

## CHAPTER X.

IN THE HOUSE OF HIS HEAVENLY, AND IN THE HOME OF HIS EARTHLY FATHER –  
THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM - THE RETIREMENT AT NAZARETH.  
(St. Luke ii. 41-52.)

Once only is the great silence, which lies on the history of Christ's early life, broken. It is to record what took place on His first visit to the Temple. What this meant, even to an ordinary devout Jew, may easily be imagined. Where life and religion were so intertwined, and both in such organic connection with the Temple and the people of Israel, every thoughtful Israelite must have felt as if his real life were not in what was around, but ran up into the grand unity of the people of God, and were compassed by the halo of its sanctity. To him it would be true in the deepest sense, that, so to speak, each Israelite was born in Zion, as, assuredly, all the well-springs of his life were there. It was, therefore, not merely the natural eagerness to see the City of their God and of their fathers, glorious Jerusalem; nor yet the lawful enthusiasm, national or religious, which would kindle at the thought of 'our feet' standing within those gates, through which priests, prophets, and kings had passed; but far deeper feelings which would make glad, when it was said: 'Let us go into the house of Jehovah.' They were not ruins to which precious memories clung, nor did the great hope seem to lie afar off, behind the evening-mist. But 'glorious things were spoken of Zion, the City of God' - in the past, and in the near future 'the thrones of David' were to be set within her walls, and amidst her palaces.

In strict law, personal observance of the ordinances, and hence attendance on the feasts at Jerusalem, devolved on a youth only when he was of age, that is, at thirteen years. Then he became what was called 'a son of the Commandment,' or 'of the Torah.' But, as a matter of fact, the legal age was in this respect anticipated by two years, or at least by one. It was in accordance with this custom, that, on the first Pascha after Jesus had passed His twelfth year, His Parents took Him with them in the 'company' of the Nazarenes to Jerusalem. The text seems to indicate, that it was their wont to go up to the Temple; and we mark that, although women were not bound to make such personal appearance, Mary gladly availed herself of what seems to have been the direction of Hillel (followed also by other religious women, mentioned in Rabbinic writings), to go up to the solemn services of the Sanctuary. Politically, times had changed. The weak and wicked rule of Archelaus had lasted only nine years, when, in consequence of the charges against him, he was banished to Gaul. Judæa, Samaria and Idumæa were now incorporated into the Roman province of Syria, under its Governor, or *Legate*. The special administration of that part of Palestine was, however, entrusted to a *Procurator*, whose ordinary residence was at Cæsarea. It will be remembered, that the Jews themselves had desired some such arrangement, in the vain hope that, freed from the tyranny of the Herodians, they might enjoy the semi-independence of their brethren in the Grecian cities. But they found it otherwise. Their privileges were not secured to them; their religious feelings and prejudices were constantly, though perhaps not intentionally, outraged; and their Sanhedrin shorn of its real power, though the Romans would probably not interfere in what might be regarded as purely religious questions. Indeed, the very presence of the Roman power in Jerusalem was a constant offence, and must necessarily have issued in a life and death struggle. One of the first measures of the new Legate of Syria, P. Sulpicius Quirinius, after confiscating the ill-gotten wealth of Archelaus, was to order a census in Palestine, with the view of fixing the taxation of the country. The popular excitement which this called forth was due, probably, not so much to opposition on principle, as to this, that the census was regarded as the badge of servitude, and incompatible with the Theocratic character of Israel. Had a census been considered absolutely contrary to the Law, the leading Rabbis would never have submitted to it; nor would the popular resistance to the measure of Quirinius have been quelled by the representations of the High-Priest Joazar. But, although through his influence the census was allowed to be taken, the popular agitation was not suppressed. Indeed, that movement formed part of the history of the time, and not only affected political and religious parties in the land, but must have been presented to the mind of Jesus Himself, since, as will be shown, it had a representative within His own family circle.

This accession of Herod, misnamed the Great, marked a period in Jewish history, which closed with the war of despair against Rome and the flames of Jerusalem and the Temple. It gave rise to the appearance of what Josephus, despite his misrepresentation of them, rightly calls a *fourth* party - besides the Pharisees, Sadducees,

and Essenes - that of the *Nationalists*. A deeper and more independent view of the history of the times would, perhaps, lead us to regard the whole country as ranged either with or against that party. As afterwards expressed in its purest and simplest form, their watchword was, *negatively*, to call no human being their absolute lord; *positively*, that God alone was to lead as absolute Lord. It was, in fact, a revival of the Maccabean movement, perhaps more fully in its national than in its religious aspect, although the two could scarcely be separated in Israel, and their motto almost reads like that which according to some, furnished the letters whence the name *Maccabee* was composed: *Mi Camochah Baelim Jehovah*, 'Who like Thee among the gods, Jehovah?' It is characteristic of the times and religious tendencies, that their followers were no more called, as before, *Assideans* or *Chasidim*, 'the pious,' but *Zealots* (ζηλωται) or by the Hebrew equivalent *Qannaim* (*Cananæans*, not '*Canaanites*,' as in A.V.) The real home of that party was not Judæa nor Jerusalem, but Galilee.

