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# *The Divinity of Christ*

By

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# The Divinity of Christ

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## PART I.



ALMOST a score of centuries ago there appeared in a little, obscure country, half way around the globe from here, a Man whose life and teaching were to change the face of the earth, revolutionize religion, and give a new direction to the history of the human race. His career was wonderfully short. He was before the eyes of the people only three years, but those were the most marvelous three years that have been seen in history, for He was the most extraordinary Man that ever walked the earth. He was quiet and peaceful. He was humble and retiring. He had no position of authority. He enjoyed no worldly power or patronage. But wherever He went crowds followed. He sat down on a stone by the roadside, on a ship at the seashore, wherever the occasion found Him, and spoke to the people—very simply, for He was no orator; but whatever He said enraptured His hearers, and they agreed that "*never did man speak like this Man.*" He said His say, and departed, seeking solitude in a wood, a grove, even out in the dreary desert. But He could have no solitude—the people followed in multitudes. Thousands went out into the wilderness after Him,

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forgetting their homes, their business—forgetting even that they must eat. For there was some mighty magnetism in that Man; they could not let Him go.

In His quiet way He said things that had never been said before, but have never ceased to be said since. Quite unostentatiously He did most astounding things. The written records of His career relate that wherever He walked, miracles sprouted from the earth. He looked upon a leper, and the leper arose, cleansed from his hideous disease. He touched the eyes of a blind man, and the man cried out glorifying God, because he had received back his sight. He stopped a funeral procession, spoke to the dead body of a young man that was being carried out to the grave, and the young man arose and was given back into the arms of his mother, who was a widow. Again, He walked three miles to the tomb of a friend, opened the door of the tomb, spoke the words, "*Arise, come forth!*" and the man who had been in the tomb four days came out. The standers-by unwrapped him from his shroud, and he walked to his home.

And naturally enough we find in the selfsame historical records which tell of these extraordinary events, that the people were astounded, and began to whisper among themselves, "Who is this Wonder-worker? And how came He by this miraculous power? Wherever He goes the blind see, the deaf hear, the lepers are cleansed, the very dead come forth from the grave—who is He, and what is He?"

There is a saying very familiar in our language, and very true, that "history repeats itself." The

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question that men asked nineteen centuries ago they are asking to-day. The mystery which confronted those ancient inhabitants of the remote province on the other side of the globe is, strange to say, still a mystery to multitudes of men in modern America. Of old, when Jesus Christ walked the earth (for, of course, the Wonder-worker is no other than He), men began to ask, "Who is He? What is He?" And to-day, nineteen hundred years since those questions were first asked, we hear them again, and we are compelled to determine again what can be the answer to them.

And I declare that it is a matter of measureless importance for us to know Who is Jesus Christ. It is a strange fact, and a sad fact, that many to-day do not know the answer to this question. Jesus is, by admission of all, whether believers or unbelievers, the Founder of Christianity, and the Author of a new civilization. He is the most important figure in history, yet there are those, even among the learned, who admit, nay, who boast, that they have no definite conviction concerning the ultimate cause of His greatness. They know not what to make of Him.

Fling out into the world to-day the question He himself flung back upon the Jews in His day: "*What think you of Christ, whose Son is He?*" and you will be astounded at the number and variety and the uncertainty of the answers that will come ringing about your ears. He is "the wise man of Judea, the Jewish Socrates, a Prophet sent by God." He is the "ideally perfect character." He is the "paragon of humanity." He is the "supreme exemplification of

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the union of humanity and divinity." "Yes, but whose Son is He?" "Son of Mary, Son of David, Son of Abraham." "Yes, yes, but is He not the Son of God?" "Son of God? we are all sons and children of God." "But is He not the Son of God in a sense in which we are not, and cannot be? We are sons by adoption. Is He not Son of God by nature? Is He not the same as God, equal to God, is He not a divine Person?" And these agnostic Christians reply, "We do not know. We cannot tell. Speak not to us of nature and person in God. We know not what you mean. We cannot concern ourselves with the intricacies of metaphysics, and with difficult theological questions."

