

but He magnified Himself very highly, even as it became Him who made Himself equal with God. For who is this that saith, 'I will go to the Father and I will send the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father.' Surely He took a great deal upon Himself who promised to send such a Messenger from such a place. And why should such a witness be necessary to testify of Christ and reveal Him to His disciples? If Christ were only man, what need of the Spirit of God to reveal Him? Could the spirit which is in man not testify of the things of a man?

But these things were taught in private, when none were present to hear but the disciples, who might report such conversations in any form they pleased, as none could contradict their testimony. What then do they say of His public teaching when He spoke in the audience of all the people? Did He, or did he not as a Public Teacher, represent Himself and the work He had come into the world to do as matters of as weighty concern to His hearers as any other thing which He did teach, or which could be taught to them by Himself or by any other?

When He said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," and exhorted them to learn of Him; He spoke to them as a Teacher, but surely He wished also to attract their regards to Himself as something more than a Teacher. There has been no lack of self-conceited and presumptuous teachers in this world; but very few have been found who would venture to call together their hearers in such confident language as that used above. Evidently they are the words of one not afraid to commend Himself, yea to magnify Himself very highly, without unduly exalting Himself, as conscious that, however large His promises, His powers of performance would not be found to come short by any who should put Him to the proof.

But His words led His hearers to expect not only that He would teach them excellent doctrine, but that He would grant them assistance of a more efficacious kind than mere teaching. Though there be much power in right words, yet, alas, we all know they do not suffice to give rest to the weary and heavy-laden who groan, being burdened with the load of a hopeless life.

But, if the prophets foretold that God would send to His people, a Saviour and a Deliverer who should be something more and greater than a Preacher of righteousness, did Jesus reprove them for this, and say that nothing more or greater could be done for men than to teach them their duty? He no more reproved the prophets on this head than He reproved Moses for the way in which he set forth the righteousness of the Lord. But he reproved the Jews and their Teachers and Rulers for making void the Law by their traditions and the prophetic doctrine of the

Messiah by their idle interpretations of it according to their carnal-minded hope. Did He ever say that the prophets had magnified His office too highly or had painted in too glowing colours the splendours of His reign, or taught men to expect too many or too great blessings from His coming? He never did anything of this kind, but He always said that all, which the prophets had promised, He was come into the world to perform. However highly then the Hebrew prophets magnified the Messiah, so highly did Jesus magnify Himself, for He said that they spoke of Him, and that they spoke no more than the truth, and spoke it by the Spirit of God. When the Jews condemned Him to death for speaking, as they alleged, against Moses and the prophets, it was not for preaching righteousness, and assuredly it was not for teaching that the prophets had unduly magnified the character and work of the Messiah, but for exalting both His own character and work, as indeed He did, far above what was proper for any mere man, and announcing Himself as supporting this character, and qualified for this work, and worthy of all the honour and glory due to a person of such surpassing dignity, engaged in such a marvelous work of benevolence and power.

That to all who heard our Saviour teach, and to all who lived while He taught, and heard of His teaching, and took any interest in the subject, from good motives or from bad, the personal claims He advanced not only did appear but must have appeared of far higher interest and importance than any other part of His teaching, we consider as clear beyond debate. It could not be otherwise, and every fragment of history, inspired or uninspired, which has come down to us, that touches upon the question of Christ and His ministry, shows that it was so. In truth it is so still. Suppose a man to read no other portion of Scripture but that called the Gospels, however much he may be struck with the expositions of the holy Law of God there to be met with, however much he may be interested in the character of Christ as an example of meekness, benevolence and purity, is it possible that he should not feel his attention fastened upon this question as the most important of all, Whom does this man make Himself to be?

But let us hear Jesus Himself on the subject. "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and, as His custom was, He entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and stood up for to read; and there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And, when he had opened the book, He found the place where it was written. The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach

deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, and gave it again to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all that were in the synagogue were fastened upon Him. And He began to say unto them: This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

When Jesus said that these words were fulfilled in Himself, He not only preached Himself, but magnified Himself more highly than if He had said the same thing of Himself directly, for He not only said they were true of Himself, but that God had thought both Him and His work of such importance as to give testimony concerning them by the mouth of a prophet so many ages beforehand.

It cannot then be said that the Hebrew prophets magnified the Messiah more than our Lord Jesus Christ magnified Himself.

But did not the Apostles exceed in this matter, and so depart from the simplicity of the example set them by the Great Teacher, in whose name they went forth to preach and to teach among all nations? It does not appear very clear that Jesus proposes Himself as a model for teachers.

We suspect any one attempting to teach after the same fashion would find reason to doubt whether he had not gone a wrong way to work. Be this as it may, the question now before us is,--Did the Apostles in their preaching magnify the person and the work of Christ more highly than He did Himself, or attach to the doctrines concerning Him a higher importance than He Himself did?

The Apostles said, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." But did not Jesus say the same of Himself, when He said, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me?" and again, "If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me." And again, "God sent His Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but should have everlasting life."

When Paul extols Christ, saying that He is raised far above all principality and power, might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come, and that all things are put under His feet, is this more than Jesus on more than one or two occasions said of Himself, as when He said, "All power is given Me in Heaven and on earth."

Or, when the Apostle says, "Christ loved us and gave Himself for us," does not the Great Teacher say the same of Himself?

When the Apostles say that "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ, and that salvation is not to be found in any other," do any such sayings imply