

present-day spirit as we enter a place so enclosed and guarded, and should not only forbid our rudely disturbing or even too rudely gazing, but should subdue our soul to reverence and affection. We must be in sympathy with all that is pure and of good report, if we are here to love; and love we must if we are to understand. In this book the Bible brings its readers to all time into a place of rest. God here blesses His people with peace. There is no commotion here, only a gentle and gracious movement. The narrative no longer sounds in a rocky bed; it glides among the smooth stones. The ear is no longer stunned; it is lulled. We are beside the still waters, and all around us is a sweet native wildness—a natural unmolested garden, where fine instinct and virtue have their own way of growing. A melodious spot it is too, where the song of God has its seasons! The book is sacred to the lowly and the poor; its *genius loci* is a woman of simplest life and of russet homebred sweetness—the Hebrew saint of meekness and of poverty, with whom if we walk this garden we shall meet with God.

ARMSTRONG BLACK.

STUDIES IN THE "INNER LIFE" OF JESUS.

IV.

THE VOCATION ACCEPTED.

1. FROM Jesus' utterance in the Temple, when He was twelve years old, a light falls forward; and from His words at His baptism, when He was thirty, a light falls backward; and thus the intervening eighteen years, in which He grew from youth to manhood, although no record of His sayings and doings has been preserved for us, need not be shrouded in utter darkness. He returned to the home and the workshop in Nazareth with the moral imperative heard, and the

filial consciousness aroused within His soul, and with, we seem to be warranted in adding, a growing sense that His filial consciousness was not shared, and the moral imperative was not heard by all. During the period of preparation for His vocation which followed, these factors in His personal experience were more fully developed. With the growth of His reason His filial consciousness would become more definite and certain; and, with the growth of His conscience, the moral imperative would become more absolute and urgent. As His knowledge of the world and of men widened and deepened, there must have been to His sinless and perfect spirit an ever fuller disclosure of the wickedness and godlessness abounding around Him, of the need and unrest, misery and hopelessness of human life. He was learning that the world was needing a Saviour, and that He was the Saviour for whom it was waiting.

2. The world's need He could learn from the book of human life which lay open to His discerning and sympathetic gaze, and the parables very clearly and fully show how close an observer He was of all man's works and ways. His own call to meet the world's need He learned from several sources. Probably His parents, after His visit to Jerusalem, as He grew to manhood, disclosed to Him more fully the revelation of His character and destiny made at His birth. If, as is often with some reason assumed, Joseph died before His ministry began it is not unlikely that the time of mourning in the home was an occasion when His mother took out of the treasury of her memory the marvellous and sacred secrets which had been there stored. Meditation and reflection did doubtless deepen and strengthen His sense of God's Fatherhood and of His call to a work for God; but as He was fully and truly man, the inward did not develop without the outward; meditation and reflection were nourished by the study of the

Holy Scriptures. A promise of a Saviour was there fully and clearly given. What we call Messianic prophecy had, as we now more fully recognize, an immediate function for the enlightenment and encouragement of the contemporaries of each prophet. It acquired very great value for the Apostolic age and the Christian Church as an apologetic argument, as a proof that Jesus was the Christ, in whom God's promises were Yea and Amen. It rendered the most wondrous service as the means by which Jesus was enlightened about His high and holy calling for His Father.

3. While we may thus conjecture for general reasons that the holy Scriptures exercised the function of instruction and stimulus in Jesus' personal development, we must closely examine His use of the Old Testament in His public ministry to discover what He learned from prophecy about Himself and His work. In examining Jesus' quotations from, and references to, the Old Testament two considerations must ever be kept in view. Firstly, His use of the Old Testament in His public ministry was didactic and even sometimes polemical, and therefore as a whole does not afford us any certain guidance as to what portions had specially nourished His inner life in His preparation for His work. The references to the law in the Sermon on the Mount have no direct bearing on His view of His vocation. His use of the 110th Psalm in His controversy with the scribes is no proof that the Davidic kingship had any attractions for Him. His quotations and references do show His thorough familiarity with the whole of the Old Testament, so that He could freely and readily draw instruments of instruction and weapons of warfare from it whenever He needed ; but do not prove that for His consciousness of His vocation all parts were equally significant. Secondly, the Gospels have not preserved for us much which we should desire to know. We may be sure that after the

