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THE
CHURCHMAN

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**ART. I.—OUR LORD'S TEACHING CONCERNING
HIMSELF—I.**

THIS is a subject of fundamental importance. It is the subject which underlies and determines every other portion of our Lord's teaching—His teaching concerning God and concerning man. For if we admit His claims in regard to Himself, we know that through Him alone we can come to the knowledge of the Father, and that by Him man's place and character and destiny are determined.

Moreover, it is a unique subject. The theme is identical with the Teacher. This is unparalleled. No true teacher speaks of himself. But what would be a mark of weakness and egotism in other men, in the Man Christ Jesus impresses us with reverence for His transcendent personality, and brings home to us the uniqueness and greatness of His self-consciousness.

It is, too, I think I may say without exaggeration, the subject which to-day looms up above all others in theology. Christ is acknowledged, as perhaps never before, to be the Supreme Person of history; the records of His life are subjected to the keenest scrutiny; and in all theological work, whether it be constructive or destructive, the significance of His claims and teaching is the great determinative. No one can fail to note the remarkable change which has taken place in this regard. The emphasis which was laid upon the work of the Redeemer, and especially upon His atoning death, is now placed upon His person. We have come to know Christ under the actual historical conditions of His life, its precedent conditions, its social and religious environment, as He was never before known. This is an attainment for which we ought to be profoundly grateful, and from which there cannot

fail to flow eventually the most fruitful results in Christian life and work.

When, however, we come to inquire into the causes of this revolution, we find indications of the dangers that crowd upon us at this epoch. It cannot be said that greater devotion to Christ characterizes this age, as compared with others that have preceded it, nor can it be claimed that as yet we see its fruits in a higher type of religious life. Yet even where the perils seem most imminent, the most timid among us can find grounds of encouragement, proofs that God has not forsaken His Church, but is overruling the inquiries and changes of our days for the vindication of His truth and the establishment of His kingdom. There is a passion for reality, a determination to be satisfied with nothing short of the true and the real, possessing the minds of students. Everything is being tested, although sometimes the tests are arbitrary and misleading. Research is forcing its way back into the inmost secrets of being and of life. The *origines* of Christianity are the fascinating subject of inquiry. And men have come to know that Christianity is Christ, and hence naturally His life and character are scrutinized in their minutest details.

The critical spirit has too much degenerated into a sceptical spirit. The critical methods have to a large extent been dominated by a philosophy of history which seeks to eliminate the supernatural. Hence the motive that has impelled many students of our Lord's life has been their hope and endeavour to account for Christ on the basis of natural development without any supernatural intervention, to find the secret of His power in the conditions of His earthly life, and to explain His person and His works in the terms of the laws of psychological and historical evolution. But it must be already evident to every candid observer that this endeavour is a failure. The more accurate and complete our knowledge of the national, social, and religious conditions of our Lord's life, the more apparent does it become that these do not and cannot explain His personality. Another demonstration is being given us of the Apostolic declaration "that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God." The outcome of these researches will furnish on the one hand the confutation of all merely naturalistic theories of Christ's person and origin, and, on the other hand, they will contribute, reluctantly it may be, but most powerfully, to the strengthening and enrichment of Christian faith, giving the people of Christ a worthier apprehension of their Lord, inspiring them with a higher and purer devotion, and binding them together in the unity which alone has reality and perpetuity—"the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God."

Now, it is to the Gospels we must go as the only accessible source for our knowledge of Christ's teaching concerning Himself. It is the veriest folly to think that the Christian faith could stand were the genuineness of the evangelic records to be disproved. It is only as the Christian is kept in direct touch with the historical Christ that he finds a solid foundation for his Christian hope and experience. Recent criticism has done nothing to shake our confidence in the authenticity and genuineness of the four Gospels. And not only do we assume, on grounds which cannot now be set forth, their genuineness, we also assume the harmony of their teaching, the accord of St. John with the Synoptists. There are, indeed, striking differences between the presentation of Christ given by St. John and that in the Synoptic Gospels, but we are convinced that thorough and candid study will show that there is no discord. There is nothing in St. John's Gospel which is not at least potentially in the Synoptics. Wendt, certainly a critic without any super-naturalistic bias, has brought out in a striking way their inner harmony. We do not need to resort to any such makeshift expedients as that of translation from the Aramaic, or a filtration of the words of Jesus through the personality of John. True, St. John had pondered those gracious words for half a century, but he had not changed them. A comparison of John's first epistle and the Gospel prologue with the rest of the Gospel shows us that St. John carefully refrained from putting his own words into the mouth of Jesus. And can we believe that the Apostle could have invented such striking phrases as "I am the Light of the world," which characterize the fourth Gospel? Or that he gave to our Lord's presentation of Himself the vast variety of form and boldness of attitude which we find in it? If John's Gospel be the most transcendental, it is the most personal and historical. It bears watermarks of time and place and circumstances inwrought into its texture, which exclude all possibility of counterfeit.

