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The God-Man.

PRIMARILY there is only one individual member of the human race of whom we have any record, who is justly entitled to call himself the *son* of God. Through the telescope of available records one may search the whole field of vision in vain, to find among angels and men more than one *begotten* son of God. There is a sonship, so called, arising out of creation, affiliation, association, and even adoption; but it is not primarily vital, proceeding from *generation* and resulting in birth. "To which of the angels said He at any time: Thou art my *son*, this day have I *begotten* thee?" The question carries its own answer—not one! If that is true of angels, it is at least equally true of men. For "what is man that Thou art mindful of him? Thou *madest* him a little *lower* than the angels" ? (Heb. 2 : 6-7).

There is one thing that every child of man can say with perfect certainty: "It is He that hath *made* us and not we ourselves" (Ps. 100 : 3); but there is only one person of whom the Father has himself declared: "This is my beloved *Son*, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3 : 17); only One, therefore, who has the inherent, conscious power to say: "I and My Father are one" (John 10 : 30).

In the primary act of *creation*, Adam is God's only *created* son. He and his wife were fashioned into living and useful shape by the clever fingers of His omnipotent Hand, in a personal, direct work of the first degree. Then and there the central laws of generation were established, secondary causes were put into operation, and by them the creative activity of God is extended to every member of Adam's race. There is, however, a marked difference between the "offspring" of God's power, through these secondary causes, and the "Son" of God, who became a Man through the Father's self-generating life. In the former, one can readily see the work of wisdom and omnipotence, but in the latter the necessity of *self-impartation* must be acknowledged.

The unique position occupied by the God-Man in the human family is still further distinguished by the remembrance of the fact, that four thousand years of human history came and went before "the only begotten Son" of God appeared on the earth. Men who were great and holy enough to be translated into Paradise without dying, had appeared on the earth during that time. Others were highly favoured with vision and

revelation and manifestation of the Most High, yet of none of them was it ever said: "This is My well-beloved SON." However much we may delight ourselves in remembering the words: "God *created* man in His own image, in the image of God *created* He him: male and female *created* He them" (Gen. 1: 27), we must not forget that God's primary act of *generation* among us did not take place until four milleniums of human history were completed. In the birth of Jesus He established His magnificent exception. The *only begotten* Son is His unique achievement in the human race.

Prophetic foregleam and apostolic witness do not deal with poetry and symbol when they point us to a "virgin" mother. It is in the light of well-attested history that the apostle John is able to say: "God *sent forth* His only begotten Son *into the world*, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4: 9). He sent Him in His own time, after man had occupied the earth for four thousand years; sent Him in His own way, not as the "created" but as the "begotten" Son; sent Him through His chosen channel—"made of a woman" but not of man, and sent Him for His own purpose—"that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4: 4-5).

Just as the Lord, in the creative process, "made" woman out of man, and she became bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, so the God-Man was "made" out of woman as the biological process, and "generated" out of God as to personal origin, so that the conjoined natures of God and man constitute in His unique life a Person qualified to be the Mediator between them both. The crystal clearness of the Scriptures at this point justifies the statement already made that, primarily, there is only one Person in the whole human family who has the *inherent* right to call God His Father. Where there is no *personal* fatherhood there is no *real* sonship, and there can be neither fatherhood nor sonship where there is no immediate generation.

For the moment we are concerned with a mode of entrance into human life—with the coming in the flesh of the Son of God. "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is *come in the flesh* is not of God" (1 John 4: 3). If the biology of the incarnation is not appraised at its right value, then the repeated use in the New Testament of the word "begotten" appeals to our intelligence in vain. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John 4: 15). If that is not believed in the sense in which it is divinely stated and emphasised, then such chapters as John 1, 3, 6, 8, 14; Heb. 1; Phil. 2; and the whole epistle of John, must await the coming of a truth-loving people, who know how to weigh evidence, and how to appreciate the revelation in store for them.

When the word *begotten*, as the characteristic word of the incarnation,

repeatedly used to express the paternal origin of Jesus, is placed side by side with the word *created*, as the characteristic word that describes the origin of man, the difference between them is self-evident. The latter may be compared to the genius of an artist, but the former not so, since it is the vital process of a father imparting and extending his life in his child. As such the prophetic eye of David saw it a thousand years before it was historically realised in Galilee. "I will declare the *decree*: The Lord said unto me, *Thou art My Son*; this day have I *begotten* thee" (Ps. 2: 7). "And again, when He bringeth in the *firstbegotten* into the world, He saith—And let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. 1: 6).