confession by the disciples of the Messiahship of Jesus, and His first announcement of His approaching Passion, He taught them much about His resolves and expectations; and probably in that teaching, were it now before us, we could discover more certainly and adequately by what portions of Scripture Jesus Himself was most deeply and strongly influenced. But the disciples, as the record shows beyond doubt or question, were at this time losing sympathy with their Master. Cherishing their own foolish and vain dream about the coming of His kingdom, and their own place and power in it, they were not interested in, and did not remember what He was teaching them about, His Cross; and, therefore, the reports of His sayings on this great theme are so fragmentary and inadequate. Hence neither the frequency nor the number of Jesus' quotations from any part of the Old Testament can decide the question, which was most influential. One single quotation, owing to its occasion or purpose, may be such more decisive for this question than many others.

4. It is at least interesting to note that the author of the First Gospel is reminded by the character of the ministry of Jesus of words written about the Servant of Jehovah. (Matt. viii. 17 is a quotation from Isaiah liii. 4, and Matt. xii. 18-21 from Isaiah xlii. 1-4.) Each of the Synoptists finds in the same prophecy a definite anticipation of some circumstance of the Passion (Matt. xxi. 5 quotes Isaiah lxii. 11, Mark xv. 28 Isaiah liii. 12, and Luke xxii, 37 the same verse as Mark). The fourth Evangelist (John xii. 38) finds the unbelief with which Jesus was met foretold in Isaiah liii. 1. Jesus in His first discourse in Nazareth, according to Luke iv. 18, 19, claimed that he had fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, and lviii. 6. His answer to the question of John the Baptist has reference to the same prophetic ideal (Matt. xi. 5, 6). These two passages are of crucial significance, and their testimony is worth more than

many quotations used in teaching and in argument in revealing to us the views He held regarding His work. The use which He makes of the title *Son of Man* does in no way weaken the conviction that the ideal which He set before Him for realization was not the Davidic kingship, but the Servant of Jehovah. That the title was suggested by the vision of Daniel of "one like unto a son of man" (vii. 13), and that Jesus claimed for Himself the dominion there described (Matt. xxvi. 64) cannot be denied; but surely we may allow that Jesus had sufficient originality to put His own meaning into the title, which He chose for Himself. Some of the sayings in which the name is used show Him in His lowliness and gentleness, far more like the Servant of Isaiah than the ruler of Daniel. The writer cannot be persuaded that there is much to be gained for our understanding of the mind of Jesus from the Apocalyptic literature, especially the *Book of Enoch*. It is not certain that He had in His early manhood in Nazareth access to this literature. Even if He had, it is not likely that such writing would exercise over His mind the same influence as the far more spiritual teaching of the prophet of the Exile. That the title used by Him has such prominence in this work, is no proof that His conception was not His own, but was borrowed from it.

5. This inquiry as to the origin of Jesus' ideal would be quite useless if, as is sometimes assumed, He began His ministry with some vague anticipations that He had a work for God to do, but found out only during its course what that work was. This seems to the writer an absolutely incredible assumption. Jesus did not make experiments, and only by their failure or success find out what the path of duty for Himself was. He did not begin with the expectation of being the victorious and successful Son of David, and only when disappointed and defeated form the intention to be the suffering and the saving Servant of Jehovah.

Doubtless He learned the definite conditions under which His work was to be done by an experience of them, the immediate duty by the appropriate occasion, the particular directions of His course by God's guidance of His every step in answer to His prayers. He had not a full-timed programme which He carried through ; but He knew what His vocation was before He began to fulfil it. The thirty years' preparation, in which he learned what His work was, was adequate for His three years' ministry, in which he fulfilled His calling. As has already been indicated, we have reason to believe that the vocation He was conscious of, and accepted, was that of a Saviour from sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

