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**WESTMINSTER LECTURES**  
(SECOND SERIES)

Edited by Rev. FRANCIS AVELING, D.D.

**THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST**

BY THE  
Rev. JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.  
M.A., B.Sc.



LONDON AND EDINBURGH  
SANDS AND COMPANY

ST LOUIS, MO.

B. HERDER, 17 South Broadway

1906



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**Nihil Obstat.**

**T. M. TAFFE,**  
*Censor Deputatus.*

**Imprimi potest.**

**GULIELMUS, EPISCOPUS ARINDELENSIS,**  
*Vicarius Generalis.*

**WESTMONASTERII,**  
*Die 26 Maii, 1906.*

## P R E F A C E

THE following lecture on the Divinity of Christ was delivered by the author, as the third of the second series of *Westminster Lectures*, in March 1906. The treatment of the subject is, as will be seen, theological rather than purely philosophical: for no attempt is made to discuss the rational aspects of the union of natures in, or the Divine personality of, Jesus Christ. Such and kindred questions, interesting as they are, hardly lend themselves to a popular discussion: and, had an attempt been made to touch upon them in connection with the main contention of the lecture, it would not only have been necessarily superficial, but would also have tended to obscure the central subject.

While recognising that there are other methods of dealing with the question than that adopted, it seemed best to limit the range of

the discussion to a definite issue, and to present as complete and full an aspect of the theological witness—which after all is the most direct and the most striking—as was possible within the limits of a lecture.

The very striking fact of the concrete existence in the world of a witness giving testimony at all times and in all places to the truth of the Divinity of Christ, is highly significant and noteworthy ; and it is with regard to this perennially concordant testimony that the early documents, whether scriptural or patristic, are examined in the following pages.

JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.

POPE'S HALL,  
OXFORD.

## THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* (Acts viii. 37.) Thereby I mean much more than that He was *just before God*, The Belief of the Christian *walking in all the commandments of the Lord without blame* (Luke i. 6),

or that He was of the number of the merciful and forgiving to whom He Himself promises, *Your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High* (Luke vi. 35) to wit, by grace and adoption. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God by nature, from all eternity, not by any concession made in time. I believe, in opposition to the heresy of Arius, that the Son of God is in all things equal to the Father, one God with Him. I believe, in opposition to another heresy, that He is not less truly Man for being God, nor less truly God for being Man. He is not a compound, or blend, of God and Man, as though He were neither one nor the other, but some third

entity, for Deity can be compounded with nothing created. His Godhead is not turned into flesh: His Humanity, that is to say, His Body and Soul, is not converted into God. But though His Body and his Soul, His Flesh, Heart, Blood, and Wounds, are not God, nevertheless they are of Divine dignity, and adorable with Divine adoration, because they are the Body, Soul, Flesh, Heart, Blood, and Wounds of the Son of God. Whatever Jesus of Nazareth did and suffered, God did and suffered. God was born of the Virgin Mary, God laboured at Nazareth, God taught in the Temple, God was scourged, was crucified and died, not indeed according to His Godhead, but according to the Human Nature which He has united with that Godhead in the unity of one Person. *This is a great mystery* (Eph. v. 32). It took the Church four centuries to find proper terms to express it. We use those terms and do partly understand their meaning, Theological Language but full comprehension is not for man on earth. This, however, we do understand, this is the central fact of our faith: our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is, in the full and proper sense of the term, God, and Man too,—God born of the Father from all



eternity, Man from the moment of the incarnation. He who is Man, is God, though His Humanity is not His Godhead; and He who is God, is Man. There are not two Jesus Christs, as Nestorius made out, one God and one Man: but one only Jesus Christ, at once God and Man. Such is the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ.

In proof of it we appeal to history, and rightly so. But were history blotted out from human memory, and all historical records lost, one witness still remains, Proof—  
History testifying that Jesus is God. That witness is the Catholic Church. The *Father in heaven*, who *revealed* it to Peter, still reveals Witness of  
the Church in the heart of every Catholic child, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* The sublime dialogue between Christ and His Vicar, *Thou art Peter, Thou art Christ*, continues to the end of the world. The average Catholic listens with strange indifference to remote historical proofs of the Divinity of Christ. He is not interested in the ante-Nicene Fathers. He is not at home in those times, but he is at home in the Church of to-day, and he finds Christ, true God and true Man, there. The logic of the question

to him, so far as he has any logic, might take this form: 'If Christ is not God, then the Church is not true; if the Church is not true, God is not true; but a God not true is no God at all; and without God human life is a ruin: none of which things am I going to believe, therefore.'—This is not logic to the man outside; but to the Catholic, by the very fact of his being a Catholic, it carries conviction.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, even to the onlooker, to the man in the street, the Church of Christ must be the most extraordinary phenomenon on the face of history. Are its pretensions justified or unjustifiable? Unjustifiable certainly, if Christ be not God. Scripture texts, then, and gleanings from ante-Nicene Fathers are to be read in the light of the teaching of the Church of all ages, the Catholic Church of the present day. To allege them as mere antiquarian fragments is to fling away half of their sig-

