

an advocate might urge before a popular jury ; I have hardly met with one that would carry weight with a scholar who took the trouble to give it a few moments' consideration. Anything like a judicious and impartial weighing of objections is very far to seek. I do not know what the readers of *THE EXPOSITOR* may think, but Dr. Roberts has lost at least one convert who might easily have been made if the case would have admitted it. I am now more convinced than I was before that he is spending his powers on a quite untenable cause.

W. SANDAY.

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### STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

#### III.—THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS.

THE Person of Christ is the perennial glory and strength of Christianity. If the life of our faith had depended on its signs and wonders, it had perished long ago. If they win the ages of wonder they offend the ages of inquiry ; and as the world grows in years credulous spirits die and critical spirits increase. But the Person that stands at the centre of our faith can never cease to be winsome while men revere the holy and love the good. His moral loveliness has been as potent to charm the human spirit into obedience as the harp of the ancient mythical musician was to charm nature into listening and life ; has by its soft strong spell held the wicked till he ceased to sin and learned to love, and the tender and guileless heart of a child began to beat within his breast.

The Person of Christ makes the Christian faith, is its sacred source and highest object. In it lie hidden the causes of what He afterwards became. Circumstances

did not make Him ; God did. Thousands lived under the same conditions, in the midst of the same society, under the same heaven, in communion with the same nature, were born in the same faith, nurtured in the same schools and under the same influences ; yet of these thousands not one can be named with even the most distant claim to be compared or matched with Jesus. And why from among the many millions living in his own land and time did He alone become the Christ ? The ultimate answer must be sought in his nature, in his person. That was his own, not given by man, but by God, full of the potencies that have blossomed into the glorious Being that has overlooked and ruled the ages. Education can educe, but cannot produce ; circumstances may plant and water, but they cannot create ; the increase must be given of God. Where the eminence is so pre-eminent and peculiar, the name that best expresses the nature and relations of Him who achieved it is the one proper to Jesus alone among men, "the Son of God."

The Person of Jesus stands in the most intimate and organic relation with his words and acts. Here the speaker and thing spoken are, while distinguishable and different, inseparable. The teaching of Jesus is his articulated character, his Person the realized religion of Christ. The more the Person is studied the better should the religion be understood ; in the former the latter finds its creative source. Of the works Jesus performed, the greatest must ever remain Himself, since beyond all question the grandest element in Christianity is Christ. But if we are to know what He was as a result, we must, in some measure at least, know how He became it. He was not an abnormal being, an arti-

ficial or mechanical product, but a growth. His manhood developed out of a youth which had beneath it boyhood, childhood, and infancy. For the perfect man could be perfect only as his becoming was throughout human. A being sent full-formed into the world had been a monstrosity—a stranger to our kind, like us, perhaps, in form, unlike us in everything essential and distinctive. But He who came to lift us from our evil came to do it in and through our nature, and in Him it orbbed into the one perfect Person that has at once dignified and redeemed humanity. And so He has made the world feel that while He hates evil He loves man, and men can cry to Him—

Be near us when we climb or fall :  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours,  
With larger, other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

The growth of Christ must, then, be considered natural: strictly so alike in its physical, intellectual, and ethical aspects. His manhood can be real only as it remains a manhood realized within the limits necessary to man. The supernatural in Jesus did not exist for Jesus, but for the world. What He achieved for others might manifest the superhuman; what He achieved in Himself shewed the human—humanity under its common conditions, obedient to its own, or rather its Maker's laws, become perfect, the realization of its eternal ideal or archetype as it exists in God. But one so conceived is not remote from God—rather is penetrated and possessed by Him. His humanity is full of the Divine—is a Divine humanity. Yet it is so for moral rather than physical reasons, because of spiritual rather than essential relationships. Were his humanity but a mask

for his divinity, it would be illusive, without the meaning that belongs to truth, or the strength that belongs to reality. But if we must hold the reality of his manhood we must not shrink from the idea of his growth. Luke, at least, did not. He <sup>1</sup> exhibits the marvellous boy as increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

