

to his person and mission "Who then is this?" is the question which will involuntarily rise to our lips as we study Jesus; and it will not rest unless adequately answered.

Jesus was unique in—

### I. HIS PERSONALITY.

He was the child of an humble home; the citizen of an obscure and proverbially degraded city; the countryman of a narrow and bigoted race; the contemporary of the most debasing things in human history. He was a dweller in humble life, a laborer unlearned in the wisdom of the schools, untravelled, and untaught. There was nothing in his personal surroundings to make him great. His opportunities cannot account for him being greater than his contemporaries; much less for him surpassing all great men in every age. This obscure citizen of a despised community soon impressed men with a remarkable personality. He roused the populace from one end of the land to the other. Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond Jordan, Tyre and Sidon, "hearing what great things he did came unto him." And when he fled from the city to the desert to get needed rest, multitudes flocked out of all the cities on foot travelling mile upon mile to be near him and to hear him.

So astonishing was the impression of his personality that men were puzzled to account for it. His friends said he had gone mad; his enemies, that he had a devil; Herod, that he was John the Baptist risen from the dead. The whole nation was aroused, and learned doctors and reverend leaders combined to suppress and silence him, without avail. He rose and towered above them all. He put them to confusion when they tried to entrap him. He drove them to the alternative of admitting his superiority, or of resorting to desperate measures to circumvent and suppress him.

Jesus took issue with his age. And while his personal success seems small, his personality stands out in colossal proportions, against the back-ground of his age and country.

### II. HIS AIMS.

1. *The establishment of the Kingdom of God.* Others have aspired to establish kingdoms over men. Jesus aimed to establish a kingdom in men. The reign of God in the human heart, is his object. He wishes to subdue men and rule over them that he may bless them. And his sceptre is love. No other conqueror or king ever aimed at such a thing as this, or acted from such a motive.

2. *The universal extension of this kingdom.*

Jesus contemplated the world in all he did or said. He assumed that his gospel would be preached in all the world. He gave directions for the universal propagation of his cause. He planned a universal revolution in human thought and action. He laid the axe at the root of every tree of evil in human society, fatedooming it to destruction. He determined the downfall of the high things of the world, and the exaltation of the

things that were abased. He would carry this revolution to the uttermost parts of the earth. In these high purposes he was without a predecessor, as he has been without a successor. His aims are peculiar to himself.

### III. HIS METHODS.

He did not seek the favor of the rich or the great. His companions and trusted disciples were all among the poor and humble. He did not use force. He adopted love as his conquering power. He entrusted his teachings and the work of proclaiming them to men who, by ordinary standards, were ignorant, and who had neither prestige nor power among their fellowmen. He wrote nothing, systematised nothing, organized nothing, while on earth. He simply lived, taught, wrought, for three years in the presence of a dozen Galilean fishermen, and before an unsympathetic world, and died a martyr to his high ideals and his inflexible purposes. That was all. And upon this, as far as human judgment goes, he depended for the perpetuity of his cause. There never was so great an undertaking left by its projector with such a slight provision for its execution. Never were such apparently inadequate means adopted for such momentous ends.

### IV. HIS INFLUENCE.

1. *It began in its true proportions after his death.* When he died his following was small. In a short time thousands had acknowledged him as Lord. In a few years he had profoundly affected his native land, and made startling conquests in the heathen world. In a few generations the whole civilized world had felt his power.

2. *It has extended to the present.* Multitudes now love Jesus, serve him, would die for him. This is a unique spectacle. No other hero has ever been able to personally attract men after he passed away from the world. No man is willing now to die for Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, or George Washington. But thousands would die for Jesus. He alone of all the great leaders of history has held his sway over the hearts of men.

3. *It is ever deepening and widening.* Other leaders lose their grip on the world as time passes. Jesus enlarges and intensifies his. There never were so many people so much under the influence of Jesus as at present. And his sway is widening with successive ages, and deepening with the passing seasons. In this growing power over the hearts of men and in the affairs of human society, Jesus has no equal, nor is there any at all like him.

"Who then is this," that stands out so absolutely alone in his personality, his aims, his methods, and his influence? We have no example of such things among mankind. We cannot therefore classify him among men. He stands by himself among men but separate from them; in this world, but so different from this world that we instinctively believe him when he says, "I am not of this world." And when the question presses for an answer, we see the only satisfactory solution of the problem to be that other statement of his, "I am from above." This explains it all. In Jesus we have heaven brought down into human society. Hence the wonders which cluster about his person and work. The winds and waves obey their Master, and the world of mankind acknowledges its Maker and Lord.

### THE ATTRACTION OF CALVARY.

T. H. BLENUS.

#### IV.

It is love that in all ages and lands has freighted the name mother, with all that is sacred and tender, noble and pure; and it is this that has lifted the name of Jesus above every name, that at this name every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father. This, I take it, is the secret of the attractive power of Jesus. He reveals to me the fact that God loves me. If it thrills me to know that I am the object of a creature's love, what must be the emotion when I awake to the fact that the infinite God stoops to love and yearns to embrace me? Can you wonder if, while memory is true to her trust, and the human heart capable of a sensation, the thought of that hour quickens and fires the soul as if by a divine afflatus? Can you wonder if the soul be well nigh beside itself with joy, when it feels itself encircled by the divine arms, and from sin and ruin it emerges into the divine likeness?

This attraction increases as the evidences of the intensity of this love are multiplied. Love is a discerner. It may not create; its office is to reveal. The world is now made to the Christian. Providence has a new meaning to the child of God. Nature is written all over, in every stone and brooklet, mead and mountain, with the evidences of a Father's love. Earth is a mansion fitted up and garnished for his children by a Father's hand. Through countless ages, before which the imagination staggers, God was preparing the earth, for the habitation of man; rearing its mountains, spreading its plains, mixing the gases for its air and water, threading its rocks with silver, sowing its sands with gold, and, foreseeing the coming frosts, storing away in exhaustless plenty concentrated sunlight and heat as fuel for the ages. Behold its garniture of clouds, its enamel of flowers. Hark to the music of its birds. Behold creation at the Christian's feet, and for his use. See, too, how every providence proclaims his love. The world's history, its joys and sorrows, its trials and triumphs, successes and failures, all come with their instruction and warning, and conspire to lift me to the pinnacle of the world's glory and power. Science reveals to me the mysteries of nature, but between the lines I read the sentence: "My Father loves me." Philosophy may explain to me the laws of matter and of mind, but behind them I see my Father's plans for the world's government, and the mind's unfolding. History may tell me of the rise and fall of nations, but amid it all I see the Father's finger pointing me to the only pathway of prosperity and power. But this truth finds its culmination and highest exemplification in the cross. Love finds its climax of power in the degree of its manifestation. But how shall I write of that which defies description? Who can portray the passing of the infinite to the finite—the stooping of God to man—the act by which the creator comes between the creature and his sins, and lifts the sinner out of his sins into the joy and blessedness of a new and holy life—the act by which God becomes man to save man—the love so fathomless that it led the Father to give his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life—that constrained Jesus, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, to lay aside the glory he had with the Father before the worlds were; to stoop to our vileness, to bear our burden, and