The true solution of the problem seems to be this. Two types of our Lord's teaching can be distinguished: the one exoteric and popular—predominantly practical and ethical; the other esoteric and mystical, in which were brought out the inner secrets of Christ's being and His relations with the Father. The former was of an evangelistic character. It was naturally the chief subject of the Apostles' testimony in their public preaching of the Gospel, and was first put into writing. The latter was spoken by Christ in the inner and sympathetic circle of the Twelve, especially when, under the stress of opposition and hatred, or under the shadow of impending death, He unbosomed His inmost thought and life, and gave

out to those who alone were able to receive them the deep things of His being and His mission. St. John was the one in closest intimacy and completest sympathy with Jesus. Upon Him these teachings would make the deepest impression. He was specially fitted to receive and record them. His very style of thought and speech may have been, probably was, moulded by his contact with Jesus; and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who worked in and through His chosen instrument, St. John was enabled to recall and reproduce accurately and faithfully the words of life.

Our Lord's teaching concerning Himself naturally falls into two divisions—His teaching concerning His person, and His teaching concerning His mission. The former may be grouped around His two great titles—the Son of Man and the Son of God. The latter comprises three great functions or works—revelation, redemption, and judgment.

I. OUR LORD'S TEACHING CONCERNING HIS PERSON.

All this evolves around two foci—two co-ordinate and complementary designations of Jesus—which determine His origin and nature.

(1) *Jesus is the Son of Man.*

This designation occurs sixty-nine times in the Synoptics, eleven times in St. John—eighty times in all. It is uniformly the self-designation of Jesus, always used by Him of Himself, and never used by anyone else, except in one case, which stands outside the Gospel history, in the mouth of the dying Stephen (Acts vii. 56). The frequency with which our Lord used the term indicates the place it had in His consciousness and its importance to us.

1. The origin of this designation has been the subject of much discussion. An attempt has recently been made to identify it with the indefinite Aramaic term *barnasha*, "a son of man," which is alleged by some to have been the Galilean vernacular for "man," and to have had no other meaning. Wellhausen assumes that Jesus said "Man" where the Gospels make Him say "the Son of Man." Krop affirms that this novelty of interpretation is the notion of the old rationalist Paulus rehabilitated. It is supported on the flimsiest grounds. But even were the case much stronger, it would not sustain the non-Messianic deductions drawn from it. It furnishes, however, a curious illustration of the destructive ingenuity of naturalistic rationalism.

The term "Son of Man" occurs in one or two apocryphal writings, such as the Book of Enoch (Similitudes section) and 2 Esdras. If we accept these as pre-Christian in date

(which is much disputed), they could not have had any wide currency, and their influence must have been slight. Certainly "Son of Man" was not in general use among the Jewish people of our Lord's time as a designation of the expected Messiah. This was probably one reason—a minor one—why our Lord adopted it. It concealed in great measure the truth which, as we shall see, it certainly affirmed.

We must find the source of the title either in the Old Testament or in our Lord's own consciousness. It is probable that the truth lies between these two views. I think that there can be no doubt that we have in the Old Testament the germ from which it sprang, and which grew to its completeness and rich significance in the consciousness of our Lord.

Then, where in the Old Testament is this germ to be found? Several passages have been suggested, and with all of them it has affinities. In the Book of Ezekiel the phrase "Son of Man" occurs some ninety times. It is always applied to the prophet himself, and is used to recall to him his weakness and dependence upon God. In Ps. lxxx. 17, which the Jewish Targums interpret Messianically, the deliverer whom God would raise up is thus described :

"Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand,
Upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself."