Quite other, and indeed antagonistic, tendencies prevailed in the stronghold of the Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees. Of the latter only a small portion had any real sympathy with the national movement. Each party followed its own direction. The Essenes, absorbed in theosophic speculations, not untinged with Eastern mysticism, withdrew from all contact with the world, and practiced an ascetic life. With them, whatever individuals may have felt, no such movement could have originated; nor yet with the Herodians or Boethusians, who combined strictly Pharisaic views with Herodian political partisanship; nor yet with the Sadducees; nor, finally, with what constituted the great bulk of the Rabbinist party, the School of Hillel. But the brave, free Highlanders of Galilee, and of the region across their glorious lake, seemed to have inherited the spirit of Jephthah, and to have treasured as their ideal - alas! often wrongly apprehended - their own Elijah, as, descending in wild, shaggy garb from the mountains of Gilead, he did battle against all the might of Ahab and Jezebel. Their enthusiasm could not be kindled by the logical subtleties of the Schools, but their hearts burned within them for their God, their land, their people, their religion, and their freedom.

It was in Galilee, accordingly, that such wild, irregular resistance to Herod at the outset of his career, as could be offered, was organised by guerilla bands, which traversed the country, and owned one Ezekias as their leader. Although Josephus calls them 'robbers,' a far different estimate of them obtained in Jerusalem, where, as we remember, the Sanhedrin summoned Herod to answer for the execution of Esekias. What followed is told in substantially the same manner, though with difference of form and, sometimes, nomenclature, by Josephus, and in the Talmud. The story has already been related in another connection. Suffice it that, after the accession of Herod, the Sanhedrin became a shadow of itself. It was packed with Sadducees and Priests of the King's nomination, and with Doctors of the canon-law, whose only aim was to pursue in peace their subtleties; who had not, and, from their contempt of the people, could not have, any real sympathy with national aspirations; and whose ideal heavenly Kingdom was a miraculous, heaven-instituted, absolute rule of Rabbis. Accordingly, the national movement, as it afterwards developed, received neither the sympathy nor the support of leading Rabbis. Perhaps the most gross manifestation of this was exhibited, shortly before the taking of Jerusalem, by R. Jochanan ben Saccai, the most renowned among its teachers. Almost unmoved he had witnessed the portent of the opening of the Temple-doors by an unseen Hand, which, by an interpretation of Zech. xi. 1, was popularly regarded as betokening its speedy destruction. There is cynicism, as well as want of sympathy, in the story recorded by tradition, that when, in the straits of famine during the siege, Jochanan saw people eagerly feasting on soup made from straw, he scouted the idea of such a garrison resisting Vespasian and immediately resolved to leave the city. In fact, we have distinct evidence that R. Jochanan had, as leader of the School of Hillel, used all his influence, although in vain, to persuade the people to submission to Rome.

We can understand it, how this school had taken so little interest in anything purely national. Generally only one side of the character of Hillel has been presented by writers, and even this in greatly exaggerated language. His much lauded gentleness, peacefulness, and charity were rather negative than positive qualities. He was a philosophic Rabbi, whose real interest lay in a far other direction than that of sympathy with the people - and whose motto seemed, indeed, to imply, '*We, the sages, are the people of God; but this people, who know not the Law, are curse.*' A far deeper feeling, and intense, though misguided earnestness pervaded the School of Shammai. It was in the minority, but it sympathised with the aspirations of the people. It was not philosophic nor eclectic, but intensely national. It opposed all approach to, and by, strangers; it dealt harshly with proselytes,

even the most distinguished (such as Akylas or Onkelos); it passed, by first murdering a number of Hillelites who had come to the deliberative assembly, eighteen decrees, of which the object was to prevent all intercourse with Gentiles; and it furnished leaders or supporters of the national movement.

