

is the appearance of the risen Lord to Thomas. It seems arbitrary to limit the use of the word "signs" to the works of power or to the wonders of knowledge which were manifested by Jesus. The words ought to be taken in all their breadth, and they include all that is written in the book. Both the *ἔργα* and the *ῥήματα* of Jesus recorded in this book are *σημεῖα*, indications of the personality of Jesus, signs of the Divine power, grace, truth, and love which dwelt in Him. All the "signs" written in these books, and those which are not written, all the works done by Him, all His recorded words, are "signs" of the glory of the only begotten from the Father, manifestations of Him out of whose fulness we have all received, and grace for grace.

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THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE EARLIER CHAPTERS OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THE metaphor which has often been used of late, that the Church passed into a tunnel in the last quarter of the first century and emerged into the open daylight in the middle of the second, admits of another and an earlier application. The Church may be said to have passed through a shorter tunnel at the very commencement of its course. It entered it after the death of the Lord; it emerged in the time of St. Paul's active work. Whereas from the year 55 to 70 A.D. we have definite authorities and documents of fixed date, between the years 30 and 55 A.D. the case is very different; our knowledge of the events of those years comes to us either from documents of uncertain date or from those of an admittedly later date. Can we then feel any certainty of being able to reproduce the life of that time, of being able to enter into the thoughts, the beliefs, "the love, hope, fear,

and faith" of the Christian Church before it was dominated by the masterful influence of St. Paul?

Necessarily there must be an element of precariousness about our answer to this question, yet there are many lines of evidence which converge to throw light upon the darkness. It is quite probable that the Epistle of St. James falls within this period; possible, if not so probable, that the First Epistle of St. Peter and even the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* are of the same date. Without doubt the Epistle to the Hebrews gives us an insight into "the first principles of Christ," the foundation of Christianity as laid in a Hebrew Christian community (Heb. vi. 1). Without doubt St. Paul's epistle to Rome witnesses to a "form of teaching," whereunto Christian converts were delivered in a mixed Church of Jews and Gentiles, in which he himself had never taught (Rom. vi. 17, Rev. Ver.). Without doubt the common material used by the synoptists points back to an early catechetical substratum, and one which very possibly may have received even a written form before the preaching of St. Paul; while, lastly, a careful examination of the language of the earlier chapters of the Acts of the Apostles makes it morally certain that the writer is dependent on materials, either oral or written, which represent the earliest thoughts of the Christian mind. It is with this last point alone that this article will deal.

It is, indeed, not always easy to disengage these materials from their setting. Here, no less than in the later narrative, where he claims to be an eye-witness, the author has added his explanations, has commented upon the events, has attempted to interpret the motives of the various actors in the scene, has gauged the effects of each event upon the general history of the Church; yet, when allowance has been made for this, there still remains a marked difference between the earlier and later chapters, which can only be accounted for either by a personal knowledge of the different

circumstances of the time, or by dependence upon different materials. The Christology affords the most striking instance of this. The conceptions of the Lord will be found to be coloured by two influences: first, they are rich with the memories of His life on earth; secondly, they are moulded on two or three striking and obviously messianic passages of the Old Testament: the Lord is identified from the outset with the prophet foretold by Moses; with the Christ, the Holy One, the Lord, of the psalmists; with "the servant of Jehovah" in the latter half of Isaiah. These two influences will be illustrated in turn, though they intertwine so subtly that it is not always possible to keep them apart.

