

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

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

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

*CHRIST'S USE OF THE TERM "THE SON OF
MAN."*

It can hardly be said that we have reached anything like a consensus on this point. Nor can this be regarded as surprising where the materials are such as to require considerable speculative combination; as when it is asked, "What determined Christ's own choice of this term, as the one most distinctive¹ of His public ministry—the one to which He calls primary attention, as giving the key to the character of His Messiahship?" The object then of this paper is not so much to suggest a complete solution of the problem, as to indicate some data for its solution, which have too often been overlooked. But first I would make clear my attitude to the data derived from Apocalyptic literature, especially the Book of Enoch. It appears not only *a priori* probable, but also in large measure actually proved by the Gospel narratives, that such literature must in the main be taken as representative of certain as yet undefined circles, rather than of the people at large.

Esoteric in its origin, and with tendencies sometimes akin to Essenism, it does not seem in its more technical features to have become really part of the popular consciousness. And among its technicalities we must reckon the use of the "Son of Man" in Enoch. In the mouth of the multitude the puzzled query,² "Who is this Son of Man?" would mean what it does to most readers to-day, the emphasis falling on "Son of Man," not on "this." On this view, then, "the Son of Man" was not a *popular* term. Had it been so, Jesus could not have constantly used it to the

¹ The expression is found nearly eighty times in the mouth of Jesus in the Gospels, and not once in the mouth of any other, except in the way of perplexed interrogation (John xii. 34).

² John xii. 34. Of course it would be otherwise with the Sanhedrin (Mark xiv. 61 ff.; Matt. xxvi. 63 ff.).

multitudes, as well as to the disciples, as a suggestive expression, giving them the hint needed to educate faith, but nothing more.

And this gives a point of transition to the class of evidence to be here cited. Jesus was Himself a Jewish villager, nurtured "under the law," like the people at large, and like them possessed by Old Testament ideas, to an extent perhaps hardly realized by most of us to-day. Was He not likely, therefore, to make appeal to His humble brethren, "the poor" to whom the Gospel was so largely adjusted, in terms deeply rooted in the Old Testament? Would He not choose as His distinctive self-revelation a title, grounded not so much in an isolated passage (only brought into prominence by a largely esoteric apocalypse), as in ideas that formed organic parts of the whole prior revelation? Not that I would, with Schleiermacher, deny that the *term* was in any way suggested, even to Christ's mind, by Daniel vii. 13.¹ But to adopt a term is one thing, to derive one's use of it from a single striking passage in which it occurs is another. And here we may say with Schmid,² that "it is *not consistent with the character of Jesus* merely to borrow an oft-recurring expression, without at the same time intentionally giving to it an original and characteristic signification." This latter I believe to have existed in His consciousness prior to the adoption of the term. Yet while original as a clearly conceived idea, it was so native to the Old Testament in the form of scattered germs, as to invite

¹ As regards the suggested influence of the Book of Enoch Dr. Bruce says: "In truth, it is very questionable if the words of Jesus have any connection whatever with that apocryphal book, and are not rather to be directly affiliated to the [symbolic] oracle concerning the Son of Man in the book of Daniel, whereof the relative parts of the book named after the ancient patriarch are a coarse sensuous expansion." Perhaps this point can be put too sharply. But that this Apocalyptic terminology is at least used allusively,—so as merely to adumbrate the continuation of spiritual relations already in operation in the historic ministry—rather than adopted *con amore* by the speaker, seems to follow from the general attitude and method of Christ.

² *Bibl. Theol. of the N.T.*, p. 111.

the gradual recognition of His hearers. We have now to ask, “What and where were these Old Testament germs?”