We have marked the rise of the Nationalist party in Galilee at the time of Herod's first appearance on the scene, and learned how mercilessly he tried to suppress it: first, by the execution of Ezekias and his adherents, and afterwards, when he became King of Judæa, by the slaughter of the Sanhedrists. The consequence of this unsparing severity was to give Rabbinism a different direction. The School of Hillel which henceforth commanded the majority, were men of no political colour, theological theorists, self-seeking Jurists, vain rather than ambitious. The minority, represented by the School of Shammai, were Nationalists. Defective and even false as both tendencies were, there was certainly more hope, as regarded the Kingdom of God, of the Nationalists than of the Sophists and Jurists. It was, of course, the policy of Herod to suppress all national aspirations. No one understood the meaning of Jewish Nationalism so well as he; no one ever opposed it so systematically. There was internal fitness, so to speak, in his attempt to kill the King of the Jews among the infants of Bethlehem. The murder of the Sanhedrists, with the consequent new anti-Messianic tendency of Rabbinism, was one measure in that direction; the various appointments which Herod made to the High-Priesthood another. And yet it was not easy, even in those times, to deprive the Pontificate of its power and influence. The High-Priest was still the representative of the religious life of the people, and he acted on all occasions, when the question under discussion was not one exclusively of subtle canon-law, as the President of the Sanhedrin, in which, indeed, the members of his family had evidently seat and vote. The four families from which, with few exceptions, the High-Priest - however often changed - were chosen, absorbed the wealth, and commanded the influence, of a state-endowed establishment, in its worst times. It was, therefore, of the utmost importance to make wise choice of the High-Priest. With the exception of the brief tenure by Aristobulus, the last of the Maccabees - whose appointment, too soon followed by his murder, was at the time a necessity - all the Herodian High-Priests were non-Palestinians. A keener blow than this could not have been dealt at Nationalism.

The same contempt for the High-Priesthood characterised the brief reign of Archelaus. On his death-bed, Herod had appointed to the Pontificate Joazar, a son of Boethos, the wealthy Alexandrian priest, whose daughter, Mariamme II., he had married. The Boethusian family, allied to Herod, formed a party - the Herodians - who combined strict Pharisaic views with devotion to the reigning family. Joazar took the popular part against Archelaus, on his accession. For this he was deprived of his dignity in favour of another son of Boethos, Eleazar by name. But the mood of Archelaus was fickle - perhaps he was distrustful of the family of Boethos. At any rate, Eleazar had to give place to Jesus, the son of Sië, an otherwise unknown individual. At the time of the taxing of Quirinius we find Joazar again in office, apparently restored to it by the multitude, which, having taken matters into its own hands at the change of government, recalled one who had formerly favoured national aspirations. It is thus that we explain his influence with the people, in persuading them to submit to the Roman taxation.

But if Joazar had succeeded with the unthinking populace, he failed to conciliate the more advanced of his own party, and, as the event proved, the Roman authorities also, whose favour he had hoped to gain. It will be remembered, that the Nationalist party - or 'Zealots,' as they were afterwards called - first appeared in those guerilla-bands which traversed Galilee under the leadership of Ezekias, whom Herod executed. But the National party was not destroyed, only held in check, during his iron reign. It was once more the family of Ezekias that headed the movement. During the civil war which followed the accession of Archelaus, or rather was carried on while he was pleading his cause in Rome, the standard of the Nationalists was again raised in Galilee. Judas, the son of Ezekias, took possession of the city of Sepphoris, and armed his followers from the royal arsenal there. At that time, as we know, the High-Priest Joazar sympathised, at least indirectly, with the Nationalists. The rising, which indeed was general throughout Palestine, was suppressed by fire and sword, and the sons of Herod were enabled to enter on their possessions. But when, after the deposition of Archelaus, Joazar persuaded the people to submit to the taxing of Quirinius, Judas was not disposed to follow what he regarded as the treacherous lead of the Pontiff. In conjunction with a Shammaite Rabbi, Sadduk, he

raised again the standard of revolt, although once more unsuccessfully. How the Hillelites looked upon this movement, we gather even from the slighting allusion of Gamaliel. The family of Ezekias furnished other martyrs to the National cause. The two sons of Judas died for it on the cross in 46 a.d. Yet a third son, Manahem, who, from the commencement of the war against Rome, was one of the leaders of the most fanatical Nationalists, the Sicarii - the Jacobins of the party, as they have been aptly designated - died under unspeakable sufferings, while a fourth member of the family, Eleazar, was the leader of Israel's forlorn hope, and nobly died at Masada, in the closing drama of the Jewish war of independence. Of such stuff were the Galilean Zealots made. But we have to take this intense Nationalist tendency also into account in the history of Jesus, the more so that at least one of His disciples, and he a member of His family, had at one time belonged to the party. Only the Kingdom of which Jesus was the King was, as He Himself said, not of this world, and of far different conception from that for which the Nationalists longed.

At the time when Jesus went up to the feast, Quirinius was, as already stated, Governor of Syria. The taxing and the rising of Judas were alike past; and the Roman Governor, dissatisfied with the trimming of Joazar, and distrustful of him, had appointed in his stead Ananos, the son of Seth, the Annas of infamous memory in the New Testament. With brief interruption, he or his son held the Pontifical office till, under the Procuratorship of Pilate, Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas, succeeded to that dignity. It has already been stated that, subject to the Roman Governors of Syria, the rule of Palestine devolved on Procurators, of whom Coponius was the first. Of him and his immediate successors - Marcus Ambivius, Annius Rufus, and Valerius Gratus, we know little. They were, indeed, guilty of the most grievous fiscal oppressions, but they seem to have respected, so far as was in them, the religious feelings of the Jews. We know, that they even removed the image of the Emperor from the standards of the Roman soldiers before marching them into Jerusalem, so as to avoid the appearance of a *cultus* of the Cæsars. It was reserved for Pontius Pilate to force this hated emblem on the Jews, and otherwise to set their most sacred feelings at defiance. But we may notice, even at this stage, with what critical periods in Jewish history the public appearance of Christ synchronised. His first visit to the Temple followed upon the Roman possession of Judæa, the taxing, and the national rising, as also the institution of Annas to the High-Priesthood. And the commencement of His public Ministry was contemporaneous with the accession of Pilate, and the institution of Caiaphas. Whether viewed subjectively or objectively, these things also have a deep bearing upon the history of the Christ.