<sup>1</sup> Legal logic, or medical logic, in a technical point, is not logic to the man in the street. The outsider, in relation to every society of experts, is a layman, a profane person, and his judgement is not taken. So of the society of believers. *The natural man perceiveth not the things that are of the spirit of God: it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined; but the spiritual man judgeth all things* (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15).

nificance. Such antiquarianism ignores that article of the Creed, "the Holy Catholic Church." It is unfortunately the prevalent fashion among people who pose as critics and historians. It is a fashion greatly to beware of. I certainly do not undertake to prove the Divinity of Christ apart from the living witness borne by the universal Church at this hour to Christ as God. I by no means say that the thing cannot be done, only that I do not undertake to do it. In all the documentary evidence that I am about to allege, I beg my hearers to remark and observe how the interpretation which I put upon any document is the official interpretation taken by the body to which the writer of the document belonged, an official interpretation continuous to this day.

In appealing to the testimony of the Gospels, I am fully aware of the attacks made on the credibility of the Gospels. If I disregard those attacks, as I mean to do, it is because it is impossible to enter into two distinct and difficult discussions in one short paper.<sup>1</sup> I am content to argue thus much only, that the

<sup>1</sup> See Westminster Lectures, *The Witness of the Gospel* and *The Higher Criticism*.

Jesus portrayed in the Gospels is manifestly God. Indeed our adversaries seem to admit that, for, wishing to impugn the Divinity of Jesus, they find no other way of doing so than by cancelling the Gospels entirely, or mutilating their text. The Gospel text as it stands is too strong for them. Not, however, to assume too much in the face of a strenuous opposition, I will draw my proofs from the Synoptic Gospels, which are more generally admitted; and the grand witness of the Fourth Gospel to the Divinity of Christ I will use only as confirmatory evidence. That I have every logical right to do: for they who will not allow the Fourth Gospel to be the work of an apostle and an eye-witness, are fain to assign it to the sub-apostolic age. The 'John' of the Fourth Gospel, if he be nothing more—and I hold that he is much more—is at least the earliest of the ante-Nicene Fathers, and witnesses to the belief of the Church as it stood at the opening of the second century. On this showing, and it is much to show, within a hundred years of His crucifixion Jesus of Nazareth was already worshipped as God.

Of the three Synoptics, I choose for my

witness St Matthew, on whose Gospel, as also upon that of St John, I have published a commentary, and have studied, I may say, every verse with minute <sup>St Matthew</sup> care. It amazes me to be told in the name of Criticism that in the Synoptics there is no evidence for the Divinity of Christ. The best antidote to such criticism is to *search the Scriptures* and have, so to speak, at one's fingers' ends the sacred text.

At Jerusalem, during the Feast of Tabernacles, there once stood a knot of Jews discussing the merits of Jesus the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee. *Some said: He is a good man. Others said: No, but he seduceth the people* (John vii. 12). That discussion has gone on ever since; but it is generally allowed, even by those who will allow no more, that Jesus was a good man. Upon that concession I proceed.

With Liddon I say: "If Jesus were not God, He was not a good man," <sup>The Claim of Christ that He was God</sup> *Jesus, si non Deus, non bonus.* This was the continual cry of His enemies, *He blasphemeth* (Mark ii. 7; John x. 33, 36). They heard His claims to be God, and disallowing them, they, not illogically, argued Him

to be a wicked man, indeed that wickedest of wicked men, a blasphemer. Surely it would be blasphemy, especially to Jewish ears, for anyone less than God to declare himself *greater than the temple*, and *Lord of the Sabbath*, the two most sacred institutions of Judaism (Matt. xii. 6, 8). *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean : I will, be thou made clean* (Matt. viii. 2, 3). This is not the language of a creature, nor the behaviour of a subject, for so saying, He touched the leper, contrary to the law. In the storm on the lake Jesus did not pray, as the prophet Jonas had been called upon to do in the like extremity, but *rising up, He rebuked the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm : but the men wondered, saying, Who is this, for even the winds and the sea obey Him?* (Matt. viii. 26, 27). They thought of the words of Ps. cxlviii. 8 : *stormy winds that fulfil His word.*

