

The Person of Jesus the Messiah*

Part One

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I. THE HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS OF JESUS

The first fact which meets us in the Synoptic testimony of Jesus in regard to his own person is that he claims and manifests a truly human consciousness. It is important to notice the character and extent of this evidence, both on its own account and because of its bearing on the question of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus.

In the examination of this point we may begin with the account of the temptation in the wilderness, which must be traced at last to Jesus' own report to his disciples. Here Jesus applies to himself words which were spoken of old to the individual Israelite. He throws up, as a bulwark against the tempter, various moral teachings of the Old Testament, thus manifestly feeling that he is on the same plane with those to whom the words first came. He quotes, as applicable to himself: "*Man* shall not live by bread alone"; "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy *God*"; "Thou shalt *worship* the Lord thy God" (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10). This language seems to be an unmistakable expression of a human consciousness. Jesus feels himself a man, and looks up to Jehovah as his God, whom he should worship.

A little later than the experience in the wilderness, we see Jesus *praying* near Capernaum (Mk. 1:35). This act is one of a series stretching through the entire ministry of Jesus. Thus it is recorded that Jesus spent an entire night in prayer before the appointment of the twelve apostles (Lk. 6:12), and Luke

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preserves a tradition that it was the praying of Jesus which led his disciples to ask him to teach them how to pray, as John taught his disciples (Lk. 11:1). Jesus thanked the Father for revealing the mystery of the Gospel to babes (Mt. 11:25). He asked God's blessing on the bread and fish with which at two different times he fed the multitudes (Mk. 6:41; 8:6). According to Luke, Jesus was engaged in prayer when the vision of his transfiguration was granted to the three disciples (Lk. 9:28). At the Last Supper he gave thanks for the bread and wine, and asked God's blessing upon them (Mk. 14:22-23). He prayed repeatedly in Gethsemane that the hour might pass (Mk. 14:35, 36, 39). He prayed on the cross both for himself and for those who had crucified him (Mk. 15:34; Lk. 23:34, 46).

Since Jesus prayed, we must believe that he felt a *need* for prayer. He offered sincere thanks and sincere supplications for the Father's help. He looked away from himself as one consciously dependent. He subordinated his will to a higher will (Mk. 14:36). He secured inward quietness and strength by casting himself upon the will of God. Now in all these situations Jesus comes before us as a true man. There is the same sense of creaturely dependence that we find in ourselves. Jesus did not have one kind of prayer for himself and another kind for his disciples. As he approached God with the name *Father*, so he taught his disciples to do. The prayers of Jesus can all be prayed by his followers, as far as their circumstances correspond with his. There is nothing in them that suggests a consciousness other than that of an ideal man. This line of evidence is of peculiar value, for through the prayers of any soul we see into its inmost depths, its most sacred feelings and beliefs.

The human consciousness of Jesus is further seen in his sense of *limited knowledge*. This is, of course, implied in the fact of prayer, but there is other evidence of an absolute character. Thus Jesus declares that the hour of his *parousia* is unknown to him, and known only to the Father (Mk. 13:32; Mt. 24:36). This statement is clear and positive. It is equal to a declaration that he is not omniscient; or, taking this fact together with the preceding evidence of a human consciousness, it seems necessary to say that these words imply a consciousness of the ordinary human limitations of knowledge. Moreover, there are particular circumstances in the life of Jesus which confirm this statement. Thus he came to a fig tree on a certain occasion to see if it had fruit (Mk. 11:13). He plainly thought it possible that he might find some, and he was mistaken. Again, he asked his disciples how many loaves they had (Mk. 8:5), and on another occasion, when people were thronging him, he asked who had touched him (Mk. 5:30). He asked a blind man, whose eyes he had touched, whether he saw anything (Mk. 8:23); and other blind men, who

sought healing, he asked whether they believed him able to heal them (Mt. 9:28). He asked the father of the epileptic boy how long his child had been thus afflicted (Mk. 9:21). Now in all these, and other similar cases in the Synoptic record, if we interpret naturally, we must suppose that Jesus was sincere in his questions, and asked for information. There is no limitation that he knew beforehand and only asked the questions for effect. On the contrary, in view of the evidence already considered, that Jesus had a human consciousness, it must be held to be entirely unfounded when one says that Jesus did not need to ask questions. The few exceptional occasions when his knowledge surpassed human limitations belong with his miraculous deeds, and have the same explanation.