Here is a marvelous spectacle—a race of men enjoying the blessings of Christian civilization, who know not what to think of Christ! And worse still, entire churches called Christian, which dare not say with certainty what they believe about Him. And, perhaps worst of all, multitudes of people who say that it matters not what we think, nor what we believe about Him.

Truly it is a strange phenomenon, this affectation of ignorance, or of unconcern about Jesus Christ. The learned world prides itself on its intellectual and scientific curiosity. And if there is any science that in recent years has been advocated and advertised more than others, it is the science of psychology. Yet here is the choicest of all psychological problems, the question of the cause of the transcendent genius of Christ; but the educators and the educated quite generally are content to profess upon this question

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an ignoble ignorance. They would be ashamed to confess indifference concerning the psychology of Socrates, or Plato, or Dante, or the "myriad-minded" Shakespeare. But with a strange inconsistency, while confessing that Jesus' is a greater mind than any of these, they boast that they will not study the cause of His superiority. They study deeply the "nature of man," the "nature of the universe," the "nature of the human mind," but they tell us that they will not listen to any discussion of the nature of Christ.

But for us Christians, who truly venerate the Author of our religion and our civilization, there can be no higher intellectual delight, no pleasanter privilege, than to examine the mind and soul, the Nature and the Person of Christ.

We all know that Jesus was a genuine man, possessed of a human heart, a human mind and soul, and a human body; a complete human nature like our own. The waves and billows of every human emotion passed over His soul. He wept and rejoiced, He brooded and worried, and grieved and pitied; He was elated and dejected in turns. He was warmed by love and friendship and sympathy; He was chilled by hatred and indifference and ingratitude; He was frequently disappointed and saddened and shamed. He was not even immune to temptation, for He was as thoroughly human as any child of Adam.

Even those who reject the traditional and orthodox view of Him, none the less glory in the perfection of His humanity. "Of this human race," says the

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author of *Ecce Homo*, "Christ was Himself a member, and to this day is it not the best answer to all blasphemers of the species, the best consolation when our sense of degradation is keenest, that a human brain was behind His forehead, and a human heart beating in His breast, and that within the whole creation of God, nothing more elevated nor more attractive has yet been found than He?"

"He was a Man of unparalleled purity and elevation of character surpassing in His sublime earnestness the moral grandeur of all other religious teachers, and putting to the blush the sometimes sullied but generally admirable teachings of Socrates and Plato, and the whole round of Greek philosophers." "The simple record of three short years of Christ's active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists."

Now, these testimonials to the beauty of the character of Jesus are pleasant to quote, but we must not let them obscure the point at issue. The principal and only problem concerning the Nature of Christ is this; Can we study His mind, His sayings, His deeds, His life and His death, and above all, the enormous and eternal consequences of His life and death, and conclude that He is adequately explained by being named "human"? Granting that He is superior in genius and sanctity and in practical achievement to any other man, are we to believe that He was, after all, essentially the same in nature with the master philosophers and poets and prophets of our race; that His nature surpasses theirs in degree

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only, and not in kind? In other words, is Jesus merely a man, or is He more than man? Is He only human, or is He also divine? And when we ask the question, "Is Christ divine?" we shall not, like many whose intentions may be good, but whose method is cowardly, delude ourselves with an elastic understanding of the word "divine." We shall not play a trick upon our own minds by maintaining that there is a spark of divinity in all men of genius; that they may therefore be called—in a sense—divine, and then admit that Jesus is divine—in that sense.

When we ask the question, "Is Christ divine?" we mean, "Is He God?" We do not ask, Is He a man who enjoyed a particularly close union with God, or a man in whom the Godhead dwelt more intimately than in any other man? but, Has He the right to say, "I am God," just as truly as you and I have the right to say, "I am a man?"

Now, the argument I shall use is this: not only had Jesus Christ the right to say, "I am God," but He did say it, and since He said it, it is true. The argument is from Christ's own consciousness, witnessed by Christ's own testimony. For this argument we require two preliminary concessions. But the concessions are so easily made, that no reasonable person could refuse to make them.

First—We ask men to admit that Christ was not a liar.