It can hardly have failed to strike most of us that the absence of *explicit* reference on Christ’s part to the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah liii. is sufficiently remarkable. But what if there be a constant *implicit* reference in Christ’s teaching as to the Son of Man, such as, in the presence of the existing Jewish prejudice against any but a mighty or self-assertive Messiah, was the only wise course? ¹ If this chapter be the real source of the Baptist’s designation ² of Jesus as “the Lamb of God,” surely Jesus might Himself bring it somehow to the front in connection with His own person. Does He not, then, do so in this use of the title “the Son of Man,” taken in connection with the sum of the predicates in which the distinctive features of its holder are set forth? ³ Let us first of all examine the links of connection presented by these features; and then ask, Are there also any verbal anticipations in the O.T. of such a use of the conception “Son of Man?”

¹ It will be seen at once by those familiar with Rev. J. E. Carpenter’s view, discussed by Dr. Sanday, in *THE EXPOSITOR* (4th series, vol. iii. 18 ff.), that the present theory absorbs its positive aspect. It is able moreover to adopt a large part of Dr. Sanday’s own language, when he says (p. 29 f.): “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. . . . But the very reason which led them to avoid the title induced our Lord to take it. It expressed His Messiahship definitely enough for His purpose; but it expressed it in that veiled and suggestive way which characterized the whole of His teaching on His own person. At the same time it conveyed to those who had ears to hear the whole secret of the incarnation. That which the Jews shrank from and ignored, He rather placed in the forefront of His mission.” And so on, though he stops short of seeking for the actual (Old Testament) sources of Christ’s own conception of the term.

² John i. 29, 36, cf. Isaiah liii. So Prof. G. A. Smith, who works out the traces of this and the related sections of Isaiah at considerable length (*Isaiah*, vol. ii., chap. xvii. “The Servant of the Lord in the N.T.”).

³ As Keim remarks, “The *mass* of the expressions must here decide as to the ultimate meaning of the phrase.” And these predicates as a whole forbid our “looking for something indefinite, or for a *mere prophetic title*” (iii. 85 f.).

I.

The affinity between the Son of Man of the Gospels and the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah, xl.-lxvi. To begin with, the programme of His ministry is found by Christ Himself in this part of Scripture, viz. chap. lxi. 1 f., where the mission of the Servant is depicted as a form of divine philanthropy. Now a deep unity pervades the kindred passages, in virtue of which chap. lii. 13-liii. at least could hardly fail to be a potent factor determining Christ's conception of His mission.¹ When, therefore, Jesus emerged from the Messianic crisis (represented by the events of the Baptism and Temptation), with the words of the Prophet or Servant of Isaiah lxi. 1 ff. on His lips, could He fail to realize their affinity with the passages, whose acme is reached in Isaiah lii. 13 to liii. If then His sense of the general fulfilment of the Old Testament foreshadowings was primarily conditioned by this cycle of prophetic "dissolving views," it would be strange if the title under which He adumbrated His own conception of Himself as Founder of the Kingdom of God lacked any direct relation to the realization of this prophetic ideal.

But may we not further infer something from His general method, specially as shown in the parabolic form of teaching, which veils indeed, yet so as by suggestion to stimulate even the dull hearer to a personal act of recognition? If so, the title "the Son of Man" might even be expected to indicate something, not indeed *formally* but *substantially*, present in the very heart of the Old Testament, on which the mass of His hearers had been reared (cf. John v. 39).

¹ Riehm (*Messianic Prophecy*, p. 299) says that the Targum of Jonathan, with its basis in the pre-Christian era, recognizes as Messianic the prophecies regarding the Servant of Jehovah, though the aspect of his suffering is sedulously obscured. But that this latter aspect was *felt*, is proved by the Talmudic expedient of the suffering Son of Joseph, side by side with the triumphant Son of David (see Weber, *System der altsynagogalen Palästina. Theologie*, 1880, § 80).