As Jesus was conscious of limited knowledge, so also of limited *power*. The fact that he prayed is sufficient basis for this statement, but there is further evidence which must be noticed. Thus Jesus says that it is by the *Spirit of God*, or, in Luke's version, by the *finger of God*, that he casts out demons (Mt. 12:28; Lk. 11:20). He does not do it in his own unaided strength, but in dependence upon the power of God. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we are required to apply to *all* his miracles what Jesus here said in regard to a particular class of them, and hold that he wrought them all in conscious dependence on God. Again, Jesus tells the ambitious brothers, James and John, that it is not in his power to bestow upon them the first places even in his own kingdom (Mk. 10:40). To do that would transcend the limits of his authority. Once more, in the hour of his arrest, Jesus rebuked the well-meant attempt of Peter to defend him with sword, and said that if he needed deliverance he could pray his Father, and He would send him more than twelve legions of angels (Mt. 26:53). Thus he was conscious that, in himself, he was helpless. His rescue from Judas and the soldiers must come from God, if it come at all. His own power and that of his disciples is limited; but God's power is unlimited.

Thus we have clear and unambiguous proof that Jesus was conscious of limitation in power as of limitation in knowledge. The superhuman power which he exercised at times was, according to his own testimony, *given* to him. It was not native and inherent. And we must judge in the same manner of the supernatural knowledge which Jesus manifested at times. By supernatural knowledge is not meant omniscience. As we have already seen, the theory that Jesus was omniscient is wrecked on his plain word, and ought never to have been held. But he certainly had supernatural knowledge in regard to particular events, as, for example, in regard to his own death and resurrection. It is true, the evidences of such knowledge are comparatively

rare. The Gospel narrative, *in the main*, not only does not require us to think that Jesus had superhuman knowledge, but very often assumes that he had not. The evidence for this has already been cited. In view, then, of these facts, we must say that supernatural knowledge was no more inherent in Jesus than supernatural power. When he had such knowledge, it was a gift of God for the purposes of the Messianic work.

There is another and different evidence of human consciousness to which we may properly refer before leaving this subject; and that is the fact that Jesus refused to be called *good*, saying that only God is good (Mk. 10:18). Now it is certain, as we shall show later, that Jesus was conscious of perfect integrity, of absolute sinlessness before God. Therefore, when he declines the epithet *good*, and says it belongs to God alone, he must do so in the consciousness that he is a man, exposed to temptation, subject to change, and not in the absolute and unchangeable possession of goodness or righteousness (cp. Heb. 2:10). He knows in himself that he has not fallen below the standard of righteousness, but that standard is the will of God, not his own will (Mk. 14:36), and he conforms to it by conscious and strenuous moral effort, as appears, for example, in the record of the temptation. Had he been righteous or good as God is good, he could not have been tempted of evil, even as God cannot be (James 1:13).

The standard of righteousness for God is not outside Himself, neither can we conceive it necessary or possible for Him to put forth effort in order to be perfectly righteous. We can understand, then, how Jesus could point to God as the only good one, and at the same time be conscious that he himself had never sinned. He does so because his consciousness is that of a man, and he feels that the quality of his inner life is dependent upon the Spirit of God.

II. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF PERFECT MORAL UNION WITH THE FATHER

A second fact which meets us in the Synoptic record of the testimony of Jesus concerning his own person is the consciousness of *perfect moral union with the Father*. This is foreshadowed in the story of the boy Jesus in the temple (Lk. 2:49). The unclouded consciousness that God is the Father, and the consequent sense of obligation to Him, while they do not necessarily argue a consciousness of sinlessness, at least suggest that his consciousness of God was unique. Yet an undue importance may easily be attached to this saying. It is the saying of a boy, and not of a philosopher or a theologian. It is a saying which does not take us beyond the ideal piety of the Old Testament. As we have already seen, the Old Testament sometimes rises to the conception that God is the father, even of individual souls, and of course

teaches that the things of God should be put first. Practically, however, the sense of sonship which appears in these words of Jesus does not seem to have been often experienced under the Old Covenant, and probably was never experienced in so high and pure a degree as by Jesus at twelve years of age. This sonship to which the passage in Luke bears witness is certainly ethical and only ethical. To suppose that the boy Jesus hinted at a peculiar meta-physical relation to God when he said "my Father," is a view which is condemned by the explicit and abounding evidence that Jesus had a truly human consciousness. To suppose that he used the words in a Messianic sense is simply to ignore one of the plainest historical teachings of the Synoptic Gospels, for they date the Messianic consciousness of Jesus from the hour of his baptism. It remains, then, to see in the words of the boy Jesus the evidence of an ideal filial spirit. They harmonize perfectly with the evangelist's sketch of the truly human development of Jesus, when he says that he "advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Lk. 2:52).

