

the judicial standpoint of the law, he is preparing for a better understanding of Scripture teaching, as well as of the facts of Christian experience. It may be questioned, however, whether Ritschl has been successful in his attempt to supplement the moral theory of redemption. He is not satisfied with the view that God is revealed to us in Christ's life and death, and that we have there also a picture of the life we ought to live, and, by the aid of Christ's influence, may live. He adds to it the thought that Christ is our representative before God, the eternal object of the Divine love, and that we enter into the same relation to God by attaching ourselves to Christ by faith. This personal relation to Christ, he always hastens to add, is not an immediate relation, but is practically realized by attaching ourselves to the Christian community. This seems to be a concession—made and then half-withdrawn—to the old legal point of view.

In general, Ritschl's type of theological method may be compared to the tendencies that show themselves in the writings of the Apostle Paul. We can discern, namely, the germs of four styles of theologizing in the New Testament: the Biblical,

the Traditional-orthodox, the Experiential, and the Speculative. The Biblical tendency is represented by Matthew and the Epistle to the Hebrews; the Traditional-orthodox method is seen in the later Epistles, and is sufficiently explained by its motto, 'Hold fast the form of sound words.' The Experiential or moral-historical method is represented by Paul; the Speculative by John. Where lies true theological science? The Biblical method is useful as a basis, so far as it leads to sound historical results; but, unfortunately, the individual consciousness always obtrudes itself, and the worshippers of the letter have always been remarkable for their heedlessness of its meaning. The Traditional-orthodox method has a conservative use; but a system of borrowed conclusions is not science. There remain the Experiential method of Paul, and the Speculative method of John. The one examines and interprets the faith, keeping close to the shore of religious experience; the other seeks to understand the presuppositions of faith, and the conditions that lie behind experience. And with all deference to Ritschl, I do not think that either of these last methods can safely exclude the other.

## The Nickname 'Son of Man.'

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*υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου γέγονεν ἵνα οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τοῦτέστι Ἀδάμ, υἱοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ γένωνται.*—S. Athan. *De Hum. Nat. Suscept.*

WHAT is the meaning of this title, 'the Son of Man,' wherewith Jesus loved to designate Himself? There is no question in the whole range of New Testament study which has been more largely discussed, and none regarding which there is less agreement.<sup>1</sup> According to one opinion it means the Ideal Man,<sup>2</sup> and constitutes a claim on the part of Jesus to a unique character and mission; according to another it means the Mere Man, and identifies Him with the other members of the race, 'the sons of men' (cf. Mk 3<sup>28</sup> τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν

ἀνθρώπων = Mt 12<sup>31</sup> τοῖς ἀνθρώποις). Some regard it as a Messianic title; others maintain that it has nothing to do with Messiahship. And recently, on the ground that in Aramaic 'the son of man' would mean simply 'the man,' the startling opinion has been propounded that the title is unauthentic and was never used by Jesus at all.

In face of such wide divergence of opinion there is reason to suspect that the investigation has been prosecuted along false paths, and a fresh starting-point and a new clue are necessary in order to a satisfactory solution of the problem. Nor is the initial fallacy far to seek. It has been generally assumed that Jesus derived the title from the apocalyptic literature, in the first instance from the Book of Daniel and then from the Book of Enoch. This, however, is very questionable. It is even

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Driver's art. 'Son of Man' in Hastings' *D. B.*

<sup>2</sup> Calv. *Instit.* ii. 13, § 2: 'Siquidem palam est hebraice more vocari filium hominis verum hominem.'

doubtful whether the Book of Enoch be pre-Christian; and in neither book is 'Son of Man' an appellation. In Dn 7<sup>13</sup> 'one like unto a son of man' means merely a figure with a human form, and the Book of Enoch simply quotes the phrase when it speaks of the Messiah as 'that son of man.'

