

STUDIES IN THE "INNER LIFE" OF JESUS.

XV. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SON.

(1) THE religious consciousness of Jesus has a deeper significance and a greater value for the thought and life of mankind than even His moral character, the perfection of which engaged our attention in the last study. He has revealed the Fatherhood of God by realizing the sonship of man in Himself, but not for Himself alone ; as in Him the Son all men may see, and be led to, the Father. Although the official title *the Christ* has become part of His personal name, and His immediate historical function was the Jewish Messiahship, yet His universal and permanent position in, and service to, the race is not expressed in this office ; and it is probable that in His own consciousness the Messiahship was not so original or essential an element as the Sonship.

(2) In order to apprehend and exhibit His religious consciousness as completely as possible, however, it is necessary that we should begin with the meaning and the worth of the Messiahship for Jesus Himself. It has been already observed that He transcended the popular expectations and even the prophetic predictions regarding *the Christ*. The beliefs and hopes which attached to the Messiah as the Son of David He seems entirely to have disregarded. He was addressed as such by two blind men, on whom He strictly enjoined silence regarding their cure (Matt. ix. 27), by the Syrophenician woman (xv. 22), by blind Bartimaeus (Mark x. 47), by the crowds at the Triumphal Entry (Matt. xxi. 9, 15) ; but He never applied the title to Himself, and even in His controversy with the scribes suggested a difficulty in regard to it (Mark xii. 35). The knowledge of Davidic descent seems with Him not to have counted for anything. He, on the other hand, did expressly accept

the title of the Christ. He revealed Himself as the Christ to the woman of Samaria (John iv. 26). He pronounced Peter blessed for confessing Him as the Christ (Matt. xvi. 17). He answered the High Priest's question "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" affirmatively (Mark xiv. 61, 62). The Fourth Gospel represents Martha as making confession of His Messiahship (John xi. 27). It is very improbable that He Himself used the term Christ as a personal name, as He is reported to have done in the same Gospel (xvii. 3). The function of the Messiah as prophet, as the revealer of truth to men, is indicated in the words of the woman of Samaria, and is thus accepted by Jesus; and the multitude recognized in Him the prophet (John vi. 14). It was generally expected that the Messiah would work miracles (John vii. 31), and to the fulfilment of this hope Jesus points in His answer to the Baptist (Matt. xi. 4, 5).

(3) That answer contains a reference to Isaiah lxi. 1, the passage which Jesus read, and declared to be fulfilled in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv. 21). It has already been pointed out that Jesus' answer to the Baptist's objection to baptize Him, "Suffer it now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. iii. 15) probably is an allusion to the "righteous servant" of Isaiah liii., and that the Baptist's description of Jesus as the Lamb of God (John i. 29, 36) is possibly an echo of some communication Jesus had made to him privately regarding His own intention to realize this prophetic ideal (see the fourth Study). The fulfilment of the prophecy of the Servant was seen in Jesus by the first Evangelist (Matt. xii. 18-21 is a quotation from Isaiah xlii. 1-4). That Jesus conceived His function to be to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sin of man will be shown fully in the next Study; but meanwhile it may be confidently affirmed that Jesus drew His conception of

His Messiahship from the writings of the prophet of the Exile. In thus connecting the Messiahship with this prophetic ideal Jesus was absolutely original. It is now generally agreed among scholars that there was no expectation of a suffering Messiah, and that in Jewish thought the Messiah and the Servant of Jehovah, righteous yet suffering, had never been identified. The identification, if not suggested to the mind of Jesus, may have been confirmed for Him by the reference to the *anointing* of the Servant (Isa. lxi. 1). The goodly remnant in the Jewish people laid stress on the Messiah's function "to give knowledge of salvation unto his people in the remission of their sins" (Luke i. 77); but Jesus alone saw that the salvation involved the Messiah's sacrifice. It was in accordance with the conditions of the Incarnation that He should have been led to a recognition of His vocation by a study of the Holy Scriptures, which it was His aim to fulfil.

