
A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

back to the Church, with the peace and the power of the Lord Himself upon you.

There is nothing that can be a substitute for this. The "consideration" of our blessed Redeemer and King is not merely good for us; it is vital. To "behold His glory," deliberately, with worship, with worshipping love, *and directly in the mirror of His Word*, can and must secure for us blessings which we shall otherwise infallibly lose. This, and this alone, amidst the strife of tongues and all the perplexities of life, can develop in us at once the humblest reverence and the noblest liberty, convictions firm to resist a whole world in opposition, yet the meekness and the fear which utterly exclude injustice, untruth, or the bitter word. For us if for any, for us now if ever, this first great message of the Epistle meets a vital need, "CONSIDER HIM."

H. C. G. MOULE.

ART. III.—JESUS CHRIST'S USE OF THE TITLE "THE SON OF MAN."

II.

HOW, then, do we explain our Lord's use of the title? How are we to escape from the sense of difficulty which, as I have said, haunts us on reading those passages in the Gospels in which the phrase occurs, if we allow it to be a generally-admitted designation of the Messiah? What we want to do is, in the first place, to keep the ante-Christian date of Enoch, and yet to escape from the conclusion that the phrase was, on that account, popularly understood of the expected Christ; and afterwards, when we have succeeded in doing this, to explain for what reasons Jesus adopted it, and made such strenuous use of it throughout His ministry. We may look at each of these questions in turn, and may, I think, hope to find for each a not unsatisfactory answer.

Are we, then, bound to suppose that the title "Son of Man" passed into the popular phraseology either in consequence of Dan. vii. or of the Similitudes? Canon Liddon answers unhesitatingly in the affirmative: "In consequence of this prophecy [Dan. vii.] the Son of Man became a popular and official title of the Messiah." Professor Sanday more or less agrees with him, but he expresses himself more guardedly, and his concurrence is only approximate, not complete: "I take it that among the Jews at the Christian era—at least,

among such as shared the lively expectations which were then abroad of the great deliverance which was approaching—it was distinctly understood that 'the Son of Man' meant 'the Messiah.' At the same time, it was not a common title, because the ordinary usage of the phrase 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament pointed to that side of human weakness and frailty which the zealots of the day least cared to dwell upon in the King for whom they were looking."[1] But was it not something more than "not a common title"? Was it not an actually esoteric one? Pharisaism, it must be remembered, was not of one mind as to the Messiah. Even in the various sections of Enoch we see this, just as we do in the later Apocalypse of Baruch. Belief in a personal Messiah was not the belief of all hearts; even among the "pious,' Hillel is said to have declared that the reign of Hezekiah exhausted the Messianic glories, and that no other Christ need be looked for;[2] and it is certain that we have pictures from Jewish brushes not so very far from Hillel in date, of Messianic splendour and joy and triumph which do not possess a personal centre. So, too, there was no unanimity of expectation as to the exact scene in the moral drama of the world in which He should be manifested. Sometimes He was thought of as coming to take His glorious part in the struggle with the foes and oppressors of the elect people; sometimes it is not till the kingdom has actually come in all its beauty that He is represented as revealed to the longing eyes of an expectant and redeemed nation. Pharisaism, therefore, had no particular interest in spreading broadcast throughout "the cities of Israel" the last vision which one of its members saw of the Messiah; for the vision did not differ in value from the denials, explicit or implicit, which it might call out. It made its appeal to some thinkers and scholars, but not to all; and until it was viewed by Pharisaic scholarship and thought with some approach to a unanimity of acceptance, Pharisaic influence was not likely to publish it among the common people, for whom, as is well known, the Pharisees professed, and had, no small measure of contempt.

It is not unnatural, therefore, to suppose that in the time of Jesus Christ the book had yet to win its way. The few knew it and its phraseology; the many did not. The learned Pharisee was acquainted with it; the Galilean peasant was

[1] *Expositor, loc. cit.; cf.* Keim, "Jesus of Nazara," English translation, iii. 84: "Emphasis was laid on the prophecy of Daniel as a whole, but not on the 'Son of Man' of Daniel, which might have sounded too insignificant to the interpreters of the prediction. The 'Son of Man' of Enoch or of Ezra was simply not known at all."

[2] Stanley, "Jewish Church," ii. 396.

not; the man in the streets of Jerusalem was not. No doubt the work did afterwards attain to popularity, and to something more—to general reverence. But the study of the Gospels seems to *compel* us to believe that it had not yet done so when Jesus Christ was teaching. It was nearing the borders of its triumph, but it had not yet entered the promised land. It was still in the wilderness of more or less general neglect.