But this growth cannot be well conceived apart from the scenes and influences amid and under which it went on. These, therefore, need to be collected into a more or less coherent picture. We must begin with his Home. It was at Nazareth, a town which survives almost unchanged to this day. Its narrow streets, tall houses, here and there almost meeting overhead; its still life, flowing undisturbed by the thoughts that move and the fears that agitate the great world, are now much as they were then. The home was poor. Joseph was an artisan, and Mary, woman of all work as well as mother. Their house would be of the common Eastern type, house and workshop in one, lighted mostly by the door, the light shewing curiously mingled the furniture of the family and the tools of the mechanic. The daily fare would be humble enough; everywhere the signs of less meanness, perhaps, but more poverty than need be found in the home of our modern carpenter. The circumstances were not propitious to magnanimity, to wealth and majesty of soul. Town and home were alike insignificant, poor. Nazareth was a remote place, neither loved by the Jew nor admired by the Gentile. It was not a centre into which the wise of many lands gathered, where the words of the mighty dead were studied, and their spirits unsphered.

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 52.

Small as to population, secluded as to position, it nestled in its quiet nook, undisturbed by the march of armies, or the stiller but grander march of mind. There Jesus grew, his genial soul making the soil genial, unwatered by strange dews, unwarmed by alien suns, in breeding, a Child of Moses, in birth, "the Son of God."

But the home is made by the Parents ; they determine its ethical and intellectual character. For the Hebrew the home had pre-eminent sanctity ; his religion dignified and blessed it. Paternity was honourable, the sign of Divine favour, children being "the heritage of the Lord." Honour to parents was the highest and best rewarded human duty, stood second only to the honour due to God. The children God gave man was to teach ; He who made the family was to receive its homage. And so the home was to be a school for religion ; the father was to instruct his children, and command them that "they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."<sup>1</sup> Parents and children in Israel had thus a sanctity to each other unknown to the men of Greece and Rome ; their relations were throughout religious, consecrated by God and defined by his law. And if we may interpret the home at Nazareth through the mind and speech of Jesus, it must have been an ideal Hebrew home. It is but reasonable to suppose that in his later teaching his earlier experiences are in part reflected. "Father" is a name He so uses as to shew that for Him it was steeped in the fondest and tenderest associations, was the symbol of loved memories and endeared relationships. In the picture of the father who cannot resist his child's pleading, or the still grander picture of one

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xviii. 19.

who knows how to forgive and restore a penitent son, and how to rebuke and forgive a son hyper- because hypo- critical, we seem to have features that could be painted only by a hand guided by a heart that had known before the imagination had created. Even within "Our Father which art in heaven" there may live a transfigured earthly reminiscence, the recollection of a father who had passed into the heavens. Childhood, too, is beautiful to Jesus, the manifest image of a time when He lived, sheltered and tended by prescient love. Years that were so sunny to memory could not have been bitter to experience, must have been possessed of the light and love that are to the heart of man as the life of God. Then He learned the value and the strength of human affection, the holy and beautiful love that in the child responds to the brooding and creative love of the parent.

Beside the home there stood the School. Schools, in the modern, or in any formal sense, Jesus could hardly have known. There were, indeed, famous schools in Jerusalem, but no evidence that in the time of Jesus any existed in Nazareth. The wonder both of Nazareth and Jerusalem as to how He had come by his wisdom, and as to how He knew his letters,<sup>1</sup> proves that He had not been educated in any school. Yet He must have had teachers. He knew letters, could read the Scriptures, was familiar with the interpretations of tradition and the school.<sup>2</sup> We may well believe that his parents had been his earliest teachers. An authority no Hebrew could despise bound them to teach their children the law and the words of God.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 54; Mark vi. 2; John vii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xii. 3, xix. 4; Luke iv. 16; Matt. xv. 1-9, xxiii. 2, ff., v. 17-20; Mark xii. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. xi. 19.

