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EDITED BY

CHARLES A. BRIGGS, D.D.,

*Edward Robinson Professor of Biblical Theology, Union Theological  
Seminary, New York;*

AND

STEWART D. F. SALMOND, D.D.,

*Professor of Systematic Theology and New Testament Exegesis,  
Free Church College, Aberdeen.*

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THE THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

By GEORGE BARKER STEVENS, Ph.D., D.D.

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INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY

THE THEOLOGY

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT

BY

GEORGE BARKER STEVENS, PH.D., D.D.

DWIGHT PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY  
IN YALE UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK

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TO

MY TEACHER COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND

GEORGE PARK FISHER, D.D., LL.D.

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

IN GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION



## PREFACE

THE aim of this volume is to set forth, in systematic form, the doctrinal contents of the New Testament according to its natural divisions. The general method pursued is that which is now common in this branch of theological science. Brief explanations of the mode of treating certain portions of the New Testament, with respect to which important critical differences exist among scholars, are given in the chapters introductory to the several parts of the work.

My indebtedness to other writers has been acknowledged by means of references to the literature of the subject in the footnotes. But all such acknowledgments must, of necessity, be very partial. I wish especially to express my obligations to the writings of my teachers in earlier years, Professors Weiss and Pfleiderer. Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus* has been very helpful, especially in its treatment of critical and historical considerations bearing upon interpretation. Beyschlag's *New Testament Theology* has been read with interest and profit. Holtzmann's *Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Theologie* is a valuable encyclopædia for the student of the subject. Its summaries of the results of critical exegesis and its copious citations from the most recent literature render it a work of great value for reference. Professor Bruce's writings have been of real service, especially his volume on the theology

of Paul. No one has written on the subject with finer insight and discrimination. The brilliant treatise of Professor Ménégos, entitled *Le Péché et la Rédemption d'après St. Paul*, has afforded me many useful suggestions. With none of these writers, however, have I been able in all respects to agree. Especially do I dissent from the interpretations given by Wendt and Beyschlag to those portions of the New Testament which relate to the person and work of Christ, and from the presuppositions on which Holtzmann's construction and estimate of New Testament history and theology rest.

Appended to the volume will be found a select bibliography which comprises the most important recent literature of the subject. Articles and brochures on minor topics in Biblical Theology, which would be likely to interest only the specialist, have not been included. In accordance with its somewhat general purpose the list is limited to more comprehensive works. A much fuller bibliography, arranged on a different principle, is prefixed to Holtzmann's *Lehrbuch*.

As respects its aim the present work is not apologetic or controversial. It seeks to expound, not to defend. It also recognizes the boundaries between the explicit teachings of the New Testament and inferences which may be drawn from them, however natural or apparently necessary such inferences may seem to be. The limitations of space which were prescribed for the volume have rendered it necessary to bestow careful attention upon the question of proportion and to present the various subjects which are discussed as succinctly as possible. Every chapter has involved a study in condensation.



The reader will observe that while much importance is attached to the influence of current ideas upon the teaching of Christ and the apostles, I do not believe that Christianity is a mere product of the age in which it arose. I hold to the unique and distinctive originality of Jesus and to the supernatural origin of his gospel. The truths and facts which constitute this gospel are, indeed, historically conditioned, and of these historical conditions the Biblical theologian must take full and careful account. But that movement of God in human life and history which we call Christianity transcends its historical relations and limitations, and can be justly estimated only by recognizing its divine origin and singularity. This view of the Christian religion is not merely an assumption which is carried into the present study, but equally a conclusion which is established by the study itself.

GEORGE BARKER STEVENS.

YALE UNIVERSITY,  
January, 1899.



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THE THEOLOGY  
OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT



# THE THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

## PART I

### THE TEACHING OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

#### CHAPTER I

##### INTRODUCTORY

THE task which lies before us in this part of our work is to present as clear a picture as possible of the teaching of Jesus on the basis of the Synoptic Gospels. The account of his teaching which is preserved in the fourth Gospel is so different in form from that contained in the Synoptics that it requires a separate treatment. In connection with the study of the fourth Gospel, the two types of tradition will be brought into frequent comparison.

Jesus did not commit his teaching to writing. He spoke his message and did his work, and left the recording of his words and deeds to those whose lives had been deeply impressed with their divine significance and value. How long a time passed before the first disciples began to make written memoranda of the Lord's life we cannot say, but, probably, several years. At first there would be no occasion to write narratives of his sayings and acts, since they were vividly photographed upon the memories of all his followers. The leading events of his life and his most characteristic sayings were preserved in oral tradition, and

were constantly rehearsed, in a more or less stereotyped form, in the preaching and teaching of the apostles. As time passed on, however, it became necessary to compose written narratives of the Lord's words and deeds. The gradual dispersion of the Christian community from Jerusalem, the addition of new members to the company who required definite instruction, and the passing away of some of the eye and ear witnesses, would be among the motives which would prompt to the writing of these narratives. The prologue of Luke's Gospel (i. 1-4) is very instructive in this connection. Luke says that before he wrote his Gospel many narratives (*διηγήσεις*) of the Lord's life had been written.<sup>1</sup> He implies that these were, in general, fragmentary and insufficient; that he was acquainted with some of them, and proposed to use them in constructing his own fuller account of Jesus' life. These numerous writers (*πολλοί*) of primitive Gospels, as we may call them, had written, Luke says, in accordance with the tradition of the Lord's words, which had been handed down from the beginning (of his ministry) by those who had seen and heard him (*αὐτόπται*). These earlier writers to whom Luke refers were not themselves apostles or immediate disciples, but they were acquainted, at first hand, with the primitive tradition of the Lord's words and deeds as it had been preserved among the eye and ear witnesses. That original tradition may have been oral, or written, or both; these writers had access to it, and based their narratives upon it, and Luke, in turn, had access to their work, besides possessing independent knowledge, derived from carefully tracing the course of events from the very beginning (*ἀνωθεν*) of the Master's life. Moreover, in dedicating his book to a certain Theophilus, probably a man of noble birth who had recently become a convert and who was, perhaps, the author's patron, Luke dis-

<sup>1</sup> The so-called *Logia of Jesus*, recently discovered in Egypt, are of interest as illustrating the existence, in the second century, of a hitherto unknown collection of reputed sayings of Jesus. Even if unauthentic, they illustrate the many, if not the earlier, efforts which were made to preserve the Lord's words in writing.

closes to us one of the first uses of the written Gospels — the instruction and confirmation in faith and certainty of those who were dependent upon the testimony of others for accurate knowledge of Jesus' teaching and work.

