

*DID JESUS SPEAK OF HIMSELF AS JUDGE ?*

"HE ascended into heaven . . . From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead," runs the Apostolic symbol, hallowed through the centuries by the repetition of millions of Christian people.

To some the very inquiry may seem to be unnecessary, almost irreverent, in face of allusions direct and indirect to the return of the Saviour as Judge in the *Te Deum* and the Creeds, as well as within the limits of the New Testament literature. To the question, when asked, the faith and the fear of countless disciples would appear to answer in the affirmative. But that return to the sources (as far as they are attainable) which has characterised the religious investigations of our age is not compatible with any restriction which would exclude the reverent student from certain quarters of the area to be explored.

In this inquiry, as in others, verification of the ancient and still prevailing view must assuredly be sought from the self-witness of the Master and the implications of self-consciousness that may emerge in the course of His teaching.

Whichever part of the material be examined first, the letters of St. Paul or the compilations of the Synoptic evangelists, we are struck by the exceeding fragmentariness of the data directly bearing on the subject in hand, and by the almost entire absence of such in other writings included in the New Testament.

The smallness of the sphere of relevant allusions, almost definable by the writings of St. Paul and the first Gospel, is sufficiently arresting ; and the lack of any outspoken claim treasured in the memory of disciples is remarkable, although the argument from a silence for which there may have been reasons of which we are unaware is admittedly precarious.

Let us state the evidence with the utmost brevity.

We may assume without preliminary discussion and with some confidence a general recognition at the present time that Jesus claimed in some sense Messiahship, however much He may have transfigured popular conceptions, and poured new content of experience and of interpretation into current expressions.

He found the traditional figure of the Messiah to be the only one which could be used with any adequacy to express the consciousness of His vocation and work, and He claimed the office and functions of the Chosen One, the Anointed, at least in private with his intimate followers after the confession of St. Peter, and publicly—according to the reports—at His trial before the high priest.

If we are asked, was the dominant expectation of our Lord's day that the Messiah would be the final Judge of men? we should, I think, be compelled to say that the balance of available evidence is on the negative side.

And if His teaching as to judicial functions was out of harmony with views generally current, we should be prepared for considerable emphasis—to the disciples, at any rate—because of its newness, its “mystery.”

This we do not find.

As to the prevalent opinion: speaking broadly, from that portion of Jewish apocalyptic literature that is considered to have arisen previous to the ministry of Jesus we seem to have only the Psalms of the Pharisees, or “of Solomon,” and that part of the Book of Enoch usually termed the Similitudes, which distinctly ascribe functions of judgment to the Messiah.

In the former, such judgment is preliminary to the Kingdom; in the latter, it appears to be final. For example: Psalms of Solomon xvii. 28 f., “And he (the King, Son of David), will gather together a holy people, which he will rule

in righteousness, and he will judge the tribes of the people sanctified by the Lord his God. And he will permit iniquity no more to dwell amongst them . . . (39) with the words of his mouth he will smite the earth," and the "day of separation" is the day when the Anointed comes to dominion (xviii. 6).

This reflects the conception of a preliminary judgment, limited to Israel, and delegated by God. A general judgment of mankind is beyond the horizon of the Psalmist's thought, at least in regard of the Messiah.

To turn to the other source named. We find here judgment committed to the Chosen One, the Son of Man. This is chiefly the case in Enoch lxi. f., lxix. For instance: Enoch lxi. 8, "The Lord of Spirits set the Chosen on the throne of his glory, and he will judge all the works of the holy ones above in the heavens, and weigh their deeds with the scales." Here obviously angels are included in the range of Messiah's judicial functions, and judgment is according to character manifested by deeds. Again, we note a connexion of thought with the Psalms of Solomon, Enoch lxii. 2, "The Lord of spirits set him on the throne of his glory . . . the word of his mouth slew all the sinners, and all the unrighteous were destroyed before his face."

Further, the range of jurisdiction in the day of his manifestation, "for the Son of Man was previously hidden" (lxii. 7), extends presumably to the Gentile powers—at least such as have come into contact with the Jews, "for all Kings, etc., rise up before him," they "praise him who rules over all," they also "beg for mercy from" the Son of Man (lxii. 3, 6, 9). Moreover, the angels whose function is to punish arrest them, apparently at the Son of Man's bidding, for their evil treatment of the elect people. The righteous, on the other hand, are pictured as viewing this spectacle of doom, and then in their state of salvation

they enjoy continuous feasting with the Son of Man to all eternity (lxii. 11, 13).