The proverbs the Jew loved, the short pregnant sayings into which were condensed the experience and wisdom of the ancients, were taught the child by father and mother alike.<sup>1</sup> Then there was the synagogue, where Jesus must often have been, and where his wondrous open soul must have learned by every sense. In the society of the worshippers He would enter into the fellowship of Israel, become conscious of affinities that would awaken many sympathies, especially with the sins, the sorrows, the hopes, the aspirations of man. There, too, as He listened to the skilled yet childish interpretation of the Law, as He watched the masked yet apparent struggles for place, He may have learned to understand the scribes and Pharisees. The synagogue may have been the school that instructed Him in the *idola* of the human heart, shewed Him how man could be so loyal to his own dreams and doctrines as to be faithless to Divine realities and truths. But with Him to see the folly and weakness of man was only the better to know the wisdom and strength of God. As He sat listening to the voices of heaven and earth, now blending in strange sweet music, and again meeting in sad deep discord, what thoughts, what visions of man's struggle towards God and God's endeavour to reach man must have come to Him! In experiences like these the Christ would find teachers qualifying Him to be a merciful and faithful High Priest, compassionate to the ignorant while dutiful to righteousness and truth.

Then, his study of the Scriptures must have been an eminently educative study. His knowledge of them was so great as to astonish the scribes and Pharisees, as well as the people. Such knowledge was possible

<sup>1</sup> Prov. i. 8. xxxi. 1.

only to years of study and meditation, and years so spent must have been full of the noblest formative and informative influences. Those old Hebrew books, with their great thoughts as to God, their strong faith in his righteous rule and high purposes, their record of man's sin and error, yet resolute and pathetic endeavour after the light, must have enabled the mind of the Christ to penetrate as from below the mysteries of the Divine nature, to see as from above the miseries of the human. And as He became conscious of their meaning, He must also have discovered that light did not always signify sight, that in man false or half-vision often made the luminous worse than the dark. And so the Scriptures would awaken Him to the unity of the ages, the kinship of the earliest with the latest, the grand Divine purpose that man in all his times and families was fulfilling, though seldom with the consciousness that his acts were being used to promote, the ends of God. He has been to us the interpretation of the Scriptures, the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets; but before He could be so to us they must have been as an interpreter to Him, revealing Himself to Himself, translating, as it were, reminiscence into knowledge. Study of the written word became fellowship with the Living Will, and the visible Son rested consciously in the embrace of the invisible Father.

But Nature is to the spirit that loves her as great an educator as the Scriptures. The modern poet that knew and loved her best has made us feel how she can teach and exalt, creating

sensations sweet,  
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,  
And passing even into our purer mind,  
With tranquil restoration ;



how in her presence one can hear "the still sad music of humanity," and enjoy

that serene and blessed mood  
 In which the affections gently lead us on,  
 Until the breath of this corporeal frame,  
 And even the motions of our human blood,  
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
 In body, and become a living soul.

Now, the purest calmest Spirit earth has known could not but find nature a translucent veil revealing the Father it seemed to conceal. Nazareth is said to lie amid beauties. The hill which rises behind the city looks upon a scene of rarest loveliness; mountains that uplift their snowy heads to a heaven that stoops to kiss them; valleys fruitful, vineclad, swelling into soft ridges, melting into a plain that slopes in lines of rich beauty to the distant sea. And the scene must have been familiar to his eye, all its objects terms in which He and heaven could speak to each other, its moods moments when Father and Son could stand, as it were, face to face. His words shew how full his mind was of Nature and the truths she teaches to those that in loving her love her Maker. The brooding heaven, so distant yet so near, where shone the sun that enlightened the earth, whence came the rain and the heat that fertilized it, was at once the home and symbol of his Father.<sup>1</sup> The lily, clothed with a loveliness which shamed the splendour of Solomon; the skimming swallows by dutiful diligence to-day making care for to-morrow vain and undutiful; the sparrow that, while unloved of man, yet lived and multiplied; the sower going out to sow; the green blade breaking through the dark soil; the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 34, 45, vi. 9.