We *must*, I think, suppose this to be the case if the Gospels are to be intelligible; and it will no doubt help us if we may suppose Schürer's date right as against Professor Charles's. But even if we accept the judgment of the latter, it does not follow that, in such a country as Palestine, and under the religious circumstances which beset spiritual life and knowledge there, these prophecies need have found their way by the time of our Lord to the popular mind and heart. We perhaps should *a priori* have expected that they would have done so, rather than that they should not. But there is no such *a priori* likelihood as to override the apparently clear evidence of the Gospels that the negative view is the correct one.

We accordingly have reached, without, I think, any undue straining of the argument, this point. The title "Son of Man" was understood Messianically by the "masters in Israel," but not by the people generally. Here and there anyone, hearing Jesus Christ use it, would understand what a depth of significance His doing so gave to His claims, but the great majority would come to no such conclusion. To *them* it was a new phrase. "Who is this Son of Man?"

We have, however, to pursue our subject a good deal further before we arrive at a goal which completely satisfies us. Why did Christ so studiously call Himself by this name? To this question the answer would appear to be a complex one; but directly we realize what it is in its diverse-sidedness, we cannot fail to appreciate—if we may without irreverence apply the expression to our Lord—how supreme was the religious genius which prompted His adoption of the title.

It was a characteristic of Jesus Christ's teaching that He breathed into commonplace modes of speech a depth of meaning which they lacked in ordinary use. "He picks up, as it were, from the roadside the common words and phrases which fall from men as they saunter unthinkingly through life; and He restores to this language its original power, I might say its original sanctity, as the native product of an immortal soul."[1] Such a power would not desert Him in the

[1] Liddon, "Easter Sermons," No. xix.

presence of a striking phrase from Apocalyptic literature; nay, it is just there that we should look for a specially impressive exemplification of it. We need not, on any interpretation of His Person, even on such as Renan's or Martineau's, question His acquaintance with the Similitudes, dating them as we have. He would, on the most meagre of the answers to the undying questions which gather round Him, be likely to have made Himself familiar with the anticipations of every section of His generation, and not only with its commoner and less-educated hopes. Whatever may be the truth about the two first chapters of St. Luke, they, at any rate, contain a striking tradition of Christ's early intercourse with all that was most educated in Jerusalem; and it is surely a postulate, necessary to an understanding of the ministry, that that intercourse was repeated again and again, through one channel or another, until the mind of a Nicodemus was as much an open book to him as the mind of a Peter or a John. There is, I think, no more radical misunderstanding of Christ than the view which depicts Him as the fresh, innocent-minded villager, who brought to a corrupt and effete form of religion a Gospel redolent only of the purity and simplicity of country life. Such an idyll is attractive to sentiment, but it supplies no such explanation of Christ's work as a teacher as to give it a claim to be treated as possessing any historical value.

But our Lord's knowledge of Enoch does not rest only upon such proof as comes from general considerations. His own phraseology shows here and there a certain measure of indebtedness to the various parts of the book. The expressions "sons of the light," "many mansions," "He hath committed all judgment unto the Son," "the mammon of unrighteousness," "your redemption draweth nigh," "when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory," are all, it would seem, reminiscences of Enoch and, in more than one case, of the Similitudes. Even the parable of the Rich Fool may have been suggested by Enoch xcvii. 8, 9. It is therefore more than likely that the Messianic phraseology in it was thoroughly familiar to him; but he saw that it was capable of a change which was little, if at all, short of transfiguration. Indeed, in the Similitudes it missed its full significance, for that fulness of significance could not apply to the conception by itself of a glorious, superhuman Messiah. There was needed the foreground of genuine humanity, and of weak humanity; and it was only when the foreground was there in adequate impressiveness that a background of majesty and Divine splendour became religiously possible. In other words, the shade of suggestiveness which attached to the phrase had to be changed. Men, when they heard the term used, must

have other thoughts brought to their minds, besides those which would arise from a recollection of the passages in Enoch, splendid in many respects as they were.

And the importance of depriving these passages of any monopoly in after-times of the phrase was increased by the fact that the title, if rightly used and understood, was completely fitted for Messianic application. The Similitudes were endangering a description which was in itself perfect, for no nobler or more appropriate name for the Messiah could have been found than "the Son of Man." The intention, therefore, of Jesus Christ was to rescue an absolutely ideal piece of phraseology from the peril of misuse; to take it out of the associations which were likely to keep it from the part which it was capable of playing in the religious life of the world, and to give it the opportunity of growth in another home to true spiritual maturity. He desired that the phrase should suggest *Him*, and not the grosser delineation of the Redeemer in the pages of this apocalypse.

