

The Lord From Heaven

by Robert Anderson

The Deity of Christ is a matter of faith, and understanding it is essential to grasping the Christian faith and the Atonement.

Scripture: Matthew 5:17, Matthew 11:27-28, Matthew 28:18, John 1:14

Topics: "Christology", "Divine Nature"

Description

Robert Anderson preaches about the progressive revelation of Christ in the Bible, emphasizing the importance of understanding the different titles of Jesus such as the Son of Man and the Son of God. He highlights the unique significance of each title in revealing the divine nature and mission of Jesus, showing how His authority and teachings surpass those of the prophets and the law. Anderson challenges the misconceptions surrounding the Virgin birth and the Sonship of Christ, urging believers to accept the mysteries of the faith without attempting to explain them, but rather to approach them with reverence and faith.

Transcript

THE LORD FROM HEAVEN

PREFACE and CONTENTS

Some years ago the Author was asked to mediate between the Committee of one of our Missionary Societies and certain of their younger agents, whose faith had been disturbed by Moslem hostility to the truth of the Sonship of Christ. Though not unversed in the literature on the subject, he could find no book that definitely met the difficulties of the missionaries, and the project of writing such a book was suggested to him. And a recent correspondence disclosed the fact that, by those who deny the Lord's Deity, that truth is supposed to depend on the special texts which teach it explicitly. These pages accordingly seek to unfold the doctrine of the Sonship, and to call attention to some of the indirect testimony of Scripture to the Deity of Christ. The book is not controversial. It is a Bible study. And if the perusal of it proves as helpful to any, as the writing of it has been to the Author, its purpose will be satisfied.

He wishes here to acknowledge help received in the preparation of it. To the Bishop of Durham he is under very special obligations for kindly and valuable criticism and counsel. And his labours were lightened by his friend, Miss A. R. Habershon, who, besides aid freely given in other ways, prepared for his use New Testament "concordance" of the names and titles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It may be well to mention that in these pages the references to Scripture do not specify which of our Versions is quoted, save where it is desired to call special attention to the reading adopted.

TO THE SECOND EDITION THE publication of this book has brought me many striking proofs that a book of the kind is needed. The mass of men are unreached by learned works upon this great subject, and mere popular treatises fail to convince the thoughtful. But in these pages there is nothing which any Bible student cannot follow, and yet they contain enough to satisfy all who accept the authority of Christ as a divine Teacher, or the authority of Holy Scripture as a divine revelation.

And this, being the scheme of the book, I have refrained from quoting the writings of theologians; and my acquaintance with ancient controversies has been used solely to enable me to shun the heresies which provoked them. It would seem that very many who, by habitually repeating the creeds, give a conventional assent to the doctrine of the Deity of Christ, are practically agnostics in relation to it. And to me this discovery is made still more startling by the fact that their doubts seem to be confirmed by the language of the very formulas which were intended to set the question at rest for ever.

For the phrase, "the persons of the Trinity," apparently conveys a meaning wholly different from that which the original words were intended to express. And to the illiterate it suggests error which leaves them an easy prey to the Unitarian propagandist. As the Latin Dictionary tells us, the word persona is "from per-sono, to sound through"; and it means "a mask, especially that used by players, which covered the whole head, and was varied according to the different characters to be represented."

And, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, our word "person" means "(1) a character sustained or assumed in a drama, or the like, or in actual life; part played; hence function, office, capacity; (2) an individual being." It will thus be seen how closely the primary and classical signification of "person" is allied to the Latin persona, and what slight affinity it has with the popular and ordinary meaning of the word. And yet its ordinary meaning has a definite influence upon the minds of ordinary people when they speak of "the persons of the Trinity."

The Deity is not to be likened to a triumvirate acting in unison. God is One. But He has manifested Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and the crowning manifestation of Himself was in the Son. At the coming of Christ He was "manifested in flesh." The somewhat doubtful revised reading of 1 Timothy iii. 16 in no way affects the force of the passage. The statement that the Man of Nazareth "was manifested in flesh" would be nothing better than a grandiloquent platitude. "He who was manifested in flesh" must refer to God.

The words are the equivalent of John i. 18, which tells us that the Son has declared Himself. But, we are asked by people who own that they are in the habit of repeating the creeds, "How could the Son be God, seeing that He prayed to God, and spoke of God as a Being distinct from His own personality?" This is a real difficulty; and it is not to be met by attempting to explain "the mystery of God, even Christ," but by freely owning that the mystery is one which reason cannot solve.

How strange it is that while, on "the authority of the Church," men give an unquestioning assent to the superstitions of what they deem to be "the Christian religion," we hesitate to accept the mysteries of the Christian faith upon the authority of the Word of God! And with great humility I hazard the opinion that, in their zeal for the truth, the orthodox Fathers went to unwise lengths in analysing and defining the Deity. But be that as it may, certain it is that the formularies of those days create difficulties in many devout minds in our own times.

In presence of the mystery of God, which, we are expressly told, we cannot fathom, our part is simply to accept the "It is written." But let us see to it that what we accept is really what is written. I am here reminded of help received many years ago from having my attention called to the Greek text of John i. 1. My lesson was learned during a railway journey, and my teacher was a Roman Catholic friend, one of H.M.'s judges of the Supreme Court, who pointed out to me the significance of the presence of the Greek article in the one clause, and its absence in the other clause, of the familiar passage, (rendered in Greek) - Our English idiom fails us here; but if we might use the word "Deity" as a synonym for "God," any one could appreciate the difference between the statement that the Word was with the Deity, and the further statement that the Word was Himself Deity.

Of course the Unitarian fritters away the force of this. But even in days when the language of Scripture is treated with reckless freedom, the significance of the words which follow cannot be evaded. For we are told, "All things were made by Him"; and if the Creator of all things be not God, language has no meaning. Classic paganism, indeed, could fall back on the figment of a subordinate God- a conception which modern enlightenment rejects- and the Arian heresy would never have gained such a hold in the Patristic Church had not the minds of so many of the Fathers been corrupted by the paganism of their early training (see p. 54 post).

