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Teaching of Jesus as to Himself

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"JESUS answered and said, Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true."—John viii: 14.

There was no need of our Lord bearing witness to His Divinity. His character, words and works proclaimed that. He said to the disciples of John, who came asking, "Who art thou?" "Go and tell your master the lepers are cleansed, the blind see, the deaf hear, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." He could safely rest His claim to Divinity upon His works, supported by His character.

Angels were His witnesses, and so were demons, when they said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Men, bad and good, His enemies and His friends, testified that He was true. Even if the Lord had not uttered a sentence concerning Himself, He could upon the testimony of others and of His works have full assurance that He was Divine.

EQUALITY WITH GOD.

There was, however, one thing which neither works nor witnesses could reveal. Jesus Himself had to speak of that. He said to Philip: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." We may see God as law-giver when we behold Him on Sinai; as ruler while we study the history of Israel; as wise, powerful and glorious as we look at the stars, stand by Niagara or examine the structure of a flower. But nothing in nature proclaims God as Father. There He is judge, meting justice to every one. Keep His laws and you are rewarded; break them and you are punished. Jesus proclaimed Himself the revelation of God the Father, and the only road to the Fatherhood of God is through Jesus Christ, for he says in Matthew xi: 27: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." And again in John xiv: 6: "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." We are born children of the flesh, children of wrath, children of nature. When we come to Jesus Christ, we become children of God. His Fatherhood is ours. "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the sons of God."

There is, therefore, no presumption in the claim which Jesus makes that He is equal to the Father, indeed God Himself. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son; that all men should honor the Son even as they honored the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that hath sent Him," John v: 22, 23. No man can honor God as Father who rejects the claim of Jesus Christ to Divinity, because the rejection of that claim puts Christ below the Father, and He claimed that He was equal to the Father; indeed, was in all essentials the Father Himself. To honor God and patronize Christ is doing no honor to God.

ETERNITY OF EXISTENCE.

Again, we are not surprised that Christ should claim eternity of existence. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John xvii: 5. Jesus existed before matter was created. He was independent of men and of angels; self-sufficient and self-glorious. You, of course, remember God's revelation to Moses, when he asked, "What is thy name?" and God replied: "I am that I am." Go tell Pharaoh, the great I AM, the self-existent God, hath sent thee. Jesus said to the Pharisees that Abraham desired to see his day and was glad. The Pharisees tauntingly replied that he had never seen Abraham. Abraham died before He was born. Jesus said unto them: "Before Abraham was I am." Here is the claim that Jesus is the "I AM" who revealed himself to Moses; the self-existent, eternal God, not de-

pendent upon time or things connected therewith.

PROOF OF HIS DIVINITY.

One of the strongest proofs, however, of the Divinity of Christ is His silence. That speaks as emphatically as His words. The silence of Jesus always means something. When Cornelius fell before Peter to worship him, Peter made him to stand on his feet, saying, "I am a man." For Peter to have received his worship would have been blasphemy. Paul and Barnabas, by their thrilling eloquence and miraculous deeds at Lystra, so excited the people that the priests of Jupiter came to sacrifice and worship them. And now it is Paul's turn to become excited, as he rushes among them forbidding them to do such a sacrilegious thing, declaring that he was a man like themselves: John on the Isle of Patmos fell before the angel to worship, but the angel would not receive it. "Worship God," was his command. "I am of thy fellow servants, the prophets." Herod on his throne received the applause of the people as they exclaimed, "It is the voice of God and not man." And for silently receiving such adoration God smote him that he died. Now it is impossible to conceive that the people around Jesus should have tolerated Him if He had received worship from men, had they not the most convincing evidence that He was God, and such worship was His due.

The leper healed of his loathsome disease might have ignorantly fallen before Christ and worshipped Him; but knowing the man Jesus as we do, we are certain that He would have made him get upon his feet had He not been God. The ruler, strongminded and influential, falls before the feet of Christ, and Jesus silently receives his adoration. But more convincing still is the fact that the disciples who were familiar with the Lord, ate with Him, talked with Him, walked with Him, and lived with Him, gave Him their worship. "The Master," says the proverb, "is never a hero to his valet." But these disciples who were most intimate with the Lord honored Him with their worship. After Jesus had walked across the waves to the boat, they all fell before Him and worshipped. Thomas, doubtful, honest, true, could not conceive the evidence which the disciples gave of his resurrection. He had been familiar with the Lord, too, and had high opinion and expectation of Him, though his opinion and expectation were largely carnal. But when Thomas looks upon the familiar face, and beholds the prints of nails and the spear, he falls before Jesus and worships. The silence of Christ in these circumstances is convincing proof that he claimed to be God, and was what He claimed.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