Now, if the Book of Enoch had been common property—if its prophecies had been familiar, well-trodden ground—so that the title was everywhere understood, it would probably have been impossible to redeem the phrase. The old ideas and associations would have had to go on in connection with the term, and a magnificent piece of religious description would have been in a measure lost. But with the Book of Enoch holding the exact place in the nation that we have supposed, the attempt was still possible. There was still a reasonable hope that the expression might be imprinted with the true stamp; and the frequency of Jesus Christ's use of it may, in part at least, be attributed to the urgency of His desire to give it this better impress. If He had used it only now and again, men would not have come to associate it with Him. Even in the thoughts of His Apostles it would not have had any very strong or lasting connection with Him. But if He used it, so to speak, at every turn, if it was always on His lips, if He made it His own peculiar name for Himself, then it would come to occupy in their memories, and in the memories of all who bore any gratitude whatever for His ministry among them, a place from which it would be difficult to dislodge it. Men who had been bound to Him by any tie whatever of discipleship would say, as the knowledge of the Similitudes spread, that there was for them but one "Son of Man," and that He had been meek and lowly of heart, despised, rejected, and crucified.

For it was undoubtedly the ideas of humiliation and lowliness that our Lord sought above all else to imprint upon the term; and, as Professor Sanday has pointed out in a passage

which I have already quoted, the foreshadowings of the phrase in the Old Testament helped Him to do so. Beyschlag, indeed, urges that, rightly understood, the prophecy in Dan. vii. would also come to His assistance in this endeavour, for "the human figure appearing in the clouds of heaven is contrasted with beast forms — beasts of prey, which rise out of the depths of the sea"; and in this contrast he sees the lesson that "the kingdom of God is not to enter into the combat of brutal power and physical strength, but to overcome them by the ascendency of the spirit and the power of God."[1] This, perhaps, is an overdrawing of the bow of interpretation; but it is, at any rate, true of the Old Testament use of "Son of Man" that it carries with it in general the ideas of dependence and frailty and impotence. That there were other ideas which Jesus Christ intended to suggest by the employment of this phrase is no doubt a defensible thesis. It is among the commonplaces of modern Anglican theology to draw from it the thoughts of absolute humanity and of representative humanity. Of the last, Professor Charles does indeed say that "It is an anachronism in history and thought. No past usage of the term serves even to prepare the way for this alleged meaning; and such a philosophical conception as the ideal man, the personalized moral ideal, was foreign to the consciousness of the Palestinian Judaism of the time."[2] But the Pauline use of the doctrine of the Second Adam, and the Apostle's declaration of the Divine pleasure to "sum up all things in Christ,"[3] would seem adequate justification for the attachment of this conception to the phrase, quite apart from all questions as to the power of Christ, through the Incarnation, to introduce into the ideas of His generation a totally fresh method of philosophical or semi-philosophical thought. It would seem, too, that Professor Charles's objection cannot be sustained except by postulating that John vi. shall be disallowed; for the only key which unlocks the gate to an understanding of that famous discourse, and to an appreciation of Christ's meaning, is the presupposition that He does regard His own humanity as the sum of all humanity, so that the fragments can be fed by participating in the sacrifice of the life of the whole. But, without pressing this particular point, we may, I venture to say, gladly accept what Bishop Westcott has in his commentary on the Fourth Gospel suggested to us as to the wealth of doctrinal significance with which our Lord enriched this name, and of which the growing

[1] "New Testament Theology," English translation, i. 66.
[2] P. 313.
[3] Eph. i. 10.

and widening intelligences of His disciples would become ever more and more conscious.

All, therefore, would now seem to work itself out into clearness. There is no longer any cloud of perplexity over these particular parts of the Gospel narratives. We keep the best results of scholarship as to the date of Enoch, and yet are able to maintain that "in the days of Jesus 'Son of Man' could not have been a current, popular designation of Messiah."[1] We see, too, what our Lord's object was in His appropriation of the now immortal title. We may slightly elaborate our conclusions without difficulty and without fear of finding ourselves in the shadowland of obscurity.