*The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law-giver, the Lord is our king*, says Isa. xxx. 22, where by *the Lord*, as usual in the Old Testament, is meant *Jahweh*, the God of the Incommunicable Name. But these same attributes of God, judgement, legislation, royalty, Jesus in the Gospel of St Matthew

claims for Himself. Consider first the character of *lawgiver*. Six times in the Sermon on the Mount, in the fifth chapter of St Matthew, does Jesus quote the text of the law of God, and speak as though He would remodel and reissue it in improved form. *Ye have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill. But I say to you, Whoever is angry with his brother, etc.* (vv. 21, 22). *Ye have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say to you, Whoever looketh on a woman to lust after her* (vv. 27, 28). *It was said to them of old, Thou shalt perform thy oaths to the Lord. But I say to you, Not to swear at all* (vv. 33, 34). No canonist durst comment on papal laws, no prophet on divine laws, in that style. If we heard such language used of papal laws, we should exclaim: "Why, the man might be Pope himself by the way he speaks." And Jesus here speaks as one who is God Himself.

*God is judge*, says the Psalmist (Ps. lxxiv.). And Job asks: *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* There is no more distinct attribute of Deity in the Old Testament than that of judging the earth. But this is precisely what Jesus

His Claim  
to be Sup-  
reme Judge

assumes to Himself, to be judge of all mankind, and to come in the glory of Godhead to judge the earth. The texts in St Matthew to this effect are many and familiar to all Christian ears.

It is remarkable that our Lord associates these His judicial functions with that title which The Son of Man He best loved to use in speaking of Himself, *the Son of man*. That title now claims our attention. The title is taken from Daniel vii. 13, 14: *I saw in vision of the night, and behold in the clouds of heaven as a Son of man coming, and he came unto the Ancient of Days, and was presented to him: and to him was given power, and honour, and kingdom, and all peoples, tribes, and tongues shall serve him: his power is an everlasting power that shall not pass away, and his kingdom shall not be destroyed;* words which evidently point to Messiah. But it is to be observed that *Son of man* is no special title of Messiah in prophecy. *Son of man* in this passage of Daniel, without the article, means simply *man*, in which sense the phrase appears continually in Ezechiel in reference to the prophet himself. Nor does the title ever occur in the apostolic writings;



only in the dying speech of St Stephen, *I see the heavens open and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God* (Acts vii. 56). It is our Lord's own peculiar designation of Himself. The definite article prefixed means that He is 'the man eminently so called, perfect man and model of men.' So construed, the term yields no indication of Divinity. But we must observe the predicates which our Lord attaches to that term as subject. Whenever He speaks of judgement, it is of "the Son of man" exercising that divine function. So, then, He who is truly man is also truly God, which is the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation. Let us recall the texts. One function of judgement is acquittal, absolution, and discharge of the prisoner—a function of God alone where there is question of sin against God. *Who can forgive sins but God alone?* (Mark ii. 7). Yet our Lord claims to Himself that power; *the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins* (Mark ii. 20); and works a miracle to prove it. Similar was His behaviour to the penitent woman (Luke vii. 48, 49). But the title is especially used in reference to the Last Judgement, where He always represents Himself as

Judge. *The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather His elect* (Matt. xiii. 41; xxiv. 31). *His angels and His elect!* Yet the angels are the *angels of God* (Heb. i. 6), and the elect are the *elect of God* (Rom. viii. 33). *They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty* (Matt. xxiv. 30), even as He was transfigured in the cloud (Matt. xvii. 5), and afterwards ascended in the cloud (Acts i. 9-11). Everywhere in Holy Scripture the *cloud* is spoken of as the visible accompaniment of the present majesty of God. So Daniel vii. 13, already quoted, to which our Lord here refers; Exod. xvi. 10, *and the glory of the Lord was seen in the cloud*; 2 Chron. v. 13, 14, *and the house was filled with cloud of glory of the Lord; and the priests could not stand to minister before the face of the cloud, because the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God*; Isaias xix. 1, *the Lord shall come seated upon a light cloud*; Ps. ciii. 3, *who makest of a cloud thine ascent*. The *great power and majesty*, then, in which the Son of man is to come in judgement is the power and majesty proper to God. What son of

Scriptural  
Meaning  
of "the  
Cloud"

man, what man who fell anything short of God, would dare to make such a pronouncement about himself? And again (Matt. xxv. 31-34): *When the Son of man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat of His majesty, and all nations shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall separate them one from another as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats, etc. Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand, etc.* There is only one way to elude the Divinity that declares itself in these words; that is, to tear the page out of the Gospel, and to assert that Jesus of Nazareth never said any such thing. Similar language is read in the pages of the other Synoptics (Mark xiii.; Luke xxi.). And yet we are gravely assured that there is no evidence of the Divinity of Christ in the Synoptic Gospels!