When we come to the public ministry of Jesus we find abundant evidence that he was conscious of a peculiar moral relation to God. We notice this first in his attitude toward the Law. In the Sermon on the Mount he says that he came to *fulfill* the Law and the prophets (Mt. 5:17), and it is plain from the following verse that he is not thinking of the Messianic prophecies in particular, but of the comprehensive moral purpose of God. It follows from this claim of Jesus that he was conscious of being in perfect harmony with the divine ideal. Had his vision of God been obscured by any slightest consciousness of sin and ill desert, he must, if honest, have recognized that he could not *fulfill* the Law and the prophets. He must have known within himself that he was not qualified to see or to say what the *perfect* will of God is. He might have felt himself *in line* with the lawgiver and the prophets, as called of God to communicate His revelation, but he could not have had the serene consciousness of manifesting the final message of God to men. In order to fulfill this end he must have been conscious of standing in perfect accord with the will of his heavenly Father.

Again, a consciousness of perfect moral union with God is involved in Jesus' claim to be the *judge* of men. He is the judge by virtue of the fact that he is also the standard. He makes it plain that he will judge men according to their attitude toward him (Mt. 10:32-33; Mk. 8:35, 38; Mt. 18:6, etc.). Whosoever confesses him, he will confess before his Father; whosoever denies him, he will deny before his Father. Whosoever causes a little one who believes in him to stumble, it were better for him that a millstone were

hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the sea. Unless the Jews repent of their unbelief toward him, they shall perish (Lk. 13:3, 5). Those on the right hand of the Judge are approved because they have manifested the spirit of Jesus (Mt. 25:34-40). According to this scene, the spirit of Jesus is the test of judgement. But since Jesus claimed to be the standard according to which all mankind are to be assigned to their everlasting conditions, he must have believed that the standard was perfect. And the other passages which have just been cited are in harmony with this scene. Confessing Jesus or denying him means accepting or rejecting him as the anointed of God, who by his life and teaching makes known the perfect way of salvation. So the consciousness of being the judge of men involves the consciousness of being in perfect accord with the will of God.

Again, there is proof that Jesus was conscious of perfect moral union with God in the fact that he never betrays the slightest sense of guilt. This fact cannot be taken alone; it owes its chief significance to another fact, namely, that Jesus showed the most perfect apprehension of sin and virtue. Thus in all his teaching he goes beneath the outward act and profession, and declares that everything depends upon the purpose of the heart. It is by this that a man is judged sinful or virtuous. The ethical teaching of the Old Testament is estimated by Jesus with unerring insight, and the hypocrisy of the religious leaders of his own day is uncovered and analyzed in a way that argues perfect moral perception. Now that a man with such an apprehension of sin and virtue never betrays any sense of ill desert is an evidence of the greatest importance. Jesus taught his disciples to pray for the forgiveness of their debts (Mt. 6:12), but *he* never prays thus. He adopts the lament of the Psalmist, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" but it is plain that these words do not imply a sense of ill desert; then the feeling that God was afar off would have been no mystery to him. In the various prayers of Jesus there is never a word nor an accent of confession; but had he been conscious of any sin, he was the one of all men who would have been most deeply humbled by it. The saintlier man is, the keener is his shame and pain when he does wrong.

In connection with this absence of any trace of guilt, and confirming what has been said, we may notice the absolute serenity of Jesus in the moments of extreme peril, and when confronting death on the cross. He was calm when the boat was beginning to sink on the lake of Galilee (Mk. 4:38-40). He was agitated, it is true, in Gethsemane, but not through fear of what comes after death (Mk. 14:33-34). He prayed that a certain cup might pass, but there was no obstruction between him and the Father. His fellowship with God was untroubled. His highest desire was that the divine will might be done (Mk.