While giving special emphasis to the entrance into life of the God-Man, we do not forget the divine foundation on which the incarnation rests. The fact that "God sent His *only begotten* Son into the world, that we might live through Him," is a proper and sufficient attestation of the pre-natal existence of Christ. Here again intelligent faith is able to rest upon attested revelation. The only available record we have of Him says that He was "in the beginning with God," that "He was God," and that "all things were made by Him" (John 1: 1-2). The pre-natal existence of the Word, inferred by the statement that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, is extended into the pre-mundane consciousness of Christ in the eternal fellowship and activity of the Godhead, for the purpose of the creative act. No less a Person is capable of comprehending within Himself the conjoined natures of God and man, or worthy to confer such an inheritance upon others. He must be that. It is a necessity *to Him*, in order to fulfil all the requirements of the revelation we have from Him as the Revealer and Vindicator of the Father; and a necessity also *to us*, as a basis of intelligent faith in Him as the Saviour and Sanctifier of sinful men. Otherwise we are as dumb, ignorant and blind beasts before Him whose name we know, but whose down-reaching power our helplessness cannot grasp.

Important, however, as this unfathomable subject is, it is not just now our chief concern. Our object has to do, not so much with the position of Christ in the Godhead, as with His relationship to the manhood of our race. "The same was in the beginning with God," then He was "made flesh and dwelt among us." He came in the way and at the time stated; but what does that coming mean to us? If the Fatherhood of God is completed in His *only begotten*, if it begins there and ends there, as the word "only" affirms, then we know with certainty that if we men and women are to enter into fellowship with the Fatherhood of the Father, we must first of all enter into fellowship with the Sonship of the Son. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell," *all* the fulness of His Fatherhood and of His Sonship. Therefore, the life of the Father,

generated into the Son by the process of the incarnation, and made available to us through faith in Him, must be given to and received by us before we have the power to call ourselves the sons of God. Christ Jesus was one with God in the infinite and eternal sense, and "thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. 2, 6); but at a certain time and in a certain way He "was made in the likeness of men." He is the seed of woman, but not the seed of man. He entered into visible life by a biological process with which man had nothing to do. Man did not choose it, did not arrange it, did not desire it. The knowledge of it was a surprise to him; but when he learned to know it, he did not meddle, did not improve, did not hinder it (Matt. 1, 18-25). From its beginning to its ending the incarnation was the personal activity of God, and the result of it in the God-Man can only be described as John 1, 14, gives it—"The only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

It adds much to the establishment of our faith when we remember that the God-Man of the incarnation was prophetically anticipated for four thousand years (Gen. 3 : 15), that He was called by His Sonship name before His birth for one thousand years (Ps. 2 : 7), that the virginity of His earthly mother was heralded for seven hundred years (Is. 7 : 14), and that His rank, His character, His service, His method and His achievement were repeatedly and specifically announced and explained along all the centuries of prophetic and typical activity.

The historical realisations of age-long hopes are quite in accordance with them. The agency, the time, the place, the events, the process by which the God-Man came into His undying fellowship with the human family, are all in accordance with written foregleam. When foregleam and history are brought together in the Person of Jesus, faith finds an intelligent basis of confidence, that enables her to make the same confession of Him that the Father made on more than one occasion: "This is MY beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3 : 17):—"He is My only begotten among you, O mortal men; He stands in the midst of your race, full of my life, and able to impart it to you. Through Him I begin a new racial centre, a new family life on the earth that is to be fitted for the heavens, where its highest consciousness and status is to be reached in the ages to come; filled with the incandescent whiteness of His own self-imparting nature, meet to stand in Him and with Him before Me!"

With such divine evidence before us of our Lord's unique position, one is able to see how truly He alone can stand among the sons and daughters of men, and, looking up to heaven out of the midst of our earth-life, can say: "I and My Father are one." Any unregenerated man who repeats these words of himself, is either an ignorant or a wilful blasphemer of the truth. He has no conception of the law of origins. Either his spiritual

intelligence is intoxicated with dangerous delusion, or he is guilty of spiritual impudence. The word of such a man could not be trusted in spiritual matters.

