

Messianic Doctrine of the Book of Enoch, and its Influence on the New Testament.

BY THE REV. R. H. CHARLES, M.A., OXFORD.

THE earliest reference to the Messiah in the Book of Enoch is found in chap. xc. 37, 38 (written before 161 B.C.). The Messiah in this passage is represented as the head of the Messianic community out of which he proceeds, but he has no special rôle to fulfil, and his presence in that description seems due merely to literary reminiscence. This Messiah-reference exercised no influence on New Testament conceptions. But with regard to the Messiah described in the Similitudes the case is very different. Four titles applied for the first time in literature to the personal Messiah in the Similitudes are afterwards reproduced in the New Testament. These are "Christ" or "the Anointed One," "the Righteous One," "the Elect One," and "the Son of Man."

"Christ" or "the Anointed One." This title, found repeatedly in earlier writings, but always in reference to actual contemporary kings or priests, is now for the first time (see xlvi. 10, li. 4) applied to the ideal Messianic King that is to come. It is associated here with supernatural attributes. A few years later, in another writing, the Psalms of Solomon (xvii. 36, xviii. 6, 8), it possesses quite a different connotation. In those Psalms the Messiah, though endowed with divine gifts, is a man and nothing more, and springs from the house of David.

"The Righteous One." This title, which occurs in Acts iii. 14, vii. 52, xxii. 14 (cf. 1 John ii. 1), first appears in Enoch as a Messianic designation; see Enoch xxxviii. 2, liii. 6. Righteousness is one of the leading characteristics of the Messiah, xlvi. 3.

"The Elect One." This title likewise appearing first in Enoch xl. 5, xlv. 3, 4, xlix. 2, 4, li. 3, 5, etc., passes over into the New Testament, Luke ix. 35, xxiii. 35, "The Christ, the Elect One." In the Old Testament we find "Mine Elect," Isa. xlii. 1, but not "the Elect One."

"The Son of Man." Its origin and meaning. As both the origin and meaning of this title in the New Testament have been very differently under-

stood, it will be necessary to discuss these theories briefly:—

(1) It has been taken to mean the Messiah with special reference to its use in Daniel. Hengstenberg, *Christologie*, iii. 91, 1858; Schulze, *Vom Menschensohn und vom Logos*, 1867—"while the concept of the Messiah is contained in the name, the peculiar expression of it in the Danielic sense can never be knowingly left out;" and Meyer, *Comment. on Matt.* viii. 20—"As often as Jesus uses the words 'Son of Man,' He means nothing else than the Son of Man in the Prophecy of Daniel."

The Danielic conception has undoubtedly influenced the meaning of this title in the New Testament in certain instances; see Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64; but in the majority of instances it is wholly inapplicable, *i.e.* when it is used in reference to the homelessness of Christ, Matt. viii. 20; or His aversion to asceticism, xi. 18, 19; or His coming not to be ministered unto but to minister, Mark x. 45; or His destiny to be rejected of the chief priests and scribes, and to be put to death, viii. 31.

(2) It is taken to mean the ideal man, the typical, representative, unique man. So Schleiermacher, who holds (*Christl. Glaube*, ii. 91) that this title in our Lord's use of it implied a consciousness of His complete participation in human nature, as well as of a distinctive difference between Himself and mankind. So Neander, *Leben Jesu*, Eng. trans. 4th ed. p. 99, and more or less approximately Tholuck, Olshausen, Reuss, Weisse, Beyschlag, Liddon, Westcott, Stanton.

This supposition cannot be regarded as more successful than the former. It fails to show any fitness in the majority of cases. It is, moreover, an anachronism in history and thought. No past usage of the term serves even to prepare the way for this alleged meaning; and such a philosophical conception as the ideal man, the personalised moral ideal, was foreign to the consciousness of

the Palestinian Judaism of the time. The nearest approach to this idea in the language of that time would be the "Second Adam."

(3) Baur (*Neutest. Theol.* pp. 81, 82; *Z. f. W. Theol.* 1860, pp. 274-292) thinks that Jesus chose the expression to designate Himself as a man, not as a man in the ideal sense, but as one who participated in everything that is human, *qui nihil humani a se alienum putat*. But though He thus used it to denote a simple ordinary man in its first acceptation, He afterwards incorporated in it the Danielic conception as in Matt. xxiv. 30, etc. So Schenkel, *Bibel-Lex.* iv. pp. 170-175.

Baur has found but few to follow him. His explanation is the most inadequate that has been offered, whether regarded from the standpoint of history or exegesis. His observation, however, that this title had apparently a varying signification, is worth noting. This variation is recognised by Weizsäcker, *Ev. Gesch.* 1864, p. 429; *Das Apostol. Zeitalter*, 1890, p. 109. Its explanation is to be found in the complex origin of the phrase.

(4) Mr. Bartlet ("Christ's use of the term 'the Son of Man,'" *The Expositor*, Dec. 1892) takes this title to mean the "ideal man," but he gives it a further and more definite content by subsuming under it the conception of the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah. As the kingdom of God is foreshadowed in Isa. xl.-lxvi., so is the Messiah in the figure of Isa. lii. 13-liii. This personality, combining as it does utter lowliness and boundless dignity, serves as a principle of synthesis for the like contrasts in the life of the actual Son of Man, and throws special light on its suffering aspects (Matt. viii. 20, etc.). The germ of the title lay for Jesus in the Old Testament (see Dan. vii. 13, etc., in the light of Ps. viii. 4; cf. Heb. ii. 5-18), though the actual phrase may have been derived from a current Enochic usage.