Our Lord entered upon His ministry with a full consciousness of His Messianic calling. That that consciousness had a history in time we cannot doubt; but the Scriptures do not tell us what it was. Only for one moment, if at all, is the curtain lifted upon the side of His early life, which so naturally moves our peculiar interest. But that that history lies behind the public ministry, and does not in any way fall within it, will surely be granted by many, even of those who do not tread with the Church the path of full confession. But Messiah though He felt Himself to be, and though His whole life was planned from the first in that self-knowledge, yet during most of His ministry He did not venture, for the sake of others, to proclaim the fact publicly. Such texts as Matt. iv. 17 and Luke iv. 21 may perhaps point to His having now and again felt His way towards doing so, only, however, to draw back into a settled policy of reserve. For, quite outside any thoughts of personal peril from the jealous power of Rome—thoughts which it is of course impossible for any religious mind to associate with Him, whatever the view adopted of His person—was the supreme consideration to which all experience bound Him tight, that it would have been the destruction of His own work to have made any such announcement to the populace. Beyschlag has brought out this circumstance very forcibly: "If Jesus from the first had thrown the exciting name of Messiah among the people, He would have called forth the most fatal misunderstandings and excitements, and have closed, rather than opened, a way for the entrance of His infinitely higher idea of the kingdom. He found Himself, with regard to His people, in the infinitely difficult position of proclaiming the kingdom of God to them without attaching to it, its given correlate, the idea of the Messiah."[2] But there *was* a title which for those who knew current literature meant Messiah, though to the mass of the

[1] Beyschlag, *loc. cit.*, 65. [2] I. 59.

nation it carried no such thought; and upon this He seized. For—

1. To those at the head of the nation it implied a Messianic claim; but

2. It conveyed nothing to the body of the people, who were, for the while, unfit to hear any open revelation of Himself as the Messiah.

3. It gave Him the opportunity of taking the expression out of a totally inadequate setting, and

4. Of introducing into it His own reading of its true import.

Thus, to Nicodemus the use by Christ of the name implied Messianic calling; but it is to be noted that our Lord was careful to couple with it at once the thought of suffering: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." To the disciples in the neighbourhood of Cesarea Philippi His use of it, in His search into their faith, meant nothing. His question, in the form which St. Matthew gives to it, suggested no more than it would have done in the less full shape under which it is recorded by the two other Synoptists. When the crowds heard the phrase upon His lips it came to them as a novel one, and it could therefore be used before them freely—nay, used, if necessary, as in John vi. 53, stripped even in the mind of the user of all direct Messianic reference. But at the end, before the Sanhedrin, we have the same employment of it as in His conversation with Nicodemus. His judges knew, as did He, what it *might* signify, and it is with all the unqualified rigour of that significance upon it that He takes it upon His lips for the last time in that supreme crisis of His life and ministry.

It is not necessary, in concluding what has perforce been a somewhat long paper, to extend further its length by dwelling upon the success which has attended Christ's attempt to vindicate the true use of this apocalyptic phrase. For all the educated world, the thoughts which He sought to attach to it will never pass from it. It is not of glory and honour and majesty that we think when we use the title, but of One who "had not where to lay His head," upon whom fell all the weight of an evil generation's hatred and scorn. To us the words mean the suffering Messiah, even though we look for the "Son of Man" to come again in the unrestrained manifestation of Divinity. It was He who gave them this significance, just as it was He who has added to our thought of God the conception of the Divine capacity for infinite self-sacrifice; just as it was He who has enriched the moral ideas of mankind with the belief in the beauty of vicarious toil, of living and dying for others. No language can adequately express

the world's indebtedness to Him on this last ground alone—to leave out of sight the other aspects of His sojourn for a brief while amongst us. And of His unspeakable service to humanity in this respect, His redemption of the title "the Son of Man" may be taken as an illustration and a type.

W. E. BOWEN.

ART. IV.—RECENT MISSIONARY LITERATURE.

ONE of the most striking things in modern Christian literature is the rapid increase in the number of works dealing more or less directly with foreign missions. Twenty years ago it was a commonplace with publishers that books of this kind "did not pay." That reproach seems, however, to be no longer possible. The Lives of distinguished missionaries are always assured of a fairly wide circulation, and the demand for purely popular works associated with the aims and methods of missions is strong enough to produce a steady output of such literature. In the meantime there is good reason to believe that missionary periodicals also profit by the greatly increased disposition to read about the work. Probably no Church magazine—apart from such as are issued for the purposes of localization—has anything like the regular sale of the *Church Missionary Gleaner*, which now circulates over 80,000 copies a month.[1] All this must imply a more serious and more intelligent interest in the duty of the Church to the non-Christian world.

The most solid contribution to the recent literature of foreign missions is, beyond doubt, the official "Report of the Ecumenical Missionary Conference, New York, 1900."[2] It has been prepared with a characteristic indifference to precedent, and with a completeness which leaves nothing to be desired. As a magazine of facts and statistics, of experiences and opinions, as well as of arguments and pleas for foreign missions, it will always be invaluable to every student of the subject. During the Conference there was, of course, a good deal said which was too declamatory to stand the test of a survey in cold type. It was inevitable also that some of the speeches and papers should alike in substance and in manner fail to rise above the trivial and the commonplace. But, with

[1] *Church Missionary Society Gleaner*, March, 1901, p. 34.

[2] Two vols. London: Religious Tract Society; New York: American Tract Society.