It was, as we reckon it, in spring a.d. 9, that Jesus for the first time went up to the Paschal Feast in Jerusalem. Coponius would be there as the Procurator; and Annas ruled in the Temple as High-Priest, when He appeared among its doctors. But far other than political thoughts must have occupied the mind of Christ. Indeed, for a time a brief calm had fallen upon the land. There was nothing to provoke active resistance, and the party of the Zealots, although existing, and striking deeper root in the hearts of the people, was, for the time, rather what Josephus called it, 'the philosophical party' - their minds busy with an ideal, which their hands were not yet preparing to make a reality. And so, when, according to ancient wont, the festive company from Nazareth, soon swelled by other festive bands, went up to Jerusalem, chanting by the way those 'Psalms of Ascent' to the accompaniment of the flute, they might implicitly yield themselves to the spiritual thoughts kindled by such words.

When the pilgrims' feet stood within the gates of Jerusalem, there could have been no difficulty in finding hospitality, however crowded the City may have been on such occasions- the more so when we remember the extreme simplicity of Eastern manners and wants, and the abundance of provisions which the many sacrifices of the season would supply. But on this subject, also, the Evangelic narrative keeps silence. Glorious as a view of Jerusalem must have seemed to a child coming to it for the first time from the retirement of a Galilean village, we must bear in mind, that He Who now looked upon it was not an ordinary Child. Nor are we, perhaps, mistaken in the idea that the sight of its grandeur would, as on another occasion, awaken in Him not so much feelings of admiration, which might have been akin to those of pride, as of sadness, though He may as yet have been scarcely conscious of its deeper reason. But the one all-engrossing thought would be of the *Temple*. This, his first visit to its halls, seems also to have called out the first outspoken - and may we not infer, the first conscious - thought of that Temple as the House of His Father, and with it the first conscious

impulse of his Mission and Being. Here also it would be the higher meaning, rather than the structure and appearance, of the Temple, that would absorb the mind. And yet there was sufficient, even in the latter, to kindle enthusiasm. As the pilgrim ascended the Mount, crested by that symmetrically proportioned building, which could hold within its gigantic girdle not fewer than 210,000 persons, his wonder might well increase at every step. The Mount itself seemed like an island, abruptly rising from out deep valleys, surrounded by a sea of walls, palaces, streets, and houses, and crowned by a mass of snowy marble and glittering gold, rising terrace upon terrace. Altogether it measured a square of about 1,000 feet, or, to give a more exact equivalent of the measurements furnished by the Rabbis, 927 feet. At its north-western angle, and connected with it, frowned the Castle of Antonia, held by the Roman garrison. The lofty walls were pierced by massive gates - the unused gate (*Tedi*) on the north; the Susa Gate on the east, which opened on the arched roadway to the Mount of Olives; the two so-called 'Huldah' (probably, 'weasel') gates, which led by tunnels from the priest-suburb Ophel into the outer Court; and, finally, four gates on the west.

Within the gates ran all around covered double colonnades, with here are there benches for those who resorted thither for prayer or for conference. The most magnificent of those was the southern, or twofold double colonnade, with a wide space between; the most venerable, the ancient 'Solomon's Porch,' or eastern colonnade. Entering from the Xystus bridge, and under the tower of John, one would pass along the southern colonnade (over the tunnel of the Huldah-gates) to its eastern extremity, over which another tower rose, probably 'the pinnacle' of the history of the Temptation. From this height yawned the Kedron valley 450 feet beneath. From that lofty pinnacle the priest each morning watched and announced the earliest streak of day. Passing along the eastern colonnade, or Solomon's Porch, we would, if the description of the Rabbis is trustworthy, have reached the Susa Gate, the carved representation of that city over the gateway reminding us of the *Eastern Dispersion*. Here the standard measures of the Temple are said to have been kept; and here, also, we have to locate the first or lowest of the three Sanhedrins, which, according to the Mishnah, held their meetings in the Temple; the second, or intermediate Court of Appeal, being in the 'Court of the Priests' (probably close to the Nicanor Gate); and the highest, that of the Great Sanhedrin, at one time in the 'Hall of Hewn Square Stones' (*Lishkath ha-Gazith*.)

