

PREFACE

IF IT IS important to understand early Christian beliefs about Jesus as recorded in the New Testament, it is even more important to attempt to discover how far these beliefs may have been derived from Jesus' own teaching, and consequently to what extent they were justified. It is not enough to accept the fact that the New Testament writings, including the gospels, reveal the beliefs about Jesus of the first generations of Christians, so that we can be united with them in common faith. The gospels also profess to record the teaching of Jesus himself and the claims that he made.

Within its own limits the present work is an attempt to trace the connection between early Christian belief about Jesus and Jesus' own teaching. Nowhere is this problem more difficult than in regard to the title and concept "Son of man". Despite all that has been written, and continues to be written, on the subject,¹ there is room for a re-examination of the problem of the connection between the primitive Son of man Christology and the use and meaning of the title in Jesus' own teaching. The present study is therefore both exegetical and theological. The significance of Jesus' use of the Son of man concept lies in the soteriological connection he saw between his life of humiliation and final rejection, degradation and sacrificial death, and his future activity characterized as that of the "Son of man". The development of the Son of man Christology in the early church may be described as "retrogressive"—in the sense that, beginning with the adaptation of current Jewish eschatological beliefs, it came retrospectively to interpret first the passion and resurrection, and then the life and ministry of Jesus, in terms of the Son of man.

My contribution, "Son of Man-Forschung since 'The Teaching of Jesus'", to the memorial volume for Professor T. W. Manson edited by me (*New Testament Essays*, 1959), gives some idea of the wide variety of views on different aspects of the question.

¹ F. Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments* 83, 1963) appeared too late for me to use.

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Since that paper may serve as *prolegomena* to the present work, much of the literature referred to there is not mentioned here.

Chapters 6 and 7 contain (with some modifications) the material of my Franz Delitzsch Lectures for 1961 given in the University of Münster and to be published in Germany under the title *Menschensohn-Studien*. I am grateful to Professor K. H. Rengstorf, Director of the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum, and to Dr. Cecil Northcott, editorial secretary of the Lutterworth Press, for kindly agreeing to the inclusion of this material.

For the text and (with a few exceptions) the critical apparatus of the Greek New Testament I have used the excellent edition prepared by Professor G. D. Kilpatrick to mark the 150th anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society (1958).

Biblical quotations are based on the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible* copyrighted in 1946 and 1952 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., but with my own numerous modifications as occasion required.

I am indebted to my wife and daughter for assistance in compiling the indexes.

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