First then, the Lord whom the apostles preach is essentially a man. He is a man, with whom indeed God is present in a marked way; a man who has been raised from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of God: yet a *Man* anointed by God for His work. He is "a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him" (ii. 22); "God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for God was with Him" (x. 38). Once He is called by His own favourite title for Himself, the Son of man: "I see the heavens opened, and *the Son of man* standing on the right hand of God" (vii. 56). The origin of this title may be traced to the influence of prophecy. In the book of Daniel (vii. 13) we have, indeed, only the much simpler expression, "one like unto a son of man"; but the fuller phrase seems to be used in the parables of the book of Enoch. Even here Dr. Westcott regards the sense as being "equally limited as before" (cf. Additional Note on St. John i. 51, § 5); but though the Ethiopic language, in which that book has been preserved for us, has no article, yet it has certain defining circumlocutions which are used in this case, and both Dillmann and Schodde

translate it "*the* Son of man." It is at least as definitely "*the* Son of man" in the Ethiopic book of Enoch as it is in the Ethiopic translation of the New Testament.¹ Perhaps it would be true to say that the book of Enoch exhibits a distinct advance upon the expression in the book of Daniel; the phrase used in Enoch implies "the definite being who, as Messiah, is the Son of man"; while yet it may fall short of that fulness of meaning which Dr. Westcott would rightly read into it as used by our Lord, "He who stands in a special relation to the human race, as its ideal representative, in whom all the potential powers of humanity were gathered." As used by St. Stephen, however, the phrase is not necessarily at all in advance of the conception of the book of Enoch; but it needs to be remembered that the date of the parables, though probably pre-Christian, is not so clearly such that we can build upon it a certain argument of the use of the phrase earlier than the gospels. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. In the later Christian writings it is found in a Jewish Christian account of a Jewish Christian apostle, the account of the martyrdom of St. James given by Hegesippus. There when urged by the Jews to dissuade people from believing in Jesus as the Messiah, he answers: "Why ask me about Jesus the Son of man? He sits in heaven at the right hand of the Mighty Power, and is about to come on the clouds of heaven."² This seems to be the only place in Christian literature³ where the phrase is used as a clear title of the Lord, except in direct quotations from the gospels.

Again, the Lord is still known as "Jesus of Nazareth," a title in which we partly hear the echo of the scorn of

¹ I am indebted for this statement to Rev. R. H. Charles, who has made a special study of the book of Enoch.

² Quoted in Eusebius ii. 23.

³ Cf. Stanton, *The Jewish and Christian Messiah*, p. 243.

the Jerusalem rabbi, as in the charge against St. Stephen : " We have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place " (vi. 14) ; or in the words of a Pharisee of the Pharisees : " I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth : and this I also did *in Jerusalem* " (xxvi. 9) ; and again, in the Lord's words, accepting the title of scorn, " I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest " (xxii. 8) ; while on the lips of the apostles themselves there is perhaps a tinge of triumphant satire as they glory in a name which excites such scorn and conveys such blessing : " Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in Him doth this man stand here before you whole " (iv. 10 ; cf. ii. 22, iii. 6, x. 38). The title does not reappear after the tenth chapter, except in the two instances quoted above, which really prove the point ; both are referring back to the earlier days : the one, to St. Paul's feelings before his conversion ; the other, to the Lord's words to him at the conversion. It does not appear in any of the epistles of the New Testament.

As we pass to the deeper conceptions of His nature, the influence of the Old Testament begins to make itself felt. Thus He is the Christ, whose sufferings had been foretold by the mouth of all the prophets ; and notably in the second psalm (iii. 18-20, iv. 27). He is " the Lord Jesus " (i. 21), the fulfilment of the ideal " Lord " of Psalm cx. 1 (ii. 34-36) ; He is " Lord of all " (x. 36). He is the " prophet " foretold in the book of Deuteronomy (iii. 22 ; cf. vii. 37). Not less really, although there is no hint of the fact, is the title " Saviour " steeped in Old Testament imagery, whether it be meant consciously to recall the judges whom God raised up as saviours against earthly enemies (cf. v. 31 with Judges iii. 9, 15), or to represent