14:36). When about to expire on the cross, he assured the dying robber that he should be with him that day in Paradise (Lk. 23:43). There is not only no fear of what is after death, but there is a perfect certainty of entering Paradise; and what is more, there is a calm assurance that he can promise Paradise to the dying man at his side.

III. THE MESSIANIC CONSCIOUSNESS OF JESUS

a. The title *Son of God*.

We have seen that Jesus had a truly human consciousness, and that he also had a consciousness of perfect moral union with God. Still more varied and extensive is the evidence that he was conscious of being *the Messiah of the Old Testament Scriptures*. We find this evidence, first, in the titles which Jesus applied to himself, or which were given to him by others and which he tacitly accepted. We come upon the first of these significant titles in the hour of Jesus' baptism, when he heard a voice out of heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved *Son*, in thee I am well pleased" (Mk. 1:10-11; Mt. 3:16-17; Lk. 3:21-22). This communication was a divine revelation to Jesus, a clear disclosure to his spirit of a new and momentous relationship to God. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, given to Jesus now in the fullest measure, the consciousness of being the well-beloved Son of God was awakened.¹ We are here concerned not with the method, but with the meaning of this communication. When the consciousness of Jesus expressed itself in the words, I am the beloved Son of God, what did those words signify to him? The Synoptic Gospels leave us in no doubt as to the reply which must be given to that question. On the lips of Jesus and the evangelists, the title *Son of God*, as applied to Jesus, had a preeminently Messianic significance, but also an ethical element.² It seems plain that Jesus so understood the term, for, in the first place, from the hour of his baptism, when he was addressed as the Son of God, his career is distinctively Messianic. His temptation is intelligible only on the view that Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah, and in the wilderness was contemplating the Messianic work. In other words, the Messianic temptation implies that the heavenly announcement, "Thou art my beloved Son," was for Jesus a virtual announcement of Messiahship. Its burden, therefore, was not ethical. If the term *Son of God* had for Jesus, primarily, the thought of a unique relationship of *love* with the Father, then

¹ Cp. Baldensperger, *Das Selbseusstsein Jesu*, 163.

² Cp. Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, 193; Bruce, *The Kingdom of God*, 166; Briggs, *The Messiah of the Gospels*, 76-77; *Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, 78, 160; Wendt, *die Lehre Jesu*, 2:433.

it is not apparent why Jesus was impelled to go from the place of baptism into the wilderness, to a temptation which concerned the exercise of his Messianic prerogatives. A sense of the Father's love, even the sense of an altogether special love of the Father, does not lead to the wilderness and to temptation. Such a sense of God's love might call a noble soul to self-sacrifice, but it is not apparent why its possessor should at once feel himself clothed with Messianic authority. Not only does the temptation imply that Jesus regarded the baptismal announcement as a revelation of Messiahship, but it is also implied in the fact that, immediately after the temptation, Jesus entered upon Messianic work. As far, then, as the Synoptic record goes, the Messianic temptation and the Messianic career have their origin in the heavenly announcement by the Jordan, "Thou art my beloved Son."

There is another passage in which Jesus virtually applies to Himself the title *Son of God*, though not of his own impulse; and the teaching of this is no less explicit than that of the foregoing facts. The high priest demands of Jesus that he shall say, under oath, whether he is the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, or as Matthew says, the Son of God (Mk. 14:61-62; Lk. 22:66-70; Mt. 26:63-64). Jesus replies, "I am," that is, I am the Christ, I am the Son of God. There is no suggestion here that the term *Son of God* means anything different from *Christ*. It appears to be an explanatory synonym.

The passages in which Jesus speaks of God as his Father do not belong in this connection, though of course, every time that he thus speaks, he claims to be in some sense a Son of God. But still these passages are not to be classed with the Messianic titles, because Jesus refers to God as the Father of his disciples and of other men, no less than as his own Father. There is no suggestion that he puts something essential into the fatherhood in one case which it does not have in the other.