In Ps. viii. the Psalmist, impressed by the magnificence of creation and the greatness of the Creator, and moved by the sense of his own insignificance, exclaims :

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him ?
And the Son of Man, that Thou visitest him?"

In Dan. vii. 13, in the vision of the four world empires, likened to four beasts coming up out of the sea, there appears at the climax "One like the Son of Man," who "came with the clouds of heaven," and to whom "there was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." This passage was regarded by the Jews as referring to Messiah personally. As the Book of Daniel became a model for later apocalyptic literature, it is highly probable that the use of the title "Son of Man" in the Book of Enoch and 2 Esdras was derived from this source. There are distinct traces of it in not a few of our Lord's words, notably in the great eschatological discourse in Matt. xxiv.: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." And in the words

addressed to the high priest at the trial : "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven" (see also Matt. xiii. 41 ; xvi. 27, 28 ; xix. 28). It does not, I think, admit of doubt that we have in Daniel the source of the self-designation of Jesus as the Son of Man. And were it true—which seems to me very doubtful—that in Daniel there is no mention of a personal Messiah, but that the description, "One like unto the Son of Man," is a collective phrase for "the people of the saints of the Most High," to whom in the explanation of the vision the power is given, this would not at all deprive it of its Messianic character. Just as "the servant of Jehovah" in Isaiah is primarily a designation of Israel collectively, and then of Him in whom alone Israel's vocation was realized and fulfilled, so also a primary reference here to the reign of the saints does not preclude an interior and ultimate reference to Him in whom, by whom, and with whom, they reign.

While the vision of Daniel may be rightly claimed as the most immediate source of the title "Son of Man," a reference to the other passages cited is not precluded. Even the oft-repeated synonym for Ezekiel's weakness has its application to Him who had not where to lay His head. The representation of the Man of God's right hand—the Son of Man—who was made strong to carry out God's purpose of deliverance for His people, finds its realization in Him who came to seek and save. Ps. viii. is given a Messianic interpretation in Heb. ii., where He who was "made lower than the angels for the suffering of death" is "crowned with glory and honour," and "all things put in subjection under His feet." These, then, are the Old Testament sources of the conception of the Son of Man which our Lord so marvellously enlarged and enriched.

2. Let us now inquire into the *significance* of the name as used by our Lord. Of this some indications have been already given us, but it is to our Lord's application of it that we must look for its complete interpretation. It asserts that He who assumes it is truly man, and it implies, as we shall see, that He is a man beyond all others—yea, that He is more than man.

Three things at least are involved in the title—that our Lord's manhood is real, is unique, and is representative.

(1) *The Reality of our Lord's Manhood.*—This had come to be disputed even in St. John's day. There were those who denied that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, who taught that He only assumed in appearance or for a time that which was foreign to Him, and with which His personality had nothing in common. According to a well-known Hebrew

idiom, the son of anything is that which embodies the idea of that to which it is thus described as related. The "Son of Man," then, means one possessed of the reality of humanity, one who is verily and indeed man.

Throughout the Gospel story this is abundantly attested. He possessed all the qualities of manhood, both bodily and spiritual. After His resurrection He gave many incontrovertible proofs that He was truly and actually, and not merely in appearance, man, in all things made like unto us, with one extraordinary exemption. Thus, Christ's grace and condescension are magnified in His assumption of our nature with all its limitations and infirmities. That the name declared His identification of Himself with us was one reason why He delighted in it.

(2) *The Uniqueness of our Lord's Humanity.*—This appears, negatively, in His freedom from sin; positively, in the ideal which He embodied.

(a) The sinlessness of Jesus, although disparaged by some as of a merely negative character, separates by a great gulf the consciousness of Jesus from that of all other men. Not only is this sinlessness demonstrated by His actions and words and in the whole conduct of His life—the detailed evidence for which it is impossible even to glance at; not only is it attested alike by friends and by foes, and these not only among His contemporaries, but all along the ages, so that to-day the verdict of Pilate—"I find no fault in this man"—is the verdict of mankind; but the strongest attestation of the sinlessness of Jesus of necessity comes from within, not from without, from His own consciousness, rather than from the testimony and conviction of others. He Himself dared to utter the challenge: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" He declared His complete conformity to the will of the Father: "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." The Evil One, He affirms, "hath nothing in Me"—no weakness, no taint of selfishness, no tendency to evil, which he could lay hold of and bend to his purposes. These utterances are marked by a dignity, a simplicity, and a genuineness which impress even those who are hostile.