Have any of these primitive Gospels to which Luke refers been preserved to us? The Gospel of Mark is probably one of them. A critical comparison of Mark and Luke shows that Luke has freely used our second Gospel in the construction of his narrative. Moreover, the earliest tradition which has been preserved to us, the testimony of Papias,<sup>1</sup> recorded in Eusebius,<sup>2</sup> respecting the origin of Mark's Gospel, agrees strikingly with Luke's description of the earlier Gospels, which he knew and used. Papias testifies that Mark was known as the interpreter of Peter; that he wrote down with accuracy, but not in chronological order, the events of Jesus' life; but that he did this from information given him by Peter, because he was not himself an eye-witness.<sup>3</sup> This would accord exactly with what Luke says: He drew up a narrative in accordance with knowledge which had been delivered to him by an eye-witness (Peter). It is one of the best attested results of New Testament criticism that Mark's Gospel is the earliest of our three Synoptics, and that it supplied the framework on which the Gospel of Luke is constructed.

But Mark was one of the "many" to whom Luke refers. He was not an apostle nor was he a personal follower of Jesus. Does there still remain to us any specimen of the tradition which the first disciples who personally accompanied Jesus preserved? Have we any written narrative

<sup>1</sup> Papias was bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, and died about 163. According to Irenæus (d. about 202) he was a disciple of the apostle John. *Against Heresies*, Bk. V. ch. xxxiii. 4. He composed a treatise in five books (now lost) entitled, *Interpretation of the Lord's Oracles*, λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξήγησις.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, III. 39.

<sup>3</sup> The testimony of Irenæus is to the same effect: "Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter." *Against Heresies*, Bk. III. ch. i. 1.

which emanates directly from an apostle or other eye-witness? Turning again to the section of Eusebius just cited, we find this quotation from Papias: "Matthew composed the Oracles (*τὰ λόγια*) in the Hebrew dialect, and each one interpreted them as he was able." Irenæus confirms this assertion.<sup>1</sup> If this ancient testimony is correct, we have here a trace of a primitive, apostolic, written source.

Numerous perplexing questions now arise concerning this writing which Papias calls the Oracles, or Logia, into which I cannot here enter at length. For a discussion of them I must refer the reader to treatises on New Testament Introduction. It is, at present, the general belief of scholars that this tradition is trustworthy, and that the Hebrew Logia of Matthew is the principal literary basis of our first Gospel. In my own judgment this is a second secure result of New Testament criticism. The *λόγια* of Matthew would be an example of the tradition (*παράδοσις*; cf. *παρέδοσαν*) of the eye-witnesses (*αὐτόπται*) upon which the many (*πολλοί*) mentioned by Luke had based their narratives (*διηγήσεις*; Lk. i. 1-4). It is probable that the Logia consisted mainly of sayings and discourses of Jesus connected together by brief historical narratives; that this writing was early translated into Greek, and incorporated into our first Gospel by another hand than that of Matthew. We thus get the elements of the "two-source theory" of the Synoptics now common among scholars. It may be stated thus: Mark, the oldest of our Synoptics in their present form, is, according to Papias, based primarily on the testimony of Peter. Other sources were probably open to him; Weiss holds that Matthew's Logia was one of these, but this view is disputed by other scholars. Mark was freely used by both the first and third evangelists. These two writers also freely used Matthew's Logia, each combining this writing with Mark in his own way. Their common, but independent, use of the Logia goes far to explain their agreement in places in which they are inde-

<sup>1</sup> "Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect," etc. *Against Heresies*, Bk. III. ch. i. 1.

pendent of Mark. Thus Mark and the Logia are the "two sources" referred to in this theory.<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be said, in general, whether the first or the third evangelist has more faithfully preserved the apostolic source. Now one, now the other, gives its narratives in greater fulness or in more natural connections. From the way in which the Logia material is distributed in the first Gospel, it has happened that many sayings have fallen out because they found no point of connection with the Mark narrative, which Luke, by his method of using the former, has preserved. It is, therefore, probable that the original order of the Logia material is better preserved in Luke. In the first Gospel the sayings are more frequently grouped together on the principle of internal kinship, without regard to their original connection. On the question whether there is a direct interdependence between the first and third Gospels, specialists are divided. Holtzmann and Wendt hold that Luke knew and used one first Gospel; Weiss is of the contrary opinion.

It will thus be seen that according to the view which I adopt as probable, our first Gospel is not, in its present form, the work of the apostle Matthew. The traditional designation of it as "The Gospel according to Matthew" is, however, justified, since it is an amplification of Matthew's Logia. For convenience I shall use the name "Matthew" when I refer to the book which bears his name, in the same way as I do "Mark" and "Luke."

<sup>1</sup> It must, however, in fairness, be mentioned that a considerable number of scholars doubt the correctness of the Papias tradition, and call in question theories based upon the supposition of a Matthaic Logia. It may happen that the "two-source theory" will be modified by later criticism, or even supplanted. It cannot be claimed that, in itself, it presents a final solution of the Synoptic problem. It should, therefore, be held, not as a demonstrated truth, but as a working hypothesis—the best which criticism has, thus far, attained. I have used it as such. The substance of my portrayal of the teaching of Jesus would not be materially affected by its modification. I cannot doubt that the elements which entered into the formation of our Gospels were so numerous, and their combination so complicated that no theory is capable of fully explaining all the facts. The truth of such theories should be regarded as approximate, and their evidence as probable only.

