

is not the best course to thrust one's hand into the fire to see whether it will burn, the fog is getting very thick indeed, and a soul is already in deadliest peril.

The only right course for a ship venturing out upon the sea of life, where fogs are rife, is to get the right Captain on the bridge from the start. Have Him there before the fog begins, before doubt has suggested itself to your mind, before the glamour of sin has blinded you to the beauty of holiness. Get Jesus upon the bridge, and He will keep you safe and sound amid all the perils that shall follow.

Around the fire on a winter evening a fellow-student of my own told me that for a considerable time he had been an agnostic. I knew him for a keen, enthusiastic Christian worker, and I asked him—

‘What was it led you to faith?’

‘Well,’ he said, ‘there was one thing I could never get away from, and that was my mother's piety. I could easily have riddled all her arguments, but I could not riddle her sweet Christian character, and I knew it was her religion which was the mainspring of that.’

‘Did you become clear about things all at once?’

‘Oh no, it all came gradually. When I was a boy of twelve I had given my heart to the Saviour, and in those days He was very real to me. It seems to me that He then mounted the bridge of my life, and that He never took His hand off the helm.’

‘Was He with you in your doubting days?’

‘I am sure of it. They were only a phase such as every young man whose mind is waking up passes through. But Jesus held His place in my life, silently and surely, though I did not know it. And then when I contrasted my mother's pure, angelic life and character with the nothings I had been exalting in its place, I saw that only Christ, who was responsible for that character, could satisfy my mind, as I had come to think He alone could satisfy my heart.’

Get Christ on the bridge, boys and girls. The fog of doubt and questioning may come. The more intelligent and thoughtful you are the more likely it is to come, at least the fog that makes you not sure of the things you have been taught. The other fog comes to every young person, who ventures out upon the world, some time. But if you allow Jesus to take His place early in your life, no fog that ever gathered will prevent Him from safely conducting you to the heavenly shore.

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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III.

1. THIS personal experience being what is significant and valuable in the Incarnation, we may look at its general character before we turn to consider the light which is thereby thrown on particular incidents of the life of Jesus. The purpose of this experience is that the *Pioneer of faith and salvation* might be *perfected through sufferings*; regarding this statement we must ask two questions—(i.) Wherein consisted this perfection? and (ii.) what were the sufferings by which it was obtained? His perfection is described in general

terms in 7²⁶. He is ‘holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.’ ‘Christ,’ says Westcott *in loco*, ‘is personally in Himself *holy*, in relation to men *guileless*, in spite of contact with a sinful world *undefiled*. By the issue of His life He has been *separated from sinners* in regard to the visible order, and in regard to the invisible world, *He has risen above the heavens*.’ This perfection is not untried innocence, for He ‘hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin’ (4¹⁵). Sin was neither the source nor the result of His temptation. He was not tempted as we are, when we are

assailed by solicitations of evil due to previous indulgence in sin, or when we succumb to the assaults of evil; nor need we assume that every kind of temptation to which man is exposed was experienced by Him; but only that temptation was as thoroughly real to Him as it is to us. Not quantitative equivalence, but qualitative resemblance alone needs to be asserted.

2. There are two characteristics of the perfection of Jesus which this Epistle emphasizes—sympathy with man, and obedience to God. He was 'made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted' (2¹⁷⁻¹⁸). 'We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (4¹⁵). Because He has had the human experience He not only feels with us in His mercy, but so understands and responds to our need that He ever uses to the uttermost in His faithfulness all the functions by which our need is met. The functions are threefold: 'propitiation for the sins of the people' (2¹⁷), 'succour' of 'them that are tempted' (v.¹⁸), and *intercession* (4¹⁶); and it is evident that for each of these functions sympathy is a qualification. Without describing this propitiation as either vicarious penitence or vicarious penalty, as both terms are not strictly applicable to the sinless, yet His sacrifice must be regarded as such a self-identification of Himself in love with mankind as enabled Him to experience sin's consequences. He so put Himself in the place of mankind that He felt the sin, shame, and sorrow due to sin as His very own. He could even think of and feel regarding death what sinful men think and feel. But while His propitiation cancels the sinful past, His succour and intercession (the earthly and the heavenly counterpart of the same tender and mighty solicitude on man's behalf) guarantee deliverance from, and victory over, present evil: and to both sympathy is essential. But to remove a common misunderstanding, it may be added here that to feel fully and truly with the tempted it is not necessary to have fallen before temptation, but only to have endured it. He who resists until victorious, experiences the full force of the temptation as he who yields does not. Sin deadens, while

holiness quickens, sympathy even with the sinful. So important is the consideration that it may be repeated: it is the sympathy of Jesus that is the best approach to an apprehension and appreciation of His Saviourhood.