It is therefore necessary to dismiss the idea that the title 'Son of Man' as Jesus used it, has any connexion with the apocalyptic literature; and, when this is understood, the way is open for a fresh investigation. What did the phrase mean in Jewish parlance? On the lips of the Psalmist it is equivalent to 'man,' with the added implication of *mortal weakness* (Ps 8<sup>4</sup> 144<sup>3</sup> 146<sup>3</sup>); and in the Book of Ezekiel, where the prophet is upwards of ninety times addressed by God as 'son of man,' it has a like signification, 'expressing,' says Davidson, 'the contrast between the prophet, as one of mankind, and the majesty of God.' In the *Mishna* 'the sons of man,' בְּנֵי אָדָם, means 'the common folk.' E.g. "א" ב"א is 'the common custom,' "א" ב"א, 'the common parlance.'<sup>1</sup> 'A son of man' would thus mean one of the common people in contrast to the great and mighty of the earth. It was not a Messianic title; indeed, it is surprising that it should ever have been taken as such in view of the use which Jesus made of it. 'Who,' he asked at Caesarea Philippi, 'do men say that the Son of Man is?' And Simon Peter answered: 'Thou art the Messiah.' The point here is that the title 'Son of Man,' so far from being synonymous with Messiah, concealed the Messiahship of Jesus and made the recognition thereof difficult, nay, impossible without divine illumination. Flesh and blood did not reveal it unto thee, but My Father in Heaven' (Mt 16<sup>13</sup>. 16-17).

'In considering the meaning of the title, it ought,' says Driver, 'to be clearly understood that it is not anywhere explained in the New Testament, so that whatever view of it be adopted must be a matter of conjecture and inference.' Is it possible to hit upon a reasonable conjecture which will take account of the facts and disclose the idea which lay in the Lord's mind when He called Himself by this name? According to St. John He first used it at the very outset of His ministry when He was returning with Andrew, John, Simon Peter, and Philip, His new-found disciples, from

<sup>1</sup> Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, p. 236.

Bethany beyond Jordan, the scene of His baptism and His manifestation unto Israel. As they travelled northward, they came upon Nathanael resting and meditating under the shade of a fig-tree, and Jesus revealed Himself to him, and answered his astonishment with the declaration, addressed not to him alone but to all: 'Verily, verily, I tell you, Ye shall see the heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man' (Jn 1<sup>51</sup>).

Is it not a reasonable conjecture that there is here a reference to the scene which had been enacted by the bank of the Jordan? The Baptist had pointed to Jesus and proclaimed Him the Messiah. 'Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man who hath become before me' (Jn 1<sup>29-30</sup>). How would the multitude feel when they heard the announcement? They would be surprised, incredulous, and disappointed. According to Jewish expectation the Messiah should have been a victorious king. He was called 'the Son of God,' the title which had of old been borne by the king of Israel as God's representative and vice-gerent (cf. Ps 2<sup>6-7</sup>); and when the Baptist pointed to Jesus, a peasant from despised Nazareth, and said, 'Behold, the Messiah!' they would exclaim in derisive incredulity, 'This the Messiah! This is no Son of God; he is a *son of man*.' Jesus would overhear their murmurings, and He caught up the contemptuous epithet wherewith they branded Him. A son of man! one of the common people, the בְּנֵי אָדָם, whom the rulers despised (Jn 7<sup>49</sup>). Yes, He was even such, and He would wear the epithet all the days of His ministry and be known as 'the Son of Man.'

He did this not in a spirit of bravado by way of exhibiting His disdain. On the contrary, it was a happy device, and had a deep and gracious purpose. The title 'Son of Man' served as a continual protest against that secular ideal of the Messiahship which more than anything else hindered His recognition and acceptance. And it set the people thinking and questioning. Once during the Passion-week Jesus spoke in the Temple-court of His being 'lifted up,' a phrase which on His lips always signified not only His crucifixion but His subsequent exaltation, 'the sufferings that should befall Messiah and the glories that should follow these' (1 P 1<sup>11</sup>). It would have been no surprise to the Jews had He

spoken of 'the lifting up of the Messiah.' They would have understood thereby His exaltation to His rightful honour as the King of Israel. But He was accustomed to speak of 'the lifting up of the Son of Man,' and this they could not understand. 'We have heard,' they said, 'out of the Law that the Messiah abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?' (Jn 12<sup>34</sup>). In assuming this title of lowliness Jesus designed to make men think and perchance discover that His Messianic glory was not what they conceived—not the glory of earthly majesty but the glory of sacrifice.