Again, it is plain that the evangelists, as well as Jesus, made no essential distinction between the titles *Messiah* and *Son of God*. Sometimes they represent the demoniacs as knowing that Jesus was the *Messiah* (Lk. 4:41), or, what is equivalent, the *Consecrated One of God* (Mk. 1:24); and again as calling him the *Son of God* (Mk. 3:11). This interchange of terms we find in one and the same writer, and even within the compass of a single verse. Thus, in Luke 4:41, we read that demons came out of many persons, saying (to Jesus), "Thou art the Son of God," and also that He did not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the *Christ*. It is obvious that this evangelist regarded the two terms as synonyms, and it is sufficiently plain that they were so regarded by Mark.

In the account of the confession of Peter, Mark has the words, "Thou art the Christ," while Matthew has, "Thou art the Christ, *the Son of the living God*" (Mk. 8:29; Mt. 16:16). It can hardly be held that Matthew's second clause introduces any new idea. It simply strengthens the statement that Jesus is the Messiah. Peter does not confess two things, namely, that Jesus is the Messiah, and also that he stands in a unique relation of love to the Father. Again, in Luke's account of the trial of Jesus by the Sanhedrin, the members of the court ask Jesus if he is the *Christ*, and then after a moment ask if he is the *Son of God* (Lk. 22:67-70). The situation is unchanged, and the purport of the second question is exactly that of the first. When they ask if he is the *Son of God*, they do not seek to know whether he claims to stand in a peculiar relation of love to the Father. It was wholly immaterial to them whether he claimed such a relationship of love or not. The sole point of interest to them was whether he claimed to be the Jewish *Messiah*. When they found that he did, they charged him with blasphemy (Mt. 26:65). Holding such views as they did of the glory and power of the Messiah, they could use no milder term than *blasphemy* for the claim of this helpless prisoner, this untaught man, who had never been recognized by the religious authorities in Israel, this would-be reformer from Nazareth, who had been betrayed by one of his own disciples for the paltry sum of fifteen dollars.³

Therefore, we must say that in the thought of Jesus and of the Jews of his day, the title *Son of God* was practically equivalent to *Messiah*. So it belongs with the titles: *The Coming One* (Mt. 11:3), *The Holy One of God* (Mk. 1:24), *The Son of David* (Mt. 12:23), and *The King of Israel* (Mk. 15:32), all of which were used in addressing Jesus but never employed by him.

This title *Son of God* is based upon the Old Testament, and particularly upon Psalm 2:7 (cp. Ps. 89:27; 2 Sam. 7:14), which is applied to Jesus by New Testament writers (Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5). The Messianic king, who was a type of the Messiah, is here called the *Son of God*. Jehovah says to him, "Thou art my son: this day have I begotten thee." This was a term of dignity and honor, but plainly not of essential relationship. The Messianic king of Psalm 2:7, whether David or another man, was not thought of as having a *nature* different from that of other men. He stood high in the favor of God, but his sonship was evidently not metaphysical. The act of *begetting* is nothing else than the *enthronement* of the Messianic king, his introduction into the royal sphere. So Peter understood it, who saw its fulfillment in the resurrection of Jesus, which was the beginning of his exaltation to the

³ Cp. Holtzman, *Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Theologie*, 1:265.

Messianic throne. But if the Messianic king is called the Son of God because he is *enthroned* by God, then plainly the sonship is official. The fact that God has enthroned him may show that God loves him, but this love is implied rather than expressed. Therefore this Old Testament passage, both in itself and as understood by Peter, prepares the way for the distinctly Messianic use of the title *Son of God*, which we find in the Synoptic Gospels. In conclusion, it may be remarked that since Jesus and the evangelists used this title as synonymous with *Messiah*, the theological use of it, which refers it primarily to the *nature* of Jesus, has no basis in the Gospels.⁴

b. The title *Son of man*.