God Himself, the primary source of all salvation (cf. iv. 12 with Isaiah xlv. 21, 22). This title is naturally not peculiar to these chapters. It is not as common as might be expected; but it is found once again in the Acts (in St. Paul's speech to Jews, xiii. 23), in the Philippians, the pastoral epistles, 2 Peter, Jude, and St. John. A rarer title, ἀρχηγός, which is found used either absolutely as "a Prince" (v. 31), or defined as "the Prince or Author of life" (iii. 15), is a word of frequent usage in the LXX. Such instances as Numbers xiv. 4, "Let us make a *captain*, and return into Egypt," or Isaiah iii. 6, "Thou hast clothing, be thou our *ruler*," will illustrate its meaning; but they can scarcely be said to suggest the title as applied to the Lord. Apart from these early chapters, the word occurs in the New Testament only in the epistle most closely associated with Jewish Christians, the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the similar phrases, "*the author* of their salvation," "*the author* of our faith" (Heb. ii. 10, xii. 2).

But there is another title which comes direct from the Old Testament, though the mistranslation of the Authorized Version has long obscured the fact. Philip taught the Ethiopian to see in Jesus the fulfilment of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah; and that same context has supplied for Him the title of "the *Servant*" of God. Peter and John so entitle Him: "The God of our fathers hath glorified His *Servant* Jesus"; and again, "God, having raised up His *Servant*, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities" (iii. 13 and 26). The whole company of the apostles re-echo it: "For of a truth in this city against Thy holy *Servant* Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint (cf. Isa. lxi. 1), both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together" (iv. 27; cf. 30 and viii. 32, 33). The use of this title is the most instructive of all. Within these chapters, it occurs five times; outside them in the New Testament

only once, in the direct quotation of Isaiah by St. Matthew (xii. 18), the essentially Jewish-Christian evangelist. It reappears in the *Didachè* (cap. ix. twice), in the *Epistle of St. Clement* (cap. lix., thrice), in the *Martyrdom of St. Polycarp* (cap. xiv.), and several times in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (viii. 5, 14, 39, 40, 41); but nearly always in prayers, as though it were a stereotyped liturgical formula, possibly adapted from some Jewish original: and even in these places the original meaning of servant seems gradually to have been supplanted by that of son. In the *Didachè* the words are: "We thank Thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David, τοῦ παιδὸς σου, which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus, τοῦ παιδὸς σου"; and again: "We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus, τοῦ παιδὸς σου." Here the comparison with David seems to make "servant" far more appropriate than that of son. In St. Clement the title is fuller, διὰ τοῦ ἡγαπημένου παιδὸς; but this could be equally well referred to the thought of servant (cf. St. Matt. xii. 18) or to that of son (cf. St. Matt. iii. 17, Eph. i. 6, Col. i. 13), and there is nothing in the context to decide between these alternative renderings. But the language of the prayer in the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, "O Lord, God Almighty, *Father* of Thy beloved and blessed Son (*παιδὸς*) Jesus Christ," shows that the idea of Son was by this time the most prominent in the word, and when the Latin translation of St. Irenæus was made, *παῖς* was regularly represented by "filius" (cf. Iren. III., xii. 5, 6).

We have then here a title of our Lord which does not appear anywhere in the epistles, and appears outside the New Testament in a form which implies that its original meaning was gradually misunderstood.

There remains yet one other set of titles, perhaps the most interesting of all. Jesus is the Holy, the Righteous

One. This is associated mainly with the language of prophecy. One of the words is taken directly from Psalm xvi. 10: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades; neither wilt Thou give Thy Holy One (τὸν ὅσιόν σου) to see corruption." Here the stress is laid on character; it implies one who is essentially holy, one who shares God's character, one who is "duteous in love" (Cheyne *ad loc.*). Elsewhere it stands in close connexion with the idea of God's servant, "Thy holy Servant" (τὸν ἅγιον παῖδα, iv. 27, 30): but here the different adjective lays stress rather on dedication; He is one consecrated to the service of Jehovah. Finally, He is the Righteous One (ὁ δίκαιος), and perhaps no title bears with it so intrinsically the stamp of an early currency. It recalls the first indignant protest of the disciples, smarting under the sense of the *injustice* of their Master's condemnation. It is on a level with the entreaty of Pilate's wife to Pilate, to have nothing to do with *that righteous man* (St. Matt. xxvii. 19), or with the conviction of the Roman centurion, "Certainly this was *a righteous man*" (St. Luke xxiii. 47). The sinlessness of Jesus is thrown into relief by the injustice of His judges, who preferred a murderer to Him, and

"At length Him nailèd on a gallow-tree,
And slew the Just by most unjust decree."

"Ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you" (Acts iii. 14). But more than this lies hid in the title; as the Righteous One, He has been the goal to which all the prophets pointed; they "showed before of the coming of the Righteous One" (vii. 52); He it is who embodies God's righteousness, the righteous Branch, who will establish righteousness upon the earth (cf. Isa. xi. 5, Jer. xxiii. 5). The title appears already fixed as applied to the Messiah in the book of Enoch, where we read that at the end of the world "the Just One shall appear in the presence of the just who are

chosen" (chap. 38); and this is explained later, "This is the Son of man who has justice, and justice dwells with Him, and all the treasures of secrecy He reveals, because the Lord of the spirits has chosen Him, and His portion overcomes all things before the Lord of the spirits in rectitude to eternity" (chap. 46). This title occurs once in the later chapters of the Acts, but again the exception proves the rule. It is in the record of St. Paul's conversion, where it is put into the mouth of a Jewish-Christian, explaining to Saul the meaning of the conversion: "The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know His will, and to see the Righteous One" (xxii. 14). A comparison of Romans x. 3 with Philippians iii. 9 will show what this meant to St. Paul. All his life he had been seeking after righteousness; but before his conversion his aim had been to establish a righteousness of his own; now he had seen righteousness in its completeness, embodied in Jesus Christ; henceforth his only aim was to submit himself to that, and to receive it into himself. The phrase does not occur as a direct title applied to our Lord anywhere else in the New Testament.

This review of the Christology of these chapters certainly has shown us the presence of language which varies from that of later times and which is in many respects peculiarly appropriate in the first days of the Church. It would be easy also to point out the striking absence of the definite theological language, both of St. Paul and of St. John, or of the Epistle to the Hebrews. To take but one instance, the simple title, "the Son of God," though that is implied in the application of the second Psalm to Jesus, occurs first in the Acts, where the writer summarizes the teaching of St. Paul (ix. 20); and the more definite theological technicalities of the epistles are entirely wanting.

But let us get behind the words to the thoughts, and see what points they were which impressed the first Christians

in the Lord, what they were most anxious to put forward to those whom they would convert. First then, it was a miraculous Christ; the evidence which supports the simpler conceptions of Him supports this also from the outset. But more emphasis is laid upon His character: He was to them the ideal of a human life, the type of holiness, of consecration, of righteousness. But He was more than this, He had the power to communicate this righteousness: He was a Saviour, He could inspire repentance, He could grant forgiveness, He could bless by turning His followers from their iniquities: He was a leader whom they could follow, a prophet who had explained God's will to them; but at the same time He was the very type of loyal obedience, of all that had been foreshadowed in an ideal servant, in one who was to be as a lamb led to the slaughter, showing the perfection of self-sacrifice and its vicarious force, who was to go as God's triumphant messenger to Jew and Gentile alike. Enthusiasm for character, for righteousness, for holiness, for consecrated obedience, this was the first inspiring force of the Christian Church.

Two interesting considerations arise out of these facts, the one of a more literary, the other of a more dogmatic kind.