These three forms of the Synoptic tradition, emanating, as they do, from three different hands and yet being, to a great extent, interdependent and based upon common documents, give rise to very perplexing questions when the narratives are treated critically and in detail. It has long been felt that the scholar's work was not done when the three narratives were adjusted to each other as ingeniously as possible and printed side by side. The striking similarities and the no less striking differences still remain to be explained. Variations of order and apparent repetitions of events need to be accounted for. These problems have given rise to the science of Gospel-criticism, or Higher Criticism as applied to the Gospels. This department of Biblical learning has been diligently cultivated in recent times, and to it such specialists as Holtzmann, Weiss, Wendt, and Resch have devoted the most painstaking and conscientious labor. It deals with the literary and historical problems to which a critical comparison of the narratives gives rise. Its work logically precedes that of exegesis, and, in many cases, has an important bearing upon interpretation. In the portrayal of the teaching of Jesus which follows I shall hope not to contravene any well-established result of criticism. Although the purpose of my work does not require me directly to discuss the questions which arise within this field, — and the limits of this volume would not permit it, — yet I shall, in the more important instances, refer the reader to works in which such problems are considered and shall indicate the bearing of the points at issue.<sup>1</sup>

It is a question of the utmost importance for the student of our subject, how the views of our sources at which criticism has arrived, affect the reliability of our Synoptic Gos-

<sup>1</sup> The first or untranslated part of Wendt's work, *Die Lehre Jesu*, I shall cite by that title. The second or translated part, originally entitled *Der Inhalt der Lehre Jesu*, I shall cite from the translation which bears the title, *The Teaching of Jesus*. For the convenience of most readers, I shall cite the translation of Weiss's *Leben Jesu* instead of the original, and so in the case of other German works of which there are translations in common use. Whenever practicable and useful, I shall also add, in parenthesis, references to the original.



pels. No one of them is the immediate product of an apostle or other eye-witness. In time and authorship they belong to the next generation after that of Jesus himself. They are, however, based upon apostolic tradition. Mark rests mainly, as we have seen, upon information derived from Peter which, through the incorporation of Mark into Matthew and Luke, is one main source of both the other Synoptics. The other principal source is an apostolic writing, the Logia of Matthew. We have, then, an apostolic basis for our first three Gospels which entitles them, in a purely historical judgment, to make a strong claim to trustworthiness. If this interdependence and use of common materials which criticism recognizes, have confused certain details and occasioned a misapprehension of some events and sayings, we can only say that this was inevitable in such a process of collation and revision as both external testimony and internal evidence prove to have taken place. The substantial truthfulness of the Synoptic picture of our Lord's life is only the more naturally and realistically attested. If criticism has been compelled to discredit those methods of argument by which the older Apologetics sought to prove that all three Synoptics really emanated from apostles, and by forced harmonizing and strained interpretation explained away differences and reconciled discrepancies, it has substituted for this claim of formal infallibility for the Gospels a valid and defensible assertion of substantial historical trustworthiness. It maintains that the Gospels rest upon reliable testimony and that they can stand upon the same grounds on which other historical narratives stand. Their authors were competent men who possessed information respecting their subject — not, indeed, complete, but yet sufficient for their purpose — and who, therefore, wrote of Christ's words and deeds with knowledge, intelligence, honesty, and sympathy. If this claim is a more modest one than that which was formerly made, it has the advantage of being the one claim which the Gospels make for themselves and the additional advantage of agreeing alike with the earliest Church tradition and with the phenomena of the Gospels themselves.

The various types of New Testament teaching have of late been studied with constant reference to their historical background. The teaching of Jesus, for example, is viewed in its connection with Old Testament thought and with the religious ideas which prevailed among the Jews in his time. To the first of these relations we shall devote a separate chapter. The relations of likeness and of difference between the popular religious teaching of the later Judaism and the teaching of Jesus form a theme too vast to admit of full discussion in this volume. Of recent writers on our present subject Wendt, in his *Teaching of Jesus*, and Holtzmann, in his *Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Theologie*, have most elaborately portrayed this popular teaching and exhibited its relations to the doctrine of Jesus. To these works I shall, from time to time, refer. It will serve our present purpose, however, briefly to advert to some of the most significant points of connection between Jewish ideas and the thought of Jesus.

The later Jewish teaching and the doctrine of Jesus alike had their historical roots in the Old Testament. But the former was developed by traditional accretion and fanciful interpretations; the latter freely and independently by expanding the germs of essential spiritual truth which were implicit in the Old Testament religion. Both the scribe and Jesus held fast to the Old Testament, but they used it in the most different ways. To the scribe it was a repository of external rules and distinctions, admitting of endless subdivision and extension; to Jesus it was a provisional expression of great spiritual truths and laws which needed to be rescued from the limitations in which they had been enclosed and given their true, universal scope and validity.

In its outward form and method the teaching of Jesus was much like that which prevailed in his time. He stood or sat in the midst of a group of disciples or other hearers and explained and illustrated his thoughts. His teaching was largely embodied in pithy, pointed sayings which were designed and adapted to impress the popular mind. He taught rather by suggestion than by presenting a full and

systematic view of any subject. It is unlikely that the extended groups of didactic sayings which appear in the Gospels as if they constituted continuous discourses were, in all cases, spoken at one time. They are often collections of sayings which have been massed together, as, for example, the "Sermon on the Mount" and the group of parables in Mt. xiii.