In a day when there are many books, and many opinions, and many blasphemies in the world, it is well to remember that there is no human being on the earth who has any original knowledge of God, nor of the Son of God. All that we twentieth century people know about Him, is first to be learned from the Scriptures, on the evidence of those enlightened men who had original knowledge of what they saw and heard. Private opinion is entirely irrelevant here. It is without evidential value in the court of truth. If the simple statements of God's word about the incarnation, for instance, cannot be accepted on their face value, then the denier has nothing worthful to say. There is no theology where there is no information. If he rejects the only available record, he is dumb upon a subject he does not personally know. When there is no truth there is no intelligence. All that the best of us can do with the evidence of fact set before us, is to examine it. If there is an occult depth of meaning in it that cannot be fathomed, save by earnest prayer and child-like faith before Him who undertakes to disclose its meaning, then let us follow that course also. When outward evidence and inward enlightenment agree, then we must accept it as it is. That man is a wicked man who alters evidence, and out of the alteration constructs a theory of his own.

What, then, is the simple evidence set before us? It is this: That the Holy Spirit of God came upon Mary, the virgin of Nazareth, and with her freest and fullest consent, and by a process of generation, He gave her the power to bring forth a son, and that Son when He was born was called just what He is—"The only begotten Son of God." His human name is Jesus, as given by an angel to His foster-father before His birth (Matt. 1 : 21). So clearly transparent was the God-consciousness within Him, that He proclaimed Himself again and again, both the Son of God and the Son of Man—a consciousness that was attested by His life, His word and His miracle, and included a standing offer on His part, to confer upon all the sons of men who received Him as such, and who believed into His name, the right to possess and to enjoy a conjoined nature similar to His own—a share of His own eternal life and of His perfect sonship with God.

The integrity of this position is not imperilled by the counterfeit incarnations of pagan philosophy, nor by the silly and idolatrous use which the Roman Catholic leaders have made of it by their nonsensical inventions. Comparisons are always odious, but they are specially so when the basic facts concerning the God-Man are compared with pagan folklore, or with the conclusions of clever miscalculating criticism. Neither men who stand in the zenith, proclaiming their rejection of the "virgin-birth" to others

who stand in the nadir, nor the God-dishonouring genuflections of those who worship a woman (and, what is even worse, if worse can be—a stone image of one; a woman who walks, it may be, across the path of a sculptor in one of the slums of Rome or Amsterdam), have succeeded in bringing the truthful story of the incarnation into ridicule.

The fundamental fact, the all-important truth remains as stated in the Gospel, that Jesus is the unique Son of God in this world of men, that He came into personal oneness with the life of the human race, in the manner and for the purpose stated, that He stands attested to the Christians' faith as the human son of a virgin mother, and the divine Son of His omnipotent Father; that He unites within His own personality the essential natures of both; that His humanity is the avenue of His descent into us, and the avenue of our ascent into God; that no man cometh unto the Father but by Him; and that, as the God-Man on the throne, He is establishing for all who receive Him and enter into eternal oneness with Him, the divine right to lift them there.

It is said of Him that He was *made* flesh and dwelt among us, His glory is that of the *only begotten* of the Father, His rightful position is in the *bosom* of the Father, and His ministry is a *declaration* of the Father (John 1:18). He was *sent* into the world by the Father, that all those who believe into Him should not perish, as they certainly will without Him, but have *everlasting* life. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God *sent* His *only begotten* Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9). He was made by His atonement of blood "the propitiation for our sins," and in His resurrection from the dead is fittingly called "the FIRSTBORN from among the dead"—the first person in the human family who has ascended out of the region of the dead to stay out of it. All others who have been raised from the dead before and after Him have returned there again in the course of time, to await the simultaneous resurrection of the Old and New Testament sainthood, when He the God-Man shall return to call and to meet them (Rev. 1:5). He is "The Living One" who was dead, and is now alive for evermore, as the *firstfruits* unto God of the resurrection that is to be conferred by Him, upon all who have become the sons and daughters of God through Him: and He is the *firstborn* among many brethren, since He is the firstborn Son of a large family that is born unto God out of the human system through His self-impacting work.

If I was to tell you that I had an only begotten son in my family, what would you understand me to mean? If a friend should ask you to-morrow what is the size of my family, you would certainly tell him on the basis of that information, that I have an only child, that none of my children are dead, that I do not have any daughters—just one only

begotten son. Even so must we understand the Lord in the same definite way, when He speaks of Jesus, or when Jesus speaks of Himself. The necessity of language compels us to interpret John 3:16 that way. If that verse says that "God so loved the world, that He gave His *only begotten* Son, that whosoever believeth into Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," then it means just what it says. In the matter of sonship it infers and states that God has just one begotten Son in the human family, that He does not have any begotten daughters—only Jesus, the God-Man.

We are therefore safe in concluding, that if we men and women, who are already the *created* offspring of God, desire to enter the *family* of God, if we are to have the right to call Him "Father," we must first receive the family life and the family nature; not from our earthly ancestors, who alas! are not able to confer them, but from the only Son who holds the life-key of the situation in His hands, and who alone can unlock that biological door to us.