First, they have a bearing on Paulinism, as showing that the germs of it were already in existence, and that St. Paul's teaching was a true development. The two doctrines most commonly connected with St. Paul are the doctrine of justification by faith and that of the catholicity of the Church. But the essential kernel of the doctrine of justification by faith lies in this, that righteousness is a gift of God, that it is not a height up to which man works in his own strength, but a life embodied in Christ Jesus, given forth from Him to those who put faith in Him. Now the possibility of this is implied in treating Christ as the ideal of holiness and of righteousness. If He was one who fully

embodied and expressed the character of God, if He represented the fullest conception of righteousness to which prophets had looked forward, if He was the Just One who was going to establish righteousness and to judge the world, then He and He alone could be the source of hope and faith to those who were seeking for righteousness; and all this seems involved in the titles, "the Holy One," "the Righteous One"; and these titles are pre-Pauline. Again, the work of the ideal Servant of Jehovah is clearly described by Isaiah as intended for Jew and Gentile alike: "I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation to the ends of the earth" (Isa. xlix. 6). This thought is indeed not worked out in these earlier chapters; and many difficulties arose as to the method in which it was to be worked out in fact, nor can we exaggerate the debt which we owe to St. Paul in the efficient working of it out; yet it is not too strong to say that the identification of the Lord with the ideal Servant of Jehovah carried with it of necessity the catholicity of the Church; and this identification is pre-Pauline.

How much more even than this was implied in the use of the title will be apparent at once to any student who will take such an analysis of it as that given in Dr. Driver's *Isaiah* (pp. 175-178). That analysis does not anticipate the Christian application, it draws out only the meaning of it to the writer at the time; but it shows that the identification of Jesus with that Servant implies that the historic nation had failed in its true work of righteousness, that that work was taken up by one who represented and impersonated all that is true and characteristic in the nation, who became a prophet to the whole world, and suffered and died for the sins of others.

On the other hand, these facts may seem to throw discredit on the gospel narrative. It may be said: "Your earliest conceptions of the Lord are so simple; they do not,

on your own showing, treat Him as 'Son of God' until they come under the influence of St. Paul. What then becomes of the gospel accounts, which clearly treat Him as such? May they not have been modified by subsequent influences?" To this it is a sufficient reply that the gospels themselves show how gradually the Lord trained His disciples to understand about His nature. He had been to them the prophet, the miracle-worker, the beneficent healer, before they could be taught the secret of His death and the exact relation which His life bore to God; and it was but natural that they should try to win converts by the same lessons by which they had been converted themselves, that they should show somewhat of the same reverence for deep truths, the same shrinking from harming their converts by forcing them prematurely to face decisive questions, which He had shown in dealing with themselves.

This answer leads us to the more dogmatic consideration. We see how the acceptance of mere theological dogma, of intellectual interpretation of facts, is never the primary factor in the Christian life. That was and is and will always be trust in a Person. In ordinary life trust in a friend precedes an intellectual analysis of his qualities; when that trust has to be justified to our own intellectual consciousness, or defended against opposition, or explained to those who have never seen him, we are obliged to analyse, to interpret, to formulate. So the need of teaching new converts, the need of meeting false views about their Master, the need of justifying the worship of their Master and correlating it with their belief in the unity of God or with the presence of evil in the world, drew out the complete dogmatic conceptions of St. Paul and of St. John.

Before the deeper conceptions, the simple titles of the early Christology pass away; but they are absorbed, not destroyed, supplemented, not supplanted. The human life, the sinless character, the suffering Redeemer, the type of

obedience, these still live on in the deeper theology of St. Paul, and of St. John, and of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Thus, to take this last epistle only as an illustration, none of these titles, of which we have been speaking, reappears in it; yet, though not called "the Son of man," He, who is "the very image of God's substance," is still like unto His brethren, touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He is not called "the Righteous, the Holy One," but He is still without sin, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners; He is not called the Servant of Jehovah, but He is still the type of obedience, who learned obedience by the things that He suffered. The earlier conceptions are there at the background still, and the later conceptions are not less true because historically they are formulated later. They are, we may almost say, more true; at least more fundamental, more operative, more ultimate, inasmuch as the life is always prior to and deeper than its manifestations. The Church had not drawn farther away from the historical Christ, when it knew a Christ after the flesh no more; it had pierced deeper into the centre of the historic life as it realized its motive power, and knew and formulated with unflinching exactness the Nature which had given to that historic teaching its soul-piercing inspiration, to that life its infinite meekness and gentleness, to that character its sinlessness.

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