There is, therefore, no presumption in the still further claim of Jesus when He says, "I am the light of the world." Men have given the world light. Aristotle gave it light on logic; Socrates on philosophy; Copernicus and Kepler on astronomy; Edison on electricity. But for Aristotle to have said, "I am the light of philosophy," would have created a laugh. Copernicus and Kepler dare not say, "I am the light of astronomy," nor Edison, "I am the light of science." Such claims would have made the claimants ridiculous in the eye of men. But it seems natural to hear Jesus say "I am the light of the world." Not of Asia, of Europe, of America, the first century or the eighteenth, but the world in all time and places. And being the light, He could safely say, "I am the way." Not I will show the way. Men have shown ways that are better than others, but no man in his sense has ever yet claimed, "I am the way."

THE SOVEREIGN MASTER.

Another claim of Jesus, which He emphasizes, is that He is the sovereign Master, and will brook no rivals. "Ye call Me Master and Lord; ye say well, for so I am." "One is your master, even Christ." He let them call Him Lord and Master before He made the claim. There was something, therefore, behind his words which

led them to call Him Lord and serve Him as Master; something which made them assent without questioning to the claim, "One is your Master, even Christ," and to acquiesce in the teaching that whatever rivaled Jesus must be cast out. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

And if you will read the connection in which these words occur, you will see the principle on which He based His Lordship. He had just girded Himself with a towel and washed His disciples' feet, telling them that as He had done to them, so they must do to others. Be servants. "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am," and I have just taught you the road to mastery. I am sovereign Master, because I am a faithful servant. Universal Lord becomes universal minister to the wants of men. Jesus does not put Himself up as arbitrary king, establishing a throne as Napoleon did by force of arms, and as many a tyrant has done, asserting the right of might and not the might of right. The throne of Christ was Calvary. The steps up that rugged hill were His ascent to the throne. The cross is His sceptre. He rules men because He serves them. We admit this principle in conferring honors upon the good and great. Why did this country make Washington President? Because he arbitrarily demanded that he should rule? Not at all. It was because he was first as a servant; he had risked more, sacrificed more than others for his country. And so Jesus Christ enthrones Himself in the hearts of men through His self-sacrificing service. He conquers by serving them. He reigns in them and rules over them by the power of self-sacrificing service.

Napoleon had in his school at Brienne a young friend Demais, who greatly admired him and was glad to serve him when he was in power, but you remember that after Napoleon had quelled the mob in Paris, and served as Toulon, his authority was taken from him and he was cast out penniless. He even meditated suicide, and was on his way toward the bridge from which he expected to throw himself, when his old friend, Demais, met him and asked him what was the matter. Napoleon frankly told him he was without money, his mother was in want and he had despaired. "Oh, if that is all," said Demais, take this; it will supply your wants." And he handed him \$600 in gold.

Napoleon said afterwards that he hardly knew why he took it, but he did, and rushed off to his cottage home. When Napoleon came to power he sought for Demais far and wide. He wanted to promote him; he wished to enrich him, and it is said that Demais still lived and served in one of his armies, but would not make himself known. The principle that made Napoleon seek for Demais that he might exalt him, is the principle that Jesus Christ established and that men follow out in noble actions. We instinctively exalt those that exalt not themselves, but serve and sacrifice for others; and so Jesus Christ has won a place on the throne of our hearts by his unselfish ministry and His death upon the cross. We respond to the noblest instincts of our nature when we crown Him Lord of all.

Winning Worthily.

WE are tempted in these days to be intoxicated with success. We are too likely to be led to feel that we must achieve the ends we set before us whatever may be the means we use to accomplish them. We must win the goal, however unfair we may be in the race. That there is too much of that spirit prevalent at the present time few will question. In business life, in social life, and perhaps pre-eminently in political life, this is to be seen. Men start out with the thought of winning a certain position; they find obstacles arising in their way; these obstacles must be overcome, and if one means of removing them fails another must be tried. It seems to matter little to many as to the ethical character of the means