



"Christ Cleansing the Temple" by Bernadino Mei, painted about 1655.

The Emotional Life of Our Lord

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Outline

Introduction: Difficulty of forming a universally acceptable conception of our Lord's emotional life. Effect of incarnation. Ideal of virtue. Value of the express attributions of specific emotions to him.

I. *Compassion and Love.*

Splangchnizomai and its grounds. *Dakruō* and *klaiō*; *stenazō* and *anastenazō*. Love to God and man: *agapaō*. Friendship: *phileō*.

II. *Indignation and Annoyance.*

Inevitableness of angry emotions. *Orgē*. *Aganakteō*. *Hembrimaomai* and its object. *Epitimaō* and its ground. *Zēlos*. Angry language. *Ecce Homo* on Christ's resentment.

III. *Joy and Sorrow.*

Man of Sorrows or Man of Joy? *Agalliaomai*. Renan's perversion. Jesus' hopes and illusions? Fundamental joy. *Khara*. Lighter emotions of joy and sorrow. The shadow of the cross. *Synekhō*. The pro-Gethsemane: *tarassō*. The Agony, its elements and meaning. *Adēmoneō*; *lupeomai*, *ekthambeomai*, *perilupos*. The Dereliction. Cause of our Lord's Death.

Fundamental religious emotions unmentioned. Few ordinary emotions mentioned: *thamazō*, *epithumia*, *epaiskhynomai*.

Conclusion: Fulness of our Lord's emotions. Reality of his humanity. His individuality. His chief characteristics? His comprehensiveness. Our model. Our Saviour.

It belongs to the truth of our Lord's humanity, that he was subject to all sinless human emotions.¹ In the accounts which the Evangelists give us of the crowded activities which filled the few years of his ministry, the play of a great variety of emotions is depicted. It has nevertheless not proved easy to form a universally acceptable conception of our Lord's emotional life. Not only has the mystery of the Incarnation entered in as a disturbing factor, the effect of the divine nature on the movements of the human soul brought into personal union with it has been variously estimated. Differences have arisen also as to how far there may be attributed to a perfect human nature movements known to us only as passions of sinful beings.

Two opposite tendencies early showed themselves in the Church. One, derived ultimately from the ethical ideal of the Stoa, which conceived moral perfection under the form of *apatheia*,

¹ "Certainly," remarks Calvin (*Commentarius in Harmoniam Evangelicarum*, Mt. xxvi. 37), "those who imagine that the Son of God was exempt from human passions, do not truly and seriously acknowledge him to be a man." "But Christ having a human nature the same for substance that ours is, consisting both of soul and body," argues Thomas Goodwin (*Works*, Edinburgh ed., 1862, iv. p. 140), "therefore he must needs have affections, — even affections proper to man's nature and truly human. And these he should have had, although this human nature had, from the very first assumption of it, been as glorious as it now is in heaven." "In what sense the soul is capable of suffering," says John Pearson (*An Exposition of the Creed*, New York ed., 1843, p. 288), "in that he was subject to animal passion. Evil apprehended to come tormented his soul with fear, which was as truly in him in respect of what he was to suffer, as hope in reference to the recompense of a reward to come after and from his sufferings."

naturally wished to attribute this ideal *apatheia* to Jesus, as the perfect man. The other, under the influence of the conviction that, in order to deliver men from their weaknesses, the Redeemer must assume and sanctify in his own person all human *pathē*, as naturally was eager to attribute to him in its fulness every human *pathos*. Though in far less clearly defined forms, and with a complete shifting of their bases, both tendencies are still operative in men's thought of Jesus. There is a tendency in the interest of the dignity of his person to minimize, and there is a tendency in the interest of the completeness of his humanity to magnify, his affectional movements. The one tendency may run some risk of giving us a somewhat cold and remote Jesus, whom we can scarcely believe to be able to sympathize with us in all our infirmities. The other may possibly be in danger of offering us a Jesus so crassly human as scarcely to command our highest reverence. Between the two, the figure of Jesus is liable to take on a certain vagueness of outline, and come to lack definiteness in our thought. It may not be without its uses, therefore, to seek a starting point for our conception of his emotional life in the comparatively few² affectional movements which are directly assigned to him in

² There is some exaggeration in the remark: "The notices in the Gospels of the impressions made on his feelings by different situations in which he was placed, are extraordinarily numerous" (James Stalker, *Imago Christi*, 1890, p. 302). The Gospel narratives are very objective, and it is only occasionally (most frequently in Mark) that

the Gospel narratives. Proceeding outward from these, we may be able to form a more distinctly conceived and firmly grounded idea of his emotional life in general.