That this authority to judge mankind is delegated by the Lord of spirits seems implied : " This is the judgment established before the Lord of spirits " (lxiii. 12), " He sat upon the throne of his glory and the sum of judgment was committed unto him, the Son of Man " (lxix. 27), while the finality thereof appears to be sufficiently indicated, " he caused the sinners . . . to pass from the surface of the earth . . . and all evil will vanish from before his face " (lxix. 27, 29).<sup>1</sup>

The foregoing references would lead us to expect teaching concerning authority to judge to be connected in the Gospel story with teaching relative to the Son of Man. Such we shall discover it in great part to be. We turn then to the evidence of the Synoptic Gospels.

#### MARK.

The Gospel " according to Mark " contains no plain and direct claim to judicial functions in the eschatological sense.

An indirect claim might be argued from the clearest utterance (although some have doubted its authenticity), that before the high priest (xiv. 62), in answer to the question, " Art thou the Christ ? "—" I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." It is open to infer that this co-session includes functions of judgment, although it may be doubted whether such would be regarded as more than punitive and national in aim, executed by Messiah in the rôle of divine vicegerent.

Another reference in the Second Gospel (viii. 38) would seem to imply that the office of Jesus is that of chief witness

<sup>1</sup> Passages dealing with the retributive judgment (not final) of Messiah in the Apocalypse of Baruch (xl., lxxii.) and Ezra (xii. 32 ff., xiii. 37 ff.) appear to be coloured by events subsequent to the ministry of Jesus.

rather than of Judge in relation to His own " generation " with its especial opportunity of hearing His message : " Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

For the idea, apart from the question of the exact words of the original source, we must compare the related passages concerning the Son of Man's " confession " or " denial " of men (Matt. x. 32 f. ; Luke xii. 8 f.) before God (Matt.), and the angels (Luke).

#### LUKE.

We might expect to find a claim to the functions of eschatological judgment more clearly and emphatically presented in the Gospel according to Luke, with its universal outlook.

The following are relevant allusions :—

(a) Luke xvii. 22 ff. refer to " the days " (22, 26) or " day " (24, 30) of the Son of Man. The opening verses of the section are unique (20–22), but a considerable amount of the subsequent figurative language concerning the Son's manifestation is found in the parallel (also based on Q), Matthew xxiv. 27–42, only " parousia"—the specially Pauline term—is there used, not " day." The latter expression recalls the implications of judgment in the Old Testament " day of Yahweh." Yet there is no ascribing of the functions of separation (Matthew 41 f., Luke 34 f.) to the Son of Man ; only the times are comparable, for neither Noah nor Lot judged in their " days," but God alone.

(b) Luke xxi. 36c., " And to stand before the Son of Man," affords indeed an instance involving judicial authority, reminding us of Enoch lii. 3 ; but it is isolated in the Gospel, and seems to be an addition (cf. 2 Cor. v. 10) out of harmony with the warning to " watch," which forms the purport of the preceding clauses,

(c) Luke xxii. 30 (=Matt. xix. 28) remains, in a difficult context, apparently belonging originally to Q, concerning the Son's Kingdom. Here the additional promise is recorded, "Ye (sc. the disciples, in answer to Peter's question as to reward) shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." *A fortiori* the Son is Judge; but it is not stated, and the reference is only to Israel.

On the other hand, the parallel in Matthew makes it perfectly clear, "When the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory" (in Enochic phrase), "ye *also* shall," etc. If our Lord had claimed authority to execute final judgment, and the second or third evangelist knew recorded utterances to that effect, why should we have to depend on these precarious instances ?

#### MATTHEW.

We have left the evidence from the Gospel "according to Matthew" till last, because here the whole aspect is changed. Jesus is represented in this Jewish-Christian compilation as claiming openly in utterances declaratory and interpretative the prerogatives of final Judge, as Son of Man.

(a) In the interpretation of the parable of the Tares (that is ascribed to Him) it is the Son of Man who sends forth the separating and punishing angels, and they are "*his* angels" (xiii. 41, cf. xxiv. 31). But the passage can hardly be held to be authentic, for story and allegorical explanation are not in accord.