Jesus frequently taught by the use of examples. For instance, he explained the nature of true righteousness (Mt. v. 20 *sq.*) by citing from the Old Testament and from Rabbinic teaching, maxims which were either imperfect or inadequate in themselves, or were erroneously applied by the people. Sometimes he taught by action, as when he took a child in his arms in order to emphasize the necessity of childlikeness in those who would be members of his Kingdom. But one of the most striking forms of Jesus' teaching was the parable. A parable is a narrative of some real or imaginary event in nature or in common life, which is adapted to suggest a moral or religious truth. The parable rests upon some correspondence, more or less exact, between events in nature or in human experience, and the truths of religion. Wendt distinguishes two classes of parables:<sup>1</sup> (1) those in which some fact in the actual world is adduced as illustrating a moral or religious principle, and (2) those in which some imagined events, or series of events, — which might naturally happen, — is narrated to illustrate a spiritual truth or process. Examples of the first sort of parables are: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick" (Mk. ii. 17), and the sayings about sewing a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment (Mk. ii. 21) and about a kingdom divided against itself (Mk. iii. 24). It is the second class of parables — the parable-stories, such as those of the Sower (Mk. iv. 3 *sq.*), the Vineyard (Mt. xxi. 28 *sq.*), and the Prodigal Son (Lk. xv. 11 *sq.*), which excite the greatest interest in the student of the Bible.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Teaching of Jesus*, I. 117 *sq.* (orig. p. 84 *sq.*).

<sup>2</sup> An interesting comparison between the parable and other figurative forms of speech, such as the fable, the myth, and the allegory, will be found in R. C. Trench's *Notes on the Parables*, ch. i.

A word must here be said respecting the interpretation of this class of parables. The commonest error of interpreters is to apply the allegorical method to the parables, that is, to seek to find some special and distinct meaning in each detail of the parable-story. This method assumes that the parable is intended to present either a complete parallel at every point between the illustrative narrative employed and the religious truth to be inculcated, or even to teach a whole series of religious lessons all at once. To some parables this method can be applied without apparent violence to their intention, but this is because they are so simple and compact as to form one indivisible picture, or because the analogy used happens to be especially complete and many-sided. In most cases, however, this method breaks down entirely. Indeed, in cases where it seems successful, its apparent success is never due to its soundness as a method. There is hardly any limit to the absurdities which have been derived from the parables by trying to make every character which is introduced into them, and every incident of the parable-story, represent some particular person or symbolize some religious truth in the application.

A sound general principle for the interpretation of the parable is that it is intended to teach one single truth. The parallel between the story which embodies this truth and its spiritual counterpart may be more or less complete. The point of the teaching may lie in the whole picture which the parable presents, or it may lie in some single aspect or element of the picture. The parable of the Prodigal Son and that of the Sower are examples of parables whose significance is found in the entire picture which they present. No violence is done in these cases by assigning a didactic value in interpretation even to the details of the parable-story; indeed, we find that this is done by our Lord himself in his explanation of the parable of the Sower.<sup>1</sup> But in many cases the details of the parable are

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, *Life of Christ*, II. 206, 215 (Bk. IV. ch. ii.), regards the explanation of this parable, which is given in all the Synoptics, as an allegorizing interpretation by Mark; Holtzmann, *Hand-Comm. ad loc.*, as

only for the sake of completing the parable-narrative, in order that the one point of comparison may be set in clear relief. Who is the rich man in the parable of the Rich Man and the Steward (Lk. xvi. 1 *sq.*)? Some say, God; others, the Romans; still others, the devil; and these are but a few of the answers which have been given. Who is the steward? We find a similar variety of answers: the wealthy, the Israelites, sinners, and even Judas Iscariot. The fact is that it makes no difference who the rich man is, or who the steward is. The point of the parable does not depend upon finding a counterpart for these persons. Whom does the servant who owed ten thousand talents represent? Who is the merchant who sought goodly pearls? Who the woman who puts the leaven in the meal, or the one who sweeps the house in search of the lost piece of money? No answers are to be sought to such questions. The meaning hinges on the *action*, not on the *personnel*, of these parables. The persons introduced are merely necessary as instruments to represent the significant act or event, and have, in themselves, no significance whatever.<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary now to illustrate, in some important points, that popular Jewish theology which forms the background and presupposition of so much of Jesus' teaching. We will notice, first, the Jewish idea of God. The idea of God's exaltation above the world was carried so far by the Jews of Jesus' time that he was almost separated from the world. God was chiefly thought of as a judge or governor. His relations with men were conceived of in a legal, rather than in a vital, way. God was an accountant who exactly credited all good deeds, and, with equal exactness, estimated and punished all transgressions

a traditional form which the explanation had taken in the teaching of the community. Most interpreters have not hesitated, in spite of the absence of a formal and precise congruity in the explanation, to ascribe it to Jesus himself. Wendt, *Teaching*, I. 125, attributes this interpretation to Jesus, although he thinks it has been displaced from its original connection. See *Lehre Jesu*, p. 30 *sq.*

<sup>1</sup> In this connection I would refer to the exhaustive study of the parabolic teaching of Jesus in Jülicher's *Gleichnisreden Jesu*.

of his law. It will readily be seen how the extreme development of this idea would tend to exclude the truth of God's grace from the minds of men, for the very idea of God's grace is that he treats men better than they deserve.

This conception of God exerted a most potent influence on practical religion. The God who was far away in the heavens had made a revelation of his will in the laws and ceremonies of the Pentateuch, and religion consisted, to the mind of the Jew, in strict obedience to all the requirements of this legal system. The main emphasis was, accordingly, laid on the externals of religion as means of pleasing God and winning his favor.

There were, however, important elements of truth in the popular Jewish idea of God. The transcendence of God—his independence of the world and superiority to it—was strongly emphasized, but the complementary truth of God's constant presence in the world was correspondingly obscured. And with this transcendence were associated ideas of arbitrariness, legal strictness and harshness, rather than ideas of moral excellence or love. So perverted an idea of God's nature and relations to the world could only lead to superficial conceptions of his will and requirements. The allusions which Jesus made to the religious ideas of the Pharisees show what popular religion had become. It was a round of ceremonies and observances most of which had nothing to do with the state of the heart and life—a tithing of mint, anise, and cummin, while judgment and the love of God were forgotten.