He had the further purpose of identifying Himself with the weak and despised, and thus revealing His grace. And the Jews should have recognized the suitability of the title; they would have recognized it, had they not been blinded by their worldly ideal. *The Son of the Fallen* was a Rabbinical title of the Messiah,<sup>1</sup> and it was closely analogous to the title 'Son of Man.' It should have been no stumbling-block to them when the Messiah came bearing this name of lowliness and of sympathy with the weak and despised. Rather should they have hailed Him gladly and recognized therein the fulfilment of their expectation. 'Behold, the Son of the Fallen!'

If this were indeed the origin of the title 'Son of Man,' it was in the first instance an opprobrious epithet, in fact, a nickname; and Jesus transfigured it by bearing it. It is not the only nickname which was thrown at Him while He dwelt among men. The Pharisees in Galilee, offended by His kindness towards the outcasts, styled Him 'the Friend of Taxgatherers and Sinners' (Mt 11<sup>19</sup> = Lk 7<sup>34</sup>); and the rulers at Jerusalem in their Judæan pride called Him 'a Samaritan,' one of the contemptuous epithets wherewith the Rabbis

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot on Ac 15<sup>16</sup>.

branded such as did not sit at their feet.<sup>2</sup> It is, indeed, only a conjecture that the name originated thus, but it is not without attestation. (1) Wherever it occurs in the Gospels, it is Jesus Himself that uses it. The Evangelists never call Him 'the Son of Man'; and what is the explanation, if it be not that it was a name of scorn, and they would not bestow it on the Lord whom they loved and revered? As soon would they have termed Him 'the Friend of Taxgatherers and Sinners' or 'the Samaritan.' And (2) Jesus never used it but in two connexions: in connexion with His present humiliation and suffering (Mt 8<sup>20</sup> = Lk 9<sup>58</sup>, Mt 17<sup>22</sup> = Mk 9<sup>31</sup> = Lk 9<sup>44</sup>, Mt 20<sup>18</sup> = Mk 10<sup>33</sup> = Lk 18<sup>31-33</sup>, Mt 26<sup>24</sup> = Mk 14<sup>21</sup> = Lk 22<sup>22</sup>), and in connexion with His future glory (Jn 1<sup>61</sup>, Mt 13<sup>41</sup> 25<sup>31</sup>, Mt 26<sup>64</sup> = Mk 14<sup>62</sup> = Lk 22<sup>69</sup>). Nor is there any inconsistency between those two usages seemingly so wide apart. When Jesus used the title 'Son of Man' in the latter connexion, it was always with the design of startling His hearers. Thus at the outset of His ministry it was nothing but a term of contempt; and when He said to Nathanael, 'Ye shall see the heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man,' it was a prophecy of the glory which they would yet discover in one so lowly. And so, when at the close He replied to the High Priest's question whether He were the Messiah, 'I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven.' It would have been no marvel had He said 'the Son of God'; but, when He said 'the Son of Man,' it seemed a preposterous claim. It was credible only to such as had discovered the glory which was hidden beneath His humiliation. It was the very opprobriousness of the epithet that gave point and force to His declaration.

<sup>2</sup> Wetstein on Jn 8<sup>48</sup>.

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF ST. LUKE.

#### LUKE XI. 13.

'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?'—R.V.

#### EXPOSITION.

'If ye then, being evil.'—An idea introduced to make the argument *a fortiori*. Even imperfect, sinful men would not act thus monstrously to their children; much less then God, who is good and perfect.—ADENEY.