fields yellowing for the sickle; the fig-tree throwing out its leaves; the vine, with its hanging clusters and grateful juices,<sup>1</sup> had attracted his eyes, filled Him with a sense of the beauty that is everywhere in nature, of the Divine care that pervades everything and protects all life. Nature bears to us another and nobler meaning since He lived, and the meaning He found for us He must have first found for Himself. As He walked, "in pious meditation, fancy fed," on the hill that overlooks Nazareth, through the vineyards and corn-fields that clothe its slopes; as He stood on the shores of Gennesaret, watching the calm heaven mirrored in the calm lake; his spirit in the degree that it opened to nature opened to God, and humanity became in Him conscious of its Divine affinities, at one with the Father.

But man cannot be educated without Society; his nature cannot develop all its energies or breathe out all its fragrance in solitude. The teacher of man must know men, must be taught of men, that he may teach man. And Jesus was not denied the education society alone can give. He had the discipline that comes of social duty. He was a Son and Brother, fulfilled the duties proper to relations so near and tender, experienced and enjoyed the affections that brighten the home. He was not a father, yet it is almost certain that He knew paternal cares. He was the first, but not the only child of Mary; and it is more than probable that Joseph died during the youth or early manhood of Jesus. On the death of the father, the eldest Son would inherit his responsibilities, become the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vi. 25, 26, 28-30, x. 29, 31; Luke xii. 6, 7; Matt. xiii. 3, ff.; Mark iv. 28; John iv. 35; Matt. xxi. 19, xxiv. 32, xxvi. 21; John xv. 1, ff.

guardian and bread-winner of the family. And so to Him was granted the Divine discipline of toil, of labour for the bread that perisheth, yet undergone because of relations that are imperishable. Work for home is a noble education. It makes man forethoughtful, unselfish, dutiful to the weak, tender to the sorrowful, mindful of the loving. It had been a calamity to Himself and his mission had our Christ been deprived of so grand yet so universal a discipline. He was not, and it was, perhaps, the condition of his sympathy with poverty and toil. His own mother may have been the widow that cast her mite into the treasury,<sup>1</sup> and his own may have been a heart pierced and touched by a child's cry for bread.<sup>2</sup> The education of Christ has been the education of man. What He learned in society and the home has helped Him to soften the heart and sweeten the relations of society throughout the world.

But we must now study the Personality formed under these varied influences. We cannot see the process, only the result. The man in germ, the Personality in the making, we see but once,<sup>3</sup> yet the once is almost enough. The child has come with his parents to Jerusalem. The city, the solemnities, the temple, the priests, the sacrifices, the people, have stirred multitudinous new thoughts in the boy. He becomes for the moment forgetful of his kin, conscious of higher and diviner relations, and seeks light and sympathy where they were most likely to be found—in the temple, and with the doctors. It is an eminently natural and truthful incident. The ideal Child, wise in his innocent simplicity, seeks the society of simple but learned age,

<sup>1</sup> Mark xii. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. vii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Luke ii. 41, ff.

feels at home in it, wonders only, when sought and found, that it could be in his mother's mind other than it was in his own. The light that streams from the question, "'Wist ye not that I must be among my Father's matters,' in his house, in search of his truth, mindful of his purposes?" illumines the youth, and makes him foreshadow the man. For He who as boy was anxious to be absorbed in his Father and his Father's affairs, became as man the conscious abode of God. Here, indeed, emerges the sublimest and most distinctive feature of his Personality. In Him, as in no other, God lived; He lived as no other ever did in God. Their communion was a union which authorized the sayings, "I and the Father are one;" "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." His consciousness was full of God, was consciousness of God. Fellowship with man did not lessen it; solitude only made it more real. The society of the sinful did not disturb his serene certainty, or becloud for a moment his sense of the indwelling Presence. Amid faithless friends and bitter foes, in the shadow of his doom and the exhaustion of his great sorrow, in the agony of the garden, the desertion and death of the cross, He was never without the clear and certain consciousness of the Father's presence. And this so distinctive feature of his Personality has made Him of pre-eminent religious significance. Since Jesus lived, God has been another and nearer Being to man; and the reason lies in that universal and ideal significance of his Person which made it a symbol as well as a reality, and a symbol which shewed that what God was to Jesus He might be to every man, what Jesus was to God every man ought to be. He who sails across an unknown