Indeed, we learn from 1 Corinthians viii. that even the Christians who enjoyed the benefit of direct Apostolic teaching were not wholly free from pagan error in this respect. We need to keep this in view in reading that chapter, for the 6th verse, "To us there is one God the Father," is the Unitarian's charter text. And this, we are told, is rendered the more emphatic by the sequel, "And one Lord Jesus Christ." But the teaching here is aimed at the pagan errors which then prevailed; and, in view of the immediate context, it is an impossible suggestion that the Apostle Paul intended to teach that the Lord Jesus Christ was but a creature.

For the added words, "by whom are all things," unequivocally declare the truth which is more fully revealed in Colossians i. 15-17, that the Lord Jesus is the Creator of the universe. And if this do not assert His Deity, I again repeat, words have no meaning. He "by whom are all things" must be God. Any one, therefore, who refuses the truth that the Lord Jesus is God, must acknowledge two Gods. The Christian reads the passage in the light of the words, "I and My Father are One."

But, we are told, these words are to be explained by His prayer to the Father on behalf of His people, "that they may be one even as we are One" (John xvii. 22). Surely we might suppose that even a child could understand the difference between perfect unity and essential oneness. When Hooker wrote, "Our God is one, or rather very oneness," he was not giving expression to a mere platitude, but to divine truth about the God whom we know as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The prayer of the betrayal night points to the time when the unity between His people and God will be as perfect as the unity between the Father and the Son.

But that is vastly different from essential oneness. Will that unity empower them, either corporately or as individuals, to create worlds, to forgive sins, or to give life to whom they will! And these supreme prerogatives of Deity pertain to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no escape from the dilemma in which this places us. If there be not two Gods, we must own that the Father and the Son are One.

But, some one demands, "How then do you explain"? Without waiting to hear what form the inquiry assumes, we reply at once that we do not attempt to explain "the mystery of God." "No one knoweth the

Son, save the Father." And the force of this is intensified by the sequel, "Neither doth any one know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." The truth of the Fatherhood is a mystery revealed in Christ: the truth of the Sonship remains an unrevealed mystery which transcends reason, but which faith accepts.

In teaching our children we often find that what to us seems clear is beyond the mental grasp of childhood; and yet we fail to recognise that divine truth may be beyond the capacity of finite minds. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" The Arian controversy assumes that we can / Heresy trades upon isolated texts, and the Unitarian heresy, as we have seen, ignores even the context of the words on which it relies. Take another striking instance of this.

At the grave of Lazarus "Jesus wept." And presently "He lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me." What proof this gives of His humanity, and that His relation to God was that of a man dependent on the divine Father? Yes, truly; but at that same time, and in that very scene, it was that He spoke the words, "I am the resurrection and the life." No Gentile, perhaps, can fully realise what those words conveyed to a devout Jew. If He who uttered them was not divine in the fullest and most absolute sense, the men who crucified Him were obeying one of the plainest commands of the divine law in putting Him to death.

In, saying this we assume, of course, that the Lord actually spoke the words attributed to Him. For these pages are addressed to Christians; and if the Gospels be not the divinely accredited records of His ministry, the Christian faith must give place to agnosticism in the case of all but the superstitious. And while utterly rejecting the Kenosis theology -that our Lord's words were at times the expression of divine truth, and at other times of Jewish error -we may notice that, as these particular words were in such violent opposition to all Jewish thought, they must, even on that profane hypothesis, be accepted as divine.

With some people religious doctrines seem to be kept in water-tight compartments. And thus they can hold divine truth along with human error which conflicts with it. But truth is really one, and if any part be assailed the whole is imperilled. If, for example, we let go the Deity of Christ, which is the foundation truth of Christianity, the doctrine of the Atonement is destroyed. For in the whole range of false religions there is not a more grotesquely silly superstition than that the death of a fellow-creature could expiate the sin of the world.

But in these days the need of expiation is largely ignored. And this because the ordinary conception of sin is so inadequate as to be practically false. Therefore it is that the truth of the Lord's Deity is held so lightly. For men are content with a vague belief in a reconciliation brought about in some undefined way by the example of a perfect life and a self-sacrificing death. And even this is lost by those who adopt the figment that the Lord belonged to a higher type of creaturehood than humanity.

Certain it is that He who died for men must Himself be man. And yet were He only man His death would avail us nothing; for, as the Bishop of Durham puts it, "A Saviour not quite God is a bridge broken at the farther end." And we must be on our guard against another error. The popular conception of "a divine man," "a God-man," a being half human and half divine, savours of old-world paganism. The Lord Jesus Christ is "very man" and yet "very God." He is the "type" and pattern of humanity, and yet He is the Son of God in all which that title signifies.

He is the only God the world shall ever know. Apart from Him "no one has ever seen God": apart from Him no one of mankind can ever see Him. And He it is who died for us. For "He who knew no sin was made sin

for us." And if it be demanded how could this be? we answer with Bishop Butler, "All conjectures about it must be, if not evidently absurd, yet at least uncertain." "And," as he adds, "no one has any reason to complain from want of further information unless he can show his claim to it," God here retreats upon His divine Sovereignty, and faith accepts the divine "It is written." But everything depends upon the Deity of Christ; and, therefore, as Athanasius said long ago, in contending for that great truth "we are contending for our all."

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: THE QUESTION AT ISSUE

"THE great English philosopher, John Stuart Mill, has somewhere observed that mankind cannot be too often reminded that there was once a man of the name of Socrates. That is true; but still more important is it to remind mankind again and again that a man of the name of Jesus Christ once stood in their midst." These are the opening sentences of a well-known work from the pen of the greatest of living Rationalists. But in this twentieth century such a reminder is an anachronism.

For infidelity has changed its ground, and the facts of the life and ministry of Christ no one now denies. The only question in dispute today relates to His personality. Who and what was the Great Teacher whose advent changed the history of the world? As the result of the controversies which raged around that question in the early centuries, the creed of Christendom proclaims His Deity. But in these days the creed of Christendom has been thrown into the melting-pot. And the real aim of the Christianised Rationalist, concealed beneath a cloak of Christian terminology, is to prove that the "Jesus Christ" who once stood in our midst was but a man.