The Messianic consciousness of Jesus is further seen in the title, *The Son of man*. This first appears in the account of what happened in the house of Peter at Capernaum, when the paralytic was lowered through the roof (Mk. 2:10). Jesus forgave the man's sins, and when accused of blasphemy for thus exercising a function which belongs to God, he declared that the *Son of man* had authority to forgive sins. This title, unlike the title *Son of God*, is used in the Gospels by Jesus only, and is used by him frequently. It is found once on the lips of the angels in the empty tomb, but they use it in a quotation from the words of Jesus (Lk. 24:7). It is, therefore, Jesus' own peculiar self-indication; and in the usage of Jesus himself we have conclusive evidence of the significance which he attached to it. We are not dependent upon the apocalyptic literature; we are not obliged to give any particular weight to Daniel 7:13; and we need not lay any especial stress on the definite article, *the* Son of man. The usage of Jesus is plain and decisive. On two occasions Jesus speaks of the Son of man as one concerning whom the Scriptures bear witness. Thus in the conversation caused by the transfiguration, when the disciples asked him, saying, "The scribes say that Elijah must first come and restore all things," Jesus replied, "Elijah indeed cometh first and restoreth all things: and how then is it written of the *Son of man*, that he should suffer many things and be set at naught?" (Mk. 9:11-12; Mt. 17:10-13). Now the disciples and scribes thought that Elijah would come to prepare for the *Messiah*. When, therefore, Jesus endorses their general thought, and says that Elijah cometh first and restoreth all things, and then asks the question, "How is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things?" it is manifest that he means by the "Son of man" no other than the prophesied Messiah.

⁴ Comp. Bruce, *The Kingdom of God*, 184.

Again, in the solemn dialogue between Jesus and the high priest, we have unmistakable evidence that the title *Son of man* expressed a Messianic consciousness. The high priest asked him, "Art thou the Christ, the son of the Blessed?" and Jesus replied, "I am, and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mk. 14:61, 62). The equivalence of the title is here beyond question.

On the evening before the crucifixion, Jesus said to his disciples, "The Son of man goeth, even as it is *written* of Him" (Mk. 14:21). But there is nothing written in the Old Testament regarding the suffering and death of one who is there called the *Son of man*. There is, however, something written regarding the Messiah; and since Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, there can be no doubt that when he speaks of the Scripture regarding the *Son of man*, he uses this title as equivalent to *Messiah*.

Again, the *functions* which Jesus claims for the Son of man are prevailingly Messianic. Thus, the Son of man has authority to forgive sin (Mk. 2:10); the Son of man sows the good seed, and the good seed are the sons of the kingdom, and so it is the Son of man who establishes the kingdom of God (Mt. 13:37); the Son of man must suffer many things (Mk. 8:31), or, in the language of Jesus after the resurrection, "Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things" (Lk. 24:26)? The Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of power and shall judge all nations (Mk. 14:62; Mt. 25:31). In all these passages there appears an authority such as no Scripture attributes to a prophet, and which can be no less than Messianic.

We conclude, then, that whatever the source of the title may have been, and whatever may have been its use in apocalyptic literature, its meaning on the lips of Jesus is undeniable. He does not use it to express the consciousness that he is a *man*, nor does he use it for the purpose of claiming for his humanity something unique, as though it were equivalent to the *ideal man*. He uses it simply to express the consciousness that he is the *Messiah*. It is an official title, and does not directly concern his nature. He could not have applied it to himself prior to the hour of his baptism by John, for it was in that hour and not before that he became conscious of Messiahship.

The result of this study of Jesus' own usage⁵ may be strengthened, in the judgement of some minds, by the famous passage in Daniel, which the New

⁵ The view of Lietzmann, that the title *Son of man* is a Christian interpolation, is not well supported. See *Der Menschensohn*, Hans Lietzmann.

Testament treats as Messianic (Rev. 1:13; 14:14), and also by the apocalyptic literature, especially the Book of Enoch,⁶ where the *Son of man* is plainly a Messianic title.⁷

In conclusion on these two titles, *The Son of God* and *The Son of man*, it may be said that the latter, since it is purely *official*, is somewhat narrower than the former. The title *Son of God* was Messianic, but it was first ethical. It could be applied to Jesus in a Messianic sense because it was perfectly applicable to him in an ethical sense.⁸ It was of course needful that he should be in perfect harmony with God in order that he might execute God's highest commission. If the above positions are correct, it is obvious that the traditional view of these titles, which regarded one as a designation of the divine *nature*, is fundamentally and entirely wrong. Neither of them refers to his nature; both are primarily Messianic.

c. Other Messianic data.

Before leaving the subject of Messianic titles, there are two points demanding brief notice. Jesus declared that he was greater than the temple (Mt. 12:6), greater than Jonah (Mt. 12:41), and greater than Solomon (Mt. 12:42). It is difficult to understand this language except as uttered in the consciousness of Messiahship. A Jew could not compare himself with the temple, the holy center of the religion of Israel, and declare that he was greater than it, unless he was conscious of being consummator of Israel's hope and redemption.