sea and finds beyond it a continent is named a discoverer; and so Jesus, in the region of the Spirit, standing where no one in human form ever stood before, found a new relation to God, and became the Founder of a new religion for man. His Personality became the creative type of a new and more filial relation to God: since his day we have inherited the spirit of sons, and can cry, "Abba, Father."

But his relation to Man was in its kind and degree as perfect as his relation to God. It rested on a conception at once truthful and generous. He conceived God as He is, and loved Him because He is Love; He conceived man as he ought to be, and loved him for the sake of the Divine ideal hidden under the depraved reality. Jesus loved holiness and hated sin. Evil was not in Himself, and his aversion to it was the radical and invincible aversion of a whole and holy nature. Yet He did not allow his hatred of the sin to become hatred of the sinners. He discovered within the evil a soul of good, and, what was even more, made them conscious of the discovery and the promise it contained. Men offensive to the traditional and typical religious character are seldom treated with mercy. A double and ineradicable suspicion almost always stands in the way of reaching and restoring outcasts—their suspicion of the respectable and the religious, and the suspicion the respectable and religious have of them. A studiously correct society has ever found excommunication and exclusion of the evil easier and safer than reconciliation and restoration. But Jesus made his way to the outcasts, became their Friend in order that they might become his, and as his, friends of righteousness. Men whose goodness was of the con-

ventional type thought they had condemned Him when they had named Him "the friend of publicans and sinners." But his friendship was justified by its results; it did not make *Him* a publican and a sinner, while it made men who were either or both friends of righteousness and truth. His relation to the evil was absolutely unique. He did not satirize or sneer at the sins and follies of men, like the cynic. Cynicism does not so much hate evil as despise folly; and, while it may keep the respectable from open vice, it can never restore the vicious to virtue. He did not, like the conventional moralist, hold Himself aloof from the fallen. The separation he enjoins may prevent the deterioration of the good, but can never promote the amelioration of the bad. Jesus, on the other hand, did not allow the man's evil to hide the man—saw that he was a man in spite of the evil. In every one there was an actual and an ideal—the actual might be his own, but the ideal was God's. Whatever the man might have made himself, there still remained the possibility of his becoming what God had intended him to be. And this belief of the Divine possibility within the depraved reality made Jesus seek, that He might save, the lost. The goodness He incarnated could vanquish man's evil, while the evil could not vanquish it. He had the purity which could see the best things in the worst man as well as the holiest and loveliest things in God; and when purity is hopeful of the impure, the impure themselves can hardly despair. And so the hope that lived in the Saviour was planted in the lost; what He believed possible they too came to believe, and the belief was at once translated into sublime and singular reality—the lost were saved.

