

attributes, I cannot, if I would, regard as one conscious person, one intelligent agent.".... "I am persuaded that controversies about Christ's person, have in one way done great injury. They have turned attention from his character. Suppose that as Americans we should employ ourselves in debating the question, when Washington was born, and from what spot he came, when he appeared at the head of our armies; and that in the fervour of these contentions we should overlook the character of his mind, the spirit that moved within him, the beatings of a noble magnanimous soul—how unprofitably should we be employed! Who is it that understands Washington? Is it he that can settle his rank in the creation, his early history, his present condition? or he to whom the soul of that great man is laid open, who comprehends and sympathises with his general purposes, who understands the energy with which he espoused the cause of freedom and his country and who receives through admiration a portion of the same divine energy? So in regard to Jesus. His greatness belonged not to his condition but to his mind, his Spirit, his aim, his disinterestedness, his calm, sublime consecration of himself, to the high purpose of God." In support of his argument against controversies as to the person of Jesus, Channing supposes the case of Americans debating the question when Washington was born, while overlooking the character of his mind. Are the cases, however, really parallel? It would be folly indeed to debate the question where Washington was born, while overlooking the character of his mind. But in the case of Washington, the question is not whether he is to receive divine worship or not. It has never been asserted that the founder of the American Republic was more than a great man. In the case of Jesus, on the other hand, the question as to His person lies at the very basis of Christianity. When Peter said to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus said, "Upon this rock, I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Nor are Channing's remarks as to the unimportance of knowing the precise rank of Jesus, supported by the teaching of Jesus Himself. At one time He said to the disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" At another time He said to the Pharisees, "What think ye of Christ?" "Whose Son is He?" In the supposition of Channing, it would have been useless for Him to have asked such questions as these.

Let us now notice some of the difficulties which beset the humanitarian theory of the person of Jesus.