Another point is the use of the word *Lord*. This was frequently applied to Jesus by others and sometimes by himself. *Lord* is a word of relation, whose correlative is *servant*. It simply means the master, the superior, and is so applicable alike to man and God. Thus Jesus says that no man can serve two lords, and again, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God" (Mt. 6:24; 4:10). The term has then no reference to *nature*. What sort of mastership it denotes depends in each case upon the context. The term is often applied to Jesus by his disciples and by others, and is always used as a term of respect. Thus it is interchangeable with *rabbi* (Mk. 9:5; Mt. 17:4), *rabboni* (Mk. 10:51; Lk. 18:41) *teacher* and *master* (Mk. 4:38). Manifestly, then, it has no implication of Messiahship, still less of anything peculiar in the nature of Jesus.

⁶ See chapter 46:204; 48:2; 62:7, 9, 14; 63:11; 69:26, 27, 29; 70:1; 71:17.

⁷ Cp. Deane, *Pseudepigraphia*, 89; Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Theologie*, 1:261.

⁸ See Bruce, *The Kingdom of God*, 180.

The Messianic consciousness of Jesus gives other expression of itself in the Synoptists than that of the Messianic titles. He claims Messianic functions, which have already been enumerated. In like manner, the importance which Jesus claimed for his person (e.g. Mt. 10:32-33; Mk. 14:9), the promise to give spiritual rest to all who come to him (Mt. 11:28-29), the conviction that the Church built on loyalty to him would be indestructible (Mt. 16:18), the assurance that he should speedily rise from the dead (Mk. 8:31), that he should be present with his disciples till the end of the age (Mt. 28:20), and that he should be manifested in glory at last (Mt. 25:31) — all these great utterances of Jesus presuppose a consciousness of Messiahship. It is because he knows himself to be the Messiah, that he is sure of being able to bestow God's peace upon men, and is confident that whatever may come to him of outward shame and suffering, his Church shall be imperishable and in service worldwide.⁹

d. Messianic consciousness not developed.

We have seen that the Messianic consciousness of Jesus rested, according to the Synoptists, upon a divine revelation which came to him in the hour of his baptism. It was not an attainment either sudden or gradual. The revelation was doubtless ethically conditioned, as is all revelation, and this ethical preparation extended through the entire previous life of Jesus; but the Messianic consciousness was originated by God in the hour of baptism. And there is no evidence that this consciousness *developed* as the months of the ministry passed. It does not appear at first wavering and afterward firm. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, but the temptation touched the *manifestations* of his Messiahship rather than its existence. Jesus did not make a public verbal claim to Messiahship at the beginning of his ministry, according to the first three Gospels. There is a noticeable reticence on his part. He checks the demonized who address him as Messiah (e.g. Mk. 1:34; 3:12). He avoids publicity in the working of some of his most impressive miracles (e.g. Mk. 5:40). He does not call himself by the popular titles of the Messiah, as, for example, *Son of David*. He does not do the things which people expected of the Messiah. The first explicit verbal claim to Messiahship, made in public, was at the trial by the Sanhedrin (Mk. 14:62). But these facts are not proof that the consciousness of Messiahship developed from weakness to strength. There are facts, moreover, which preclude such a development. Thus the

⁹Mt. 14:33 is not discussed among the data for Messianic consciousness, because of the manifest bearing which the parallel in Mk. 6:51-52 has upon it.

account of the baptism of Jesus is not the picture of a human spirit catching a glimpse of a new and divine mission that opens suddenly before it; rather of a human spirit at whose very center God creatively awakens a new consciousness. This consciousness at once expresses itself in unmistakable, though not unexpected, ways. It gives to the teaching of Jesus a tone of authority which astonishes the worshippers in the synagogue (Mk. 1:22). It finds utterance in the forgiveness of sin (Mk. 2:10), in the claim to fulfill the Law, and in the quiet unchanging assumption of Jesus that a man's attitude toward him is of endless importance. These facts are of paramount significance, and reveal even at the beginning of the ministry a deep, clear consciousness of Messiahship. The solemn affirmation of Messiahship before the Sanhedrin at the close of the ministry presupposes no clearer consciousness of this fact on the part of Jesus than the early word in Peter's house: "Son, thy sins are forgiven."