Secondly—We ask men to admit that Christ was not a lunatic.

Truly this is a trifling concession, but when

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it is granted, the divinity of Jesus is a foregone conclusion. If He was sane, He could not so wildly and so outrageously mistake His own nature as to *imagine* Himself God. If He was truthful He could not claim to be God, knowing Himself to be only man.

The strongest statements from the lips of Jesus in support of His divinity are to be found in the Gospel of St. John. But since many who deny His divinity, either reject the Apostolic authorship of St. John's Gospel, or at least maintain that therein a theological thesis is discoverable, we may, without admitting either of the contentions of our opponents, confine ourselves principally to the other three Gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, if carefully read, will yield proof in abundance that Christ claimed and exercised personal divine authority and power, and that He is therefore God. In these three Gospels, Christ declared that He is Ruler, Redeemer, and final Judge of the world. He said that all things had been delivered to Him, and that He possessed all authority in heaven and on earth. He demanded, furthermore, absolute self-surrender of those who would be His disciples. They must, without reasoning or hesitation, leave all things and follow Him if only He so much as glanced at them, and bade them come. They must abandon not only their worldly goods, great or small, but they must leave mother and father, husband or wife, if summoned by Him. He declared bluntly that anyone who loved father or mother more than Him was not worthy of Him. He claimed the right to enter into any home, call any member of the family to come after Him. And

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if one hesitated, Jesus indicated that such a one would hardly enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Furthermore, He claimed to be Judge of the world. He would come with legions of angels, in the clouds of heaven, and separate the good from the bad—and the separation was to be eternal. There was to be no appeal from His decision.

He assumed a position of authority different from that of any other teacher, or group of teachers. He calmly took to Himself, without debate or discussion, without argument and without consultation, a position of the most exalted personal rank and dignity.

Without asking anyone's leave, without explanation or apology, without even condescending to present His credentials, He not only interpreted, but He revised, and, in some cases, abrogated the Mosaic Law. Yet the Mosaic Law was admitted by Him, as by all the people, to be the teaching of Jehovah. In effect, He claimed to be what one writer has called Him, a "new Jehovah." Perhaps the greatest of His claims in the eyes of His friends and His enemies alike, was the claim of the right to forgive sins, and to communicate that right to whomsoever He might choose.

Furthermore, He claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God. In these days, when a multitude of cowardly Christians are afraid to define their theological principles, or give an honest answer to a plain question concerning their faith, it is customary to say that the question, "*What think you of Christ?*" is irreverent, and that the answer to it is unimportant. But those who say such things seem to forget

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that the words are a quotation from Christ Himself. The Jews who had witnessed His miracles, listened to His dogmatic utterances, and observed His assumption of absolute authority, were asking one another, "Who is He, and what is He? By what authority does He do these things? How came this Man by this wisdom and authority?" Coming from the lips of Christ's enemies, these questions were asked, no doubt, in a spirit of scorn. Christ, however, thought it important and necessary to answer them. Just as John the Baptist explains very carefully that he *is not* the Christ, Jesus explains very carefully that He *is* the Christ. And first He would settle it firmly in the minds of His immediate followers. "*Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?*" He asked the Disciples abruptly. And they answered: "*Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets.*" "*Jesus saith to them: 'But whom do you say that I am?'*" "*Simon Peter answered and said: 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.'*" "*And Jesus answering said to him: 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven.'*" (Matt. xvi. 13-16.) Whatever the modern, semi-agnostic Christians may imagine, Jesus seemed to think the question of His identity important enough to be the cause of a revelation from heaven.