But the relation of Jesus to Righteousness was as

perfect as his relation to God and man. His moral ideal was the highest. He lived to do the will of God. His beatitudes were moral, the good was the blessed man. But it is significant that one whose ethical ideal was so exalted had Himself no consciousness of sin, confessed to no sense of guilt, to no failure in obedience. In one constituted like Jesus, to be without the sense of sin was to be sinless, to be conscious of no disobedience was to have always obeyed. And this becomes the more evident when his goodness is seen to be spontaneous, without effort, the free and joyous outcome of a nature so happy as to have been always holy. His calm and serene soul knew no struggle, no conflict of the flesh and spirit such as made the experience of his greatest apostle so tragic. He knew sorrow, but it was the sorrow of the heart that weeps for sin, not of the conscience that reproves it. And the character that expressed this spontaneous obedience was a harmony of blended opposites. He was so gentle as to draw the love and trust of little children, as to conquer the suspicion and fear the fallen ever feel towards the holy; but He was so stern as to rebuke hypocrisy in words that still burn, so strong as to resist evil till it vanquished his life in revenge for its failure to vanquish his will. He was "meek and lowly in heart," had no love for place or power, no lust of wealth or position, no craving for the fame that is the last infirmity of noble minds; but yet He claimed a majesty so august that beside it Cæsar's was the merest mock royalty. He had singular independence, a will so strong that nothing could unfix its resolution or divert it from its chosen path; but yet He was so dependent that in his deepest agony He sought the sympathy and presence

of man. These features of his character are but phases of his obedience. The principle that rules Him is one; the forms which express his loyalty to it are many. His nature is good and his goodness spontaneous, but it ever assumes the aspect appropriate to the moments of his many-sided and significant life.

These phases and features of his Personality emerge in his teaching, give to it its most distinctive characteristics. His words as to God but express truths represented in his own relation to the Father. The love from heaven that filled and surrounded his soul became articulate in his sayings and parables. What He experienced He expressed; the God He knew He made known; and as we enter into the truth He embodied and revealed, we enter into a relation to the Father akin to his. And as He thought, felt, and acted towards man, so He taught concerning him. His words witness to his faith in the Divine possibilities that still live in the most depraved man, and witness, too, to the yearning of the Supreme Goodness we call God after his broken and buried image. The parables that speak of the shepherd that seeks till he finds his lost lamb; of the woman that lights the candle and searches for the coin she can ill spare; of the father who watches for the return of the prodigal, and receives him with weeping joy; represent the Divine side of his mission, the attitude of his own unique Personality to the fallen and outcast. And the sermons and parables that enforce and illustrate the righteousness He loved, the virtues He instituted or made possible, obedience of the one righteous Will, imitation of the perfect God, forgiveness, prayerfulness, truthfulness, purity, faith, charity, love to the stranger, sympathy with the suffer-



ing, tenderness to the fallen, only describe and enjoin the ideals He had realized, the graces that were personalized in Him. He who rightly apprehends the relation of the Personality to the teaching of Christ will understand why He was and is "full of grace and truth."

A. M. FAIRBAIRN.

### A BRIEF NOTICE.

THE LIFE AND WORDS OF CHRIST. *By Cunningham Geikie, D.D.* Vols. I. and II. (London: Strahan and Co.) It is obviously impossible to do justice to these two portly and handsome volumes in the few sentences which the remnant of this page will hold. I can only give the briefest indication of their quality and value.

Dr. Geikie's *Life of our Lord* is not so rhetorical and picturesque as the popular work of Canon Farrar, nor is it marked by the moral penetration and force of Mr. Beecher's noble fragment. But it is far more erudite than either, and must have cost far more study and labour. It is well and carefully written, and often rises into a sober and chastened eloquence. And of all the "Lives" we possess, it is likely to prove most helpful and informing to those who teach and preach the Word. It supplies them with precisely what they want in order that they may place the sayings of our Lord in a telling and picturesque setting of historical circumstances and local colour. It gives the results of wide reading and immense industry, and is really, though not formally, an elaborate and invaluable commentary on the four Gospels.

It has its defects, of course, for it is as true of books as of their authors, that never was any yet so perfect,

but some defect in it  
Did quarrel with the noblest grace it owed,  
And put it to the foil.

And the main defect of this book is, perhaps, that Dr. Geikie gives his reading of a disputed text, or his solution of a difficult problem, not as *his* view of it simply, but as though there were none to question it. Defects notwithstanding, our advice to all ministers of the Word who can allow themselves only one *Life of Christ*, is—By all means get this.

S. COX.