(4) Jesus does not, however, use the term *Servant* of Himself; and two reasons why He did not may be suggested; in the first place, it would have contradicted what has already been described as the original, essential element of His consciousness, His sense of sonship; and in the second place, it would have involved a premature disclosure both to His disciples and to the people of His ideal. He needed a title that would express His own consciousness without committing Him in any way to the popular expectations on the one hand, or interfere with the gradual education of His own disciples on the other hand. He found this in the term *Son of Man*. There is still abundant controversy regarding the source and the significance of the term; but into this it would be altogether contrary to the purpose of this series of Studies to enter. After careful consideration of the matter the writer's conclusion is that Jesus Himself did use the term, that He did not use it impersonally as

indicating mankind generally, but personally as defining His own distinctive function, that it was not in current use as a designation of the Messiah, and that it was chosen to conceal His Messianic claim while serving gradually to reveal the contents of His Messianic ideal. That He was familiar with the *Similitudes* of the *Book of Enoch* the writer does not consider probable, and even if Jesus were so familiar, it seems to him still less probable that the significance of the term in the Gospels is to be determined by its meaning in that writing. We may be sure that He put His own meaning into the term He chose. It is by no means certain, as is sometimes assumed, that the *Book of Daniel* suggested the term to Him, although in the eschatological passages in which it is used a reference to that book is probable. There are other passages, however, which seem to show that Psalm viii. first of all suggested the use of the term. It is impossible, however, to trace the varied uses of the title by Him to one source.

(5) Before investigating the meaning of the term we may classify the passages in which it occurs. The habits of the *Son of Man* are described; He "came eating and drinking" (Matt. xi. 19), and He "hath not where to lay His head" (viii. 20). His varied functions are indicated; He hath "authority on earth to forgive sins" (ix. 6), "is lord of the Sabbath" (xii. 8), "soweth the good seed" (xiii. 37), "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (xx. 28), "came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). His passion and resurrection are foretold; He "must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark viii. 31; cf. Matt. xvii. 22, xx. 18, xxvi. 2), He "shall suffer" like Elijah (Matt. xvii. 12), He "goeth as it is written of Him" (xxvi. 24), He "is betrayed into

the hands of sinners by a kiss" (xxvi. 24, 45, 49). His second coming is frequently referred to (Matt. x. 23, xiii. 41, xvi. 27, 28, xix. 28, xxiv. 27, 30, 37, 39, 44, xxv. 31); the most significant allusion is in Jesus' answer to the high priest, "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (xxvi, 64). A few passages cannot be classified: "A word against the Son of Man shall be forgiven" (Matt. xii. 32); the disciples shall be reproached "for the Son of Man's sake" (Luke vi. 22); He "will confess before the angels of God" those who "confess Him before men" (xii. 8); He is a sign to His own generation as was Jonah to the Ninevites (xi. 30); there will be desire to see one of His days (xvii. 22). That the term Son of Man was not a recognized title of the Messiah is proved by Jesus' question which called forth Peter's confession, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" (Matt. xvi. 13). Another evidence is the bewilderment of the people as reported in the Fourth Gospel: "Who is this Son of Man?" (John xii. 34). In this Gospel the title is of less frequent occurrence. The disciples shall "see the heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (i. 51); He "which is in heaven descended out of heaven" and "must be lifted up" (iii. 13, 14; cf. vi. 62, viii. 28). He gives eternal life by the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood (vi. 27, 53), He is being glorified (xii. 23; cf. xiii. 31) in His death. It has been generally affirmed that this title is used by Jesus only, and never by any other, except Stephen (Acts vii. 56); but some of the passages in the Fourth Gospel seem to be either reflexions of the Evangelist (as iii. 13, 14) or utterances of Jesus translated into the Evangelist's peculiar phraseology (as vi. 27, 52); and we cannot, therefore, confidently use any of the Johannine passages to determine the significance of the phrase. Apart,

however, from the references to the descent from heaven (iii. 13, vi. 62), and the constant intercourse with the open heaven (i. 51), they do not add anything that would essentially modify the conception indicated by the Synoptic passages. Humiliation is as prominent as exaltation, humility as dignity, in these allusions, and it is therefore impossible to define the conception from one exclusive point of view. The predicates assigned to the Son of Man do not give to the term any distinctive meaning.