No consciousness of sin—such is the great gulf which separates the consciousness of Jesus from that of all other men. As Keim says, "The conscience of Jesus is the only conscience without a scar in the whole history of mankind."

Here is Man without sin, and He knows it and affirms it. And He knew what sin is. He had been trained under the disciplinary institutions of Israel, whose chief aim was to impress upon the conscience the sinfulness of men and the holiness of God. He had been instructed in the Old Testa-

ment, throughout which run from beginning to end those two determinative truths of revelation. He realized, as no one else ever did, the breadth and spirituality of the Divine Law, and how searching and absolute are its requirements.

He was keenly conscious of sin in others. He knew its prevalence and its power. He laid bare the inmost secrets of human hearts. No disguise could cover up from Him the malice, the pride, the self-will, the impurity of men. It is emphatically said of Him that "He knew what was in man."

He lived in closest fellowship with God, but the vision of the Divine purity did not awaken in Him, as it did in other men—a Job, an Isaiah, a Daniel, a Paul, an Augustine, an A. Kempis, a Luther—a sense of unworthiness. Our Lord was humble: as He Himself says, "meek and lowly in heart." Now, wherever we find deep humility among men it is accompanied with self-distrust and self-accusation. But such was not the attitude of Christ. In Him there was complete absence of self-reproach. As R. H. Hutton notes, Christ's humility was "not of conscious unworthiness, like St. Paul's, but of conscious submission, of filial perfection."

No physical miracle that was ever wrought approaches in significance and grandeur this moral miracle of the absolute sinlessness, the spotless purity and goodness, of the Man of Nazareth.

(b) Our Lord's sinlessness was not of a merely negative nature. There was positive and active goodness shown in character and conduct. In Him, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," meet together. In Him the ideal of humanity is embodied. But not only did He embody it, He first disclosed it. Not merely was it never elsewhere found in actual being, it never existed in theory or in imagination. No philosopher had ever conceived it, no poet had ever pictured it. Certainly it did not exist amongst our Lord's contemporaries, as even Strauss admitted. The Jewish ideal of the time was a poor, beggarly, artificial creation of legalism, set forth in the dreary religionism and formalism of the Pharisees which our Lord denounced, and seen at its best in the devout and fanatical intensity of one Saul of Tarsus, who persecuted unto the death the followers of Jesus.

And if this ideal cannot be found in Judaism, it certainly cannot be found outside of it. Neither the dreamy mysticism of eastern sages, nor the loftiest speculations of Greek philosophy, nor the political activities of Roman Imperialism could be its birthplace.

Nor could our Lord's character and claims have been constructed by an idealist out of the Old Testament, or wrought out by some process of conscious imitation of Old Testament prophecies. The unity of the Messianic portraiture in them was not discoverable by men. That portraiture is so complicated ; it is given in details so numerous and so diffused ; it abounds in traits so diverse and apparently contradictory, that no ingenuity of research, no vividness of imagination could ever construct it, could ever combine its elements into one self-consistent personality.

"It has been reserved for Christianity," says Mr. Lecky, "to present to the world an ideal character which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love." There have been other great men, and among them those who are reverenced and esteemed, but not one of them inspires men with this passion of love. Those who have most influenced men for good have confessedly drawn all their power to influence from Jesus Christ. It is this mighty influence of Christ exerted to-day which corroborates the Gospel testimony to the uniqueness of His humanity. "Never man spake like this Man." Never man lived like this Man.

(3) *The Representative Character of Our Lord's Humanity.* —There is yet a third consideration involved in the title "Son of Man." It not only emphasizes the reality and uniqueness of Christ's humanity that He is truly man, and man such as never was, it also sets forth the representative character of His humanity.

Our Lord is the representative man, not only because of the perfection of His humanity, by virtue of which He is the type and pattern to which all should be conformed, but also because His title "Son of Man" has a distinctively representative character. As we have seen, its origin in the Old Testament gives it unquestionably a Messianic implication, and it was practically equivalent to Messiah, although it was not popularly recognised as such in our Lord's time. The Messianic force of the title is sustained by two considerations.