Again, Jesus flung the question as a kind of challenge in the face of the Pharisees: "*What think you of Christ? Whose Son is He?*" They answered: "*David's Son.*" But Jesus insisted: "*How then doth*

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*David call Him Lord? . . . If David call Him Lord, how is He David's Son?" . . . The Scripture says that they were silenced, and indicates that they were awed: "No man was able to answer Him a word." (Matt. xxii. 41-45.)*

Finally, He claimed an absolutely incomparable devotion to His own Person, as the indispensable condition to membership in the Kingdom of Heaven. He presumed and exercised authority over all mankind, even in matters the most sacred and intimate. He exacted what no philosopher ever dreamed of demanding—love of Himself as well as adherence to His teaching. In this He has been contrasted with Socrates, who is admitted by universal tradition to have been not only the wisest, but the most attractive and lovable, of human teachers. "It was the perpetual object of Socrates to sink, as much as possible, his own personality." He wished his arguments to rest altogether upon their intrinsic value, and not at all upon his authority. Christ, on the other hand, never argued, and seldom explained. He simply asseverated and demanded belief upon His word. "Socrates depreciates himself: Christ perpetually and consistently exalts Himself."

To continue by quoting literally from the unbelieving author <sup>1</sup> whose line of thought I have been following: "Some men have been as levers to uplift the earth, and roll it in another course. Homer, by creating literature; Socrates, by creating science; Cæsar, by carrying civilization inland from the shores of the Mediterranean; Newton, by starting science

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Seeley, *Ecce Homo*.

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upon a career of steady progress, may be said to have attained this eminence. But these men gave a single impact like that which is conceived to have set the planets in motion. Christ claimed to be a perpetual attractive power like the sun, which determines their orbits. They contributed to men some discovery, and passed away. *Christ's discovery is Himself!* To humanity, struggling with its passions and its destiny, He says, 'Cling to Me; cling ever closer to Me.'" "I have read all the sages of the world," says St. Augustine, "and not one of them dares say, 'Come unto me.'"

How utterly futile, in the face of these facts, is the contention that Christ was a good man, and yet not strictly divine. If He was not divine these demands are enormously extravagant, and, indeed, nothing short of imposture and insanity. No mere man has any right to assert such absolute authority over his fellow men; no mere man could assume such tremendous personal prerogative.

Remember that Christ was—paradoxical as it may seem—the meekest and humblest of men. He was naturally contented with obscurity. "He lacked altogether the reckless desire for distinction and eminence which is common in great men. The temptation to exaggerate His own importance was not likely to master Him. Christ was indeed an humble man. When we have fully pondered this fact we may be in a condition to estimate the force of the evidence, which, submitted to His mind, could induce Him to lay claim persistently, and with the calmness of complete conviction, to a dominion more

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transcendent, more universal, more complete, than the most delirious votary of glory ever aspired to in his dreams."

The conclusion is obvious. He that made these claims is no mere man. And the Christian world has made no mistake in maintaining that none but a God could either decently make the claims, or have them effectually recognized by an unending series of generations of believers. Jesus assumed and exercised the prerogatives of God. If He be not God indeed, we are thrown on the other horn of the dilemma—He is not even a good man. "*Why callest thou Me good?*" said Jesus, "*None is good, save God.*" There is profound meaning in the sentence. Why dost thou call Jesus good? Thou canst not call Him good unless thou callest Him God. Say He is not God, and you must say that His enormous pretensions are only blasphemy. If He be a blasphemer, why dost thou call Him "*a good man?*" But in truth, the one who would dare call Jesus a blasphemer would be himself guilty of blasphemy.

## PART II.

Thus far, in setting forth the proofs of the divinity of Christ, I have used only the testimony of the Synoptic Gospels: viz., those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Purposely I have postponed consideration of the evidence given by St. John, because it has been alleged by some "advanced" scholars that the fourth Gospel is not a trustworthy historical record of the sayings and doings of Jesus. It will be advisable, therefore, if not actually necessary, to answer this allegation before quoting from St. John.

Briefly, the objection is this: that the author of the fourth Gospel writes not as a historian, but as a mystic seer; that the Gospel, while in appearance historical, is in reality a philosophical treatise; that it contains not a simple statement of facts, but a religious and theological interpretation of alleged facts; that it consists of the reminiscences of one who was perhaps an eyewitness of the life of Christ, but who allows his mystical tendencies to color the facts he has seen, and to transform the words he has heard; that, consciously or unconsciously, he has metamorphosed and apotheosized the human Nazarene into the Divine Logos.