Save for the fact that this theory recognises the inclusion in this title of the Old Testament conception of the Servant of Jehovah, it labours under all the difficulties of (2), and incurs further disabilities of its own. It attributes a very capricious method to Jesus. It supposes Him, first of all, to choose a current Apocalyptic phrase, next to strip it absolutely of its received meaning, and to attach to it a signification in the highest degree questionable for the period and country; and, finally, while rejecting the Old Testament authoritative title of

Servant of Jehovah, to subsume its complete connotation under this current Apocalyptic phrase with its new, artificial, and unmediated meaning. The whole procedure is arbitrary in the highest degree—so unlike the method of Jesus generally. That the title, moreover, however transformed, had not parted with its Apocalyptic meaning is proved by John v. 22, 27, which are practically a quotation from Enoch lxix. 27.

The above interpretations are all unsatisfactory, and the reason is not far to seek. They are too subjective and one-sided, and they all more or less ignore the historical facts of the age. The true interpretation will, we believe, be found *if we start with the conception as found in Enoch, and trace its enlargement and essential transformation in the usage of our Lord. In this transformation it is reconciled to and takes over into itself its apparent antithesis, the conception of the Servant of Jehovah, while it betrays occasional reminiscences of Dan. vii., the ultimate source of this designation.*

First, shortly as to the facts of the problem. The expression is found in Matthew thirty times, in Mark fourteen, in Luke twenty-five, in John twelve. Outside the Gospels in Acts vii. 56; Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14. In all these cases we find $\delta \text{ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου}$, except in John v. 27 and Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14. The two passages in Revelation may be disregarded, as they are not real designations of the Messiah. As for John v. 27, I can neither offer nor find any satisfactory explanation of the absence of the article.

Our interpretation of this title is as follows:—

(1) Its source in Daniel and its differentiation therefrom. The title "the Son of Man" in Enoch was undoubtedly derived from Dan. vii., but a whole world of thought lies between the suggestive words in Daniel and the definite rounded conception as it appears in Enoch. In Daniel the phrase seems merely symbolical of Israel, but in Enoch it denotes a supernatural person. In the former, moreover, the title is indefinite, "like a Son of Man," as in Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14; but in Enoch it is perfectly definite and distinctive, "the Son of Man."

(2) The first occasion of its use. As the Similitudes are pre-Christian, they furnish the first instance in which the definite personal title appears in literature.

(3) Its supernatural import in Enoch. The Son of Man as portrayed in the Similitudes is a supernatural being, and not a mere man. He is not even conceived as being of human descent as the Messiah in Enoch xc. 37. He sits on God's throne, li. 3, which is likewise His own throne, lxii. 3, 5, lxix. 27, 29; possesses universal dominion, lxii. 6; and all judgment is committed unto Him, xli. 9, lxix. 27.

(4) Its import in the New Testament. This title, with its supernatural attributes of superhuman glory, of universal dominion and supreme judicial powers, was adopted by our Lord. The Son of Man has come down from heaven, John iii. 13 (cf. Enoch xlvi. 2, note); He is Lord of the Sabbath, Matt. xii. 8; can forgive sins, Matt. ix. 6; and all judgment is committed unto Him, John v. 22, 27 (cf. Enoch lxix. 27). But while retaining its supernatural associations, this title underwent transformation in our Lord's use of it, a transformation that all Pharisaic ideas, so far as he adopted them, likewise underwent. And just as His kingdom in general formed a standing protest against the prevailing Messianic ideas of temporal glory and dominion, so the title, "the Son of Man," assumed a deeper spiritual significance, and this change we shall best apprehend if we introduce into the Enoch conception of the Son of Man the Isaiah conception of the 'Servant of Jehovah. *These two conceptions, though outwardly antithetic, are, through the transformation of the former, reconciled and fulfilled in a deeper unity—in the New Testament Son of Man.* This transformation flowed naturally from the object of Jesus' coming, the revelation of the Father. The Father could be revealed, not through the self-assertion of the Son, not through His grasping at self-display in the exhibition of superhuman majesty and power, but through His self-emptying, self-renunciation and service (Phil. ii. 6). Whilst therefore in adopting the title "the Son of Man," from Enoch, Jesus made from the outset supernatural claims, yet these supernatural claims were to be vindicated, not after the external Judaistic conceptions of the

Book of Enoch, but in a revelation of the Father in a sinless and redemptive life, death, and resurrection. Thus in the life of the actual Son of Man, the Father was revealed in the Son, and supernatural greatness in universal service. He that was greatest was likewise Servant of all. This transformed conception of the Son of Man is thus permeated throughout by the Isaiah conception of the Servant of Jehovah; but though the Enochic conception is fundamentally transformed, the transcendent claims underlying it are not for a moment foregone. *If then we bear in mind the inward synthesis of these two ideals of the past in an ideal, nay, in a Personality transcending them both,* we shall find little difficulty in understanding the startling contrasts that present themselves in the New Testament in connexion with this designation. We can understand how, on the one hand, the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head (Matt. viii. 20), and yet be Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. xii. 8); how He is to be despised and rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be put to death (Luke ix. 22), and yet be the Judge of all mankind (John v. 27).

It has been objected that Matt. xvi. 13, John xii. 34, prove that the Son of Man was not a current designation of the Messiah in the time of Christ; but no such conclusion can be drawn from these passages; for in the older form of the question, given in Matt. xvi. 13, the words "the Son of Man" are not found: see Mark viii. 27; Luke ix. 18. In John xii. 34 it is just the strangeness of this *new* conception of this current phrase of a Messiah who was to suffer death that makes the people ask, "Who is this Son of Man? we have heard of the law that the Christ abideth for ever."

On the other hand, though the phrase was a current one, our Lord's use of it must have been an enigma, not only to the people generally, but also to His immediate disciples, so much so that they shrunk from using it; for, as we know, it is used in the Gospels only by our Lord in speaking of Himself.