Though Jesus constantly spoke of God as His Father, He did not, it appears, commonly style Himself *the Son of God*. There are two passages in which He takes that appellation indirectly, John ix. 35; x. 36; in the former, however, the more approved reading is *Son of man*. But

God's  
Witness at  
Baptism  
of Jesus

at the opening of His ministry, at His baptism, a voice cries from heaven : *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased* (Matt. iii. 17). In what sense is He there styled *beloved Son*? Son by nature, or Son by adoption? For though in the Old Testament Messiah is called by God *my son* (Ps. ii. 7), *my first-born* (Ps. lxxxviii. 27), the whole people of Israel is called *my son, my first-born* also (Exod. iv. 22 ; Rom. ix. 4). The answer is not far to seek, if we turn to St John's Gospel. There (i. 12-14) the *only-begotten of the Father, the Word made flesh*, is clearly marked off from other men to whom He, the Son of God by nature, gave power to be made the sons of God by faith and the new birth. But let us confine ourselves to St Matthew. The great dogmatic utterance in St Matthew's Gospel, which all the rest leads up to, or follows from, or is interpreted by, is the confession of St Peter,

*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the*

St Peter's  
Confession *living God* (xvi. 16). Had sonship by adoption been meant, John Baptist, in that respect, was a son of God, so was Elias, so Jeremias, and all the prophets, from whom Jesus here is clearly differentiated as well by His own question as by St Peter's

answer. But, it is contended, Jesus is sufficiently marked off from the holy men of old by being declared the Christ, the Messiah; and in the account of this scene given by St Mark (viii. 29) St Peter's confession is limited to this bare pronouncement, *Thou art the Christ*. As for the title *the Son of the living God*, the children of Israel are promised the title of *sons of the living God* in Osee. i. 10; which title, our opponents allege, was given to Messiah as to one *primus inter pares*, inasmuch as he was *first-born* (Ps. lxxxviii. 28), or most highly favoured of heaven, and chief of all the children of Israel—something like the *διογενής βασιλεύς*, or “god-born King,” the usual style of Kings in Homer. So, if we may be allowed a quotation from the Fourth Gospel, Nathaniel at his first introduction to Jesus, salutes Him, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel* (John i. 49); a confession of Messiahship, not of Divinity.

To all this argumentation I reply that it is not a question of what ordinary Jews meant by applying the title of *sons of God* to themselves, and in some more excellent way to their Messiah and King, but of what St Peter meant in this particular case. In applying

the title to his Master, it is a gratuitous assumption that St Peter meant nothing more than what any ordinary Jew would have understood by the title. Nay, further, the assumption is not only gratuitous, but false. For by this time, some eight months before His Passion, Jesus was quite accustomed to being hailed as Messiah. The Canaanite woman had addressed Him *Son of David*, which means Messiah (Matt. xv. 22). She, a foreigner, cannot have invented the title for Him, but must have addressed Him in the style in which she heard Him commonly spoken of. When He walked upon the waters, *they that were in the ship*, His apostles and Peter among them, came and worshipped Him, saying: *Thou art truly Son of God* (Matt. xiv. 33, the article here is omitted, which is expressed in xvi. 16, *ὁ υἱός*).

The Son  
of God

If this be taken for an acknowledgment of Divinity, so much the better ; but I am willing to allow that here the appellation does not pass beyond Messiahship. In calling Himself the *Son of man*, and speaking of His *Kingdom* (Matt. xiii. 41), Jesus assumed the title of Messiah as something which His apostles quite recog-

nised. Accordingly, St Mark, who gives us the bare confession, *Thou art Christ*, also suppresses all reply of our Saviour expressive of any delight or satisfaction. In the thirtieth month of His ministry Jesus of Nazareth was well accustomed to the style of Messiah, and took it as a matter of course. But how very different His behaviour on this noteworthy occasion! As on one previous occasion (Luke x. 21; Matt. xi. 25), *he exulted in the Holy Ghost*, and said in solemn tones of satisfied majesty, *Blessed art thou, Simon son of John, and I say to thee that thou art Peter*, etc. He hails the confession for a signal work of grace, not of *flesh and blood*, but of the revelation of the Father. A hundred voices ere now had saluted Him as Messiah: He was not much moved by that. Peter meant more, and Jesus knew it. What he meant, we must gather as well from the various utterances of Jesus in this St Matthew's Gospel upon which I have already dwelt, as also from the Catholic tradition which started from that hour and continues to this day, in the confession of the Universal Church to her Saviour and Redeemer, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*.