(b) Again, we have a unique addition in xvi. 27. The coming of the Son of Man is referred to in the parallels (Mark viii. 38, Luke ix. 26), and Luke indeed attributes "glory" to the Son separately; but Matthew continues quite definitely, "then shall he render to every man according to his deeds."

Would such a declaration, with its obvious personal claim, coming just after the critical confession of St. Peter, have

passed unnoticed or have been omitted by the other evangelists ?

(c) The reference in apocalyptic terms in xix. 28 to the Apostles as sharers with their Master in the prerogatives of a national dominion has already received a brief notice as a parallel to Luke xxii. 30 : it is peculiar to the first Gospel, and is a marked development of the saying which lay behind the forms transmitted.

(d) Once more, the ideas of the heavenly Son of Man and of the angels of retribution are combined in xxiv. 30 f. The vision of the coming is common to all, but the sending forth of the Son's angels is again peculiar to Matthew (cf. xiii. 41).

(e) There remains the description of the Judgment-scene, in the first Gospel only (xxv. 31 ff.), where the basis of judgment is loving ministry. The present form can hardly be original. A parable regarding the blessedness of acts of lovingkindness seems to underlie the latter part, and perhaps the figure of a King belongs to it, but this has become—with incomplete adjustment of detail—a picture of separation for bliss or woe under the sentence of the Son of Man in His glory, according to the treatment which either the heathen have bestowed upon His followers, the primitive missionaries in His name, or Christians—assuming a converted world—have imparted to one another.

Jesus nowhere else is recorded as having thus called Himself King, and as such pronouncing final judgment on the comparatively narrow basis of the non-receiving of His emissaries, or the omission of acts of kindness.

The setting is that of Enoch lxii., but the form of the material transmitted suggests very strongly the moulding influence of early Christian preaching.

Another hint of the regarding of Jesus as Judge in the eschatological sense is to be found probably in the unique

addition "before the time" (viii. 29) in the story of the Gadarene demoniac(s); apparently implying that the first evangelist or his circle assumed the final punishment of demons and evil angels (xxv. 41) to be part of Messiah's judicial functions.

The first evangelist then stands virtually alone among the Synoptists in representing Jesus as claiming to be Judge in clear words, and in doing so in terms mainly Enochic.

#### PARABOLIC IMPLICATIONS.

In addition to the eschatological utterances of Jesus which involve the claim direct or indirect to execute judgment, it may be asked, Do any of the parables imply that the speaker will judge? Let us seek for any further evidence that they may provide.

Now although there is a considerable amount of eschatological matter in Mark, the few parables afford us no data for this question. In Luke, however, several parabolic references suggest such a claim in the form in which they have come down, the most obvious being contained in the simile concerning (*a*) "the master of the house" (xiii. 25 ff.). We cannot be at all sure that this section was originally spoken immediately after the allusion to the "narrow door" (24, cf. Matt. vii. 13 f.), and suggested thereby, and followed by the picture of the incoming of the dispersed (whether proselytes or, as later interpreted, Gentiles) to recline in the Kingdom of God (29). Luke may have so linked the fragment taken from his source (be it Q or another) because of its connexion with the idea in the context of "shutting out" and "casting forth" through the exclusion of those who felt certain of inclusion (28, cf. Matt. viii. 12).

As the action proceeds in Luke, the application of this veiled parable of the Kingdom appears to pass from God to Jesus, "master of the house"—"Lord"—"thou didst *teach*

*in our streets.*" [Cf. the Matt. form (vii. 22 f.), which, however, breaks the connexion. Here those excluded claim to have " prophesied," etc., in the name of Jesus. The insertion is made in this case shortly after the reference to the " narrow gate " (13 f.)] The verdict too is eschatologically conceived, " Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity " (cf. Matt. vii. 23, xiii. 41).

The " confession " of the Lord to their detriment, which precedes this adverse pronouncement, reminds us of Matthew x. 32 f., the " confessing " and " denying " of men by Jesus, while the agent in the Lukan parallel (xii. 8 f.) is the Son of Man, and is not clearly identified with Jesus.