6. Are these conjectures confirmed and transformed into certainties by what we may learn about the Inner Life of Jesus from the records of the Baptism? If we learn what was the significance of John's baptism generally, we may be helped to discover what it meant for Jesus. John preached the approach of the kingdom of God as a judgement on the sinful, called to repentance and amendment of life, and promised a time of spiritual revival. By the rite of baptism was symbolized repentance for sin and resolve of amendment. Even as a preparation for the new covenant which God was about to form with His people, it must have meant at least this, that the people were ready to admit their great need, and to welcome the good gift of this new covenant, in which forgiveness of sin and spiritual renewal were the greatest blessings promised. Taken broadly, baptism was the self-dedication to the new order of which John was a herald. For Jesus baptism could not mean repentance for personal sin and resolve of personal amendment ; for He had no sense of guilt, and felt no need of reformation. If it had no significance or value for Himself it could not confirm John's ministry, but would have been an empty compliment unworthy alike

of him by whom and to whom it was offered. If Jesus had no need of baptism for Himself, He could not submit to it simply as an example to others, for action must be dutiful if it is to be exemplary. We do not teach others their duty, and encourage them to do it by doing what is not our duty also. There was a feature in common between the baptism of Jesus and of the people generally. In both cases it was a response to a Divine summons. Jesus too dedicated Himself to the new order. But the difference between Himself and others was this, they dedicated themselves as recipients and subjects, He as fully endowed and fully empowered agent and sovereign. His private preparation in the home was by this act closed and His public ministry in the world was opened. At His baptism He abandoned His family good and duty, and devoted Himself wholly to the fulfilment of God's will in His calling. But the baptism seems to enable us to define that vocation more closely and to discover in it a direct reference to repentance and amendment. If He was resolved to realize the ideal of the Servant of Jehovah, then He conceived His vocation as vicarious. He was called to save by suffering for the people. The new covenant required His sacrifice as a condition of its institution, and in dedicating Himself to the new covenant He dedicated Himself to the Sacrifice. In His baptism he gave Himself to a vicarious repentance and amendment.

7. We must, however, look more closely at this conception of vicarious sacrifice, because it is beset with misunderstandings. It is by no legal fiction that the iniquities of us all were laid on Him, that He was reckoned among transgressors, and that God made Him to be sin for us. It was by an organic union, a vital self-identification, tender devoted sympathy with the race, that He made its sin, guilt, shame and curse vicariously His own. The possibility of His substitution has sometimes been based on the

universal relations of the Word of God to the race. Without questioning the reality of these relations, or their significance and value for a theory of the atonement, which seeks to take into account all that may be helpful for a solution of the problem, the writer must express his conviction that for religious experience the psychology of Jesus is far more interesting and influential than the metaphysics of the Word, that what will appeal more potently to Christian faith is the adequate recognition of the vicarious element in Jesus' own consciousness. He was so truly man, and so deeply loved mankind, that nothing human was alien to Him, that He did not stand apart in lofty superiority, in harsh contempt, or stern judgement from the sin and misery of the race; but he felt the burden and the blight, the sorrow and the shame, the darkness and desolation of man's sin as His very own, just as the parent feels his child's wrongdoing, and the patriot his country's dishonour; but He felt more keenly than any man, with mind darkened and heart dulled by sin, can feel. It was not condescension but compassion which brought Him to John's baptism, in which He accepted, not as a grievous burden or unwelcome task, but as His freely and readily chosen calling from love to God and man, a responsibility for, and an obligation in regard to, the world's sin.

8. This vicarious consciousness of Jesus seems to throw some light on one of the deepest problems regarding the relations of the infinite God and finite man which human thought has ever attempted to deal with. The question has been raised, Is not God's infinitude limited by His finite creatures? Does not the freedom of man's will especially introduce, as it were, a foreign element into the Divine existence and consciousness? But if the Infinite can, so to speak, appropriate as His own the whole life of His creatures, can live in them, can transform their mental, moral, and spiritual experience, so as to make it even a



subordinate moment in His own perfection and blessedness, then the finite does not limit the Infinite, but becomes His organ and function. If this be so, then the more universal any consciousness is, the wider the range of feeling, the deeper the reach of thought, the greater the result of effort which it can vicariously experience, the more abounding the life of others which it can re-live in its own convictions, affections, and purposes, the nearer is it to the infinite consciousness of God. It was a consequence of Jesus' divinity as the Son of God, that He possessed a true and full humanity as Son of Man, that He re-lived in Himself the life of the race, and thus bore its burden, waged its warfare, endured its trial, and passed through its shadow and even let its curse fall on Him. While in human life generally there is this vicarious element, it can be realized perfectly only in One, in whom manhood has its home in the bosom of God. For the full explanation of the psychology of Jesus, His vicarious consciousness, we need the metaphysics of the Word of God, His universal relations; yet it is the psychology, through which alone we can with interest and intelligence approach the metaphysics.