Passing out of these 'colonnades,' or 'porches,' you entered the 'Court of the Gentiles,' or what the Rabbis called 'the Mount of the House,' which was widest on the west side, and more and more narrow respectively on the east, the south, and the north. This was called the *Chol*, or 'profane' place to which Gentiles had access. Here must have been the market for the sale of sacrificial animals, the tables of the money-changers, and places for the sale of other needful articles. Advancing within this Court, you reached a low breast-wall (the *Soreg*), which marked the space beyond which no Gentile, nor Levitically unclean person, might proceed - tablets, bearing inscriptions to that effect, warning them off. Thirteen openings admitted into the inner part of the Court. Thence fourteen steps led up to the *Chel* or Terrace, which was bounded by the wall of the Temple-buildings in the stricter sense. A flight of steps led up to the massive, splendid gates. The two on the west side seem to have been of no importance, so far as the worshippers were concerned, and probably intended for the use of workmen. North and south were four gates. But the most splendid gate was that to the east, termed 'the Beautiful.'

Entering by the latter, you came into the Court of the Women, so called because the women occupied in it two elevated and separated galleries, which, however, filled only part of the Court. Fifteen steps led up to the Upper Court, which was bounded by a wall, and where was the celebrated Nicanor Gate, covered with Corinthian brass. Here the Levites, who conducted the musical part of the service, were placed. In the Court of the Women were the Treasury and the thirteen 'Trumpets,' while at each corner were chambers or halls, destined for various purposes. Similarly, beyond the fifteen steps, there were repositories for the musical instruments. The Upper Court was divided into two parts by a boundary - the narrow part forming the Court of Israel, and the wider that of the Priests, in which were the great Altar and the Laver.

The Sanctuary itself was on a higher terrace than that Court of the Priests. Twelve steps led up to its Porch, which extended beyond it on either side (north and south). Here, in separate chambers, all that was necessary for the sacrificial service was kept. On two marble tables near the entrance the old shewbread which

was taken out, and the new that was brought in, were respectively placed. The Porch was adorned by votive presents, conspicuous among them a massive golden vine. A two-leaved gate opened into the Sanctuary itself, which was divided into two parts. The *Holy Place* had the Golden Candlestick (south), the Table of Shewbread (north), and the Golden Altar of Incense between them. A heavy double veil concealed the entrance to the *Most Holy Place*, which in the second Temple was empty, nothing being there but the piece of rock, called the *Ebhen Shethiyah*, or Foundation Stone, which, according to tradition, covered the mouth of the pit, and on which, it was thought, the world was founded. Nor does all this convey an adequate idea of the vastness of the Temple-buildings. For all around the Sanctuary and each of the Courts were various chambers and out-buildings, which served different purposes connected with the Services of the Temple.

In some part of this Temple, 'sitting in the midst of the Doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions,' we must look for the Child Jesus on the third and the two following days of the Feast on which He first visited the Sanctuary. Only on the two first days of the Feast of Passover was personal attendance in the Temple necessary. With the third day commenced the so-called half-holydays, when it was lawful to return to one's home - a provision of which, no doubt, many availed themselves. Indeed, there was really nothing of special interest to detain the pilgrims. For, the Passover had been eaten, the festive sacrifice (or *Chagigah*) offered, and the first ripe barely reaped and brought to the Temple, and waved as the Omer of first flour before the Lord. Hence, in view of the well-known Rabbinic provision, the expression in the Gospel-narrative concerning the 'Parents' of Jesus, 'when they had fulfilled the days,' cannot necessarily imply that Joseph and the Mother of Jesus had remained in Jerusalem during the whole Paschal week. On the other hand, the circumstances connected with the presence of Jesus could not have been found among the Doctors after the close of the Feast. The first question here is as to the locality in the Temple, where the scene has to be laid. It has, indeed, been commonly supposed that there was a Synagogue in the Temple; but of this there is, to say the least, no historical evidence. But even if such had existed, the worship and addresses of the Synagogue would not have offered any opportunity for the questioning on the part of Jesus which the narrative implies. Still more groundless is the idea that there was in the Temple something like a *Beth ha-Midrash*, or theological Academy, not to speak of the circumstance that a child of twelve would not, at any time, have been allowed to take part in its discussions. But there were occasions on which the Temple became virtually, though not formally, a *Beth ha-Midrash*. For we read in the Talmud, that the members of the Temple-Sanhedrin, who on ordinary days sat as a Court of Appeal, from the close of the Morning-to the time of the Evening-Sacrifice, were wont on Sabbaths and *feast-days* to come out upon 'the Terrace' of the Temple, and there to teach. In such popular instruction the utmost latitude of questioning would be given. It is in this audience, which sat on the ground, surrounding and mingling with the Doctors - and hence *during*, not *after* the Feast - that we must seek the Child Jesus.