We shall not enter that secret door by guessing, or by thinking that, because Adam our father was "made in the image of God" in the beginning, therefore we are the "children" of God to-day. In order to feed our subtle pride of ancestry, we may be tempted to ignore what lies between that first "image" and our deformed and battered inheritance of it. "Think not to say within yourselves: We have Abraham for our father! For I say unto you: God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt. 3:9). Neither ancestral rank, nor a sublimated human life of our own make, entitles us to be called the sons of God. The sonship is in the Son for us, and it passes from the Son into us immediately we receive Him; not otherwise. When we are completely in Him, then we become complete in Him, and when He is completely in us, then His sonship life is in us, His sonship rank is conferred upon us, and His sonship oneness with the Father is consciously our own.

Union with Jesus is vital not creedal, personal not ancestral, spiritual not intellectual. So also is His union with us. In the fellowship of sin established at the cross. He gave Himself *for* us, in the fellowship of faith secured in the believer's heart, He gives Himself *to* us. The Life-giver always gives life, that is to say Himself, and in that gift the life of God is superadded to the life of man. When the human spirit is open to Him by the law of faith, He comes to dwell there, to enrich and to transform it according to His own pattern.

Vital forces follow a vital process. They are also described by a vital term—"begotten." It is the same term as that used in the New Testament to describe the unique position of the Son of God. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is *born* of God (or stronger still, as

expressed by the original text—"born out of God"); and everyone that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is *begotten* of Him" (1 John 5 : 1). The vital force is in Christ, the vital process is our faith centred in Him, and the vital term is begotten, and expresses the result of both, when they come together in a personal relationship. The divine life which the Father generated into the Son, in the unique transactions of the incarnation, is, by the Son generated into us when we trust Him and receive Him. By a self-imparting process He gives His Father's life, His Father's sonship, and His Father's fatherhood to the spirit-matrix of every person that is open to Him. The result is a birth—a child is born out of the human family unto God, not by the primary act of the Father, who completed His work in the Son; but by the primary act of the Son, who imparts, extends and amplifies the Father's life to others. "As the Father has life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself," in order that He might become the Life-giver to a fallen race (John 5 : 26).

When the life of The Firstborn has been given and received, the results are so blessed that "He is not ashamed to call them *brethren*." He is as an elder Brother to them, and assumes the responsibility of trusteeship and administration on their behalf. What He *is* and *has*, they too are to possess. The "glory" which His Father gave to Him, He gives unto them, that they may be one with them and like them in the shekinah splendor of their inheritance. Christ is made unto them wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that they may be enriched with the attributes of the Firstborn (1 Cor. 1 : 30). Since they also are born of God, they do not commit sin, "for His seed remaineth in them, and they cannot sin, because they are born of God" (1 John 3 : 9). Since He has all authority in heaven and on earth, He gives them authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and empowers them with all power by His Spirit in the inner man (Luke 10 : 19, Eph. 3 : 16). Thus are they able to live, like Him, in a sinful world without defeat, to face the scorn, the malicious hatred of the devil, to trample over his power in the name of Jesus; because they "are strong, and have overcome the Evil One" (1 John 2 : 14).

The method by which the Father obtains for Himself a large family of children from among the children of men, began in the Firstborn Son, and is extended through Him unto us. Of the former it is said: "The *Holy Spirit* shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore that Holy One that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Of the latter it is said: "That which is born of the flesh is *flesh*, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit . . . so is *everyone* that is born of the Spirit." The law of the Spirit of Life

makes them free from the law of sin and death. The old relations and the old law of cause and effect are cancelled at that point, and the new relations with God begin through the operation of a higher law of grace. By one Spirit they are all baptized into one body, and God sends forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, enabling them to cry "Father, Father!" (John 3 : 8, Rom. 8 : 17). The possession of the sonship life is attested by the sonship Spirit, and is demonstrated by the sonship cry. As He is, so are we in this world. Is He the heir of God? So are we, being joint-heirs with Him of all that God is, of all that God has, and all that God has promised to His Firstborn on our behalf. Since we "suffer with Him" the rejection, the discipline and the limitation of this present life, we shall also be "glorified with Him" in the splendor of the future life; in "the ages to come He will shew the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3 : 7).

