertheless not precisely

¹ John xviii. 19.

² Heb. ii. 14, 17; iv. 15.

a holy thing. It belongs to that province of the *natural* which interposes itself at the beginning of our life between those of sin and holiness. Later on, play disappeared from the life of Jesus, as it generally disappears from the life of every serious man, in proportion as the great work of life comes upon him.

This is an instance of the way in which all the activities of nature, all the physical and moral forces, ranged themselves by degrees in Jesus in subordination to the task to which He was growing up, and received in succession, in virtue of that free consecration, the seal of holiness. It was by means of these continual and freely chosen acts of self-control (*I sanctify myself*) that He became, in the full meaning of the word, the *Holy One of God*.

In this holiness of Jesus everything is, if you will, Divine, in the sense that it is perpetually drawn afresh from God, the alone good. But everything is human, nevertheless, in the sense that that communion with God, which was its principle, was by Jesus entered upon, and sustained, by acts of free will. In himself, and apart from the Fall, every man would have been able to develop himself in the same manner.

2. The holiness of Jesus was human, not only because it obeyed the law of progress, but also because it submitted itself to a law of far graver character—that of temptation and conflict.

Conflict has no place in God. "God cannot be tempted with evil." Jesus had to fight. The wilderness and Gethsemane—here are two battle-fields which the Church will not forget, and which were

watered with his sweat. Nor were these the only ones.¹

The question has been asked how it was possible for Jesus to be tempted, to go through a conflict, if He was without sin. Do you then know of no other moral conflicts but such as spring from sin? I will suppose you have a taste for study, and delight in science. But, being the eldest brother, and having lost your parents, you have brothers and sisters to bring up. You are compelled to lay aside your books, and, by work of quite a different kind, earn a living for those whom Providence has entrusted to your care. There is a conflict in your case, not between good and evil, but between a lower kind of good—science, and a higher kind—duty. Or, you are devoted to art, and you give yourself wholly to the cultivation of the fine faculties with which you have been endowed. But your country being in danger, demands help from the strong arms of her children. The sound of her cry of distress reaches you in the foreign land where you are losing yourself in the pursuit of the beautiful. You are called to leave the scene of your artistic labours, and to hasten to the scene of war. Is there not a conflict here—not between good and evil, but between two kinds of good which occupy different steps on the ascending hierarchies of morality?

It is in this sense that Jesus, though without sin, was capable of exposure to temptation. He possessed instincts the most generous, faculties the most eminent. As a philosopher, He would have surpassed Socrates; as an orator, He would have

¹ Cf. Luke xii. 50; John xii. 27.

eclipsed Demosthenes. The substance as well as the form of his teaching prove that. He had a heart capable, above all others, of delighting itself in the tenderness of family affection; and as an organ of the high inspirations of patriotism, none could have been found more heroic than He, had He been permitted to surrender Himself to them. We have but to recal his last words to his mother and to his disciple, and his tears over Jerusalem on the day of his own triumph! He had to check all these innocent instincts, to repress these noble impulses, to sacrifice these legitimate pleasures, in order to give Himself up altogether to the task assigned to Him from above—to his work as the Redeemer; in Himself setting before his Church an example of what was meant by those expressions—to cut off the right hand, to pluck out the right eye, to lose one's life in order to find it. After our likeness, too, He was capable of physical suffering, of undergoing the sharp pangs and rendings of the heart. Out of zeal for his mediatorial work He had to accept all the sufferings against which our flesh and our heart most legitimately rebel. But every time this submission cost Him a struggle. We see it plainly enough at Gethsemane. Thus, as it is said in that admirable Epistle to the Hebrews, He was *made perfect*, and He *learned obedience* by the things which He suffered.¹

Progress and conflict, Are not these the characteristics of a holiness truly human? In the wilderness, at Gethsemane, it may well indeed be said we are in

¹ Heb. ii. 10; v. 8, 9. No other book in the New Testament brings out with such force, by the side of the divinity of Jesus Christ (Chap. i.), his perfect humanity (Chaps. ii. and v.).

the ante-chambers of Heaven, but assuredly we are not yet in Heaven itself.

III. And this is just the reason why the holiness of Jesus, perfect as it is, is yet within the reach of man, and of every believer who aspires to it; though not indeed *apart from* Him and in a way parallel to his, as the freethinkers imagine, who deem that to set Jesus before them as their model is enough to enable them at once to imitate Him. No, the distance between Him and us is too great for the work of our sanctification to be accomplished in the same way as his. It must be worked in us *by* his.