And the great problem of the ages has today assumed a new and subtle phase. For that which was formerly the issue in the Unitarian controversy is no longer in dispute. The divinity of Christ is now, acknowledged even by the infidel. "Rest now in thy glory!" Renan exclaims in an outburst of enthusiastic homage. "Thy work is achieved, thy divinity established. . . . Between thee and God men shall distinguish no longer." Indeed it is accepted even by the base apostasy which masquerades as "the New Theology."

For, we are told, God is "immanent" in human nature, and we are all His sons. The Nazarene's title to divinity therefore is not only undisputed, but it is admittedly preeminent, albeit it is not exclusive. Every prince of the blood is a royal personage. But not even the Prince of Wales, unique though his position be, has either the power or the dignity of kingship. The parable needs no interpreting: the question at issue today is not the divinity of Christ, but His DEITY. In dark days now past, when the avowal of "heretical" beliefs involved suffering and loss, men thought deeply before they strayed from the beaten tracks of "orthodoxy."

They knew what it meant to "gird up the loins of their mind." But slovenly-mindedness is a marked characteristic of religious thought in this shallow and silly age of ours. The catch phrases of the fashionable pulpit or the popular press are accepted without any sort of mental struggle; and "historic beliefs" are jettisoned without the slightest exercise of heart or conscience. And yet, having regard to the transcendent importance and solemnity of the questions here at issue, such levity is intolerable.

For if the "historic beliefs" are true, the coming of Christ was the crisis of the world.' While then, with the Rationalist, the Great Teacher was "a man of the name of Jesus Christ," the Christian maintains His Deity. This belief, moreover, is based on the writings of His first disciples; and if the beliefs of the Apostles and

other writers of the New Testament on a subject of such supreme importance do not reflect the teaching of their Lord, and of the Holy Spirit who was given to guide them into all truth, faith in Christianity is mere superstition.

That the New Testament teaches the Deity of Christ is so indisputable that the infidel accepts the fact, and the task he sets himself is to disparage the testimony of the writers. In Baur's day this was achieved by maintaining that most of the sacred books were not written by the men whose names they bear, but belong to a later age. It is achieved in our day by insisting that, just because the writers were His disciples, they were not impartial witnesses, and their evidence is therefore unreliable.

Such are the ways of those who attack the Bible. "The Tubingen school" implicitly allowed that if the New Testament had been written by the Lord's contemporaries, the evidence would be valid. The Schmiedel school to-day insist that, just because the writers were His personal disciples, they were not impartial, and their evidence should be rejected! To put it tersely, no one who believed in His claims should be allowed a hearing in support of His claims. The conception of a tribunal which acted on this principle would be delightful in a "nonsense book" or in a farce to be acted on the stage.

It is a theory of evidence unknown in any civilised community - ancient or modern. And no less absurd would it be if applied to history. Suppose, for example, a life of Queen Victoria written on the system of excluding everything derived from those who knew and honoured her! How, then, does the matter stand? Upon the question here at issue, the testimony of the disciples is so clear that even the infidel acknowledges that it would deserve acceptance if it were confirmed by independent evidence.

But no confirmatory evidence is more convincing than that of hostile witnesses, and the fact that the Lord laid claim to Deity is incontestably established by the action of His enemies. We must remember that the Jews were not a tribe of ignorant savages, but a highly cultured and intensely religious people; and it was upon this very charge that, without a dissentient voice, His death was decreed by the Sanhedrim - their great national Council, composed of the most eminent of their religious leaders, including men of the type of Gamaliel and his great pupil, Saul of Tarsus.

That He was of the royal house of David was proved by the official genealogies. That He did great miracles was universally acknowledged, and not even His enemies denied that all His acts and, save on one vital point, all His words, were Worthy of His Messianic claims. How, then, can the fact be accounted for that good men - men who had a zeal for God- condemned Him to death as a blasphemer? The answer is not doubtful. It was not for His good deeds that He had been threatened with stoning, but because, said they, "Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God."

And upon this charge it was, I repeat, that He was arraigned. Had that charge been false, had it been due to a perversion of His words, He would, as a devout Jew, have repudiated it with indignant earnestness, whereas His acceptance of it was unequivocal. "Not so," the Unitarian will object, "the accusation was not that He claimed to be God, but that He called Himself the Son of God; and the answer He gave- that He was yet to sit 'on the right hand of power '- was in keeping with all His teaching.

The very assertion of His Sonship was itself an acknowledgment that He took a subordinate place, and owned the Supreme as His Father and His God." Are we to conclude, then, that the crucifixion of Christ was due to a misunderstanding which any one of us might have put right, if only we could have gained a hearing before the Sanhedrim on that fateful day? The alternative to this absurd suggestion is that the assertion of His Sonship was essentially a claim to Deity. And this suggests an inquiry of extreme interest

and importance respecting the use and meaning of the word "son" in the New Testament.

THE MEANING OF "SON" IN SCRIPTURE

IT is unnecessary to notice passages where the word "son" stands for remote descendant, as, for example, in the first verse of the First Gospel, or in the familiar phrase "Children of Israel," or again, when the Lord declared that in building the tombs of the prophets the Jews bore witness that they were the "sons" of those who slew them. Still less need we notice the numerous occurrences of the word in its primary and common acceptation. But such is the influence of our English Bible upon our habits of thought and speech that when we are told that James and John were "sons of thunder" the phrase seems as natural as when we read that they were sons of Zebedee.

Our English Bible, I say advisedly; for when the Revised Version first appeared, people were inclined to resent such unfamiliar phrases as "Sons of the bride-chamber," "sons of disobedience," &c. And yet the distinction between "son" and "child" is of great importance; and in ignoring it our version, the translators have sometimes obscured, or even perverted, vital truth. In the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, the Lord is made to say that by loving their enemies men may become children of God.

But this is utterly opposed to Christian teaching. It is by birth, and only by birth, that the relationship of father and child can be created. Moreover the Lord was there addressing His disciples, who had in fact experienced the new birth and were already children of God; and to them it was He said, "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven." Again, the A.V. reads, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born . . . of God."