Once again this great confession was to be made, not by the Apostle Peter, now in his moment of defection and denial, but by Him whom Peter had confessed, speaking this time for Himself. *And the high priest rising up, said to Him: I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith to him, Thou hast said it (or as St Mark gives the answer, accommodating it to Western ears, I am, xiv. 62): hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power and coming with the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath blasphemed. But they said, He is guilty of death (Matt. xxvi. 62-66).*

The high priest recognised the quotation from Daniel: he knew to whom and by whom it was said in Ps. cix., *Sit thou on my right hand (cf. Matt. xxii. 42-45):* he understood the significance of those attendant *clouds of heaven*; and therefore he said virtually what we find the Jewish multitude crying in St John xix. 7: *We have a law, and accordingly to this law He ought to die, for that He hath made Himself out Son of God*—not surely in the sense in which every good Jew was son of God, but Son by equality



and identity of nature. And still more clearly : *For a good work we do not stone thee, but because thou, being a man, makest thyself God* (John x. 33). Jesus of Nazareth was condemned by the high court of His nation for making Himself out to be God ; and so indeed He did. If He was not a blasphemer, or if He was not labouring under a miserable hallucination, then indeed He was God. We gather from our Lord's own account of Himself in St Matthew's Gospel this theological equation, as I may call it, *the Son of Man is the Son of God, and the Son of God is the Son of Man.*

The Fourth Gospel is avowedly the Gospel of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. They who deny that Divinity are compelled to make away with the Fourth Gospel. Yet even they are compelled to date its composition from the first half of the second century at latest, and to allow that it expresses the belief of sub-apostolic times. Upon which concession a Catholic would observe : What the Church believed in the year A.D. 140, as a primary article of faith, she does right in believing now. The chiefest evidence for our Lord's Divinity, as I have

The Fourth  
Gospel—  
The Gos-  
pel of the  
Divinity

said before, is the unchanging belief of the Church from its first institution to this hour.

There is one other Scripture witness which I must not pass over, that of St Paul. I select one passage, which is at once a clear Witness of  
St Paul testimony to the Divinity of Christ, and at the same time explains most of the difficulties which are alleged against that Divinity from the phraseology of Scripture. The passage I refer to is Phil. ii. 5-11, with which I will conjoin a parallel passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews v. 7-10. These are the two passages in full: *Be of that mind among yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it no robbery [οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν, non rapinam, no prize (R.V.) to be snatched without paying for it] to be on an equality with God, but emptied [ἐκένωσεν] Himself, taking the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of man; and in figure [σχήματι, outward mien, more superficial than μορφή, form] found as a man He humbled Himself, being made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore also God hath exalted Him, and given Him the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee may bow of things in heaven, and*

*of things on earth, and of things under the earth, and every tongue may confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father [or according to the Greek: that Jesus Christ is Lord unto the glory of God the Father] . . . (Heb. v.) Who in the days of His flesh, putting forth prayers and supplications to Him that was able to save Him from death, with a loud cry and tears, was heard for His reverence, and, Son though He was, He learned obedience from what He suffered, and being consummated, He became to all who obey Him cause of eternal salvation, being called by God a high priest, according to the order of Melchisedech.*

The first words to observe are *being in the form of God, He took the form of a servant*, which means that He who was God from eternity became man in time (this against Nestorius with his two Christs), and the *form of God* was as real as the *form of a servant*; that is to say, Jesus was as truly God as He was truly man. The most difficult term in the passage is that which is translated *no robbery*, or in the Revised Version *no prize*. I do not think *no robbery* correct. St John Chrysostom in his homily on this passage gives the key to the right interpretation in

these words :—“ Whatever a man has possessed himself of by robbery, and holds beyond his due, that he ventures not to lay aside, fearing lest it be lost and slip from him, but clings to it constantly ; whereas he who holds a thing as his natural right is not afraid to waive that right, knowing that he shall suffer no such deprivation. Thus the Son of God was not afraid to waive His right ; for He did not regard His Divinity as a thing snatched by violence, and was not afraid of anyone taking away from Him His nature or His right : therefore He laid it aside [*i.e.*, laid aside the state and dignity of it], and hid it away, thinking Himself none the worse for that. He had not His pre-eminence by robbery, but by nature, nor as a gift, but as an abiding and safe possession : therefore He shrinks not from taking the outward appearance of private soldiers (*ὑπασπιστῶν*). The usurper in war fears to lay aside his purple robe, but the true king does so with much indifference.”