For to recognize a formal correspondence in title implies no spiritual discernment; while only those who have a certain moral or spiritual affinity can discern correspondence of undertone, as it were. And it is precisely such a selective value that we look for in a term habitually used by Jesus. Mark well this feature. "The Son of Man," unlike "Messiah," occurs on the lips of Jesus from first to last. It must surely, then, point to those elements in the *præparatio* which were least likely to countenance any suggestions of force. How otherwise can the fact be explained that, while Jesus studiously avoids the term Messiah even in private converse with disciples prior to Peter's confession, He as studiously refers to Himself in the third person as "the Son of Man." The inference seems inevitable, that whatever may have been the technical usage in certain circles represented by literature like the *Book of Enoch*,¹ the title "the Son of Man" was not employed by Jesus in any such conventional sense.² Rather it hinted at an essential aspect of the longed-for Redeemer, as He might be expected by the common people, and as He was actually waited for by a certain pious circle referred to in the Gospels, of which the Baptist was the splendid flower.³ But "of all prophecy it was the Book of Isaiah, and chiefly the latter part of it, on which they lived."⁴

Such then being the general presumption, let us now examine more in detail the traits common to the impressive figure looming through the early morning mists of Isaiah xl. ff., and that yet more impressive figure of the

¹ Shortly to appear in a satisfactory English form, edited by Rev. R. H. Charles, through the Clarendon Press.

² The occurrence of the term in Matt. xvi. 13—*on any theory* as to its presence—demands nothing less than this. Otherwise for the Evangelist and his readers at least the query would be mere tautology.

³ Cf. Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus*, vol. i. pp. 79, 82, 87, 93 (English translation).

⁴ Prof. G. A. Smith, *Isaiah*, vol. ii. p. 282; where he specially emphasizes this influence in the case of the Baptist.

latter day, when the full sunlight of history pours down on the majestic yet lowly "man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs," "the Son of Man," who "came not to be ministered to but to minister and give His life a ransom in place of many." As the Servant in Isaiah liii. is unprivileged in lot, unsupported by human countenance (*vv.* 1-3); so is it with the Son of Man, who had not even house or home (*Matt.* viii. 20). Is the former misunderstood or despised? So is the latter; and that so readily as to involve but little direct sin in any who but mistake His real nature (*Matt.* xii. 32). Does he, undiscouraged, persist in his mission of love (*cf.* also *l.* 4 *ff.*), pitying the sheep without a shepherd (*vv.* 4-6), ministering even unto the laying down of his life for those who set him at nought (*v.* 7 *ff.*)? Not otherwise is it with the Son of Man, who, coming to seek the scattered sheep (*Mark* vi. 34, *cf.* *Luke* xix. 10), ministers to men even unto that death itself (*Mark* x. 45; *cf.* *Matt.* xxvi. 54), which is the basis of His people's ransom (*ib.*; *cf.* *Isa.* liii. 10 *ff.*) and of the great reversal, whereby glory, and no longer weakness, becomes His lot.¹ Finally the specific reference to Himself of the words, "And he was reckoned with transgressors" (*Luke* xxii. 37), though unaccompanied by the title "Son of Man," goes to support the general position.²

So much said, we may now advance to the key of the situation, the Archimedean point of positive proof, whereby the whole force of the circumstantial evidence can be brought to bear upon the problem. This appears to be found in a passage in *Mark* (ix. 12 *f.*), too often neglected in this connection. "And He said unto them, Elias indeed first cometh and restoreth all things: and how is it *written* as regards the Son of Man that He should suffer

¹ *Isa.* liii. 11 *ff.*, *cf.* *lii.* 13 *ff.*; *Matt.* xxvi. 64; so *Mark* viii. 38; *cf.* *Luke* xxiv. 25 *ff.*; *1 Pet.* i. 11; *Phil.* ii. 8, 9.

