Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus

Garvie Alfred Ernest
STUDIES IN THE INNER
LIFE OF JESUS
BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A Guide to Preachers

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STUDIES IN THE INNER 
LIFE OF JESUS

By
ALFRED E. GARVIE
M.A. (Oxon), D.D. (Glas.)
Principal of New College, London

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To My Wife
PREFACE

It is more than twenty years since the writer—then engaged in business, and dividing his leisure between study and Christian work in the slums and "mean streets" of Glasgow—prepared, with such resources of knowledge and insight as he could then command, a series of studies, eight in number, of the inner life of Jesus. Although these were not intended for publication, and written only to satisfy his dominant desire for self-expression on this theme, it must be confessed that a hope, however faint, was cherished by him that some day he might be fit to make such a venture. Amid the varied intellectual interests of his college course in Glasgow and Oxford this theme never lost any of its attraction; and as soon as that course was completed, he began the minute comparative study of the Gospels, which he had now learned was necessary as a preparation for this enterprise. During ten years' ministry in Macduff and Montrose he preached about one hundred sermons on texts from the Gospels bearing on this subject. Six years ago he felt he might venture on making a beginning, and in 1902 ten articles appeared in the Expositor under the title of this volume. His appointment to a professorship in London with the new claims it brought interrupted the continuous execution
of his purpose, but during four years ten studies more were prepared for the *Expositor*. The first of the series as introductory, and now replaced by the "Critical Introduction" and "Constructive Conclusion" has been omitted, and nineteen, thoroughly revised, appear in this volume. Five new studies have been added; three, the tenth, nineteenth, and twenty-first, to complete his original plan, and the other two, the first and the last, as expressing his conviction that the apostolic interpretation as well as the evangelic testimony must be taken into account in dealing with the Person of Jesus. His purpose at first was to exclude all critical, apologetic and dogmatic questions; but in view of the urgent importance of these to-day he has found this impossible, although only reluctantly has he turned aside from his main theme. In order that these questions might be more thoroughly dealt with, a "Critical Introduction" and a "Constructive Conclusion," consisting of the four lectures delivered at the Summer School of Theology in Cambridge, have been included, and this it is hoped will make the volume more useful.

The title indicates the purpose and the method of the book. It is the mind, heart, and will of Jesus as revealed in His words and works that the writer seeks to understand; enough is being written about the scenery, the upholstery and drapery of the life of Jesus; an exaggerated importance is attached to a knowledge of contemporary custom and costume; even the ideas and ideals of His environment, important as a knowledge of these is, do not explain Jesus. We
can know Him as He reveals Himself. There is an opinion current that it is irreverent for us to try and penetrate the mystery of the "inner life" of Jesus. This the writer does not at all share. Jesus is the revelation of God, and that revelation in its most essential features—this inner life—we are intended to know and understand. Theology cannot construct a doctrine of the Person of Christ without this insight, and piety needs this discernment for closest and tenderest communion. What is here written is written in profoundest reverence, and nothing should offend the most reverent reader.

The method is that of inquiry and suggestion rather than of discovery and affirmation. The writer does not offer himself as a teacher, but rather as a student, who asks his readers to share his quest for the truth about Jesus. He has avoided as far as he could expressing his conclusions with any undue confidence; he has not shrunk from conjectures where these might help in the discovery of the certainties. This may explain what some readers may blame in the volume. As regards the problem of the Fourth Gospel he has not reached intellectual satisfaction; in its relation to the Synoptics he still finds many unanswered questions. Should there appear inconsistencies in his treatment, he has preferred to run that risk rather than suppress any suggestions which might be helpful to other minds. As the Studies were prepared at intervals during six years, in which the problems were being constantly gone over in his reflections, it is possible that in spite of as careful revision as he could make, some differences
of judgment may be discovered. The arrangement of
the volume has necessarily involved some repetition;
the same utterances or incidents have been referred
to in illustration of different aspects of the inner life
of Jesus. To be content with references to other parts
of the volume did not commend itself as a desirable
course, as thereby the completeness of the treatment
of each theme would have been sacrificed.

The writer desired to help his readers by supplying
a detailed analysis of the contents, such as he provided
in his volume on The Ritschlian Theology; but he
found on closer examination that this volume, dealing
as it does with sayings and doings of Jesus, and not
offering a continuous argument, does not lend itself
so well to this treatment. A full index of Scripture
references, and another of writers quoted and subjects
treated has been provided, and will, it is hoped,
afford the guidance to the contents which is needed.

In sending forth these meditations of many years
from the quiet haven of private study to the open sea
of public discussion, the writer would in all reverence
and sincerity address to Him who is their theme the
prayer,

Forgive them where they fail in truth;
And in Thy wisdom make me wise.

Whitley Bay,

September 23, 1907
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. The Literary Sources of the Life of Jesus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. The Historical Value of the Gospels</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prologue: The Eternal Word</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Virgin-Birth</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Growth in Wisdom and Grace</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vocation Accepted</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Temptation</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>