For the sake of clearness and simplicity, let me illustrate the vital process this way: The Father as No. 1 gave His life to the Son as No. 2, through the activity of the Spirit as No. 3; and constituted Him the GOD-MAN in the midst of and on behalf of men. Their joint action produced in the human race the GOD-MAN of the incarnation. Then, on the basis of His redeeming work, No. 2 is free to impart His life to me as No. 4, again through the activity of The Spirit as No. 3. Then No. 2 gives His life to No. 5, who is my neighbour, through the same work of No. 3; and so on to No. 6, No. 12, No. 500 and No. 1,000,000—to "as many as receive Him."

There is a two-fold difference between the self-giving Father of the heavens and the ordinary self-giving father of the earth—the former decrees that He will have one, only one "begotten" Son; the latter may have many. "Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten" (Jud. 8 : 30), but "God hath sent His *only* begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4 : 9). That is the first difference. The second is this: When the earthly father as No. 1 has given his life to his son as No. 2, he in his turn and time is able to extend it to his own son as No. 3, and No. 3 to No. 4, and 4 to 5, and so on; but with the heavenly Father it is not so. The only begotten Son as No. 2 may give His life, through the power of the Spirit as No. 3, to me as No. 4, but I cannot give it to my son or my neighbour. It is reserved to the Son of God alone to be the direct, the immediate and the personal Life-giver of the human race—the solitary, the absolute power to beget out of the human system a numerous family of sons and daughters unto God, like unto Himself, conformed to His own image, and therefore acceptable with Him and like Him to the Father. Hence the necessity imposed by the gospel upon every man, whether he is No. 5 or 500 or

5,000,000 of coming personally to Christ, and in His way, to receive each one for himself the God-life He is able and willing to impart. If I have anything to do with this delightfully holy and blessed transaction at all, it is simply to point the sinner to Jesus, and to plead with him to take this blood-bought heritage from Him who offers it freely to every unworthy child of man.

If the New Testament does not teach that in simplicity, then its language is ambiguous and uncertain. If it does not impose upon every child of man who desires to become a child of God, the necessity of coming to the only begotten Son for a share of His sonship life; then what we know as the christian faith exists in vain. The New Testament is an effort on God's part, to inform the intelligence of man of all that He has made possible for them. From many points of view He has portrayed before it the fact, that in the Person of THE GOD-MAN, the nature of God and the nature of man are effectively and eternally conjoined for us; so that through His human nature, God may be in fellowship with all our human need, and through His divine nature we may enter into possession of all that God has supplied. The primary gift is life, although it includes pardon for sin, cleansing from defilement, peace with God and justification before Him. When that life is given, it is enriched with those divine attributes peculiar to itself, and with those anointings from the Lord that are known to us as "the gifts of the Spirit" (1 Cor. 12). Every child of man may become a child of God that way—through a process, not of affiliation as in baptism, not by association as in "confirmation," not by eating and drinking as in "communion," not by identification as in church membership; but through birth—through the power of a transmitted life from Person to person, imparted through the energy of the Spirit, and received through the energy of faith. That which we do not and cannot possess by nature or by purchase, that which we cannot evolve, acquire or attain by self-effort, has been entrusted to the God-Man to give, through the tender mercy of His redeeming grace.

The incarnation of the only begotten Son of God has a vital place in the christian faith. It is like a nerve-centre that has been repeatedly agonized by the centuries. The comments of men upon it, or their silences about it, are symptomatic. Every clever finger that has tampered with it, has been burned with condemnation. The sin against the Holy Spirit is potentially involved in every deed and in every truth that proceed from Him. The incarnation and the cross, and all included in them, and all that lie between them in the word and work of Christ, were and are under the control of the Holy Spirit, and every person who wilfully perverts and misinterprets them, is perilously near to a sin that can never

be forgiven. There is a "live wire" in the truth of the Lord, charged with deadly voltage to those who touch it with impudent hands.

In these latter days God hath spoken unto us by HIS SON, whom He hath appointed HEIR OF ALL THINGS, by whom also He made the AGES. It is an appointment that has never been withdrawn. That heirship includes the reader of these lines. Think of it! You have been included in the "all things." Do you agree to it? Will you endorse it with your signature, in the presence of Him who is the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His Person, who upholds all things by the word of His power? (Heb. 1:1-3). That Son is THE GOD-MAN, of whom the Father has said: "Thou art MY SON, this day have I 'begotten' Thee;" and again: "When He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith: Let all the angels of God worship Him." From that appeal to angels we turn with an appeal to men. Will you do it? and not only worship Him, but receive Him, eat Him, drink Him, assimilate Him, incorporate Him into the innermost centre of your conscious life, until you cannot live one moment without Him, in this or in any other world?