² See also Riehm, *Messianic Prophecy*, p. 302 *f.*

many things and be set at nought?" Now assuming, as we well may, that the reference is here mainly to Isaiah's suffering servant of Jehovah, we have to notice the definiteness with which Jesus blends this Old Testament type with the title "the Son of Man." As Wendt maintains,¹ this term is everywhere used by Christ with strict appropriateness, and not, as we are too apt to imagine, as a mere synonym, where another title would be equally in place. Accordingly one is led to see in this passage a practical identification of the conception "the Son of Man," as it lived in His mind, with the Old Testament type of the Servant,² found specifically in the latter chapters of Isaiah, if in a general sense throughout the prophets (cf. Luke xviii. 31). It is surely more than mere accident that Peter's early speeches in the Acts habitually set forth Jesus as the Servant (*παῖς*, according to LXX. usage) of God, divinely endowed for His mission and divinely vindicated from out a violent death.³ We may note too the way in which the Apostle expresses the meaning of Christ's death in close relation with the principle of His whole life, viz. that of perfect meekness. Such a representation must surely go back to the Isaianic type of the Master's own language, in which at the same time the term "the Son of Man" played so prominent a part.⁴

¹ *Op. cit.* ii. 148.

² May not the essentially *filial* consciousness of Jesus have necessitated the avoidance of the original title "Servant" of Jehovah? He speaks of Himself as servant of *men*; but in relation to God, ever as Son.

³ Acts iii. 13, 26, iv. 27, 30; see R.V. marg. on iii. 13, where—besides Isa. xlii. 1, lii. 13, liii. 11—Matt. xii. 18 is cited.

⁴ See 1 Pet. ii. 21 f., Isa. liii., Markx. 45. For the Epistle to the Hebrews additional evidence of an element in the apostolic tradition pointing back in the same direction, see p. 435. Granting there be no strict dependence of the Pauline "Second" or "Heavenly" Man, upon the use of "the Son of Man" here advocated, yet the analogy witnesses to the soteriological richness of the latter idea. Here Romans v. 12 ff., as emphasizing the human nature of the Redeemer, throws welcome light on the possible meaning of Mark x. 45, though the associations of the two passages are otherwise different. Within due limits Philippians ii. 8 also may be cited as illustrative.

II.

It will now be in place to ask whether there are any *verbal* points of contact with this title to be found in the Old Testament. Does it supply any language tending to make "the Son of Man" a fitting form under which the features of Jehovah's Servant might afresh be crystalized? Here of course we start with the phrase in Daniel vii., the fountain-head of later apocalyptic developments. When we examine the passage on its own merits—as we have right to suppose that Jesus did, in keeping with His strikingly original attitude to Scripture from youth upwards (Luke ii. 47)—we perceive the arbitrariness of the conventional apocalyptic view, which failed to do any justice to the context. Here the "one like unto a son of man" must symbolize a type of kingdom, since the whole point lies in the contrast with the animal symbols, denoting brutal and worldly force. The kingdom of God's saints (*v.* 17) is essentially humane—human in the sense in which the genius and glory of manhood, the human ideal, cannot but contrast with the idea of the brute creation. Could a point so obviously appealing to spiritual insight have escaped the notice or failed to impress the mind of One, who showed such an eye for all that served to bring out God's ideal of man, as is betokened in His use of Deuteronomy in the Temptation, and in the subtle reference of John x. 34 f. (Ps. lxxxii. 6)? But this representative or typical use of "Son of Man"—here so strikingly analogous to that of "the Servant" in Isaiah—is by no means confined to Daniel vii. Not to mention Ezekiel, it occurs in the Psalter in a train of thought not only impressive in itself, but also couched in the striking terms of apostrophe.¹ "What is

¹ Ps. viii. 4 (cxliv. 3), cf. lxxx. 17. Cf. Keim, iii. 81. "This contrast of lowliness and majesty had already acquired in these passages a character of *mysteriousness*, the appearance of a special, individual, and unique privileged position." That this quality (at least quasi-Messianic) had not failed to attract

man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the Son of Man, that thou visitest him. For Thou hast made him little lower than God (*Elohim*), and crownest him with glory and honour. Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands.” I cannot think that the idea contained in this passage, which so rivetted the attention of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews as to dominate his whole argument,¹ held a lesser place in the Scriptural equipment of Him who delighted to be recognized as “the Son of Man” *par excellence*.²

Finally as showing how thoroughly in keeping with the idea of the Servant of Jehovah is this notion of essential humanity, with its blending suggestions of creaturely dependence and exalted divine destiny, one may point to Isaiah lii. *fin.*, where the frail and suffering aspect of the Servant, as man among “the sons of men” (v. 14), is balanced at once by his august exaltation (v. 13, 15).³

notice, is proved by the use of the passage in Hebrews ii. 6 ff. in a way practically identical with that here urged. Cf. the use of “Son of God” (Ps. ii. 7) as a title of Messiah (Heb. i. 5).