Those who know St Ignatius's Spiritual Exercises will be reminded of the contrast between Satan the Pretender and Christ our Lord the Eternal King, in the meditation in

the Two Standards. With a Doctor of the Church to lead the way, I now proceed to explain the passage.

The Philippians are exhorted (vv. 3, 4) not to be contentious or jealous of dignity, but to forego their claims and give way to one another, each taking the other for his superior in all humility, and that in imitation of the Man Christ Jesus, who being in the form, or nature, of God, took upon Himself the nature of a servant, or creature, and in that human nature thus assumed did not consider *the glory of the only-begotten of the Father* (John i. 14) *a thing to be greedily seized upon* (ἀρπαγμὸν, rapinam) and displayed in His flesh from the first, but came among men as a man like the rest, and in *outward mien* (σχήματι) was found like an ordinary man: thus He humbled Himself *in the days of His flesh* (Heb. v. 5), that is, in the days of His mortal life, and lived under His dignity, shorn of His connatural right, choosing to behave as God's servant rather than as God's Son, and learning the hard lesson of obedience even by the death of the Cross (Heb. v. 8): wherefore God exalted Him in the day of His resurrection, and

Explana-  
tion of  
Passage  
Cited

showed Him forth as His true Son by nature (Acts xiii. 33), making the name Jesus honoured as the Incommunicable Name of God, and causing all creation willingly or unwillingly in the end to adore Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man in one person, with the adoration due to Adonai Jahweh, the Lord God.<sup>1</sup>

In this passage we have Good Friday together with Easter Sunday, the humiliation, the *κένωσις*, or emptying out of divine glory, characteristic of the one, with the exaltation and fulness of glory proper to the other; and He who is humbled, the same it is that exalted (Eph. iv. 9, 10)—humbled as Man, still being God, and then exalted as the Man-God.

The theological term *kenosis*, borrowed from this passage (*ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, he emptied himself, v. 7*) represents the theme of liveliest discussion in modern theology. It concerns us only so far as it yields the explanation of the passages usually quoted from the New Testament against our Lord's Divinity. If it were proved that a duke had gone into disguise for several years and earned

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Of God and His Creatures*, notes, pp. 361, 365.

his own livelihood by the commonest occupations; and someone afterwards in disparagement of his ducal claims were to say: "He's no duke, why, I've worked with that man in the pit"; such evidence would not be difficult to rebut. Charles II., after his defeat by Cromwell at Worcester, wandered about in an involuntary *kenosis* under various disguises as a serving man or a peasant, and yet I suppose he was king all the while. So our Lord, choosing for thirty-three years to forego the divine dignity proper to His human nature, was ignorant, for instance, of the day of judgement, where He chose to remain ignorant and shut off a matter from His view (Mark xiii. 32):<sup>1</sup> He was amazed, and cast down, and full of grief and fear in the Garden (Mark xiv. 33, 34), when He opened to those passions the gates of His soul. He *learnt obedience* (Heb. v. 8), inasmuch as He chose to frequent the school of suffering.

<sup>1</sup> "Knowing as God, He is ignorant according to the flesh" (*σαρκικῶς*), St Athanasius, *ad Arianos*, iii. 43. So, too, St Cyril of Alexandria and St Gregory Nazianzen, quoted in Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 468-9, eleventh edition.

The Divinity of Jesus Christ was proclaimed at the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, against Arius, Consiliar Definitions who taught that the Son of God was a creature; and in the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, A.D. 431, 450, against Nestorius, who taught two Christs, one God and one Man. St Athanasius was Nice, Ephesus, Chalcedon the presiding spirit at Nice. St Leo guided the Fathers at Chalcedon. SS. Athanasius and Leo are the two doctors of the incarnation. After Nice, the Fathers of the Church are unfaltering in their confession of Christ's Divinity. But before Nice, the ante-Nicene Fathers, as they are called, while saying many things in support of the doctrine—evidence collected by Liddon in his *Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of Christ*, and long before him by Petavius and Bull—Liddon (Bampton Lecture) also speak at other times with a more uncertain sound. Thus, Liddon writes (*Bampton Lectures*, pp. 428-9, eleventh edition):—"Undoubtedly, it should be frankly granted that some of the ante-Nicene writers do at times employ terms which, judged by a Nicene standard, must be pronounced unsatisfactory—terms which, if they admit of a Catholic interpretation, do not always invite one. For, in