3. Corresponding to Jesus' sympathy with man is His obedience towards God, and both are expressions and exercises of love appropriate to the respective relations. As the brother of sinful, sorrowing, and dying men, He shows His love as sympathy; as the Son of the perfect God, as obedience. 'Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things that he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation' (5⁷⁻⁹). We must return to discuss v.⁷ as a description of the agony in Gethsemane especially: but meanwhile attention must be concentrated on v.⁸, while in passing it may be pointed out how v.⁹ confirms the analogy we are insisting on between the experience of Jesus and of man. His obedience to God in His sacrifice has its counterpart in their obedience to Him for their salvation. (i.) 'He learned obedience by the things that he suffered' (*ἐμαθεν ἂφ' ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν*). This statement does not mean merely that Jesus through the sufferings of His life learned to obey, acquired the habit of obedience, but that His sufferings were of such a kind as to make the maximum demand conceivable or possible for the surrender of the will to God; by His surrender He measured the distance between the deepest depths of desolation and the highest heights of blessedness. His sacrifice was a perfect act of obedience without reserves or limits. Was this obedience an exception to, a contradiction of His Sonship towards God, or was it its full and last expression? The clause *καί τις ὡν υἱός* suggests the former interpretation, and Westcott *in loco* adopts it: 'Although Son and therefore endowed with right of access for Himself to the Father, being of an essence with the Father, for man's sake as man He won the right of access for humanity. In one sense it is true that the idea of Sonship suggests that of obedience; but the nature of Christ's Sonship at first sight seems to exclude the thought that He should learn obedience

through suffering.' Conceding that the writer of the Epistle intended a contrast between the two clauses, as for him the Sonship of Christ expressed the divine dignity, yet this exposition contains several errors on which it is worth dwelling. The introduction of such a phrase as 'being of an essence with the Father' fixes on the Scriptures the theology of the later creeds. The contrast between what Christ did 'as man, and for man's sake,' and what as Son of God He was in Himself and did for Himself, reproduces the dualism of the creed of Chalcedon between the human and the divine nature, and also the dualism which has introduced so much unreality into the representation of Christ's work between His person and His office. In opposition to this method of interpretation, we must insist that if the Incarnation is a revelation and not a concealment of God, then to the Sonship as temporally realized in obedience there does correspond the Sonship which is eternal reality. Not 'in one sense' only, but in every sense, 'it is true that the idea of Sonship suggests that of obedience,' and if 'the nature of Christ's Sonship at first sight seems to exclude the thought that He should learn obedience through suffering,' the sooner we get beyond the first sight to a deeper view the better for our theology. We shall never get an adequate Christology till we rid ourselves of the assumption that in the moral and religious sphere there is contradiction and not affinity between God and man, and that consequently there was a contrast between what Christ was as Son of God, and what He did or suffered as man for man's sake. In the *essential* trinity there must be the possibility of all that *becomes* the actuality in the *economic* trinity. We must insist on a more vital unity of God and man in Christ than the two-nature doctrine allows: but to do this we must get rid of the assumption of an impassible God, and must boldly affirm, in spite of the anathemas of 'the holy, great, Œcumenical Council of Chalcedon,' 'the monstrous doctrine that the divine nature of the only-begotten is passible.' But turning from Westcott's comment to the text itself, the contrast of the two clauses seems to be inconsistent with the general standpoint of the Epistle, which presents not a contradiction but a revelation of the eternal reality in the temporal experience of Jesus and believers. Insistence on the contrast of sonship and obedience would involve that the former is noumenon and the latter only pheno-

menon, to use Kantian terms, or the former idea and the latter only image, to use Platonic.

(ii.) The motive of His obedience is 'godly fear' (εὐλάβεια). Westcott *in loco* can here be quoted without any criticism. 'Εὐλάβεια marks that careful and watchful reverence which pays regard to every circumstance in that with which it has to deal. It may, therefore, degenerate into a timid and unworthy anxiety (Jos. *Antt.* vi. 2. 179); but more commonly it expresses reverent and thoughtful shrinking from over-boldness, which is compatible with true courage (Philo, *Quis. rer. div. haer.*, § 6 (i. 476 M)). . . . Christ by His εὐλάβεια perfectly realized that submission which is obedience on one side and fellowship on the other.' Mind, heart, and will were in perfect accord, in entire self-surrender to the will of God.