¹ See Heb. ii. 6 to end of chap., e.g. v. 17, so iv. 16, v. 6–10 (where *vids* of v. 6 corresponds to the salutation at the Baptism, Mark i. 11, and *ἀρχιερεις* to the official meaning of *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, e.g. Mark ii. 10, 45).

² For Ps. viii., as Messianically interpreted, see I Cor. xv. 27, Eph. i. 22, as well as Heb. ii. It is to be noticed also that in Ps. viii. we have the phrase “Son of Man,” not merely “one like a Son of Man.”

³ It is perhaps worth noting that even *Enoch*, in the description of its Son of Man, seems to have been influenced by this passage (cf. “startle” in xlvi. 4 with Isa. lii. 15). Whilst then quite unable to entertain the notion that in all genuine utterances of Jesus Himself “the Son of Man” remains, as it appears originally in Daniel, the symbol of the kingdom of God’s saints, I cannot but feel that this view so far tends to confirm the line here pursued. For if we recall Delitzsch’s comparison of the three related uses of the “Servant of Jehovah” (viz. Israel as a whole, as a faithful residue, and in the person of its ideal representative) to the narrowing area of a pyramid as it rises from base to apex, we may recognize what of truth there may be in such a theory, by keeping in mind the *representative*, as opposed to individual, character attaching to “the Son of Man” as the author of the new humanity of “the Kingdom” (cf. even Matt. xvi. 28). In this connexion it is interesting to note how the servant stands as “a covenant for the people” (Isa. xlii. 6, cf. xlix. 8), an idea which makes intelligible the relation of “the Son of Man” to “the

Whatever may be the degree of probability already attained, it cannot fail to be enhanced by attention to a somewhat analogous case, the idea of God in the Old Testament as taken up and transformed by Christ. Here it must be sufficient to simply remark of a subject that has been fairly worked out already,¹ that just as Jesus gathered up all the Old Testament contributions towards a truly spiritual idea of God, and vitalized them afresh in coherent form through His idea of the Heavenly Father—the *theological* pole of “the kingdom”; so to constitute the *anthropological* pole, as it were, of the same “kingdom,” there went all the important Old Testament data as to man. Among these the passages just dealt with are cardinal; and their root may be recognized in Genesis i. 27. But instead of summing up His general teaching on this head in abstract form, Jesus concentrated attention upon it and the true nature of the “kingdom” as involved therein, by pointing to the realization of both in His own person. In Him, the Messiah, the true ideal of man as God’s perfect Servant because Son, the Kingdom was indeed present, and could be proclaimed as no longer merely future but as nigh at the very doors. And the term which contained suggestively, for those in true sympathy with the spirit of the Old Testament, these and kindred truths was the title “the Son of Man,” the unique yet typical Head of the New Mankind.² He it was who realized in principle its ideal destiny as redeemed, being indeed “the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. viii. 29). Doubtless in anything like its full and

kingdom,” and also His blood as “the blood of the Covenant” (Matt. xxv. 28, etc.).

¹ *E.g.* by Wendt, *l.c.* p. 184 ff.