We are thus led to the consideration of the current idea of righteousness among the Jews in contrast to that which Jesus presents. Their idea of righteousness grew out of their conception of God and of his revelation. It consisted in obedience to commandments, and these commandments were looked at in quite an external way. The rich young ruler who came to Jesus asking what he should do to inherit eternal life (Mk. x. 17 sq.) is a concrete illustration of the view which the Jews took of the commandments. He said that he had kept them all. He

considered that to refrain from doing such evil deeds as stealing, lying, sabbath-breaking, and the like, which the commandments forbade, was to keep the commandments perfectly. Only a superficial conception of the import and bearing of the commandments could underlie his claim that he had kept them all from his youth. The same faulty notion of the real moral requirements of the law lay at the root of the pride and self-righteousness of the Pharisees. They thought themselves righteous only because they measured themselves by an imperfect standard.

It would not be correct to suppose that all the Jews believed themselves to have kept the law perfectly. On the contrary, they invented various devices by which they thought they could make good their personal deficiencies. Specially great sufferings and meritorious works, such as almsgiving, were thought to have an atoning efficacy. The extraordinary merits of one's ancestors or friends might avail to supply defects in obedience.<sup>1</sup>

One of two results was quite sure to flow from this externalism in religion, either of which would be destructive of a healthy religious life. On the one hand, if one supposed himself to have done all that was required, he would easily fall a prey to spiritual pride, for had not he achieved this lofty height of goodness by his own exertions? On the other hand, if a man felt that he had failed to do the divine will and to win acceptance with God, he would naturally become hopeless and despondent. We accordingly find that the religious life of the Jewish people, to a great extent, oscillated between self-righteousness and despair. The former of these tendencies is illustrated by the hypocrisy and self-righteousness which were the common characteristics of the Pharisees; the latter by the gloom and despair of a sincere religious mind in the pre-Christian experience of the apostle Paul which is reflected in the seventh chapter of Romans.

Now when Jesus came, he presented a very different idea of the way in which men are to find acceptance with God. He taught that trust or faith was what God required.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie* (1897), § 63.

This teaching opens a way of salvation on which any one, however weak and sinful, may enter. It is not necessary to climb up into God's favor by meritorious works; nor is it possible, since the power of sin is so great in unrenewed human nature. In substituting faith for works Jesus gave quite a new character to religion. He opened the way to real repose of soul because in faith men do not rest upon their own achievements, but in God's mercy. They have a secure ground of hope in the goodness of God. But this faith is not a mere passive principle; it involves love and obedience. Real trust in God implies living fellowship with him. Thus faith sets man in his true relation to God because it both opens his life to the divine grace and also calls forth his own best aspiration and effort after likeness to God. Christ's teaching, therefore, replaces self-righteousness by humility, and substitutes confidence for despair. Its whole idea is that of a vital, loving relation with God.

The teaching of Jesus presents a great contrast to the Jewish ideas of his time in regard to the person and work of the Messiah. The popular Messianic idea had been formed from those prophecies which represented the Messiah as a Prince or King. These representations were taken in a political sense. The Messiah was to be another David who should restore the Jewish monarchy to power and glory, subdue hostile nations, and rule the conquered world in unsurpassed majesty. When, therefore, Jesus appeared, claiming to be the Messiah, and yet did nothing which the Jews expected the Messiah to do, it is not strange that they rejected his claim. And when he began to teach that he must suffer death, his contemporaries were more than ever offended at his claim to be the Messiah. Even his disciples found it hard to overcome their Jewish prejudices respecting Messiah's person so far as to see how their Master could be destined to suffer death. "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall never be unto thee" (Mt. xvi. 22), exclaimed Peter when Jesus said that he must suffer many things, and be put to death, and in so doing he doubtless voiced the general feeling.



The doctrine of a suffering Messiah was not current in pre-Christian Judaism.<sup>1</sup> The *dolores Messiae* of which Jewish writers speak are not the Messiah's personal sufferings, but calamities which, it was believed, would come upon Israel and the world previous to, and in connection with, Messiah's coming. The Old Testament passages which describe the suffering Servant of Jehovah, such as Isa. liii., were not applied to the person of the Messiah until Christian times. The Jewish Messianic ideal at the time when Jesus appeared was too much associated with thoughts of earthly power and glory to permit of reconciliation with the notion that the Messiah should die an ignominious death. The ideas of Jesus, therefore, stood in sharp contrast with the popular expectations of the Jews of his time respecting Messiah's work and kingdom.

The Jews of a later period believed that there was to be a preparatory Messiah, the son of Joseph, who was to die as a warrior in defending the nation. He was not conceived of as preëminently a sufferer, nor was his death regarded as atoning. He was to prepare the way for the victorious Messiah, the son of David. Preparatory sufferings of a sympathetic and disciplinary nature were sometimes attributed to him during the time preceding his entrance upon his Messianic vocation.<sup>2</sup>

An inevitable result of the ideas of salvation, righteousness, and the kingdom of God which we have noticed, was that the Jews regarded themselves as the special favorites of heaven. To them, as they thought, God had given his only revelation, and to them he had restricted his saving mercy. The Old Testament had presented the idea that God had bestowed peculiar privileges upon the Jews in order that they might be the bearers of true religion to the world. They, on the other hand, considered their privi-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Stanton, *The Jewish and the Christian Messiah*, pp. 122, 123; Schürer, *Jewish People*, Div. II. § 29. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See Dalman, *Der leidende und der sterbende Messias der Synagoge*, who has shown that the dying Messiah, *ben Joseph*, and the suffering Messiah, *ben David*, must be kept entirely distinct. Cf. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, § 79. The contrary view is represented by Wünsche, *Die Leiden der Messias*.

leges as destined for themselves alone. The favors of heaven should stop with them and be their exclusive possession. This attitude of mind involved the great perversion of Israel's history. By failing to receive Christ and his world-wide conception of salvation, they broke with the sublime purpose of God in their own history, and failed to attain the true goal of their existence as the theocratic people.