9. The answer Jesus gave to John's question at the baptism does not contradict but confirms the conclusion regarding His vicarious consciousness, which we have reached. What was the righteousness which Jesus felt bound to fulfil? It was not the righteousness of the Pharisees, the strict and literal observance of rites and precepts from fear of punishment or hope of reward. It was not even the righteousness which John required of the people—repentance and reform. He was, it is true, in closer agreement with John than the Pharisees, for the Pharisaic conception involved the view of God as lawgiver, ruler, and judge, but John's involved a recognition of God's presence and action in human history to save and bless men who in humility and confidence committed themselves to Him. Jesus' conception

of righteousness was most probably that of Isaiah liii. 11. The righteous Servant shall justify many because He shall bear their iniquities. It is in His vicarious consciousness and the sacrifice which this would ultimately involve that Jesus fulfilled all righteousness. There is a higher righteousness than being justified by one's own works, a higher even than depending on God's forgiveness; and that belongs to Him who undertakes by His own loving sacrifice for sinners to secure God's forgiveness on their behalf.

10. That Jesus at His Baptism had the ideal of the Servant of Jehovah before His mind, and even in His answer refers explicitly to the prophetic language, finds a further confirmation in a saying of John the Baptist's, recorded in the Fourth Gospel, which many scholars have found it quite impossible to accept as a genuine utterance of John's at the time. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." This is so unlike the testimony to the work of the Messiah given by the Baptist, according to the Synoptists, that even those who accept the saying as genuine are forced to conclude that we have here a solitary prophetic intuition unrelated to, and inexplicable by, his habitual modes of thought. But the incompleteness of the narrative allows us to assume that there was some conversation between Jesus and John; that Jesus communicated to John what His own ideal of His work was, that accordingly John's words refer to what is recorded in Isaiah liii. about the Servant as "a Lamb led to the slaughter"; that Jesus for a time at least raised John's mind to the height of His own insight; that when the influence of Jesus was withdrawn John relapsed to His own familiar modes of thought; and that the answer of Jesus by the two disciples on a later occasion was a kindly reminder of the conversation in which He had persuaded him of the truth and rightness of the ideal which He was faithfully realizing.

11. If this was the task which Jesus at His baptism accepted then He dedicated Himself to humiliation. But because He had humbled Himself God at once highly exalted Him. Whether the vision and the voice had a purpose for John and the people as well we need not now inquire; all that now concerns us is what it meant for Jesus. It confirmed His filial consciousness; it sealed with the Divine approval His dedication to His work, the summons to which had come to Him in John's preaching, and the character of which He had symbolically indicated in His acceptance of John's baptism. There was besides an endowment with supernatural power by the descent of the Spirit. We have no evidence that Jesus wrought any miracles before His public ministry began, nay, we have no reason to suppose that He was even conscious of any miraculous power. The Spirit had been His from the beginning as the Spirit of truth and grace; by the Spirit's operations His conduct had been guided, and His character formed. The Spirit as a revelation of His filial relation to God did not first come to Him at His baptism. But the manifestation of the Spirit at His baptism was, as at Pentecost, a communication of supernatural power. He received resources for His work on which he had not reckoned when anticipating and dedicating Himself to it; hence He was in a sense unprepared for the use of those powers unless in so far as His absolute submission to God and His entire devotion were the best preparation for any moral emergency. It was necessary that a decision should be definitely formed regarding the exercise of His supernatural power in His public ministry. This decision Jesus made in His temptation, the subject of the next Study, by rejecting all such use of His power as to His moral discernment and spiritual insight seemed inconsistent with the vocation which in His baptism He had accepted.

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