But this is no less inaccurate. Thus it is indeed that we become children of God, and "children" is the word here used; but sonship connotes what children ought to be. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." To many the statement may seem startling, but its truth can be easily tested, that in the New Testament believers in Christ, as such, are never designated sons of God. In other words, that phrase never occurs as a mere synonym for "children of God."

The words of Galatians iii. 26 may seem to be an exception to this, but in fact they afford a striking illustration of it. For when the Apostle writes, "Ye are all the Sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus," he uses the word "sons" in a peculiar sense, his purpose being to mark the difference between the position of children under age, and of those who have attained their majority. In this Christian dispensation the people of God are no longer treated as in a state of nonage, "under tutors and governors," but are now deemed to be of full age, and take rank as sons.'

In Hebrews xii. 8, again, the word "sons" occurs in a sense equally foreign to our English use; for it marks the distinction between the legitimate offspring and the illegitimate, to the latter of whom the status of son is denied. These two passages are quite exceptional, the word "son" being employed to connote dignity or privilege, whereas it is generally used to indicate character or nature. And it is noteworthy that when the word is employed in this ethical sense, no thought of parentage is involved, unless, perhaps, remotely, and by way of a poetic figure.

The Gentile Galatian converts, for example, could have no possible claim to be "children of Abraham," nor would the Apostle have thus described them; but, though not "sons of the stock of Abraham," he tells them that "they which are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham." The word is here used as definitely in a

figurative sense, as in the phrase "sons of thunder." And that phrase might teach us to distinguish between the traditional "St. John" and the Apostle of that name.

The one was a soft, womanly creature, whereas "the beloved disciple" was a bold and manly man who used strong, stern words. For with him those who cherish malice are murderers; and those who belittle the Lord Jesus Christ, or deny His glory, are liars and antichrists. And remembering that his brother, the Apostle James, was a man of the same type, we can well understand why his death was specially pleasing to the Jews when he fell as a victim of Herod's malignity. If Joseph (or Joses) had been called "a child of consolation," we might suppose him to have been the recipient of very special comfort; but when we read that the Apostles surnamed him Barnabas, or "son of consolation," we conclude that he was a man of intensely sympathetic spirit.

In the same way "Sons of wrath" would be "sons of Belial"; but when the Epistle to the Ephesians tells us that by nature we are "children of wrath," the words are meant to express our condition and destiny. So, again, the phrase "a child of disobedience" might perhaps imply that the individual was the progeny of a parent's sin, whereas "sons of disobedience" describes what men are essentially and as to their very nature.¹ The fact that the Apostle exhorts the Ephesians to walk as "children of light," whereas "sons of light" is his word to the Thessalonians, may seem to indicate that in this instance, at least, the words are used as synonyms.

But an examination of the passages will make it clear that here, as elsewhere, the words carry their distinctive meanings. The one statement describes the normal condition and environment of the Christian; the other relates to his character and nature. There is a double parallel: "Watch and be sober" answers to "Walk as children of light," but "Ye are all sons of light" answers to "Ye are light in the Lord." This may remind us of the Lord's words in explaining the Parable of the Unjust Steward: "The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light."

The comparison here is not between earth and heaven, but between those who belong morally to the present economy and those who are "light in the Lord." But in another passage, where the Lord speaks of "sons of this world" and "sons of the resurrection," the contrast is merely between our condition in the present economy, and what we shall be when we "attain to that world." He thus uses the phrase in a double sense. In the one case, "sons of this world (or age)" includes all who belong to this economy in the sense of being in it, whereas in the parable it indicates those who are of it.

Nor will this seem strange if we keep in mind that in Scripture the word bears an Oriental and essentially figurative meaning. And this is true, even where a literal sense might seem possible, as, for example, when the Apostle Peter appeals to the Jews as "sons of the prophets." His audience may, of course, have included some who were actual descendants of the prophets; but the words he added, "and of the covenant," make it clear that no such thought was in his mind. In addressing them as "sons of the prophets and of the covenant," he was appealing to them as heirs of the hopes and promises of which the covenant and the prophecies spoke.

So again, when the Apostle Paul denounced Elymas the sorcerer as "Thou son of the devil," his Oriental hearers would understand his words as describing the man's character and nature. And in this same sense it was that the Lord Himself branded the typical proselyte of the Pharisees as a "son of hell."

CHAPTER III

THE SON OF MAN

Tins preliminary inquiry will help us to appreciate the significance of the word " Son" in the titles of our Divine Lord. And first as to His self-chosen designation of Son of Man. Is it, as the Rationalist and the Jew would tell us, a mere Hebraism meaning no more than that He was human? The English reader misses the significance which the Greek article lends to the words in the original. But it is recognised by scholars; and those who wish to evade it maintain that the Lord spoke in Palestinian Aramaic, and in that dialect, they declare, the phrase could not have the meaning which the Christian assigns to it.

But we can afford to ignore discussions of this kind. For words are like counters, in that their value is settled by those who use them; and there can be no doubt as to the significance which the Lord Himself attached to this His favourite title. When, for example, He exclaimed, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head," it is clear that the contrast implied in His words was between the highest and the lowest.

The humblest creatures had a home, but He, "the firstborn of all creation," was an outcast wanderer. This is the first occurrence of the phrase in the New Testament, and in Scripture a first occurrence is often specially significant. And certain it is that on the last occasion on which He used the title - it was when on His defence before the Sanhedrim - His purpose was, by declaring Himself to be the Son of Man of Daniel's vision, to assert His claim to heavenly glory. For while the first vision of the seventh chapter of Daniel (like the vision of the second chapter) is of earthly kingdoms in relation to Israel and Israel's Messiah, the vision which follows, in which He is seen as "Son of Man" in heaven, reveals a wider sovereignty and a higher glory.

In many a learned treatise the question is discussed whether this be a Messianic title at all; and in not a few this question becomes merged in an inquiry whether the Jew regarded it as such. But the Lord's words before the Sanhedrim clearly point to the conclusion suggested by His use of the title in the passage already cited, namely that it was His rejection as Messiah that led Him to declare Himself the Son of Man. And this conclusion is confirmed by the record of the martyr Stephen's vision.