These illustrations of Jewish ideas will serve to show how uncongenial to the spiritual truth of Jesus was the soil in which he must plant it. To the thought of his age God was afar off, his service was a round of rites and observances, righteousness was an external, and largely a non-moral, affair, and the great hope of the nation was to subdue, by divine intervention, the surrounding nations and to obtain supremacy over the world. With all these ideas and hopes the teachings of Jesus came into the sharpest collision. He aimed to show men that God was near to them and that they could live in fellowship with him. He taught that all outward rites were valueless in themselves and that God cared most about the state of the heart. For him righteousness consisted in Godlikeness; that is, in love, service, and helpfulness.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GOSPEL AND THE LAW

IN his teaching Jesus took his stand, as we have seen, upon the Old Testament. He did not aim to introduce a wholly new religion. He clearly foresaw that some of his disciples would suppose that it was his purpose to break with the Old Testament system, and he warned them against this serious mistake by telling them that any of them who should feel themselves free to break the least commandment of the Old Testament law, and should teach others accordingly, should be called the least in the Kingdom of God (Mt. v. 19). His constant manner of speaking in regard to the Jewish religion and Scriptures shows the reverence in which he held them.<sup>1</sup>

There is in one of his parables a significant expression in regard to the gradual progress of his truth in the world: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mk. iv. 28). This statement might be fitly applied to the whole process of revelation of which the Old Testament represents the earlier stages. It would as truly describe Jesus' idea of this process as it does the growth to which he immediately applied it. The Old Testament represents the first steps in a great course of revelation and redemption which reaches its consummation in Christ himself.

While, therefore, Jesus builds upon the Jewish religious system, he also builds far above and beyond it. While

<sup>1</sup> On this subject I would refer the reader to the following discussions: R. Mackintosh, *Christ and the Jewish Law*, 1886; E. Schürer, *Die Predigt Jesu Christi in ihrem Verhältniss zum alten Testament und zum Judenthum*, 1882; W. Bousset, *Jesu Predigt in ihrem Gegensatz zum Judenthum*, 1892; L. Jacob, *Jesu Stellung zum mosaischen Gesetz*, 1893.

salvation, historically considered, is from the Jews, it is none the less necessary that the Jewish religion should be greatly elevated and enriched. The actual religion of the people, though embodying essential and permanent elements of true religion, is not adequate to the needs of the world; it must be further developed, supplemented, and completed at many points before it can become the universal, the absolute religion.

There were imperfections in the Jewish religion which were incidental to its character and purpose. It was in its very nature provisional and preparatory. It was adapted to an early and rude stage of human development. A convenient illustration is found in the principle of retaliation which, within certain limits, the Old Testament sanctioned. "Ye have heard," said Jesus, "that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil," etc. (Mt. v. 38, 39). Another example is found in his conversation with the Pharisees when they asked him why, if a man and wife became one in marriage, Moses commanded to give a bill of divorcement. Jesus answered, "Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you," etc. (Mt. xix. 8).

Jesus, in effect, undermined the Jewish law of clean and unclean by setting forth the principle that it is not what enters into a man which defiles him, but that it is that which proceeds out of him, that is, from his heart, which defiles him (Mk. vii. 15). The Levitical system of sacrifices would not long survive among those who appreciated the force of the principle that "to love God with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mk. xii. 33). It is obvious, then, that the actual effect of the Gospel in doing away with the Jewish sacrificial and ceremonial system was a natural and logical result of the principles which Jesus laid down, and may be said to have been contemplated by him.

But the question now arises, Did Jesus intend to abrogate the whole Old Testament religious system, and, if so, by what means? This question also involves another, If he did do away with this system, how is the fact to be reconciled with his frequent assertion of its divineness? The most important passage, in its bearing on these problems, is Mt. v. 17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." This passage must be read in the light of the explanations and applications which follow it. Jesus proceeds to say that not a jot or tittle shall pass away from the law, — a statement which, if read by itself, would seem to indicate the perpetual validity of the whole Old Testament system, ritual, sacrifices, and all. But to the statement in question he immediately adds: "till all things be fulfilled, or accomplished." He does not, therefore, say that no part of this system shall ever pass away (as it has done, and that, too, in consequence of his own teaching), but only that no part of it shall escape the process of fulfilment; that it shall not pass away till, having served its providential purpose, it is fulfilled in the gospel. What, now, is this fulfilment which is to be accomplished for the whole law, even for its least portions?

This question is not to be answered in a single sentence or definition. The fulfilment of the old system by the new is a great historic process, the adequate understanding of which requires a careful study of the whole New Testament. Its salient features, however, may be briefly indicated. Jesus fulfils the Old Testament system by rounding out into ideal completeness what is incomplete in that system. In this process of fulfilment, all that is imperfect, provisional, temporary, or, for any reason, needless to the perfect religion, falls away of its own accord, and all that is essential and permanent is conserved and embodied in Christianity. Some of the elements of this fulfilment are as follows:

(1) Jesus fulfils the law perfectly in his own personal life. The character of Jesus was the realization of the ideal which the law contemplated. He was a perfectly

righteous person, and it was righteousness which the law demanded and aimed to secure. But it is not merely or mainly the personal fulfilment of the law's ideal to which Jesus refers in saying that he came to fulfil the law.

(2) Jesus fulfilled the law in his teaching by setting forth therein the absolute truths of religion and the universal principles of goodness. This point may best be illustrated from the context of the passage under review. Our Lord says that the true righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (*v.* 20). Their righteousness consisted in the punctilious observance of the bare letter of the law, quite to the neglect of its spirit. Jesus then proceeds to show the difference between such external, superficial righteousness and that which corresponds to the law's true ideal. He says (*v.* 21 *sq.*): You have in the Old Testament the commandment, Thou shalt not kill. It is commonly supposed that to refrain from the actual, overt act of murder is to keep that commandment, but I tell you that he only truly keeps it who refrains from anger and hate. In the sight of God, hate is the essence of murder. He thus finds the seat of all goodness, and of all sin in the heart, that is, in the sphere of the motives and the desires.