² John xii. 23 ff. illustrates the identity of principle regulating the life of “the Son of Man” and of His disciples. Such a son of man has affinity with “the Servant of Jehovah,” who denotes now (the true) Israel, now its Ideal Representative; but hardly any with a transcendental or “heavenly” Messiah, like that in *Enoch*.

inner meaning it remained for many a day more of an enigma than aught else even to the inner circle of disciples. But is not this in perfect accord with Christ's general method of evoking faith?¹ He taught in parables that tested preparedness by suggestions provocative of reflexion, rather than by explicit statement that rendered personal effort superfluous. The unexplained element in the term so understood is thus no fatal objection, but rather a fresh confirmation. But the contrary is the case with that theory which views "the Son of Man" as used primarily in a conventional sense, with all the emphasis upon a scenic and marvellous future. If however such associations are only suffered to emerge here and there, where the future, indeterminate to human thought, is necessarily in question—as in the reply to the High Priest's interrogation (Mark xiv. 62)—while as a rule the reference is to features of His own historic person, all incongruity is avoided.²

To recapitulate the discussion, so far, in the form of a bare thesis. One may say that *the title the Son of Man, as habitually used by Jesus, had primary reference to Himself as the unique personalized type of the Kingdom of God, the main features of whose character were given most vividly and completely in the picture of Jehovah's Servant in Isaiah lii. 13–liii.; other associations of a more Apocalyptic type being confined to vague and picturesque hints as to the future developments, when weakness should give place to manifested glory.*

¹ See for instance a paper on this subject in THE EXPOSITOR for June last.

² Possibly the transition from Christ's specific use to one not unlike the "Apocalyptic," is seen in John v. 27, where His very humanity constitutes His fitness to fill the place of judge, so emphasized by the latter. Here Rev. i. 13, 18, xiv. 14 f. agree with the Gospel. Finally it is quite probable, in view of the gentle tone of Stephen's dying words, that "the Son of Man" seen of him was the patient ideal man of Hebrews ii. 8–10, rather than the judicial potentate of Apocalypics.

III.

Dr. Bruce has distinguished three classes of passages affecting the Son of Man; those suggestive of (1) unprivileged and suffering condition; (2) essential human sympathies; (3) glory in the final issue.¹ If these three strands of thought are exegetically assured, then the present discussion seems to lay bare the Old Testament basis of their vital unity to the mind of Christ, by pointing to the concrete ideal set forth in Isaiah.

One point in particular is thus cleared up, namely the paradoxical aspect of "the Son of Man," in whom lowly humanity and superhuman dignity strangely blend. Thus Baldensberger has sharply criticized Wendt and others for not finding the ascription of judicial *authority* (*ἐξουσία*)² to Christ as Son of Man (*υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου*), radically inconsistent with any theory which starts with the notion of "genuine humanity."³ But the critic forgets that the term "authority" is by the same Evangelist used also for the empowering of believers with divine Sonship. While as to the judicial function, its principle seems identical with that stated three verses lower down: "I cannot do aught of mine own initiative (*ἀπ' ἑμαυτοῦ*): as I *hear*, I judge: and my judgment is righteous, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." Surely this is not the spirit of an Apocalyptic "heavenly Messiah." We must bring Christ's own sense of the judicial function to the study of each of His words. So doing we may learn from passages like John viii. 26 ff., and x. 47 ff., that the same truth whereby He searched and judged men on earth, shall be the judge of men in the final judgment; and that the "authority" needed, to be the organ of that truth then, is

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 172 ff.

² John v. 27.

³ *Das Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, p. 185, cf. 172 n. (Strassburg, 2nd. ed., 1892).

none other in principle than that already possessed by the lowly Son of Man on earth.¹ But waiving these points—and a tendency to water down Christ's idea of *man* to the current Jewish idea which set humanity in hard antithesis to the transcendent Deity²—it surely remains true that a similarly unique dignity belongs to the Servant in Isaiah, which is prior to any Apocalyptic tendencies. To be sure the fully realized dignity is reached only through humiliation, and, as it were, by a development. But this is just what an historical view of the Gospels also recognizes for the Son of Man, who, according to a principle common to Him and His, must be made fruitful through dying like a grain of wheat (John xii. 23 ff.), and so be glorified (cf. Luke xxiv. 26). Thus He through the discipline of suffering and temptation, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, is completely qualified (*τελειώσαι*) as First-born to bring many sons unto glory, having as *the* Son of Man been consummated as High Priest of mankind (Heb. ii. 10 ff., 17, 18; v. 7-10).