But we have yet to show that the presence and questioning of a Child of that age did not necessarily imply anything so extraordinary, as to convey the idea of supernaturalness to those Doctors or others in the audience. Jewish tradition gives other instances of precocious and strangely advanced students. Besides, scientific theological learning would not be necessary to take part in such popular discussions. If we may judge from later arrangements, not only in Babylon, but in Palestine, there were two kinds of public lectures, and two kinds of students. The first, or more scientific class, was designated *Kallah* (literally, bride), and its attendants *Beney-Kallah* (children of the bride). These lectures were delivered in the last month of summer (Elul), before the Feast of the New Year, and in the last winter month (Adar), immediately before the Feast of Passover. They implied considerable preparation on the part of the lecturing Rabbis, and at least some Talmudic knowledge on the part of the attendants. On the other hand, there were Students of the Court (*Chatsatsta*, and in Babylon *Tarbítsa*), who during ordinary lectures sat separated from the regular students by a kind of hedge, outside, as it were in the Court, some of whom seem to have been ignorant even of the Bible. The lectures addressed to such a general audience would, of course, be of a very different character.

But if there was nothing so unprecedented as to render His Presence and questioning marvellous, yet all who heard Him 'were amazed' at His 'combinative insight' and 'discerning answers.' We scarcely venture to inquire towards what His questioning had been directed. Judging by what we know of such discussion, we infer

that they may have been connected with the Paschal solemnities. Grave Paschal questions *did* arise. Indeed, the great Hillel obtained his rank as chief when he proved to the assembled Doctors that the Passover might be offered even on the Sabbath. Many other questions might arise on the subject of the Passover. Or did the Child Jesus – as afterwards, in connection with the Messianic teaching - lead up by His questions to the deeper meaning of the Paschal solemnities, as it was to be unfolded, when Himself was offered up, ‘the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world?’

Other questions also almost force themselves on the mind - most notably this: whether on the occasion of this His first visit to the Temple, the Virgin-Mother had told her Son the history of His Infancy, and of what had happened when, for the first time, He had been brought to the Temple. It would almost seem so, if we might judge from the contrast between the Virgin-Mother’s complaint about the search of His father and of her, and His own emphatic appeal to the business of His Father. But most surprising, truly wonderful it must have seemed to Joseph, and even to the Mother of Jesus, that the meek, quiet Child should have been found in such company, and so engaged. It must have been quite other than what, from His past, they would have expected; or they would not have taken it for granted, when they left Jerusalem, that He was among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, perhaps mingling with the children. Nor yet would they, in such case, after they missed Him at the first night’s halt - at Sichem, if the direct road north, through Samaria, was taken (or, according to the Mishnah, at Akrahah) - have so anxiously sought Him by the way, and in Jerusalem; nor yet would they have been ‘amazed’ when they found Him in the assembly of the Doctors. The reply of Jesus to the half-reproachful, half-relieved expostulation of them who had sought Him ‘sorrowing’ these three days, sets clearly these three things before us. He had been so entirely absorbed by the awakening thought of His Being and Mission, however kindled, as to be not only neglectful, but forgetful of all around. Nay, it even seemed to Him impossible to understand how they could have sought Him, and not known where He had lingered. *Secondly*: we may venture to say, that He now realised that this was emphatically *His* Father’s House. And, *thirdly*: so far as we can judge, it was then and there that, for the first time, He felt the strong and irresistible impulse - that Divine necessity of His Being - to be ‘about His Father’s business.’ We all, when first awakening to spiritual consciousness - or, perhaps, when for the first time taking part in the feast of the Lord’s House - may, and, learning from His example, should, make this the hour of decision, in which heart and life shall be wholly consecrated to the ‘business’ of our Father. But there was far more than this in the bearing of Christ on this occasion. That forgetfulness of His Child-life was a sacrifice - a sacrifice of self; that entire absorption in His Father’s business, without a thought of self, either in the gratification of curiosity, the acquisition of knowledge, or personal ambition – a consecration of Himself unto God. It was the first manifestation of His passive and active obedience to the Will of God. Even at this stage, it was the forth-bursting of the inmost meaning of His Life: ‘My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.’ And yet this awakening of the Christ-consciousness on His first visit to the Temple, partial, and perhaps even temporary, as it may have been, seems itself like the morning-dawn, which from the pinnacle of the Temple the Priest watched, ere he summoned his waiting brethren beneath to offer the early sacrifice. From what we have already learned of this History, we do not wonder that the answer of Jesus came to His parents as a fresh surprise. For, we can only understand what we perceive in its totality. But here each fresh manifestation came as something separate and new - not as part of a whole; and therefore as a surprise, of which the purport and meaning could not be understood, except in its organic connection and as a whole. And for the true human development of the God-Man, what was the natural was also the needful process, even as it was best for the learning of Mary herself, and for the future reception of His teaching. These three subsidiary reasons may once more be indicated here in explanation of the Virgin-Mother’s seeming ignorance of her Son’s true character: the necessary gradualness of such a revelation; the necessary development of His own consciousness; and the fact, that Jesus could not have been subject to His Parents, nor had true and proper human training, if they had clearly known that He was the essential Son of God.