(iii.) It is this obedience to God that gives its value to the sacrifice in contrast to all animal sacrifices. The author of the Epistle puts into the lips of Christ the words of the psalmist (40⁶⁻⁸, LXX) in depreciation of animal sacrifices and exaltation of general obedience. 'Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body didst thou prepare for me: in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure: then said I, Lo, I am come. . . . To do thy will, O God' (10⁵⁻⁷). He repeats the declaration, 'Lo, I am come to do thy will' as the abrogation of the old and the establishment of the new order (v.⁹): and then argues that it is this obedience of Christ which makes the death of Christ an efficacious offering for the sanctification of believers (v.¹⁰). Such value is given to the sacrifice that it needs no repetition (v.¹⁴). Well would it have been for Christian theology if, dealing with the doctrine of the Atonement, it had always kept in view this declaration. It is no quantitative equivalence of Christ's sufferings and the eternal pains of the sinful race that measures the value of the sacrifice; it is the qualitative transcendence by the obedience of Christ of the whole moral history of the race that makes the Cross so final and perfect an expression of the whole relation of God to man and his sin, the divine propitiation, both judgment and forgiveness. For the present purpose we need not go further in this exposition.

4. The sufferings by which the sympathy of Jesus was developed and He learned obedience may be very briefly mentioned. What is made prominent *first of all* is His liability to temptation, which must include the whole range of His contact and conflict

with the evil of the world. *Secondly*, His strivings with God in prayer regarding His death are referred to (5⁷). While we must not limit the reference to Gethsemane, yet there this element in the passion is most clearly and fully presented to us; and we shall in the next section see what light this saying throws on that event. *Lastly*, the death itself is presented as the completion of the sacrifice, and that death is referred to not as an event merely, but as an experience. 'We behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God he should taste death for every man' (2⁹). Reserving the first part of the sentence for subsequent treatment, the last clause claims closer consideration, ὅπως χάριτι θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσῃται θανάτου. Attention may first of all be called to the variant reading χωρὶς θεοῦ, which might mean one of four things, that Christ's divinity was not involved in His death, or that He died with the sense of desolation (cf. Mt 27⁴⁶), or that God was not included among these, on account or for the benefit of whom Christ died. But we need not settle the question, as χάριτι θεοῦ is much the more probable reading. The grace of God was not the result of, but the reason for, the vicarious death of Christ. Because God is grace, God willed that Christ should die for all. *Secondly*, 'taste death' is not merely a periphrasis for 'die,' just as 'learned obedience' is not for 'obeyed.' Christ, because sinless and in fellowship with God, realized the full import of death as the penalty of sin, inclusive of the sense of separation from God, which is the sting given to death by sin. His sympathy with man made Him realize all that death means for man, His obedience to God recognized fully the will of God in death as such final adequate judgment of God in sin. His experience was qualitatively perfect. *Thirdly*, the clause ὑπὲρ παντὸς suggests also that it was quantitatively complete. He realized death in its universality, as embracing the whole race.

IV.

1. The Epistle throws light not only on the experience of Jesus generally, but on particular incidents in His life, to which we may now turn. We need not add anything to what it has been already needful to say about the temptation and the death of Jesus; but there remain three inci-

dents to which fuller reference may now be made. The writer cannot be satisfied with the exegesis of 2⁹ usually given. The construction is intolerably loose if the phrase 'crowned with glory and honour' refers to the Resurrection and Ascension subsequent to 'the suffering of death,' and the tasting death for every man. The crowning with glory and honour is a preparation for, and not a result of the sacrifice. While it is possible that the author of the Epistle might regard the vocation to sacrifice as itself glory and honour, even as in the Fourth Gospel (12²⁸, 13³¹, 17¹); yet a more definite allusion is more probable. He writes with a definite knowledge of the earthly life of Jesus; and so we may assume that the story of the Transfiguration was familiar to him. That event was the completion of Jesus' human development: He was 'ripe for glory,' ready and fit for the glorious and blessed immortality, the destiny to which mankind had failed to attain. He had this foretaste of heaven, however, only to confirm Him in and equip Him for the purpose to surrender the glory and honour He might have claimed as His right, to put Himself in man's place, and to share with man the doom of death, which in no way was His due. Even if the author had not this event in view, it appropriately illustrates his otherwise difficult statement.