This definite reference to our Lord does not seem, therefore, likely to belong to the common original, for this reason : unless we are to assume these verses to be a fragment of private teaching for the disciples, one of whom is the questioner (23), surely so open a claim to the right of pronouncing the final verdict would have been seized on at once (as Messianic and more) if uttered in public address " journeying on unto Jerusalem " (22). Besides, the figure is changed from that of the city-gate to that of the house-door by Luke (24), perhaps for his Roman readers, perhaps to suit the following section that was to be incorporated. Further, the order in the succeeding paragraph (28 f.) has been altered from that of the Matthaean form, so as to connect the verses with the place of exclusion already implied in the command to depart.

The opening and closing portions of this teaching concerning non-entrants appear somewhat widely separated in Matthew's compilation (vii. 13 f., viii. 11 f.).

Thus the addition which describes the excuse offered to the " teaching " Lord, i.e., Jesus in His ministry, seems most probably to belong to the later touching of an original simile, as application was made (quite naturally) in early Christian

homiletics to the glorified Lord as the judicial excluder from the Kingdom. Most likely there was nothing in the original utterance involving His thus giving sentence, but rather God was implied ; for the point of comparison throughout is the struggle for entrance, the striving for fitness to share in the coming Kingdom, expressed under the imagery of a banquet (Matt. viii. 11 f.).

(b) Again, in the parables to teach Watchfulness, there is that of the Pounds (Luke xix. 12 ff.), which appears in a different dress—quite possibly a divergent stream of tradition from a common source—in the Matthaean story of the Talents. It is introduced as being in answer to a question about the immediacy of the Kingdom of God, so that the whole point of the parable is, “ Be ready whenever it shall come, it may be delayed more than you expect ; readiness lies in consistency of loyal service.” If any emphasis is to be placed on the agent in adjudicating reward or punishment in the parable, the hearers would interpret the act as God’s, because His is the dominion concerning which the inquiry was made (if the occasion were such as Luke states) and answered in story form. But it was easy for the Church to interpret the departure and return of the “ nobleman ” of Christ’s ascension and expected coming again.

Nor does Matthew’s story of the Talents (xxv. 14 ff.) itself imply in any way that it is the speaker who goes and returns “ after a long time ” (19) and apports praise or blame, although Christians afterwards naturally took it so, but, as in the Vineyard parable, it is God who is primarily represented.

(c) Now in the comparisons about faithful waiting, it is Matthew alone who adds words that point definitely to the ascribing of prerogatives of judgment to Jesus having been made already at the time of the compilation of his Gospel. This we may see by comparing the similes of the Thief and

the Unfaithful Slave in Matthew (xxiv. 43 ff.) and Luke (xii. 40, 42 ff.). Only Matthew applies to Jesus the preceding section regarding sudden separation in plain terms, " Watch therefore, for ye know not on what day *your* Lord cometh " (42) ; but the moral of the Thief simile is drawn in both Gospels in the same words, " Be ye also ready : for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh " (Matt. xxiv. 44, Luke xii. 40). And so with the warning from the Unfaithful Slave (but for Luke's change of " hypocrites " to " unfaithful " (46), except that here Matthew gives the whole a new turn by the addition of his favourite eschatological clause, " there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth " (51), thus considerably increasing the feeling that he regards final punishment as being in the hands of the Christians' Lord, although the original language (probably in Q) did not demand such interpretation.

(d) This peculiarity of the Matthaean representation seems to be further confirmed by his inclusion of the " Ten Virgins " in his closing group of parables, without any interpretative additions as to the " shutting out " of the unprepared. It might have been utilised to teach more openly the Son's judgment ; it does so by its very position indeed, but the moral of the story itself was simply " watch " (13). This, however, is just the lesson drawn from the comparison with the slaves ready with lamps lit for the return of their master from his wedding that *they* may open to *him* (Luke xii. 35 ff.). The longer and shorter traditions were evidently closely related. At the time of the incorporation of the parable-form in Matthew Jesus was already identified with " the bridegroom," for so He was reported to have spoken of Himself elsewhere (Mark ii. 19 f., Luke v. 34 f., Matt. ix. 15).

It would be quite unreasonable to suppose that in the numerous instances set forth above Matthew has been merely correcting the omissions and misconceptions of Mark, and,

unconsciously, of Luke. Additions and transforming touches such as those that have been enumerated in the transmitted records of our Lord's parables appear to indicate the way in which primitive interpretation in Jewish-Christian circles was tending towards the attribution to Jesus of an authority to give sentence which He had at least not claimed in any direct manner for Himself.