(6) It is not improbable that Psalm viii. suggested some of the uses of the title. Just as the Psalmist was surprised at God's condescension in being mindful of, and visiting man (verse 4) so Jesus lived in a glad and thankful wonder at the goodness of His Father to Him. He did make lofty claims for Himself ; but His spirit of lowliness was expressed in the title with which these claims were associated. It was as crowned by God with glory and honour that He forgave sins, was lord of the Sabbath, gave His life a ransom for many, sought and saved the lost. In distinguishing Himself from mankind in claiming these distinctive functions for the good of men, He yet identified Himself with the race to which He brought these Divine gifts. His humility towards God is expressed in this title as well as His sympathy towards man. He came to fulfil the prophecy of the Jewish Messiah, but He chose a title for Himself that ignored, and so implicitly denied, these local limitations. It has been already sufficiently shown that the love of Jesus was universal in its range ; and we are surely justified in finding in this universal love one reason for His adoption of this title. In His ministry He was compelled often to submit to the limitations which Jewish exclusiveness imposed, but the name by which He chose to be known was a constant protest against this temporary restriction of His ministry. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that Jesus

meant by the use of this title to so assert His similarity to other men as to deny His superiority. It was because there was no natural identity that it was necessary for Him thus to intimate His voluntary identification with the race. A sense of difference of moral character, of religious consciousness, of historical position and function, is expressed, as well as the desire for union with the race, so that He might become the channel of divine grace to it.

(7) For such reasons probably Jesus chose the title Son of Man; but what was the original and essential element in His consciousness was expressed in the title Son of God, which He used, if at all, with very much greater reserve. It was a not altogether unfamiliar phrase to Jewish ears. It is used in the Old Testament of angels (Gen. vi. 2, 4), of judges or rulers (Ps. lxxxii. 6), of the theocratic king (2 Sam. vii. 14: "I will be his father, and he shall be my son"), of the theocratic people (Exod. iv. 22; cf. Hos. xi. 1), of the Messiah (Ps. lxxxix. and ii.). That this was a current designation of the Messiah seems to be indicated by the use of it by the demoniacs (Mark iii. 11, v. 7). The centurion's words at the Cross (xv. 39), which may be rendered *a Son of God* as well as *the Son of God*, may express pagan superstition rather than Jewish belief. We cannot be sure that the use of the title in the Fourth Gospel, as by the Baptist (i. 34) and Nathanael (i. 49), or even by Christ Himself (v. 25, ix. 35, x. 36, xi. 4), is not an echo of contemporary Christian belief; as it was natural for the Evangelist, writing after so long an interval of time, to antedate theological terms. This remark applies also to Matthew xiv. 33, xxvi. 63. One hesitates about applying the same criticism to Peter's Confession in Matthew xvi. 16, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"; but uncertainty must be induced by the comparison of the parallel records. Mark has only the words, "Thou art

the Christ" (viii. 29), and Luke "the Christ of God" (ix. 20). If Peter did use the term, we must beware of importing into it all that it afterwards meant. He would use it as the loftiest title of the Messiah; and so would any who might have employed it during the earthly ministry of Jesus. We must not assume, however, that Jesus regarded His Divine sonship as primarily and distinctively a Messianic honour or prerogative; but must seek for the roots of this religious consciousness in His unique nature.