Now, in answer to such statements, I shall insist once again upon avoiding what has been called the "charlatanism of words." I shall refuse to allow myself or my readers to be bewildered by the appearance of scholarship that is conveyed by such high sounding phrases. And I propose, therefore, to

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translate these pretentious words and pedantic phrases of the "higher critics" into the simple language of the people. We shall see just what the critics mean, and then we shall apply the touchstone of plain reason and of common sense to their elaborate theories.

In plain English they mean this: Jesus Christ is not God; He never claimed to be God; the first three Gospels represent Him as simply a man. But between the time when those three Gospels were written, and the time at which the fourth Gospel appeared, the Christian people had been gradually deifying Christ in their imaginations, and this process of deification was completed, authorized, canonized, and sanctified by the fourth Gospel, which openly declares itself to be a thesis that Christ is God.

In other words, Christianity became a corrupt religion, setting forth an enormous lie, degenerating into idolatry in two generations after the death of Christ. That is to say, whereas Moses and Buddha and Mohammed were wise enough, and honest enough, and skillful enough to prevent their followers from deifying them, Christ either could not, or did not, succeed in keeping His religion pure for more than one generation.

Jesus was put to death about the year 33. The fourth Gospel was written (as many of the most radical modern critics admit) between the years 95 and 100. In 60 years, therefore, Christianity had become idolatry. The purest and loftiest religion ever preached had become radically vitiated. The heroic efforts of the noblest of Prophets, Jesus Christ, had

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resulted in swift and complete calamity. Christianity was only a corruption of Judaism, a mistake, a failure—had gone radically wrong in its infancy.

Someone, writing of the degeneration of pagan Rome in the days of the later Empire, says that the pagans had finally reached the “incredible baseness of deifying the Emperor.” If the theory of the higher critics of the fourth Gospel be true, then St. John the Apostle, or some companion of his, or perhaps some intruding Greek philosopher masquerading as an Apostle, combining with the early Christians in a conspiracy against truth and against religion, was guilty of the “incredible baseness of deifying man.” And from that day to this an inestimable multitude of Christians have been idolaters, bending the knee, prostrating the body, wholly immolating themselves before a mere Man, calling out to Him: “Thou art our God, and we adore Thee!”

A little common sense often is better than a mass of “learning.” The higher critics might extricate themselves from the maze of their incredible conclusions if they would turn their critical eyes away from ancient documents, and turn them upon their own theories. There are some things that are palpably, obviously impossible, and one of them is the theory that Christianity was a setback to the evolution of religion; that it was and is the most universal, most complete, and most monstrous system of idolatry ever foisted upon humanity. If called upon to choose between this absurd theory and the alternative theory that the writer of the fourth Gospel knew the facts wherof he wrote, and was substan-

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tially accurate in relating the conversations of Jesus, I think that no man will hesitate to choose the latter, unless he is amongst the number of those who are mad with too much "learning."

This may be a very summary and unscientific way of disposing of the objections against the authority and historicity of St. John's Gospel, but the same conclusion may be reached legitimately by the application of the strictest rules of scientific criticism. As a matter of fact, the critics are arrayed against one another, some rejecting, others of equal merit advocating, the reliability of the fourth Gospel. "When doctors disagree," a little common sense may indicate the way to the truth. And the common sense relative to the fourth Gospel question, in a few sentences, is this: No one, even amongst the radicals, goes so far as to maintain that the fourth Gospel is a deliberate deception. Now, the writer of the fourth Gospel claims to have been an eyewitness of the life of Jesus, and consequently an earwitness of His sayings. It is possible that he paraphrased these sayings, and developed their meaning; he may have brought out their inner significance more clearly than have the other Evangelists; he may have grouped the sayings that prove his thesis, and set in bold relief Jesus' testimony to His own divinity. But in all this there is nothing that conflicts with truth, or interferes with historical accuracy. It is impossible that the Evangelist could have lied, or misrepresented facts, or that he could have contradicted Christ, or that he could have, even unconsciously, so terribly misunderstood his Master as to think Him

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to be God, if He were only man, or quote Him as claiming to be Divine if He never made the claim. We may say, therefore, of the Gospel of St. John: "*These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*" (John xx. 31). And of its writer: "*This is that Disciple who giveth testimony of these things, and hath written these things, and we know that his testimony is true*" (John xxi. 24).