#### JOHN.

In the interpretation of the historic life given us in the Fourth Gospel, judgment is present and progressive in man's experience according to his relation to the manifestation of the Son (Logos) in the world. Indeed, judgment (*κρίσις*) is expressly disclaimed by Jesus (iii. 17, viii. 15, xii. 47), and yet the very coming of the Son into the world has proved to be a judgment (*κρίμα*, ix. 39).

Of judgment in the eschatological meaning as a function of Jesus there is no trace in discourse or soliloquy, but for a verse (v. 27) which, if so taken, is out of harmony with the preceding context, as it states in apocalyptic phrase (cf. En. lxix.), "the Father . . . gave him authority to execute judgment (*κρίσιν ποιεῖν*), because he is (the) Son of Man" (contrast 22). The small section which follows concerning resurrection of the literally dead at the voice of the "Son of Man" to life or judgment (28 f.) appears to be in many respects alien not only to 24 ff., but to the main teaching of this Gospel upon (spiritual) death and life.

#### OTHER NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE.

If the expectation of the coming of Jesus in His character of Son of Man or Messiah to judge were based on explicit utterances cherished in the memory of intimate associates and reported to and recorded by Gospel-writers in their turn, we should be prepared to discover considerable testimony in other writings within the New Testament to that

effect, especially where the speakers (or authors) had been closely connected with our Lord "in the days of His flesh." This we do not find.

(a) It is remarkable that in the Petrine addresses in Acts there is no word of judgment in relation to the functions of Him who was made "both Lord and Christ," but rather of the blessing that accrued from His incarnate life (iii. 26); except in the speech before Cornelius (x. 42) with strong Lukan traits, "This is he which is ordained of God (to be) the judge of quick and dead,"—singularly close to the words reported of St. Paul at Athens (xvii. 31).

(b) Even if we may assume that the first epistle bearing St. Peter's name is genuine, the reference therein to "him that is ready to judge the world," before whom men "shall give account" (iv. 5), does not necessarily allude to the glorified Jesus, because God is the nearer subject (2). The other relevant instances ascribe judgment to God the Father (i. 17, ii. 23).

(c) Let us turn next to letters attributed to "the brethren of the Lord." If they be of later origin, their evidence, though scanty, is of the sort that we should be led to expect in the case of a development. St. James alludes to the "coming of the Lord," which "is at hand" (v. 7 f.), and uses the word *παρουσία* just like Matthew and St. Paul. The judge that "standeth before the doors" is presumably Jesus.

(d) The brief letter of St. Jude is so pervaded with Apocalyptic phraseology that we are not surprised to find Enoch lxii. 9 adapted in the clause "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (21). The one who extends mercy in this sense is probably regarded also as the Judge.

(e) The epistle (so-called) "to the Hebrews" provides no evidence, except in so far as judgment and the "appear-

ing" of Christ would seem to be coincident in time (ix. 27 f.).

(f) In the intensely Jewish-Christian Apocalypse one verse (xxii. 12) recalls immediately Matthew xvi. 27: the speaker is Jesus or the angel in His name, "I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is." Again, judgment, under the figure of reaping, is ascribed to "one sitting on the cloud like unto the Son of Man, having . . . in his hand a sharp sickle" (xiv. 14): in the passage following, an angel reaps (17 ff., cf. Matt. xiii. 39). Otherwise God is the Judge, although "the Lamb" shares the throne.

We should not be far wrong in concluding from our survey up to this point that a tendency to relate judicial functions to Jesus at His coming is growing up in Jewish-Christian circles, but is not of such strength as we should have surmised if there had existed genuine utterances concerning such from the lips of the Master. We have seen that in the rest of the New Testament (outside the extant letters of St. Paul) there is but one clear reference in the Apocalypse, one inference in Jude (unless the quotation [14 ff.] from Enoch be applied to Jesus), and one possible allusion each in James and 1 Peter, to be brought forward in support of the reported claims to final judgment which are peculiar to the Gospel "according to Matthew"; and in at least three of those cases that the authors were "apostles" or even men of the first generation is open to serious question. The doctrine was apparently becoming established in the circle of the first evangelist that the Judgment, as suggested by the Book of Enoch, would be "committed" to the Lord at His return.

