

What Think Ye of Man?

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For nearly two thousand years we have been trying to answer the question, "What think ye of Christ?" In the process of this inquiry we have answered it in all sorts of ways. We have declared that he was very God of very God. We have declared that he was a perfect man, a complete a full revelation of the possibilities human nature, the fullness of the divine spirit manifest in life, the link which bridges the chasm between the human the divine, the finite and the infinite. We have even gone to the trouble of expending time and effort to demonstrate that there never was any such person. At the present time there is developing a school of theologians in Europe who are interested in preserving the so-called orthodox interpretation of Christ. In the interest of this purpose they have declared that Christ never lived. That Christianity developed around a Christ Myth. This position, somewhat akin to the one that Straus developed nearly a hundred years ago, is now being pushed forward as the only alternative to accepting as final what has been the position of modern thought of people for many decades now. Say these people, "Either Christ was simply a myth or a man?" Very good logic says the man of modern thought. We quite agree with you. But we are not willing to accede to your contention that he is a myth because that conserves your preconceived notions. We are glad, however, to take the other end the dilemma, and rest content with the simple truth that Jesus Christ was a man.

Having then come to this conclusion, not as a personal opinion but as the logical result of historic development, we are asking ourselves today, "What is man?" What are his achievements? What are his limitations? What are his possibilities? To these questions we are giving in our modern world some very definite answers. If we trace the answers back into history we shall find that we are giving to man just about the same characteristics which people in

the past have ascribed to Christ. We are democratizing the Christ Life.

First of all is the idea that Christ was very God of very God. He was the word made flesh. Such we may say of man. Man is very God of very God, the word made flesh. The very inclusive qualities, the qualities of good and evil, of achievement and limitation, are qualities of an indwelling God. In the concrete man that we meet on the street, whatever may be his development, we meet God. Not in Christ alone, but in all men and women has the word become flesh and does it dwell among us. We are all very God of Very God.

Again in the matter of life and existence we are Christs. Through the experiences of life, in joy and sorrow in defeat and success, we are translating to each other the living principles of life. The life we live, with all its complex relations, its tragedies, and glories, its common experiences and common values are just as much the experiences of suffering Christs as the life of Jesus. The white slave, suffering supreme degradation of womanhood, as a price for our beastly limitations; the poorly fed child of the slums, the over-fed child of wealth, the degraded drunkard, the vanquished vagrant, the men and women struggling against poverty, are the vicarious sacrifices of our limitations and wickedness. They bear the burdens that we cast upon them. They are God on the cross, and in the mire. By their pain we are healed, and in processes like these we achieve the capacity to understand and to measure the values of life. We are all damned for our transgressions. In other words, man, we say is divine and essentially good. He has to learn in the process of experience what values of life are worthwhile, and at what price those values may be attained. Those values we must attain together through effort in common.

Again we have democratized the suffering and the beauty of Christ's life. That which was in Jesus is now in us.

Finally we are learning in this process that the life which is worthwhile, which satisfies, which rounds out into complete and enriched old age, which is the basis for a faith in the eternal value of human personality, is the

life which loses itself that it may find itself. The life that goes through the drama of temptation, and withstands the allurements of wealth, power, and religious domination, and follows the fleeting vision of truth, justice, mercy. Not what we have exhorts us, not what do exhorts, but what, through the varied experiences of success and failure, we would do, and what we strive to do, what we fight for exhorts. Seeking first the kingdom of heaven to use an old phrase, is not pious ranting, but plain hard cold life fact. The measure of our suffering, not as individuals alone, but as races and nations, is the measure of our failure to meet this plain law of life. It is not the ultimatum of men but of the universe, that we are dealing with. What is man? He is a being of infinite worth whose experiences in life open to him the chamber of life's mysteries, and reveals the secrets of life's worth.