Two or three more passages call for notice as tending to decide between rival theories. When Jesus said to the paralytic, "Son, thy sins are forgiven," the Scribes saw in His words blasphemy. In order to convince them of the reality of His authority in the spiritual sphere, Jesus proceeded to demonstrate it in the more palpable sphere of the physical. What then is the tacit reasoning here? Not that He is thereby proved to be the "heavenly Son of Man" of Apocalyptic type. To convince Scribes of this, "signs" of a very different order were required (cf. the

¹ See also John xii. 31, "Now is (the) judgment of this world," etc. Baldensberger seems to feel no scruple in taking *υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου* as equivalent to *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* in this passage. But is it not just the point of the position criticized, that *υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου* must be taken as a *generic* term, *i.e.* human? Reference should here be made to Dr. Westcott's note on the passage, which should carry conviction on a point which is really crucial as between the "Apocalyptic" and "Old Testament" theories as to Christ's usage.

² Cf. *infra*, the remarks on Matthew ix. 3-8.

"sign from heaven," Matt. xvi. 1). No, the thought is rather that even though a true man among men upon earth, the Son of Man as such was not disqualified, but rather qualified thereby, to pronounce the Father's forgiveness to the trustful soul. Two ideas of God and man lie behind the criticism and the response. That this is the true view follows from two further considerations. To wit (1) that the first Evangelist seems to have so understood the incident; "they glorified God who had given such authority *to men*." And (2) that Jesus later on delegated similar authority to His disciples (John xxi. 21-23).

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; so that the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark ii. 27 f.). Here the very nerve of the logic is that the Son of Man, though unique as the Head of humanity, is yet man and so normative as judge of man's highest interests. The intrusion of reference to a "heavenly" Son of Man would produce a mere paralogism. So with the contrast between speech against the Son of Man and that against the Holy Spirit (Matt. xii. 32). Alter the emphasis, as some would do, and the whole becomes tame, if not inept.¹

But what of the class of Johannine sayings which seem to connect the Son of Man specially with heaven as His native sphere, to which He was about to return by being "lifted up."² Well, at least they cannot be used to override a clear verdict derived from the Synoptists. And further, we have our Lord's own authority for taking them in a spiritual rather than realistic sense (comp. John vi. 62 with v. 63); for the Father's inner teaching is requisite ere men can enter into their true bearing (*ib.* 65). As with

¹ It is enough to simply refer to the Son of Man's broad humanity in social relations even with the outcasts (*e.g.* Luke xviii. 1-10)—in contrast with the Baptist's imperfect "humanity."

² *ὑψωθῆναι*, viii. 28, xii. 32; *ἀναβαλεῖν*, vi. 62.

the "eating" of His *flesh* and "drinking" of His *blood*, so here too the Great Teacher is obviously availing Himself of figurative license. We must beware of trying to elucidate "the obscure by the more obscure." So much in general. On the other hand, a special passage like John i. 51 is otherwise capable of an excellent meaning. "Ye shall see," says Jesus in explanation of the peculiar glory of the dispensation introduced by Him, "not so much a restoration of the old prophetic vision, which ever and anon pierced into heaven, but rather heaven laid open and constant intercourse established between it and the Son of Man on earth."¹ Or, in other words, the dualism between earth and heaven, man and God, which had hitherto more or less pervaded men's thoughts, was to be done away, absorbed in the one spiritual sphere wherein the New Man, God's Son, habitually lived and had His being. This is precisely the notion of the Synoptic passages above treated, and is the root idea of the theology common to both types of Gospel.²