#### PAUL.

It remains to call the last witness; to inquire what part St. Paul had in the upholding and teaching of this ex-

pectation among the Jewish-Christians, and in causing it also to become firmly rooted in the faith of the Gentile churches.

That the eschatological judgment was part of the office of the heavenly Christ, the Son of God, is taught consistently by St. Paul in his letters, although quite incidentally. Whether the firm conviction which underlay this teaching was due to converse with older disciples as to the functions of the risen Lord in the future (seeing that personal hearing of Jesus is scarcely to be assumed), or was due—as would seem more likely—to his thinking out of his mental attitude towards the old and the new factors in his religion as the result of his experience upon the Damascus road, or to some other cause or causes, we have not the material for a certain decision.

Along with the traditional belief of his nation in the coming judgment of "the day of the Lord," there is the strong confidence on Paul's part that such is committed (after the manner of a portion at least of the Jewish apocalyptic teaching) to "the Lord Jesus" as "the Christ." Moreover, this doctrine, although occasional and unsystematised, develops in the course of the extant epistles from the national eschatological outlook to one which is universal and more definitely spiritual in expression. For example: (*a*) in the letters to the Thessalonians the Judgment that is expected speedily (1 Thess. iv. 15) coincides with "the parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 23), or, in language reminiscent of Enoch, with his "revelation from heaven" (2 Thess. i. 7), when "he shall slay the lawless one with the breath of his mouth" (ii. 8) and execute the divine vengeance (1 Thess. iv. 6). Now it is worth noting that about the same time St. Paul is reported by Luke to have enunciated this doctrine clearly in his address at Athens, in the words, (God) "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world of men

in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 31); so that (if the words in question were spoken) the transition to the including of the Gentiles apart from their treatment of the Jewish people is apparent already.

(b) As time proceeds, the doctrine of the Judgeship of Christ is more definitely announced. In the "revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 8) it is He who judges, and that according to works which afford the test of character (iv. 4 f., etc.); and nothing could be clearer than the statement (2 Cor. v. 10), "we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ." Here again is the Enochic idea, and the conception implied in that additional clause peculiar to Luke xxi. 36 ("and to stand before the Son of Man"); yet this was also in the apocalyptic manner "the judgment-seat of God" (Rom. xiv. 12).

(c) In the later letters, wherein the cosmic significance of the Christ emerges clearly, the positive aspect of absorption into His dominion (where "Christ is all and in all," Col. iii. 11) is emphasised: "reconciliation" of heavenly powers (i. 19 f.), as well as "reward" of men (iii. 24 f.), become more prominent features than vengeance. The Son's day of judgment is taken up into a universal mediation which transcends time, and so the way lies open to the Johannine teaching of the ever-present judgment of the manifested Word.

In conclusion, the least that we appear compelled to admit is that the curious distribution of the evidence ought to make us pause. We should not greatly err in hesitating to attribute to Jesus Himself a claim to the prerogatives of final judgment, because of the virtual silence of His more immediate reporters in this respect.

We know that the pseudepigraphical literature of the Jews was divided on the question whether God or the Messiah executed judgment, and also as to its range and exact place in the scheme of the future. If it were a matter

of controversy between opposing schools we should hardly be surprised at our Lord's silence, for the teaching of Jesus went deeper than partisanship. Indeed, would it not seem to be rather a mark of the greatness of the Master if He gave no verbal assent to any one of the views that were current as to the judicial functions of the Messiah in the time to come?

In the main, it is two writers intensely Jewish that stand sponsors for the claim reported or ascribed—the author of the First Gospel and St. Paul. The latter towards the close of his career as a missionary statesman breaks through the narrow Jewish judicial conception of his earlier days, and attains to a larger and more comprehensive, more universal and more spiritual view of the judgment of the Son, of God in Christ. This view is to us the higher, freed from the limitations of a national and temporal outlook. It is virtually that of the author of the Fourth Gospel, and we may well grant that it is considerably more in accord with the world-view of our days. The silence of Jesus, if such it be, may be regarded as more eloquent than the efforts of the apostolic and later ages to fill in from the narrow time-coloured outlook of earth what appeared to be a gap in the Lord's teaching concerning Himself, to quicken ancient hopes in times of gloom, or to satisfy the religious cravings of their own generation.

After all, the question of the Person of the Judge is relatively of little importance for the essentials of religion, because the confirming and completing of ever-present individual judgment is in any case ultimately the act of God.

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