His murder was Jerusalem's final rejection of Messiah. For he was the messenger sent after the King to say they would not have Him to reign over them. And as his eyes were closing upon this world, they were opened to see the heavenly vision Daniel saw-"the Son of Man on the right hand of God." It was not His human birth that constituted Him the Son of Man. That birth, indeed, was the fulfillment of the promise which the name implied; but the Son of Man, He declared explicitly, "descended out of heaven."

And He said again, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? " When, therefore, He proclaims that "the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost," came "to give His life a ransom for many," faith responds intelligently in the words of that noblest of the Church's hymns, "When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb." For the Virgin birth was but a stage in the fulfilment of His mission. Nor was it as the Virgin's Son, but as the Son of Man, that He claimed to be "Lord even of the Sabbath," and to have "power upon earth to forgive sins."

And, according to the language of our English Versions, it is as the Son of Man that the prerogative of judgment has been committed to Him. The Father, He said, "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." But a reference to the original discloses the fact that here the form of the words suggests that His purpose is to emphasise that it is because He is MAN that He is appointed to be the judge of men. The revelation of the Son of Man will lead the spiritual Christian, who has learned to

note the hidden harmony of Scripture, to recall the language of the creation story: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."(Footnote - Eighty times the words "Son of Man" occur as uttered by the Lord; but here, and here alone, they are anarthrous (see p. 14 ante).

Bishop Middleton maintains (" The Greek Article," p. 246) that the absence of the articles makes no difference; and he accounts for it by saying that "Now, for the first time, has Christ asserted His claim to the title: in all other places He has assumed it." But surely this would be a valid reason only if this were either the first time, or the last, of His using the words.) "The type," as the biologist would phrase it, is not the creature of Eden, but He after whose likeness the creature was fashioned.

And this suggests the solution of a "mystery." We are but men, and while angels behold the face of God, no man hath seen Him or can see Him. We are "flesh and blood," and "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." And yet as men we are to dwell in heavenly glory; and that wonderful promise shall be fulfilled to us-" They shall see His face." How is this seeming paradox to be explained? "Flesh and blood" are not essential to humanity. True it is that, as "the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.

He assumed "a natural body." "For there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." The one pertains to "the first man," who is "of the earth earthy, the other to "the second Man," who is "of heaven." For the Lord from heaven is "Very Man," and it is as Man that He is now upon the throne. But the body is not the man: it is but the tent, the outward dress, as it were, which covers Him. And He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever " the same who once trod the roads of Galilee and the streets of Jerusalem.

He is enthroned as Man, but no longer now in "flesh and blood." For ere He "passed through the heavens" He changed His dress. And we too "shall be changed." "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly,' The image, or pattern, of the earthy is the Adam of the Eden creation; that of the heavenly is the last Adam, the Lord from heaven. And He will "fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory.

For the triumph of redemption will not be in restoring us to the place which Adam lost by sin, but in raising us to the perfectness of the new creation, of which the Lord from heaven is the head. The eyes of our faith are not fixed upon the blessedness of Eden, but upon the glory of "the Holy Mount"; for "we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." We must bear in mind, then, the distinction so clearly marked in Scripture between the Lord's essential glory as the Son of Man, and what He became in virtue of His human birth.

Nor is this all. We need to remember also that, because of His humiliation, He has been raised to a position and a glory beyond what is revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures, or even in the doctrinal teaching of the Gospels. "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him and gave unto Him the name which is above every name." In view of His prayer on the night of the betrayal, how can this be understood? "And now," He said, "O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

A higher glory is inconceivable, and this glory was His by right: what meaning, then, can be given to the statement that He was raised to the highest glory in virtue of the cross? There is only one explanation possible, namely that it is as MAN that He has been thus exalted. It is not that as the Son of Man, by inherent right, He has "ascended up where He was before," but that as the Crucified of Calvary He is enthroned in all the glory of God. And this may explain what to some may seem a difficulty.

The Apostle John was not only "the disciple whom He loved" he was one of the favoured three who were with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration; how is it, then, that while that vision of glory served only to excite wondering worship, and led the disciples to pray for its continuance, he was so completely overwhelmed by the vision of the Lord vouchsafed to him at Patmos? "When I saw Him," he writes, "I fell at His feet as dead." May not the explanation be that, whereas the glory of "the Holy Mount" was that of "the Son of Man coming in His kingdom," the Patmos vision revealed Him in all the fulness of the supreme glory to which He was exalted when "begotten again from the dead"?

He was "like unto the Son of Man"; but "His eyes were as a flame of fire." "And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." And it is as thus exalted that the Christian is called upon to know Him and to worship Him. It is not that there are many Christs, but that "upon His head are many crowns." Nor is it that the Lord Jesus of Bethlehem and Calvary is lost to us. "He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, fear not," is the seer's record of the scene when he lay like one dead in presence of such awful glory.

But though His hand held the stars of that vision of glory, it was the same loving hand that had so often rested on him in the days of the humiliation. And though that voice was "as the sound of many waters," the words were such as the beloved disciple was doubtless used to hear during the ministry of the forty days-"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death." That supreme glory was His, I repeat, by inherent right.

"Originally in the form of God," and "on an equality with God," are the words of the often-cited text. But, not counting this "a prize" (or "a thing to be grasped"), He emptied Himself - divested Himself of it all. The inference of the rationalistic "Higher Criticism" is that during His earthly sojourn He was, in effect, a mere man, and therefore a dupe of the ignorance and error which prevailed among the Jews of His time. And this, moreover, not merely in ordinary matters, but in the sphere that most vitally concerned His ministry and His mission.

Strange it is that even un-spiritual men can fail to be shocked by the profanity of this; stranger still that even a surface acquaintance with the Gospels does not enable them to detect its falseness. (Footnote - Here are the words of the standard text-book of the cult: "Christ held the current Jewish notions respecting the divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament." (Hasting's Bibl. Dict., article "Old Testament," p. 601.) For the antithesis so often emphasised in His teaching was not between the divine and the human, but between the Father and the Son.