It cannot be assumed beforehand, indeed, that all the emotions attributed to Jesus in the Evangelical narratives are intended to be ascribed distinctively to his human soul.³ Such is no doubt the common view. And it is not an unnatural view to take as we currently read narratives, which, whatever else they contain, certainly present some dramatization of the human experiences of our Lord.⁴ No doubt the naturalness of this view is its sufficient

they expressly notify the subjective movements of the actors in the drama which they unfold.

³ Direct mention of our Lord's human 'soul,' under that term (*psykhē*), is not frequent in the Gospels: cf. Swete on Mk. xiv. 34, "Though the Gospels yield abundant evidence of the presence of human emotions in our Lord, (e. g. iii. 5, vi. 6, x. 14, Jno. vi. 33), this direct mention of his 'soul' has no parallel in them if we except Jno. vii. 27; for in such passages as x. 45, Jno. x. 11 *psykhē* is the individual life (see Cremer s. v.) rather than the seat of the emotions." J. A. Alexander on Mk. xiv. 34 remarks that "my soul" there "is not a mere periphrasis for the pronoun, (I), but refers his strange sensations more directly to the inward seat of feeling and emotion." Cf., however, the Greek text of Ps. xlii. 6, 12, xlv. 5; but also Winer, *Grammar*, etc., Thayer's tr., 1872, p. 156. The term *pneuma* occurs rather more frequently than *psykhē*, to designate the seat of our Lord's emotions: Mk. viii. 12; Jno. xi. 33, xiii. 21; cf. Mk. ii. 8; Mt. xxvii. 50; Jno. xix. 30.

⁴ Such an attempt as that made by W. B. Smith (*Ecce Deus*, 1911, p. 101), to explain away the implication of our Lord's humanity in the earliest Gospel transmission, is, of course, only a "curiosity of literature." "Mark," says he, "nowhere uses of Jesus an expression which suggests an impressive or even amiable human personality; or, indeed, any kind of human personality whatever." What Mark says of Jesus, is what is commonly said of God — of Jehovah. The seeming exceptions are merely specious. He ascribes "compassion" to Jesus: it is the very core of the oriental conception of God that

general justification. Only, it will be well to bear in mind that Jesus was definitely conceived by the Evangelists as a two-natured person, and that they made no difficulties with his duplex consciousness. In almost the same breath they represent him as declaring that he knows the Father through and through and, of course, also all that is in man, and the world which is the theatre of his activities, and that he is ignorant of the time of the occurrence of a simple earthly event which concerns his own work very closely; that he is meek and lowly in heart and yet at the same time the Lord of men by their relations to whom their destinies are determined, — “no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” In the case of a Being whose subjective life is depicted as focusing in two centers of consciousness, we may properly maintain some reserve in ascribing distinctively to one or the other of them mental activities which, so far as their nature is concerned, might properly belong to either. The embarrassment in studying the emotional life of Jesus arising from this cause, however, is more theoretical than practical. Some of the emotions attributed to him in the Evangelical narrative are, in one way or another, expressly assigned to his

he is merciful. He speaks of Jesus “rebuking” (*epitimaō*) or “snorting at” (*embrimaomai*) men: these are expressions suitable to God and employed in the Old Testament of Jehovah. He tells us that Jesus “loved” the rich young man — the *only* ascription of love to Jesus, by the way, in the Synoptics: but the rich young man is just a symbol, the symbol of Israel, whom Jehovah loves. And so on.

human soul. Some of them by their very nature assign themselves to his human soul. With reference to the remainder, just because they might equally well be assigned to the one nature or the other, it may be taken for granted that they belong to the human soul, if not exclusively, yet along with the divine Spirit; and they may therefore very properly be used to fill out the picture. We may thus, without serious danger of confusion, go simply to the Evangelical narrative, and, passing in review the definite ascriptions of specific emotions to Jesus in its records, found on them a conception of his emotional life which may serve as a starting-point for a study of this aspect of our Lord's human manifestation.

The establishment of this starting-point is the single task of this essay. No attempt will be made in it to round out our view of our Lord's emotional life. It will content itself with an attempt to ascertain the exact emotions which are expressly assigned to him in the Evangelical narrative, and will leave their mere collocation to convey its own lesson. We deceive ourselves, however, if their mere collocation does not suffice solidly to ground certain very clear convictions as to our Lord's humanity, and to determine the lines on which our conception of the quality of his human nature must be filled out.