(8) How soon the consciousness of sonship was awakened in Jesus we cannot tell; but it is probable that the revelation came to Him gradually in correspondence with His mental, moral, and spiritual development. From the beginning of His conscious and voluntary temporal existence His attitude toward God was filial trust in, love for, surrender to Him. Whether any external communication from His mother regarding the wonder and promise of His birth, made with such reticence as regards details as His youth imposed, was divinely used to evoke certainty and confidence regarding His unique relation to God we cannot be certain; but that is at least probable (see the third Study). The interest such an intimation would awaken, and the enthusiasm it would kindle, may explain the mood of absorption in the Temple which made Him remain behind in Jerusalem, and inspired His answer to His mother's reproach, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke ii. 49). The silent years in Nazareth witnessed a continuous development of this religious consciousness, and the corresponding moral character. When the conviction of His Messiahship, and the conception of the nature of His vocation as prefigured by the righteous Servant of Jehovah came to Him we have no indication; but, as both the Messianic hope and the prophetic ideal belonged to the realm of history, Jesus'

knowledge of both must have been a mediated knowledge ; it was as He studied the Scriptures that the conviction was deepened and the conception was defined. His filial consciousness, on the other hand, belonged originally and essentially to His own nature ; it was the temporal revealing of the eternal secret of the inner life of God Himself. This filial consciousness so pervades and dominates the mind and heart and will of Jesus, that it is incredible that it can at first have been an inference drawn from His Messianic vocation. It was surely an immediate intuition. The voice at the Baptism (Matt. iii. 17 ; Mark i. 11 ; Luke iii. 22) did not discover to Him a secret hitherto hidden from Him ; but conveyed to Him who already knew Himself as Son the assurance of the Father's affection and approval in His acceptance of His vocation. It was not His sense of sonship that needed confirmation, but His choice of the service which as Son He was offering to the Father. So also the voice at the Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 5 ; Mark ix. 7 ; Luke ix. 35) did not meet any doubt of Jesus regarding His Sonship, but confirmed for the sake of the disciples present as well as for Himself His resolve to offer Himself in death as "a ransom for many." Whatever may have been the nature of the Divine manifestations on both occasions they were addressed to a consciousness receptive and responsive to such communications ; they did not constitute, but were conditioned by, His sense of sonship.

(9) During His ministry He spoke habitually of God as Father, and Himself as Son. Although He revealed God as Father of all men, and taught His disciples unitedly to pray "Our Father," yet He did not so identify Himself with men as to represent Himself as only one among many equal sons of God. He speaks of God as "my Father" (Matt. vii. 21, x. 32, xv. 13, xvi. 17, xviii. 10) in utterances in which, if He had not recognized something unique in

His relation to God, He might have been expected to say "our Father." In two parables this distinctive character of His sonship is indicated. In the parable of the husbandmen the "beloved son" is distinguished from the servants, and is described by the husbandmen as "the heir" (Mark xii. 6, 7). In the parable of the marriage feast the king's son is the bridegroom (Matt. xxii. 2. Compare the parable of the Ten Virgins, xxv. 1). What was implied in this relation between the Father and the Son is indicated in a few passages. The passage in the Synoptic Gospels which is of supreme significance is found in Matthew xi. 25-27 and Luke x. 21, 22. In this utterance of as profound emotion as sublime thought, the Divine ordering of His ministry is gratefully accepted in absolute submission to the Divine will. In the words "all things have been delivered unto me of my Father" there is not a claim to universal dominion, but a confession of entire dependence. All the words and works are given to Him by God, and, therefore, the absolute submission is appropriate to the entire dependence. But the entire dependence and the absolute submission not only accompany, but surely result from the unique intimacy. If His sonship were shared, it would be understood by men; but it is to them as much a secret as is the Divine fatherhood until revealed by Him. God's knowledge of Him is as exclusive as is His knowledge of God. It need hardly be said that there is here no claim to Divine omniscience, but only to a unique knowledge and revelation of God as Father in a unique self-knowledge as Son. Jesus Himself confesses a limitation of His knowledge of the will of the Father concerning Himself as Son. The words in Mark xiii. 32 have already been discussed in dealing, in the twelfth Study with the limitation of the knowledge of Jesus; but now we return to them to notice only that Jesus as the Son not only distinguishes Himself from men, but even from the angels in

heaven ; and thus indicates that it is possible for things hidden from men and angels to be revealed to the Son. This intimate knowledge is allied with an intense affection. He is the beloved Son, and His whole life shows His love to His Father ; although in the Synoptists this communion of love between Father and Son is not laid bare to us. But affection beautifies and glorifies both the dependence and the submission shown.