Nor was this the limit of His self-renunciation. He not merely "emptied Himself" in coming into the world, but, "being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself." And yet He claimed to forgive sins, and to be Lord of the Sabbath; and in the hour of what seemed His greatest weakness and shame He declared that He could summon myriads of angels to His help. Is this the attitude, is this the language, of "a Jew of His time"? As we read the record we realise that we are in the divine presence of the Son of Man.

And yet He humbled Himself to the extent of giving up even His liberty as a man, and refraining, not merely from doing His own will, but even from speaking His own words. The holiest of men could not be trusted thus, When, in His dealings with the exiles of the Captivity, God needed a prophet who would never speak save in words divinely given, He struck Ezekiel dumb. Two judgments had already fallen on the nation - first, the Servitude, and then the Captivity, to Babylon. But they were warned that, if they remained impenitent, a third, more terrible than either, would befall them - that of the seventy years'

Desolations; and until the day when Jerusalem, their boast and pride, was smitten, Ezekiel's mouth was closed, save when the Spirit came unto him, and God gave him words to speak.'

But the self-renunciation of the Son of God was so absolute and unreserved that He could use language such as this - The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do" (John v. 19). "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak" (John xii. 48-50). Are these the words of One who "held the current Jewish notions" of His time? Blind though they were, the Jews of His time were not so blind as some Christian ministers and professors of Christian Universities to-day. For the Jews could recognise that "He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." From the scribes they were used to receiving definite and dogmatic teaching, but it was teaching based upon "the law and the prophets": here was One who stood apart and taught them from a wholly different plane.

The words of the Apostles and Evangelists were "inspired," but His words were "the words of God " in a higher sense. For it was not merely the body of His teaching that was thus divine, but the very language in which it was conveyed. So that in His prayer on the betrayal night He could say not only "I have given them Thy Word," but "I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me." So complete was His self-renunciation and submission that beyond what the Father gave Him to speak He knew nothing, and was silent.

With reference to His coming in glory, for instance, He declared, "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." This was not within His "authority"; the Father had not given Him to speak of it. But if and when He spoke, He spoke with authority. "Whatsoever I speak, therefore," He declared, "even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak." What wonder, then, that He said again - and the words gain tremendous force from being part of the very same sentence in which He disclaimed the knowledge of the time of His return - " Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." What wonder that He declared His coming to be the crisis of the world!

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SON OF GOD

WE have seen, then, that "the Son of Man" is a Messianic title only in the sense that it belongs to Him who is Israel's Messiah; further, that the Lord assumed this higher glory when His Messianic claims were rejected; and lastly, that so far from its implying sonship by a human father, the title is altogether independent of His human birth. He was not only the man who was born in Bethlehem, but the Son of Man who "descended out of heaven "- Man by a higher title than human birth could give.

In speaking of Him as the man of Bethlehem and Nazareth we are treading, as it were, the sacred enclosure reserved for the feet of the covenant people. And when we dwell upon His glory as the Son of Man, we seem to have passed the outer veil, where none but anointed priests might enter. But He is not merely the Son of Man, but the Son of God; and here we stand before the second veil which shrouds the mysteries of the holiest of all. And if we may dare to draw aside that veil, let us take heed that we do so with befitting reverence, and in the spirit of the words of Agur's "prophecy."

We do well to recall them here: "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? . . . What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell? . . . Add thou not unto His words." Here, then, are some of the words of the Son of God: "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father; and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father. The Lord goes on to say, "Neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him; but there is no such added clause respecting the knowledge of the Son.

No ONE KNOWETH THE SON, SAVE THE FATHER; or, as the Lord expressed it upon another occasion more definitely still, "No one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father." This is absolute, and in the light of it we read the Apostle's words, "the mystery of God, even Christ." Would that this had always been remembered in the past! For the truth of Christ has suffered more from the mistaken zeal of its learned and devout defenders, than from the ignorance and malice of its assailants, heretical or profane.

There are truths which we can make our own, and these we can distribute, so to speak, in our own coinage. 'But in presence of truth so solemn, so mysterious, so transcendental, it is our part simply to accept what is written, and to keep to the very words in which it is revealed. A recent incident in the French Chamber might teach us a lesson here, for "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." Trouble was caused in a certain district through the general in command having communicated a War Office order in his own words.

And when the Minister of War was challenged in Parliament for punishing him, his answer was, "He committed an offence, and I removed him; he paraphrased an order which it was his duty only to read." And men have offended grievously by paraphrasing the words in which "the mystery of God" has been revealed. The Sonship of Christ has thus been defined and explained in the terms used to express the generation of human beings, thus affording the Jew a further excuse for his unbelief, and the Moslem an occasion for his blasphemies.

As the Lord's title of Son of Man does not mean that He was begotten by a man, but that He is the very impersonation of humanity, ought we not to interpret His title of Son of God on this same principle? But is He not called the "only begotten Son of God"? Such is indeed the inaccurate rendering of our English versions.' Etymologically "only begotten," as one word, would be the precise equivalent in English of the Greek word here used; but what concerns us is not the etymology of the word, but the meaning of it.

The language of the New Testament is largely based upon that of the Greek version of the Old; and this word is used by the LXX. to represent a Hebrew term of endearment - a term in which there is no suggestion whatever of "begetting." It properly denotes "only"; and by a natural transition it comes to mean unique, and then greatly beloved. In six of its twelve occurrences the Septuagint Version has "beloved" the very word by which the Lord Jesus was hailed from heaven at His baptism, and again on the Holy Mount.

And in every one of these six passages our English translators render it "only." In one passage (Ps. lxxviii. 6), it is taken, both in the Greek Bible and also in the English, to mean "solitary"; and in Proverbs iv. 8 it is rendered by a term of affection. In the four remaining passages (Judges xi. 84; Ps. xxii. 20, xxv. 16, and xxxv. 17), the Septuagint rendering is monogenēs. The first of these passages tells us that Jephthah's daughter was his only child. In the 25th Psalm the word in our translations is "desolate."

And in the 22nd and 85th Psalms, where our divine Lord is referred to, "darling" is the word used in the English versions. Then as to the use of this word monogenēs in the New Testament; in three of the nine passages where it occurs, it means an only child (Luke vii. 12, viii. 42, ix. 88). And their rendering of it by

"only begotten" in Hebrews xi. 17 suggests that our translators regarded this English phrase as a term of endearment; for Isaac, though his father's darling, was not his only son.