truth, these ante-Nicene Fathers were feeling their way, not towards the substance of the faith, which they possessed in its fulness, but towards that intellectual mastership, both of its relationship to outer forms of thought, and of its own internal harmonies and system, which is obviously a perfectly distinct gift from the simple possession of the faith itself.—The finished intellectual survey and treatment of the faith is a superadded acquirement: it is the result of conflict with a hostile criticism.—Heresy indirectly contributed to form the Church's mind:—it unwittingly forced on an elucidation of the doctrines of the Church by its subtle and varied opposition.

“ But before heresy had thus accomplished its providential work, individual Church teachers might, in perfect good faith, attempt to explain difficulties, or to win opponents, by enterprising speculations, in this or that direction, which were not yet shown to be perilous to truth. Not indeed that the universal Church, in her collective capacity, was ever committed to any of those less perfect statements of doctrine which belong to the ante-Nicene period. Particular fathers or schools of thought within

Rise and  
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ment of  
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Terminology

her might use terms and illustrations which she afterwards disavowed, but then they had no Divine guarantee of inerrancy, such as had been vouchsafed to the entire body of the faithful. They were in difficult and untried circumstances; they were making experiments in unknown regions of thought; their language was tentative and provisional. If, without lack of reverence to such glorious names, the illustration is permissible, the Alexandrian teachers of the second and third centuries were relatively to their successors of the age of the Councils, in the position of young or half educated persons, who know at bottom what they mean, who know yet more distinctly what they do not mean, but who, as yet, have not so measured and sounded their thoughts, or so tested the instrument by which thought finds expression, as to avoid misrepresenting their meaning more or less considerably, before they succeed in conveying it with accuracy."

The ante-Nicene Fathers were beset with many heresies; and in combating one they Arians and Sabellians sometimes seem to give place to its contrary. There was not only the Incarnation to maintain, but also the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Not only was the equality

of the Word with the Father to be asserted against the Arians, but also against Sabellius it was necessary to argue the distinction of Persons between Father and Son, and the procession of the Son from the Father as from the origin of all Godhead. Sabellius, an African in the early third century, taught that one and the same Divine Being as giving the Old Law was called the Father, as born of Mary was called the Son, as given to the Apostles was called the Holy Ghost: thus there was no Trinity of Persons, but a Triple manifestation of one and the same Person. With such an antagonist as Sabellius before him, a controversialist was apt to widen to the utmost the difference between Father and Son, and in his zeal he might readily be betrayed into expressions that might seem to confine Godhead to the Father only. In those days theological terminology was not yet fixed; and it was easy to accept in an orthodox sense a phrase which afterwards came to bear an heretical meaning, as that Christ was the "Minister of the Father"; or to repudiate as containing Sabellian heresy a term like the *ὁμοούσιον*, or consubstantiality, which was afterwards consecrated as the Catholic expression

of the unity of substance, although not of person, between Father and Son. It is much to our purpose to remark that writers such as St Justin and Origen, who in some places speak obscurely of the Divinity of Christ, enunciate it clearly in others. A Catholic reading a Catholic author, of two possible interpretations of his mind will prefer the more Catholic.

Strongly as I adhere to Newman's theory of development of doctrine, yet, in considering the **Development of Doctrine** definition at Nice of the equality of the Son with the Father, and the definitions at Ephesus and Chalcedon of the unity of person, along with the distinction of natures in Christ, so far as these definitions taken together define the Divinity of Christ—I should not call these definitions a development of doctrine, but rather a settlement of terminology, a repudiation of incident heresies, a vindication of the doctrine clearly held from the first. From the day of Pentecost the issue was plain. Jesus Christ crucified, risen, and ascended into heaven, either is God or He is not. And the faith of the Apostolic Church proclaimed him God. But scientific terms like *hypostasis*, *ousia*, *persona*, *natura*, those had to

be sought out, defined, and adapted as vehicles for the ever-abiding belief in the Blessed Trinity and in the Incarnation of the Eternal Word.

The whole edifice of Christianity is built upon the Divinity of Christ. If Christianity is Divine, Christ is God. As Christianity is the Kingdom of God, so Christ is its King and He is God. Anything short of the Kingdom of the God-Man on earth is not Christianity.