I.

The emotion which we should naturally expect to find most frequently attributed to that Jesus whose whole life was a mission of mercy, and whose ministry was so marked by deeds of beneficence that it was summed up in the memory of his followers as a going through the land “doing good” (Acts xi. 38), is no doubt “compassion.” In point of fact, this is the emotion which is most frequently attributed to him.⁵ The term employed to express it⁶ was unknown to the Greek classics, and was perhaps a coinage of the Jewish dispersion.⁷ It first appears in common use in this sense, indeed, in the Synoptic Gospels,⁸ where it takes the place of the most inward classical word of this connotation.⁹ The Divine mercy has been defined as that essential perfection in God “whereby he pities and relieves the miseries of his creatures”: it

⁵ Mt. xx. 34; Mk. i. 41; Lk. vii. 13; Mt. ix. 38, xiv. 14, xv. 82; Mk. vi. 34, viii. 2. Cf. Mk. ix. 22. Not at all in John.

⁶ *Splangkhnizomai*: see Bleek, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, §33, (vol. i, p. 75); J. A. Alexander on Mk. i. 41; Plummer on Mt. ix. 38. Buttig’s monograph, *De Emphasi splangkhnizomai*, we have not seen.

⁷ So Lightfoot, on Phil. i. 8.

⁸ It is found in the LXX in this metaphorical sense apparently only at Prov. xvii. 5. Cf. Swete on Mk. i. 41.

⁹ *Oikteirō*, which does not occur in the Synoptic Gospels, and indeed only once (Rom. ix. 15) in the N. T. The adjective, *oiktirmōn* occurs at Lk. ix. 38 (also Jas. v. 11 only in N. T.); the noun *oiktirmos*, occurs in Paul (Rom. xii. 1; 2 Cor. i. 3; Phil. ii. 1; Col. iii. 12; also Heb. x. 28 only).

includes, that is to say, the two parts of an internal movement of pity and an external act of beneficence. It is the internal movement of pity which is emphasized when our Lord is said to be “moved with compassion” as the term is sometimes excellently rendered in the English versions.¹⁰ In the appeals made to his mercy, a more external word¹¹ is used; but it is this more internal word that is employed to express our Lord’s response to these appeals: the petitioners besought him to take pity on them; his heart responded with a profound feeling of pity for them. His compassion fulfilled itself in the outward act;¹² but what is emphasized by the term

¹⁰ A. V. Mk. i. 41, vi. 34; Mt. ix. 38, xiv. 14; R. V. Mk. i. 41; Mt. ix. 36, xx. 34.

¹¹ *Eleēō* (sometimes, *eleaō*), Mt. ix. 27, xv. 22, xvii. 15, xx. 30-31; Mk. x. 47-48; Lk. xvii. 13, xviii. 38-39; cf. Mk. v. 19; Mt. xviii. 33. This word also is not found in John. In Mk. ix. 22 only is *splangkhnizomai* used in an appeal, and even there its more subjective sense is apparent. On *eleos* and its synonymy see J. H. Heinrich Schmidt, *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache* iii., 1879, § 143, pp. 572sq.; and the excellent summary statement by Thayer in Thayer-Grimm, *Lexicon etc.*, *sub voc. eleeo*. G. Heine, *Synonymik des N. T.: -lichen Griechisch*, 898, p. 82, states it thus: “*eleos* (Hebrew: *khan*, *khesedh*) is the inclination to succor the miserable, *oiktirmos* the feeling of pain arising from the miseries of others... *oiktirmos* is the feeling of sympathy dwelling in the heart; *eleos* is sympathy expressing itself in act.” *Splangkhnizomai* is a term of feeling, taking the place of *oikteirō*.

¹² W. Lütgert, *Die Liebe im Neuen Testament*, 1905, thinks it important to lay stress on this side of our Lord’s love. “In the Synoptic portrait of Christ the trait which stands out most clearly is the love of Jesus. He not only commanded love, but first himself practiced it. It is not merely his thought but his will, and not merely his will but above all his deed. He therefore not only required it but aroused it. It expresses itself accordingly not merely in his word, but in the first instance in his act. Jesus’ significance to the Synoptists does not consist in his having discovered the command of love, but in his having fulfilled it. For them Jesus is not a ‘sage’ who teaches old truths or new, but a