In like manner, he declares that the essence of adultery is in the lustful desire and the impure look. He thus makes righteousness an inward and moral affair. It depends upon the state of the heart. This truth he next illustrates by reference to a more subtle distinction (*vv.* 33-37). He cites the commandment which requires men to speak the truth, and to perform their vows unto God. It appears that under cover of this second requirement the Jews permitted themselves to make subtle distinctions between vows or oaths taken "to Jehovah," and those taken, for example, "by the heaven," or "by Jerusalem." Oaths taken in Jehovah's name were regarded as more sacred and binding than those not so taken, and thus an easy way was opened for disregarding the real sacredness of vows and promises. Jesus strikes at the root of all these hollow and dishonest distinctions, and discounte-

nances altogether the use of oaths in apparent confirmation of one's word. Such oaths, he says in effect, are either meaningless or irreverent. Let your simple word be enough. Esteem that to be as binding as if you had coupled your statement with Jehovah's name. The Jews had made the commandment of truthfulness an instrument of untruthfulness; Jesus insists upon a truthful heart which, to use a modern phrase, makes one's "word as good as his bond."

The illustrations of fulfilment thus far given are examples of the way in which Jesus penetrated in his teaching to the inner meaning of Old Testament precepts and exhibited their true ideal requirements, as against the superficial application of them which regarded them as relating to outward action only. Now, however, he takes an example of an Old Testament legal principle to which in itself he objects: "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth (Ex. xxi. 24); but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil," etc. (vv. 38, 39). The principle here cited was a part of the Mosaic system. It was a law of retaliation which magistrates were to apply under certain restrictions in the punishment of crimes; it was popularly applied to justify personal, private revenge. Unwarranted as this application was, we cannot justly say that it was this alone to which Jesus objected. The principle which he enunciates is certainly opposed to retaliation itself, though not to retribution. The rule that the wrongdoer was to suffer the same kind of an injury which he had done to another represented a rude kind of justice which was better than none; but it did not accord with the spirit of the teaching of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

As a final example of fulfilment he cited the commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor" (Lev. xix. 18), and joined with it the popular addition which was derived

<sup>1</sup> The legal rule in question was not merely a *lex retributionis*, but a *lex talionis*. All penal legislation proportions penalty to crime, but it does not punish in kind; much less does it countenance the private redress of wrongs. The teaching of Jesus here cannot, therefore, be construed into a disapproval of civil penalties in general.

by inference from it: "and hate thine enemy" (Mt. v. 43). Jesus, on the contrary, set forth the ideal import of the commandment and illustrated and enforced the duty which it enjoins by showing that the love of God, which is the type of all true love, is not niggardly, but large and generous. He then concludes: "Ye therefore shall be perfect (that is, complete in love — generous, helpful, and forgiving), as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. v. 48). Luke's version of this saying — which, in the judgment of many, is the more original form of it — is: "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (vi. 36). These are examples of the way in which Jesus fulfilled the law in his teaching, both by rescuing its true import from the perversions and exaggerations to which the scribes had subjected it, by recognizing the ethical imperfections in the law itself, and by replacing them by absolute principles of truth and right which are universally applicable.

(3) This fulfilment preserved all that was of permanent value and validity for religion in the Old Testament system. Jesus taught that this whole system, in all its parts, was involved in the process of fulfilment. He did not illustrate in detail how the fulfilment applied to the various parts of the law. We must ascertain this from the nature of the gospel and from the history and teaching which the New Testament records. Whatever there was of moral or religious significance in the various regulations of the Old Testament cultus will be found to have been conserved in the comprehensive principles of Jesus. He fulfils the prophets by realizing their highest ideals of religion no less than by accomplishing their predictions. The great fact in this connection is that Jesus fulfils the Jewish history as a whole; in him the development of revealed religion culminates; he is its realization and its goal. The aspirations and hopes of the nation had been directed for centuries to some great consummation, some wonderful expansion of the kingdom of God; this Christ came to accomplish, but into its realization the greater part of the Jewish nation, through blindness and perversity, did not enter.



(4) The process of fulfilment involves the passing away of the Old Testament system as such. As the fulfilling of the blossom by the fruit involves the passing away of the former, so does the new system replace the old. This view of the matter is abundantly recognized in the teaching of our Lord and his apostles. He described his truth as new wine which must not be put into the old bottles of Judaism (Mt. ix. 17). He said that his gospel was not merely a new patch which was to be sewed onto the old garment of the law; it was rather a new garment complete and sufficient in itself (Mt. ix. 16).

It is of interest to observe, just here, that this teaching is quite in accord with what the prophets themselves, in their highest inspirations, had discerned and intimated concerning their own religious system. They frequently recognize its inadequacy and temporary character and predict that it is to pass away by being merged into something higher.<sup>1</sup> What religion, besides Judaism, ever predicted its own abrogation? It is one of the most significant facts of prophecy that the loftiest spirits in the nation were led to look for the dawning of larger truth, and for a more complete form of the Kingdom of God.

But when it is said that the Old Testament system is abrogated in the new, it is of capital importance to observe that the new replaces the old, not by destruction, but by fulfilment. The new does not reject and discard the old; it preserves and embodies it, just so far as it has elements of permanent value for the world's religion. The fulfilment is therefore, an organic process; the new comes out of the old by a natural and orderly process of development. In that process what is unessential falls away of its own accord, while all that is essential and permanently useful is taken up into Christianity, more completely developed and applied, and reinforced by higher motives on the plane of broader principles.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See, especially, Jer. xxxi. 31-34.

<sup>2</sup> This subject has important practical bearings upon Christian thought and life, to which a brief reference may here be made. The Christian world has never very clearly perceived what was its relation to the Old

Christ did not fulfil a part of the law merely, but the whole of it. He did not complete the ritual part of the Old Testament alone, but all its moral parts as well. This is but to say that it was not merely the ritual element of the law which was imperfect and temporary, but the moral element also. Many a moral maxim and practice of the Old Testament, as we have seen, was below the plane of Jesus' ideal morality. If he fulfils the system in all its parts, then must the system *as such* pass away. And this is the fact in the case. On no other supposition

Testament religion. How discordant and inconsistent have been the prevailing views on this subject. Commonly some rough distinction has been made between those parts of the system which were supposed to be binding and those from which the Christian was believed to be free, but this distinction rested on no well-defined principle. The discrimination has ordinarily been perfectly arbitrary, having no better grounds than those of practical convenience. No Christians, in our time, hold that they must observe the Old Testament rules respecting meats and drinks, or suppose that they are bound to observe the sacrificial system. But this was not always so. In the apostolic Church there was a large party who held that it was necessary for the Christian even to keep the whole law of Moses in order to be saved. (See, *e.g.*, Acts xv. 1). Their view was that Christianity was a kind of addition or appendix to Judaism and that their former religion, in all its particulars, was in full force and perpetually binding. Paul had his sharpest conflicts with this party. He showed that they were quite consistent, though consistently wrong. In insisting on the necessity of a continued observance of circumcision, they logically committed themselves to the keeping of the whole law. But it was impossible that Christians should long continue to observe the whole Mosaic ritual, and the effort to do so was less and less consistently made.