One more passage, and one only, calls for explicit notice, as presenting in essential harmony the two aspects calling for reconciliation, the historic and the "apocalyptic" moments in the idea "the Son of Man." In the Judgment Scene (Matt. xxv. 31 ff.), the King, as in the Book of Enoch for instance, divides men into two categories, the righteous and the wicked. But on how different a basis! Here it is men's treatment of their fellows, the very brethren of the Judge (*vv.* 40, 45). This points back irresistibly to His historic experience of unity with the race, in all its need of fraternal sympathy and mute appeal for the things that concern its conditioned and dependent lot. Conversely too,

¹ So in substance Dr. Westcott *in loc.*

² In John ix. 35, **NBD**. Theb. *Æth.* (*codd.*) Chrys. (?) read *ἀνθρώπου* for *θεοῦ*; and Dr. Westcott argues for it strongly, agreeably with the view set forth in his Additional Note on John i. 51.

it sets forth the continuity, so marked also in Isaiah liii., between the One, who "had not where to lay His head," and who craved for the companionship of His disciples in the final prayerful "watch" (Mark xiv. 34, 37, 41); and the same in glory whether of regal sway, already in process when once the state of humiliation is past (cf. "henceforth," Matt. xxvi. 64; so Luke xxii. 69), or of ultimate judicial function for mankind. And to Christ's mind, relative to either condition the title "the Son of Man" retained its *fitness*.

A final confirmation lies near at hand. All must recognise how little explicit teaching as to the significance of His death is contained in Christ's own allusions thereto. But if we regard them as indeed allusions, meant to refer the disciples' thoughts back to a great *locus classicus* on the subject, like that in Isaiah liii., then all becomes comparatively plain. For His death, too, He could point back, by the aid of His pregnant title, to prophecy, when with the meek Servant before His mind, He spoke of the Son of Man as giving "His life a ransom in the stead of many."¹ In this light also we may perhaps find it easier to conceive how the Baptist could refer to Jesus as he did, as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Certain it is that the Church at large would have kept more close to Christ's own thought as to Redemption, had her imagination dwelt longer and more lovingly upon the great Isaianic picture with its tender pathos.

Many important aspects of the Person of Christ have here been necessarily left on one side. The present is but a "short study on a great subject." Yet incidentally it may serve to confirm confidence in the Gospels,² as well as

¹ See Prof. G. A. Smith's *Isaiah*, ii. 344 f. There is a "mystic efficacy" in the death of Isaiah liii.; why should there not be the same in Mark x. 45?

² By indicating a fresh watermark of Christ's own original stamp, and that just where His reporters might well have failed to preserve His mind.

elucidate a topic of practical moment to Christian people of all sorts, who desire to know aright the Christ of History, that they may the better have fellowship with the Christ of Faith.

VERNON BARTLET.

THE FIRST LEPER HEALED.

(MATT. VIII. 2; MARK I. 40; LUKE V. 12.)

AMONG the ancient Jews, a leper was of all human creatures most forlorn. The horrible nature of his disease, in which the blood was poisoned until the very bones rotted and the body slowly fell to pieces, was enough to make him feel that he was doomed, and in some sense already dead. Therefore, Moses prayed for Miriam, "Let her not be as one dead"; and when the king of Israel was invited to restore Naaman, he felt how poor a thing is a monarch in the iron presence of fate, and cried, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive?" (Num. xii. 12; 2 Kings v. 7.) So far beyond all hope of recovery was this disease, that the marvellous pharmacopœia of the Rabbis had neither a drug nor an incantation to oppose to it (Eldersheim, *Life*, i. 492).

Josephus described the lepers as being "in effect dead persons"; and he dismisses the regulations for their purification with an expression which, however pious, has in it the ring of orthodoxy much rather than of faith: "if in answer to prayer any of them recovered." Clearly the leper was beyond hope.¹ Yet Keim asserts that "this

¹ Students of Tennyson will remember how, in the middle ages, a kind of funeral service, with a casting of earth upon the leprous body as upon a living corpse, was performed over those who suffered from the disease, which some, even yet, confound with the leprosy of Scripture. It differs from it, as in other respects, so especially in the important matter of contagion.