(10) With this inmost life of Jesus the Fourth Gospel deals without any of the reserve which is characteristic of the Synoptists. It is not at all improbable that there was in the company of the disciples one with whom Jesus had a closer intimacy of intercourse due to greater affinity of nature, and that the Fourth Gospel supplements the Synoptics in these matters of most sacred interest. But at the same time the Gospel is so evidently doctrine as well as history, that we cannot confidently and certainly distinguish the Evangelist's reminiscences and reflexions ; and we must also recognize the possibility that the Evangelist's comment on utterances he may have preserved correctly may be rather a theological development than a historical exposition. The claims made by Jesus, according to the testimony of this Gospel, to be the Water of Life (vii. 37, 38), the Light of the World (viii. 12, ix. 5), the Good Shepherd (x. 11-16), the Resurrection and the Life (xi. 25), and the True and Living Way to God (xiv. 6) do not necessarily transcend what is involved in His claims according to the Synoptists to forgive sins, seek and save the lost, give His life a ransom for many, be Judge of all the nations, determine the future fate of men by their present attitude to Himself. Even the statement " He that hath seen me hath seen the Father " (xiv. 9) is but a vivid expression of His claim to reveal the Father as Son. The discussion in John iii. 13-21 as an utterance of Jesus seems to be in the highest degree improbable both at

the early stage in Jesus' ministry in which it is placed, and with the sceptical inquirer to whom it is addressed : probably Nicodemus was dismissed with the altogether appropriate words reported in verse 12 ; and at verse 13 reminiscence passes into reflexion. That Jesus described Himself as "descended out of heaven," and as the "only begotten Son" cannot be affirmed, however appropriate these phrases may be to express the faith of the Christian Church regarding Him. If the Evangelist endorses as well as reports the accusation of the Jews that Jesus in calling "God His own Father" was "making Himself equal with God" (v. 18), the context does not justify his or the Jews' inference. When Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (verse 17), it was surely in filial humility and submission that He claimed the warrant of the Divine example. The argument with which He met this charge, as recorded in x. 35, 36, confirms this conclusion. While He did not place Himself merely on an equality with the judges called gods in Psalm lxxxii. 6, yet He placed His sonship on the basis that "the Father sanctified and sent Him into the world" (verse 36). This was surely not making Himself equal with God. So when He declares that "I and the Father are one" (verse 30) it is to do violence to the historical significance of the words to find in them an evidence of co-substantiality as affirmed by the Creeds. All the context demands, and therefore warrants, is identity of purpose in Father and Son. As if expressly to exclude any such inference, Jesus affirms, "My Father, which hath given them unto me, is greater than all" (verse 29) ; and He does not exclude Himself as an exception, for the reason of His joy in His going to the Father is this : "The Father is greater than I" (xiv. 28). It is in the light of such declarations that we must interpret a saying such as this, "All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine" (xvi. 15). The context also does

define the "all things" as "all the truth," the content of the revelation of the Father in the Son. The dependence, subordination, and submission of the Son to the Father are clearly taught in the Fourth Gospel; the Son can do only what He sees the Father doing (v. 19, 20), He speaks as the Father has taught Him (viii. 28), the Father hath given Him the commandment what He should speak (xii. 49), He makes known what He has heard from the Father (xv. 15), His revelation of God has been given Him (xvii. 11).