There is in us that germ of sin which, as we have seen, did not exist in Him. He had but to learn; we have, not only to learn, but also to *unlearn*, if we may use the expression. He had but to grow; we have to grow and to decrease at the same time. He had but to fill his heart with God; we have, at the same time that we so fill ours, to empty it of ourselves.

This twofold work is beyond the moral strength of man; that is a fact which every man who seriously sets himself to it will ere long be brought to acknowledge. It is necessary, then, that the holiness of Jesus should become to us more than a mere model to imitate. It is necessary that that holiness which He realized freely in his own person, in our human existence, should become *our own*. Did not He say, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, *that they also might be sanctified through the truth*" ?¹ When He sanctified Himself, it was human life, it was mankind altogether, that He was sanctifying. By

¹ John xvii. 19,

continually preventing the birth of sin in his own person, He was condemning it to destruction in our own. He was proving that sin is an *intruder* in human nature, and was planting within the consciousness of men the feeling of the possibility and therefore of the duty of expelling it. It was by his life, which was human, but at the same time pure and holy, free from all stain, and wholly devoted to God, that He contradicted sin and set up the kingdom of holiness, that is, of God, upon this polluted earth.

But in order that this kingdom may extend itself, it is necessary that that holiness, which is its essence should be communicated from its King to his subjects. This communication presupposes a bridge of connection between the two, which is described by Jesus in these words, "I am the vine, ye are the branches."¹ It was by his ascension that He acquired the power to establish this connection, and it was at Pentecost that He established it in fact.

The pure sap which filled the vine was to enter into the branches and to take the place of the poisoned sap which was circulating in such abundance within them. Through his exaltation to the right hand of God,—which means into the mode of existence of God Himself, the state of Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence,—Jesus received the power to enter, Himself, into the hearts of believers, to make his abode there, and to reproduce in them that same perfected humanity which He had realized in his own person. Associated with the sovereign power of God, He dispenses the Holy Spirit, and can by his co-operation reproduce all the features of his moral physiognomy in believers.

¹ John xv. 5.

You know that art—one of the most marvellous discoveries of our time—by means of which we have all become painters of as great ability as the most consummate artist: our form, reproducing itself in all its subtlest details upon the plate prepared for the purpose, may be multiplied in a thousand copies, each an exact *facsimile* of the original prototype. It even succeeds in imparting to them something of the life which animates it. Just so, through the power of the Spirit, does Christ reproduce Himself in the heart and in the life of believers. If we place ourselves assiduously before Him, in a mood of concentrated devotion, that Holy Spirit, through whom He offered Himself to God without spot,¹ imprints, like the ray of light upon ourselves, the characteristic features of the model which we are contemplating; He Himself lives in us. So had He promised, "He shall glorify me in you;"² and St. Paul affirms the same truth in those words which sum up his sublimest experiences, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."³

Under such conditions it is possible for us to enter successfully upon the great work of our moral renewal, and to set out upon that path of holiness which ascends to heaven, without fear of succumbing under its difficulties in the midst of the journey, or even in the first and lowest steps of the upward progress.

By his death, Christ our righteousness and our peace; by his life on earth and in heaven, Christ our sanctification and our strength:—this is the

¹ Heb. ix. 14.

² John xvi. 14.

³ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

salvation offered to the human soul. To receive Christ in this twofold character, by the energetic receptivity of faith, is what Jesus calls, in his symbolic way of speaking, "eating his flesh and drinking his blood;" and you all know that it is to these two acts united that He has Himself attached the possession of life.¹

F. GODET

NOTES ON COMMENTARIES.

6.—THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

IN the last number of *THE EXPOSITOR* I promised to give some account of Mr. Lewin's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul," to which I referred as less known, but not less deserving to be known, than Conybeare and Howson's work of the same title. I have pleasure in redeeming that promise, both because the book is one which I have found useful, and because a new, enlarged, and most sumptuous edition of it has recently appeared, with the merits of which all students of the Bible ought to be acquainted. Mr. Lewin commenced his work, I believe, before Messrs. Conybeare and Howson commenced theirs, and issued his book complete when not more than half of theirs had been printed. This simultaneous, or nearly simultaneous, production of two elaborate works on the career and writings of St. Paul was the more singular from the fact that the two works are built on very much the same lines, have a similar aim, and pursue it in a similar method. Any one who has the quarto edition of Conybeare and Howson, but not that of Mr. Lewin,

¹ John vi. 53, 54.