(a) Our Lord claims that He came to fulfil the law and the prophets. He found and expounded "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." "They were all," He says, "written . . . concerning Me." "They are they," He affirms, "which testify of Me." He, then, is the Goal of the Old Testament, the subject of its utterances, the object of its promises and predictions, the consummation of all its revelations. What a stupendous claim ! The lowly Jesus stands at the close of those centuries of Divine work and speech, and says, "I am the end and climax of it all; in Me God's

purpose is fulfilled, God's plan completed, God's promise kept; I am the One for whom the ages have longed and prayed and waited."

(b) Then, again, our Lord claims Messianic attributes and powers. The name "Messiah," Christ, was repeatedly applied to our Lord by others. On three occasions he expressly accepted it for Himself—first, when in answer to the Samaritan woman's eager question, "Art thou the Christ?" He answered, "I am"; then, when He approved the confession of St. Peter as divinely taught, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"; and then again towards the end of the awful tragedy, when placed upon His oath, in solemn answer to the high priest's interrogation, "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" He said, "I am." Thus explicitly, as Harnack notes ("History of Dogma," i. 63), "He calls Himself Messiah" (see Weiss's "Life of Christ," i. 295). It was in the synagogue at Nazareth, at the threshold of His Galilean ministry, that, reading out Isaiah's delineation of Him who was to come, He testified, "To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears."

Now, when we examine the use of the title "Son of Man" in the Gospels, and classify its applications, we find that they fall into two well-defined groups, exclusive of some passages which cannot be definitely assigned to either. These two groups correspond to the two chief correlative representations of Christ in the Old Testament—the lowly and suffering Servant of Jehovah, and the Prince and Lord of all.

Correspondent to the Old Testament representations of the Messiah in His humiliation, His sorrow and shame, we find a group of passages in which the title "Son of Man" is associated with the suffering and death of Jesus: "The Son of Man must suffer many things"; "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head"; "The Son of Man came . . . to minister." The Son of Man must "be lifted up" on the cross.

Correspondent to the Old Testament representations of the majesty of the Messiah, we find a second group of passages in the Gospels in which the title "Son of Man" is associated with the Lord's power and prerogative, and with His second coming in glory to judge the world. "The Son of Man hath authority on earth to forgive sins." "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." "The Son of Man shall come in His glory, shall sit upon the throne of His glory, shall be seen coming in clouds with great power and glory." He has "authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man."

One of the great paradoxes of Messianic prophecy was the startling contrast between the two sets of attributes with which the Coming One was clothed. And it is certainly

remarkable to find the same contrast in connection with the chief designation of Himself—the Son of Man. Surely nothing more is required to place it beyond doubt that our Lord chose this name for Himself, not only because it indicated His acceptance of the humble place to which He had stooped as the suffering servant of Jehovah, and His sense of brotherhood with us, His complete identification of Himself with our nature and our need, but also because it kept before Him and before us His vocation to be the fulfiller of the Divine promise of salvation, the Saviour of sinners. Not only does it assure us of His fellow-feeling with us in our temptations, but also of His power to save and bless. Not only does it continually remind us that He is truly man, but it intimates that He is more than man—one endowed with superhuman powers as well as with human sympathies. He is, as He said to Nicodemus (John iii. 13), the Son of Man “that descended out of heaven.”

J. P. SHERATON.

(*To be continued.*)

ART. II.—“OUR UNHAPPY DIVISIONS”—IV.

WE have hitherto been endeavouring to take a fair view of Episcopacy as seen in connection with the history of primitive Christianity and of the Reformed Church of England.

But it will be asked, What is all this leading up to? Supposing all this to be conceded, What is to follow?

Let it be well understood that the aim of these papers is not to lead up to the advocacy of any particular way of answering the many and various questions of practical difficulty which will no doubt be found at some future time pressing for solution. These questions will have to be well pondered, in reliance on Divine guidance, by those who may be called upon to deal with them in detail. Our object here is a much humbler one. It is simply to indicate certain general principles, which, as it seems to me, should be allowed to have weight in governing all decisions on this subject.

And I venture humbly to submit that if my argument, as a whole, is valid, *this* will follow—viz., that while we may not throw overboard or lightly disregard the just claims of Episcopacy, we are not warranted in regarding a connected chain of unbroken Episcopal succession (in the strictest sense of the words) as essential to the *esse* of a Christian Church.¹

¹ See Dean Field’s “Of the Church,” book iii., chaps. xxxix., xl.