(11) His sense of sonship was always consistent with humility, reverence, and obedience as well as confidence, affection, and dignity. To import the metaphysics of the Creeds into the consciousness of Jesus is not only an error, it is a wrong. It makes the appreciation of Jesus as "the meek and lowly in heart" impossible. Not in doubt or denial of His real divinity, but in order that we may form a worthy conception of His Person, is it necessary to insist that sonship, as the term itself implies, meant for Him dependence and submission. While this religious consciousness of Jesus is inexplicable by common manhood, it is, so conceived, not inconsistent with real humanity. To trust and love and serve God as a Son is the ideal for man, first realized in Him, and realizable in others through Him. To claim equality with God is not an ideal for man, and Jesus would have severed Himself from the race with which He identifies Himself as Son of Man had He meant that when He called Himself the Son of God.

(12) It has sometimes been argued, however, that this subordination of the Son to the Father applies only to the days of His Flesh. As regards the exaltation after the Resurrection Paul, who teaches that the name of Jesus is above every name, also teaches that it is God that highly exalted Him, and gave Him this name, and that the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord is to the glory of God the

Father (Phil. ii. 9, 11). He too affirms that at the end the Son also Himself shall be subjected, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 28). As regards the pre-existence it has been disputed whether the term *Son* is applicable to the relation of the *Word* to God ; but if God is affection as well as intelligence, the latter term must be regarded as less adequate than the former. If we believe that the temporal consciousness of Jesus expressed eternal truth, then we may affirm that the subordination of Sonship to Fatherhood is eternal in the Godhead itself. Although the writer shrinks from speculation on these high themes, he may venture one step further, and conjecture that the temporal *kenosis* in the Incarnation is made possible by, nay, is due to, the eternal *kenosis* in the nature of God. The characteristics of the Incarnate belong also to the Eternal Sonship. If this be so, Jesus' consciousness of pre-existence would be not discordant, but harmonious with His humility and obedience, as there would be identity of moral and religious quality. It is true that this consciousness finds expression only in two passages in the Fourth Gospel (viii. 58, xvii. 5), and that we cannot be altogether certain that these are not interpretation rather than testimony. Accepting them, however, as authentic sayings of Jesus, how can we interpret them as consistent with the real humanity, of which we have just spoken ? We cannot and we need not assume a continuous consciousness from the pre-existent to the incarnate state of the Son of God. We have no proof that Jesus had any remembrance of the conditions of His pre-existence to hinder, or interfere with, His normal personal development. Not as an inference derived from, but as an intuition implied in, His sense of sonship there came to Him the certainty that His relation to God did not begin in time, but was eternal. So immediate was His vision of, so intimate His communion with, so intense His affection for, so absolute His submission

to, God as His Father, that His relation to God stood before Him as eternal reality. When this intuition came to Him, at what stage of His personal development the temporal disclosure of the eternal secret became possible, we cannot tell. Possibly it was His submission to the will of His Father that He should die, that was rewarded with the paternal assurance which inspired the filial certainty that His was an eternal life in God. What for a few daring thinkers has been a speculation about the origin of man in God was to Jesus a personal experience. Because He so lived in God He knew Himself to have come from God as His Eternal Son.

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*THE SECOND TEMPLE, FROM ZECHARIAH
TO EZRA.*

THE builders of the Second Temple completed their work in March 516 B.C., the last month of the sixth year of Darius.¹ The data of its size, appearance, and furniture are meagre and ambiguous. No inference can be drawn from the words of Haggai,² that in the eyes of them who had seen Solomon's Temple, the new House was as nothing; for the prophet spoke when the builders had been but a few weeks at work. That their disappointment was not with the scale of their building, but with the lack of materials to enrich it, is proved by the prophet's promise that God Himself would provide these later.³ Haggai's expression, *Who among you that saw this House in its former glory* does not imply, as has been supposed, that, though ruined, the fabric of the old House was still standing.⁴ The hypothesis is contradicted by the thoroughness with which annalists and poets alike describe

¹ Adar, the last of the Babylonian year; on the 3rd day, according to the Aramaic document in the Bk. of Ezra, vi. 15; but on the 23rd, according to 1 Esdras.

² ii. 3.

³ ii. 7, 8.

⁴ So Guthe, *Gesch.* 264; cf. 270.