2. While it is probable that Jesus on more than one occasion 'wrestled with God in prayer,' yet Gethsemane seems to offer the most telling illustration of 5⁷. There He 'offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears.' There He prayed that God might save Him, 'not from death, but out of death' (ἐκ θανάτου). 'The phrase,' says Westcott *in loco*, 'covers two distinct ideas, "to save from physical death so that it should be escaped," "to bring safe out of death into a new life." In the first sense the prayer recorded in Jn 12²⁷ was not granted, that it might be granted in the second.'

One wonders why the allusion is not made to the record of Gethsemane in Mt 26³⁶⁻⁴⁶, as that suggests another possibility. It is not likely that Jesus was in any way doubtful of the necessity of His death, and desired to escape it. If He anticipated in Gethsemane what He experienced in Calvary, it was the dereliction (27⁴⁶) He shrank from, and prayed to be spared. It was surely εἰδάβεια that the Son should dread this separation from the Father: and yet the obedience to the

Father could be perfected only by His assent to even this experience, the maximum of suffering possible to Him. The prayer was granted, not in the Resurrection, although that followed in necessary sequence, but in His recovery even on the Cross, of His communion with, and confidence in His Father, as the words of self-committal show (Lk 23⁴⁶). It was surely thus that He was 'saved out of death.'

3. The last incident referred to in this Epistle has not yet come under our consideration; but it is interesting to note that the ascriptions of Sonship and even of absolute divinity to Christ in 1⁵⁻¹⁴ in contrasting Him with the angels are related not to the eternal existence, or the temporal incarnation of the Son, but as vv.^{8,4} show, to the Ascension. 'When he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent

name than they.' There can be no doubt that the author of the Epistle does assign pre-existent Sonship and divinity to Christ; in the quotations in vv.¹⁰⁻¹² he applies to Christ words used of God Himself. But as little doubt is there, those in agreement with Paul in Ro 1⁴ and Ph 2⁹⁻¹¹, he regarded the Ascension as not merely a return to previous glory (as in Jn 17⁶), but as an increase of the glory and the honour, an enhancement of the dignity and authority of the Son of God. In his view the earthly life, work, and suffering of Christ has an eternal significance and value for the very being of God Himself; its result is taken up into the relation of the Father and the Son; it is no temporary episode unrelated to, and not affecting, the inner life of God Himself, but it is a moment and a movement of the very being of the Supreme Himself. Thus in Christ idea and image, noumenal and phenomenal, invisible and visible, eternal and temporal, God and man are one reality.

Literature.

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

THE volume on the *History of Christian Missions* for the 'International Theological Library' has been entrusted to the Rev. Charles Henry Robinson, D.D., Hon. Canon of Ripon Cathedral and Editorial Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (T. & T. Clark; 10s. 6d.).

It is an immense subject for a single volume, for Dr. Robinson begins with St. Paul and ends with Dr. Mott, and he takes all the churches, all the societies, all the men and women (without naming them all) with him as he goes. There is no confusion. The work has been mapped out as if it were an Encyclopædia article. And so far as we have been able to test the book, there is no respect of persons or of agencies. Every man, woman, and movement that has accomplished anything for the progress of the Kingdom gets an equal share of attention and a place in this great roll of honour.

The statistics are up to date. They are very many, but no weariness has deprived them of their

necessary verification. There are lies, blank lies, and statistics, said the pessimist. The statistics in this book are too startling to be untrue; they are too startling both in their bigness and in their littleness. What accounts for it? Why here progress and prosperity like the rushing mighty wind, there stagnation and derision? God only knows. But sure it is that the missionaries are of the very salt of the earth. Even in these business-like statistical pages one can see that, and it is all the same whether they are preaching or teaching or healing; they all see of the travail of their soul, whether they are satisfied or not. There is no book that says more for the race than this book.

Canon Robinson has opened his book with a chapter on Methods. That was a good thought. Where does he find the best methods and the best account of them? In the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. How often do you return to that book—the Book of the Acts of the Apostles? It is the barometer of the New Testament. If you read it much and pray much over what you read, it will make a missionary of you, and when the next Survey of Missions is written your name will be written there.