## APPENDIX I

*Note on questions arising out of the subject of the Lecture.*

### COMMUNICATIO IDIOMATUM

As one and the same person is at once God and Man, we can predicate of this same person both divine and human attributes. This is called *communicatio idiomatum*, or communication of characteristics. Thus we say that God was born, God suffered, God died; nor is it always necessary to add *in the flesh*, though that is always understood. Or we may say, *the Son of Mary is the Eternal God*. We may also say, *the Man Christ Jesus is eternal*, meaning, in His Divine nature. But we must not put it in the abstract, *the Humanity of Christ is eternal*, for that would mean that He is eternal as man, which He is not. Similarly, the Humanity of Christ is not omnipresent, nor omnipotent, nor self-existent, nor infinite. The Man Christ Jesus is all these things, but not as man. Briefly, the Humanity of Christ is not God, but the Man Christ is God.

We must also notice a small ambiguity that besets the word *humanity*. It may be taken for a purely abstract substantive, for what one might have called the *human-ness* of Christ, or the fact of His being man. But it is

usually employed in a concrete sense, to denote that whereby He is man, namely, His human Body and Soul, and in that sense we shall speak of the Sacred Humanity.

The Sacred Humanity is not God, it is not eternal, it is not infinite, it is not everywhere, but only in Heaven, and in the Blessed Sacrament. There are Divine attributes which cannot possibly attach to a human body and soul. But the "moral attributes," as they are called, of the Godhead do attach to the Sacred Humanity. These are principally sanctity and dignity. The Sacred Humanity is holy with all the holiness of God: it is infinitely holy. Though it is not God, yet it is of Divine dignity, because it is the Humanity of the Son of God—the Flesh and Blood, Hands, Feet, Heart, Body and Soul of the Eternal Word. It is penetrated through and through with the Divinity, like a live coal with fire. It is alive and instinct with Godhead. This causes St Cyril of Alexandria to say it is "divinised." Being of Divine dignity, the Sacred Humanity is adorable with the one adoration that is given to God Himself, whose Humanity it is, and inseparable from Him. It is adored, not as Flesh and Blood simply, but as the Flesh and Blood of the Son of God. This is why the Church of God ever makes so much of the Sacred Humanity. You cannot make too much of it: for it is sovereignly holy and sovereignly adorable.

On the text, *Adore ye His footstool, because it is holy* (Ps. xcvi. 5), in connection with that other text, *Heaven is my throne and earth my footstool* (Isa. lvi. 1), St Augustine writes (*Enarrationes in Psalmis*, h. 1.): "I am thrown into perplexity. I fear to adore earth,

and on the other hand I am afraid of not adoring the footstool of my Lord. In my doubt I turn to Christ, and I find how without impiety one may adore earth, and without impiety may adore His footstool. For He took earth of earth: for flesh is of earth, and of the flesh of Mary He took flesh. And because in that same flesh He here walked, and gave us that flesh to eat for our salvation, and no one eats that flesh without having first adored it, a way is found of adoring that footstool of the Lord, and how we may not only not sin by adoring, but should sin if we did not adore." Similar is the language of St Leo (Serm. 73): "That with no doubtful faith, but with certain knowledge, it should be held, that that nature was to be seated with God the Father on His throne, which had lain in the sepulchre." "To be seated with God the Father on His throne," means to be adorable with the adoration that is given to God the Father. The phrase is explained by the Church's hymn at Matins on Ascension Day:

Peccat caro, mundat caro,  
Regnat Deus Dei caro.

"Flesh sinneth, flesh cleanseth: the flesh of God reigneth as God" (*Oxford and Cambridge Conferences*, 1897-1899, by Joseph Rickaby, pp. 108-111).



## APPENDIX II

WORKS that may be consulted in connection with the subject of this lecture :—

Franzelin—*De Verbo Incarnato.*

Perrone—*Prælectiones Theologicæ.*

Hurter—*Theologiæ Dogmaticæ Compendium.*

Fouard—*Christ the Son of God.*

Didon—*Jésus Christ.*

Rickaby—*Oxford and Cambridge Conferences.*

Liddon—*Bampton Lectures.*

Gore—*Bampton Lectures.*

Sanday—Art. "Jesus Christ" (*Hastings' Biblical Dictionary*).

Marsh — *The Resurrection of Christ* (*Westminster Lectures*, 1905).

Barnes — *The Witness of the Gospels* (*Westminster Lectures*, 1905).

Harris—*Pro Fide.*

Pearson—*Exposition of the Creed.*

Farrar—*The Life of Lives.*

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