A further, though to us it seems a downward step, was His quiet, immediate, unquestioning return to Nazareth with His Parents, and His willing submission to them while there. It was self-denial, self-sacrifice, self-consecration to His Mission, with all that it implied. It was not self-exinanition but self-submission, all the

more glorious in proportion to the greatness of that *Self*. This constant contrast before her eyes only deepened in the heart of Mary the everpresent impression of ‘all those matters,’ of which she was the most cognisant. She was learning to spell out the word Messiah, as each of ‘those matters’ taught her one fresh letter in it, and she looked at them all in the light of the Nazareth-Sun.

With His return to Nazareth began Jesus’ Life of youth and early manhood, with all of inward and outward development, of heavenly and earthly approbation which it carried. Whether or not He went to Jerusalem on recurring Feasts, we know not, and need not inquire. For only once during that period - on His first visit to the Temple, and in the awakening of His Youth-Life - could there have been such outward forth-bursting of His real Being and Mission. Other influences were at their silent work to weld His inward and outward development, and to determine the manner of His later Manifesting of Himself. We assume that the School-education of Jesus must have ceased soon after His return to Nazareth. Henceforth the Nazareth-influences on the Life and Thinking of Jesus may be grouped - and progressively as He advanced from youth to manhood - under these particulars: *Home*, *Nature*, and *Prevailing Ideas*.

1. *Home*. Jewish Home-Life, especially in the country, was of the simplest. Even in luxurious Alexandria it seems often to have been such, alike as regarded the furnishing of the house, and the provisions of the table. The morning and midday meal must have been of the plainest, and even the larger evening meal of the simplest, in the home at Nazareth. Only the Sabbath and festivals, whether domestic or public, brought what of the best lay within reach. But Nazareth was not the city of the wealthy or influential, and such festive evening-entertainments, with elaborate ceremoniousness of reception, arranging of guests according to rank, and rich spread of board, would but rarely, if ever, be witnessed in those quiet homes. The same simplicity would prevail in dress and manners. But close and loving were the bonds which drew together the members of a family, and deep the influence which they exercised on each other. We cannot here discuss the vexed question whether ‘the brothers and sisters’ of Jesus were such in the real sense, or step-brothers and sisters, or else cousins, though it seems to us as if the primary meaning of the terms would scarcely have been called in question, but for a theory of false asceticism, and an undervaluing of the sanctity of the married estate. But, whatever the precise relationship between Jesus and these ‘brothers and sisters,’ it must, on any theory, have been of the closest, and exercised its influence upon Him.

Passing over Joses or Joseph, of whose history we know next to nothing, we have sufficient materials to enable us to form some judgment of what must have been the tendencies and thoughts of two of His brothers *James* and *Jude*, before they were heart and soul followers of the Messiah, and of His cousin *Simon*. If we might venture on a general characterisation, we would infer from the Epistle of St. James, that his religious views had originally been cast in the mould of *Shammai*. Certainly, there is nothing of the Hillelite direction about it, but all to remind us of the earnestness, directness, vigour, and rigour of *Shammai*. Of *Simon* we know that he had belonged to the Nationalist party, since he is expressly so designated (*Zelotes*, *Cananean*). Lastly, there are in the Epistle of St. Jude, one undoubted, and another probable reference to two of those (Pseudepigraphic) Apocalyptic books, which at that time marked one deeply interesting phase of the Messianic outlook of Israel. We have thus within the narrow circle of Christ’s Family-Life - not to speak of any intercourse with the sons of Zebedee, who probably were also His cousins - the three most hopeful and pure Jewish tendencies, brought into constant contact with Jesus: in Pharisaism, the teaching of *Shammai*; then, the Nationalist ideal; and, finally, the hope of a glorious Messianic future. To these there should probably be added, at least knowledge of the lonely preparation of His kinsman John, who, though certainly *not* an Essene, had, from the necessity of his calling, much in his outward bearing that was akin to them.

But we are anticipating. From what are, necessarily, only suggestions, we turn again to what is certain in connection with His Family-Life and its influences. From St. Mark vi. 3, we may infer with great probability, though not with absolute certainty, that He had adopted the trade of Joseph. Among the Jews the contempt for manual labour, which was one of the painful characteristics of heathenism, did not exist. On the contrary, it was deemed a religious duty, frequently and most earnestly insisted upon, to learn some trade, provided it did not minister to luxury, nor tend to lead away from personal observance of the Law. There was not such separation between rich and poor as with us, and while wealth might confer social distinction, the absence of it in no way



implied social inferiority. Nor could it be otherwise where wants were so few, life was so simple, and its highest aim so ever present to the mind.