Let us see, then, what are the statements of Jesus bearing directly upon His divinity, as set forth in St. John.

We have seen that in St. Matthew's Gospel, Christ claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God. St. John will help us to understand the full meaning of that phrase. In one of our Savior's frequent altercations with the Jews the argument turned upon the question of His superiority over Abraham: "*Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead, and the Prophets who are dead? Whom dost Thou make Thyself?*" Jesus replied: "*Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he might see My day; he saw it and was glad.*" "*The Jews, therefore, said to him: 'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?'*" "*Jesus said to them: 'Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am.'*" (John viii. 50 ff.) "*Amen, amen,*" is practically an oath; and the profound significance of the distinction between Abraham "*was made*" and "*I am*" could not have escaped the Jews, for it was a familiar fact to them that the name of God was "*I am who am.*" They associated the ideas instantaneously, and not

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content with reviling Jesus for claiming existence prior to that of Abraham, who had been dead perhaps two thousand years, they attempted to stone Him as a blasphemer, who named Himself by the very name of God. They would not forget that *blasphemy.*" It was to be the chief accusation in the final indictment against Him.

But if one should object that, after all, this saying, "*Before Abraham was made, I am,*" is rather cryptic, and that perhaps Christ did not really intend to use the phrase as a claim to divinity, all doubt about His meaning must vanish when we read again: "*Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch, and the Jews came round about Him and said to Him, 'How long dost Thou keep us in suspense; if Thou be the Christ tell us plainly.'*" (John x. 23 ff.) "*I and the Father are One,*" was His reply. Again "*the Jews took up stones to stone Him,*" and when He expostulated with them, saying: "*Many good works I have showed you . . . for which of these good works do you stone Me?*" they answered: "*For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy, because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.*" Later on, when they had arrested Him and haled Him before Pilate, they explained to the Governor: "*We have a law that this man must die, because He maketh Himself the Son of God.*"

Perhaps the most solemn affirmation of His divinity was given by Jesus on the night before He died, when He was placed under oath by the high priest, and commanded to say once more if He claimed to be God. "*I adjure Thee by the living God,*"

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said Caiphas, "*that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.*" Jesus answered with the solemn affirmative, "*Thou hast said it.*" Whereupon "*the high priest, rent his garments, saying, 'He hath blasphemed.'*" (Matt. xxvi. 63 ff.)

They put Him to death for that answer. "*Blasphemy*" was the word of His death warrant. "*Blasphemer*" they named Him because He claimed to be equal to God. "*Blasphemer*" was the word they wanted on His cross. Pilate wrote the inscription for the cross to be nailed over His head: "*Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judæorum*"—"Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." But the Jews objected. They wanted as the word of His death warrant: "He calleth Himself God's equal."

And the Lord admitted the impeachment. He would not retract. He could not retract, and be truthful. He stretched out His hands, and they crucified Him. The last testimony to His divinity was the outpouring of His Blood. And as that Blood trickled down the slope of Calvary, even the pagan Roman cried out: "*Verily this was the Son of God.*"

To-day there are men who declare captiously, with an appearance of reason and of learning, that the title "*Son of God*" which Jesus claimed as His own is merely one of the appellations of the Messiah, and that consequently Jesus was claiming only to be the Christ, but not Son of God in the strict sense.

Such an interpretation cannot stand in the face of the fact that the whole Gospel of St. John is a commentary on the meaning of the phrase, "*Son of God.*" And if the whole trend of St. John's argument,

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beginning with his majestic prologue and ending with the solemn asseveration of his testimony that Christ is God, be not enough, then there are in the Gospel many explicit statements of the exact meaning of Jesus' words. "*The Jews sought to kill Him,*" says St. John (v. 18), "*because He did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God.*" And again, what they meant by blasphemy is clear from their own statement: "*For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that Thou, being a man maketh Thyself God*" (John x. 33).