In the other passages where it occurs, it designates the Son of God (John i. 14, 18, ffl. 16, 18; and 1 John iv. 9). The view we take of the first of these passages will influence our reading of the rest. "And we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father." Thus the revisers have given a literal translation of the text. And apart from controversy, every one would naturally understand it to mean that the glory of Christ was glory such as the Father would bestow upon the only Son.

But yet most commentators read it differently, although the phrase "only begotten from the Father" is as unusual in Greek as it is in English, and the meaning of the word rendered "only begotten" is acknowledged to be "only" and "beloved." Such, indeed, is clearly the governing thought in every passage where the word is applied to the Lord; and it may be averred with confidence that, but for the controversies of other days, no other element would have been imported into it. "Words are the counters of wise men, the money of fools," and in this sphere, above all others, it behoves us to keep clear of folly. (Footnote - Grimm's Lexicon gives it "single of its kind, only"; and adds, "He is so spoken of by John, not because of generation by God, but because He is of nature, or essentially, Son of God.")

Dean Alford says: "In New Testament usage it signifies the only Son." (" Gr. Test. Corn.") Bloomfield says, with reference to "the Beloved" in Eph. 1. 6: "It may be compared with monogenea of John 1. 14, 18, iii. 18; 1 John iv. 9, where the full sense is 'only and most dearly beloved.')" The meaning of a word is settled by its use, and having regard to the Scriptural use of the word here in question, it is certain that the dogma with which it is associated must be based on some other foundation.

And to base it on His title of "Son" is, as we have seen, to ignore the meaning of that word in Scriptural usage. But it may be demanded, How then is His Sonship to be explained? The mysteries of the Christian revelation have this in common with the superstitious dogmas that have been based upon it, that they claim acceptance on transcendental grounds. But here the analogy ends; for although these truths of revelation may be above our reason, yet, unlike the errors of superstition, they never outrage reason.

But while with the "Christian religionist" "the voice of the Church" is an end of controversy, and he refuses to discuss the dogmas of his creed, the Christian seems to have so little confidence in the Word of God that he is always eager to "explain" the mysteries of his faith. A signal example of the evil of this tendency is afforded by the usual perversion of the Apostle Paul's defence of the resurrection. In reply to the demand, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" he does not attempt to explain the mystery.

His answer is, "Thou fool!" The words which follow are the germ and "pattern" of Bishop Butler's great "apology." If, the Apostle argues, we cannot explain the most familiar processes of Nature - as, for instance, the growth of corn from "bare grain," dead and buried in the ground - how can we expect to explain the resurrection of the dead? But if there be a living God - an Almighty God - there is no improbability in the thought of the resurrection. And so, when arraigned before his heathen judges at Caesarea, the Apostle exclaimed, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?"

And in the same spirit we may well demand, Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should manifest Himself to men? For if we recognise, as all thoughtful persons must recognise, the reasonableness of such a revelation, the only question open relates to the manner of it. And judging by

our Bible "Dictionaries" and "Encyclopaedias," it would seem that our decision of that question should depend on whether the divine method commends itself to the "wise and prudent."

That God thundered forth His law at Sinai, and engraved it upon stone, the "wise and prudent" scout as a superstitious legend. And that "His only begotten Son declared Him," they reject as mysticism. If, indeed, instead of living in a remote province, and among a superstitious people - they happened to be the land and people of the Covenant!- the Christ had submitted His claims to committees of scientific experts in Rome and Athens, and the "blue-book" containing their report upon His test miracles were before them, the "wise and prudent" would believe in Him.

But Christians are so dull-witted that even if such a blue-book were available they would prefer the New Testament! And in the New Testament they find that when, in the days of His ministry, the "wise and prudent" rejected Him, He "answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." "Babes" -that is, children.' It is not that children are unintelligent - they are often more quick-witted than their seniors - but that they are guileless, and believe what they are told, And if in this spirit we enter on the study of the Bible, we shall be content to accept the divine revelation about Christ, without attempting to explain its mysteries.

But we are not content to take the place of children. And the result is deplorable. For just as the mysteries of the Atonement are "explained" in the language of the market and the criminal court, so the mysteries of the Incarnation are "explained" in the language of - ! But here I check myself.' I am not unmindful that it is only the unlearned who base His title of Son of God upon the Virgin birth. But the majority of Christians are "unlearned." The first occurrence in the New Testament of the full title, the "Son of God," is the Apostle Peter's confession : "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Was this confession due to a sudden appreciation of the fact that the Lord's mother was a virgin?

The suggestion is both painful and grotesque. That could be attested by "flesh and blood" on the recognised principles of evidence ; but of this truth of His Sonship the Lord declared, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." And so was it with all the Eleven at the last; throughout His ministry He had been subjected to a constant ordeal of interrogation. But His words at the Supper drew from them the confession, "Now we are sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any one should question Thee; by this we believe that Thou comest forth from God."

It was not what He had become in virtue of His human birth, but what He was by inherent right. For His "coming forth from God" does not point to the manger of Bethlehem, and the date of the Nativity, but to a past Eternity and the Father's throne. And this is the truth on which the faith of the Christian rests - the faith that "overcometh the world." "For whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." It is not an inference from the Virgin birth, but a revelation from the Father in heaven.

If, then, His title of Son of God does not depend on the Virgin birth - and it is a fact of vital moment that the word "begotten" is used of Him only in relation to His resurrection from the dead '- what can be its significance? The only meaning that can be given to it is that which it conveyed to those who heard His teaching, those among whom He lived and died. Just as by "Son of Man" He claimed to be man in the highest and most absolute sense, so by "Son of God" He laid claim to Deity. His disciples understood it thus, and they worshipped Him as divine; and those who refused to believe in Him understood it thus, and

they crucified Him as a blasphemer.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TESTIMONY OF THE FIRST GOSPEL

THE Gospels may be studied either as the divinely accredited records of the Ministry, or as a progressive revelation of Christ. Not that the Lord's teaching was divided chronologically into sections, but that in the books which contain the inspired record of His teaching there is a definite and systematic "progress of doctrine." The purpose of the First Gospel, for example, is to record His Messianic mission to the people of the covenant, and it contains nothing save what relates to that mission.