We have already spoken of the religious influences in the family, so blessedly different from that neglect, exposure, and even murder of children among the heathen, or their education by slaves, who corrupted the mind from its earliest opening. The love of parents to children, appearing even in the curse which was felt to attach to childlessness; the reverence towards parents, as a duty higher than any of outward observance; and the love of brethren, which Jesus had learned in His home, form, so to speak, the natural basis of many of the teachings of Jesus. They give us also an insight into the family-life of Nazareth. And yet there is nothing sombre nor morose about it; and even the joyous games of children, as well as festive gatherings of families, find their record in the words and the life of Christ. This also is characteristic of His past. And so are His deep sympathy with all sorrow and suffering, and His love for the family circle, as evidenced in the home of Lazarus. That He spoke Hebrew, and used and quoted the Scriptures in the original, has already been shown, although, no doubt, He understood Greek, possibly also Latin.

*Secondly: Nature and Every-day Life.* The most superficial perusal of the teaching of Christ must convince how deeply sympathetic He was with nature, and how keenly observant of man. Here there is no contrast between love of the country and the habits of city life; the two are found side by side. On His lonely walks He must have had an eye for the beauty of the lilies of the field, and thought of it, how the birds of the air received their food from an Unseen Hand, and with what maternal affection the hen gathered her chickens under her wing. He had watched the sower or the vinedresser as he went forth to his labour, and read the teaching of the tares which sprang up among the wheat. To Him the vocation of the shepherd must have been full of meaning, as he led, and fed, and watched his flock, spoke to his sheep with well-known voice, brought them to the fold, or followed, and tenderly carried back, those that had strayed, ever ready to defend them, even at the cost of his own life. Nay, He even seems to have watched the habits of the fox in its secret lair. But he also equally knew the joys, the sorrows, the wants and sufferings of the busy multitude. The play in the market, the marriage processions, the funeral rites, the wrongs of injustice and oppression, the urgent harshness of the creditor, the bonds and prison of the debtor, the palaces and luxury of princes and courtiers, the self-indulgence of the rich, the avarice of the covetous, the exactions of the tax-gatherer, and the oppression of the widow by unjust judges, had all made an indelible impression on His mind. And yet this evil world was not one which He hated, and from which He would withdraw Himself with His disciples, though ever and again He felt the need of periods of meditation and prayer. On the contrary, while He confronted all the evil in it, He would fain pervade the mass with the new leaven; not cast it away, but renew it. He recognised the good and the hopeful, even in those who seemed most lost. He quenched not the dimly burning flax, nor brake the bruised reed. It was not contempt of the world, but sadness over it; not condemnation of man, but drawing him to His Heavenly Father; not despising of the little and the poor, whether outwardly or inwardly such, but encouragement and adoption of them, together with keen insight into the real under the mask of the apparent, and withering denunciation and unsparing exposure of all that was evil, mean, and unreal, wherever it might appear. Such were some of the results gathered from His past life, as presented in His teaching.

*Thirdly: Of the prevailing ideas* around, with which He was brought in contact, some have already been mentioned. Surely, the earnestness of His Shammaite brother, if such we may venture to designate him; the idea of the Kingdom suggested by the Nationalists, only in its purest and most spiritual form, as not of this world, and as truly realising the sovereignty of God in the individual, whoever he might be; even the dreamy thoughts of the prophetic literature of those times, which sought to read the mysteries of the coming Kingdom; as well as the prophet-like asceticism of His forerunner and kinsman, formed at least so many points of contact for His teaching. Thus, Christ was in sympathy with all the highest tendencies of His people and time. Above all, there was His intimate converse with the Scriptures of the Old Testament. If, in the Synagogue, He saw much to show the hollowness, self-seeking, pride, and literalism which a mere external observance of the Law fostered, He would ever turn from what man or devils said to what He read, to what was 'written.' Not one dot or hook of it could fall to the ground - all must be established and fulfilled. The Law of Moses in all its bearings, the utterances of the prophets - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi - and the hopes

and consolations of the Psalms, were all to Him literally true, and cast their light upon the building which Moses had reared. It was all one, a grand unity; not an aggregation of different parts, but the unfolding of a living organism. Chiefest of all, it was the thought of the Messianic bearing of all Scripture to its unity, the idea of the Kingdom of God and the King of Zion, which was the life and light of all. Beyond this, into the mystery of His inner converse with God, the unfolding of His spiritual receptiveness, and the increasing communication from above, we dare not enter. Even what His bodily appearance may have been, we scarcely venture to imagine. It could not but be that His outer man in some measure bodied forth His 'Inner Being.' Yet we dread gathering around our thoughts of Him the artificial flowers of legend. What His manner and mode of receiving and dealing with men were, we can portray to ourselves from His life. And so it is best to remain content with the simple account of the Evangelic narrative: 'Jesus increased in favour with God and Man.'