There is one more testimony, amongst many that remain, which must not be omitted. It is the testimony of Christ to Thomas, important in itself, and perhaps still more important when considered in comparison with similar passages in the Sacred Scriptures. When Jesus was risen from the dead, and appeared the first time to the Apostles, Thomas was not with them. And when they reported to him, "*We have seen the Lord,*" he answered: "*Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.*" When, therefore, Jesus came the second time, finding Thomas in the group, He said to him: "*Put in thy finger hither and see My hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing.*" "*Thomas answered and said to Him: 'My Lord and My God.'*" (John xx. 25-28.)

Such was the incident; now for the comparison. When St. Paul and St. Barnabas were at Lystræ in

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Lycaonia, St. Paul, by the power of Jesus, raised up a man who had been a cripple from his mother's womb. "*And when the multitudes had seen what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice . . . and cried, 'The gods are come down to earth in the likeness of men.' And they called Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercury.*" But when Paul and Barnabas heard it, "*rending their clothes, they leaped out among the people, crying and saying: 'Ye men, why do ye these things? We also are mortals like unto you.'*" (Acts xiv. 10 ff.)

Again, in the Apocalypse (the Book of Revelations), John himself declares that when he "*fell down to adore before the feet of the angel,*" the angel forbade him: "*See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant. . . . Adore God.*" (Apoc. xix. 10.)

But Jesus, when Thomas, prostrate, cries in adoration, "*My Lord and my God!*" answers not with a warning, but a blessing. Is Jesus less cautious than the angel, less honest than Paul and Barnabas? Do we not say truly that the world has believed in the divinity of Jesus, because He claimed to be divine? And may we not once again insist upon the awful alternative, "Either God, or a blasphemer?" All who will not call Jesus a blasphemer must call Him God.

Now, in conclusion, what is the immediate practical purpose of such an argument as this? Perhaps some will say: "We Christians need no proof of Christ's divinity. We have always believed Him to be God. And we adore Him. Surely Catholics cannot imagine that they alone adore Jesus. We all believe in Him: we all adore Him."

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If this be your comment upon the argument, I thank God, and I congratulate you upon your faith in this fundamental doctrine of Christianity. But you and I must not delude ourselves with the fancy that all non-Catholic Christians still maintain belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ. It is a melancholy fact that perhaps the majority of the members of non-Catholic denominations, preachers and people, understand the doctrine so incompletely, so hazily, that they do not realize either its meaning or its consequences. And it is a still more lamentable fact that multitudes of Christians, in spite of all evidence, have rejected Christ's divinity. There are professors and preachers in almost every Protestant denomination who are doing all in their power to eradicate this belief from the minds and hearts of the people who look to them for guidance.

But rely upon it, the ever unfailling and majestic power of the Catholic Church will be always against those who are committing this crime against Christianity. It matters not if other Churches temporize and qualify and explain away the divine nature of Jesus, our Savior. The Catholic Church will never temporize, never equivocate, never deny nor tolerate the denial of one least jot or tittle of the glory of Jesus Christ. She shall be forever His champion and His chief defender. It was the first Pope of the Catholic Church, St. Peter, who, when many were guessing or wavering or denying, solaced the Heart of His Master with the exultant declaration: "*Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.*" And it was one of the most recent Popes of the Catholic

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Church who has given to the world the most triumphant and eloquent of modern tributes to Jesus Christ, words of the Head of the Catholic Church, expressing the mind and the conviction of the universal Catholic people. "The secret of life and death, of the grave and immortality, is Jesus Christ. *'There is no other name under heaven by which men may be saved.'* The greatest of all misfortunes is never to have known Him. The greatest of all crimes is, once having known Him, to reject Him. Christ is the Fountainhead of all good. Mankind can no more be saved without His power, than it could be redeemed without His mercy. If the individual soul reject Him it shall surely die the death. If the human race lose hold of Him it can only hurry to its doom. There is no health of soul, nor rest of mind, nor peace of heart apart from Him. He alone is the Way and the Truth and the Life—the Way that men must follow, the Truth that men must believe, the Life that men must live if they are to come to the Eternal Kingdom where He alone is King forever and forever."

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