A fuller spiritual knowledge of Scripture is needed, perhaps, to enable us to recognise in Mark the revelation of Him as Jehovah's Servant; but no one can miss the prominence which the humanity of Christ holds in the Third Gospel; and the distinctive character of the Fourth, as the revelation of the Son of God, is universally acknowledged. But though the Gospels thus present us with four different portraits, there is but one Christ. And while the Fourth Gospel was written expressly to reveal Him as the Son of God, it displays Him none the less as Israel's Messiah, Jehovah's Servant, and the Son of Man.

For such is the divine system of a progressive revelation. "What has yet to be unfolded is rarely anticipated, but what has been already revealed is incorporated and continued." "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." This brief sentence on the opening page of the Fourth Gospel sums up the story of His Messianic mission as recorded in the First. And when we read that "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," we recall the Virgin birth. No need to set forth the manner of it, for that has been already told; and now all that remains is to give the full revelation of the Son of God.

Not even the full title, "the Son of God," is to be found in the earlier Gospels, save only in Peter's confession, in the mysterious homage accorded Him by demons, and in the charge on which the Sanhedrim condemned Him for blasphemy. That charge gave proof that He had used it in His ministry. But the Holy Spirit, in inspiring the records of the Ministry, reserved the unfolding of it for the Apostle whose peculiar receptivity led to his being known among his brethren as the disciple whom He loved.

And the purpose of his Gospel is expressly stated at the close: "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"; that "Jesus," the Man who was born in Bethlehem, is the Christ - Israel's Messiah - and that He is the Son of God. But though the Gospel of John has thoroughly distinctive characteristics, it is merely an advance in a progressive revelation, and not, as some would tell us, a breaking away from all that has gone before. The figment that the other Evangelists do not teach the Deity of Christ betrays extraordinary blindness; for though that truth is nowhere asserted by them as a dogma, it is in the warp and woof of their record of the Lord's ministry.

Abundant proof of this may be found in each of the earlier Gospels, but for the present purpose an appeal to the Gospel of Matthew will suffice. Take, for example, the "Sermon on the Mount." Of the Ten Commandments Moses declared, "These words the Lord spake in the Mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; and He added no more." In Scripture they have a special solemnity. What, then, was the Lord's attitude toward them?

"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; but I say unto you . . . And this formula is five times repeated. Was it that He thus intended either to revoke or to disparage the law of

Sinai? Far from it; the words are prefaced by the declaration that that law is eternal. But the "Mount of the Beatitudes" spoke with the same divine authority as the mount of the thunder and the fire: this is the explanation of His words. The Hebrew prophets spake from God, but "Thus saith the Lord" prefaced all their utterances.

And though the Apostle Paul had abundant revelations, and he insisted that his words had divine authority, the authority he claimed for them was that they were "commandments of the Lord." He himself was nothing, and the emphatic ego's in his teaching are rare; they are usually inserted, indeed, to mark his insignificance. In Colossians, for instance, that wonderful Epistle in which the revelation of the Christ reaches its highest development - there is never an ego anywhere, save in declaring himself a servant.

But in the Lord's teaching the ego stands out with the utmost prominence, and "I say unto you" takes the place of "Thus saith the Lord." Of the law of Sinai He declared, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled"; of His own teaching He declared, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away. "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not steal," these are words for sinners.

And when the great telos' comes, (Footnote- 1 Cor. xv. 24. The telos in Greek is not the end in the sense of our English word. It connotes, not cessation, but result. The end of a journey is our arrival at our destination; the accomplishment of the purpose with which we set out.) when all things have been subdued unto Him, and God has become all in all - when "the first heaven and the first earth are passed away, and the tabernacle of God is with men, and God Himself shall be with them"- then the words of Sinai shall be a memory of an evil past; but the words of the Ministry of our glorious Lord and Saviour shall live as the everlasting heritage of His people.

Entirely in keeping with this is His teaching recorded in the eleventh chapter. Upbraiding the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, He declared that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for Capernaum. What Sodom was - that name of infamy - we know. But what had Capernaum done? He did mighty works there; He taught in its streets; He made His home in it - it is called "His own city": all this gives proof that in Capernaum there can have been no open hostility to His ministry.

But "they repented not" - that is all. Sodom poured contempt upon "the moral law," which was afterwards embodied in the "ten words" thundered forth at Sinai: Capernaum failed to repent on hearing the words of Christ. And yet He declared that the sin of Capernaum was deeper than the flagrant and filthy iniquities of Sodom. If His words were not as divine as the words of Sinai, the profanity of this would be astounding. And yet then and there He owned His position of dependence and subjection, calling upon God as His Father and the Lord of heaven and earth.

The most absolute subjection, here and always; but subordination, never by word or act throughout His ministry. Notice the terms in which He addresses Him - "Lord of heaven and earth": His "Lord" He never calls Him. And mark what follows. Though He was "the First-born of all creation" - the One by whom and for whom all created things were made; the Word who in the beginning, and before there was a creature made, was with God, and was God - He had, when coming into the world, divested Himself of all His rights and all His glory; but the response of the Father was to re-invest Him with all that He had surrendered.

Not, as the Neo-theology would tell us, after His return to heaven - till then, indeed, He could not re-assume the glory - but here, in the time and scene of His humiliation and rejection, He could say, "All

things are delivered unto Me of My Father." And in the same breath He adds, anticipating the craving which such words excite to understand the mystery of His personality, "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father." And then - "Come unto ME, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Another emphatic! If words like these came from the greatest, holiest, best of men, we should fling them back with indignation. But they are the words of Him by whom and for whom we were created; of Him who spoke from Sinai, and knows the guilt and penalty of sin; of Him to whom all judgment has been committed, and who can anticipate the decrees of the Great Day; of Him - let us not forget it - who "took part of flesh and blood," and knows our burdens and our toils. And when spiritual men dwell upon His words, with thoughts like these filling their hearts, they do not sit down to frame a christology; they cast

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