In modern times we not infrequently find Christians who have conscientiously placed themselves under some part of the old system, believing that, for some special reason, it is binding upon them, while from the observance of its other regulations they readily excuse themselves. It may be the law of tithes, which is regarded as still binding, or the regulations relating to marriage or to the Jewish Sabbath—which are considered to be of perpetual obligation. But the question arises: On what principle is one requirement of the system observed while the others are neglected? Did Jesus specify those which were temporary and those which were perpetually binding? If he did not, how are they to be distinguished? It is common to make a distinction between the ceremonial and the moral parts of the law, and to suppose that, while the former are done away, the latter are still binding upon Christians. But this distinction is recognized neither in the Old Testament nor in the New; it is a modern division of the law which it is quite convenient and natural for us to make, but one of which a quite unwarrantable use is commonly made.

can the New Testament references to the subject be naturally explained; on no other view can a clear definition be given of the relation of the two Testaments.

The conclusion, then, to which we are led is, that the whole Old Testament system, in all its parts, was taken up into the process of fulfilment and that all its elements of permanent value and validity have been made part and parcel of the gospel. To the old system *as such* we have no need to go back, because the gospel is its completion, and we have no occasion to supplement Christianity by additions from Judaism. But the Old Testament has not thereby been *destroyed*, but *fulfilled*. On this distinction between destruction and fulfilment turns the true solution of the question under consideration. The fulfilment is, by its very nature, a conserving process; it rejects nothing which it can use, but embodies it in its perfect result. All the essentials of the Old Testament are preserved in the New, and it is as parts of the gospel of Christ that they are binding upon the Christian man. He is not under the Old Testament system, or, to state the case more fully, he is under only so much of it as has been taken up and incorporated into Christianity, and he is under that because it is a part of Christianity, not because it is a part of the Old Testament religion. If it is asked, Is not the Christian under the authority of the ten commandments? the reply is, In their Old Testament form and as part of that system, he is not. The essential substance of the ten commandments consists of changeless principles of righteousness, and is therefore a part of Christianity; in that sense the Christian is under the commandments, and in no other. The duty to obey parents, for example, is as urgently inculcated in the gospel as in the commandments, and is, of course, perpetually binding, but the reason by which it is enforced in the Old Testament — that by obedience one may win a long residence in the land of Canaan — is not applicable to us.

The truth which we are considering, stated on its positive side, is that Christianity is complete and sufficient in itself as a guide to faith and action. The whole philosophy of

the subject is in that most expressive figure of Jesus to which we have referred: His gospel is not a patch to be sewed on the old garment of Judaism, but a wholly new garment. We might carry out the figure a step further by saying — quite in harmony with his thought — that into the texture of that garment have been woven all the elements of Judaism which are adapted to become parts of its permanent and perfect structure.

While, then, we are not under the old system at all, it must always have the greatest value in helping us to understand historically its own fulfilment in Christianity. To speak in Paul's language, the Old Testament is glorious, but not with "the glory that surpasseth" (2 Cor. iii. 10); that is, it has its true glory in the fact that its mission was to prepare for and to usher in a more perfect system. It was glorious, not so much in itself, as in the great end which it contemplated.

In this view it will be seen that the old system could well be both temporary and divine. Its glory lay in the very fact that it was to give itself up to decay in order that from it, as from the seed, a larger life might spring. Had this truth been clearly seen by the Church of the apostolic age, many great controversies and alienations would have been avoided. It was naturally hard for those who had been reared and trained as Jews to see the sufficiency and independence of Christianity and to recognize the complementary truth that the Jewish religion had waxed old and was ready to vanish away. To this difficulty of transcending their ancestral religion and of apprehending the newness and sufficiency of the gospel, Jesus refers in the saying: "No man having drunk old wine desireth new; for he saith, the old is good" (Lk. v. 39). It required a vision to convince Peter of the largeness and newness of the gospel, and even then he did not continue consistent in his conviction. The whole dispute about circumcision which so tried the soul of the apostle Paul would have been settled in an instant if all could have seen Christ's truth of fulfilment. It was incapable of real settlement except upon Paul's bold principle that the Christian is not under the law, either in whole or in part.

## CHAPTER III

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“The Kingdom of God” is one of the phrases which we most frequently hear on the life of Jesus. We may therefore believe that it represents one of his most fundamental and characteristic ideas. According to Mark, his first announcement of the “Gospel of God” consisted in his saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel” (i. 15). Our purpose requires us to examine the historical basis of the conception, the development of it by our Lord, and its fitness to serve the ends of his teaching and work.<sup>1</sup>

We observe at the outset that Matthew usually employs the phrase, “the Kingdom of heaven,” instead of “the Kingdom of God.” Several difficult questions arise in connection with the former term: Does it mean the same as “the Kingdom of God”? What is the force of the defining genitive “of heaven” (*τῶν οὐρανῶν*)? Was this title probably employed by Jesus himself? There is no indication in Matthew’s usage that the phrase “the Kingdom of heaven” bears any different sense from its alternative designation. The two are used interchangeably in the first Gospel (cf. Mt. vi. 10, 33; xii. 28; xxi. 21, 43). It seems probable that the genitive denotes the origin and the consequent attributes of the Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> In contrast

<sup>1</sup> Several monographs on the subject have appeared within recent years, such as: E. Issel, *Die Lehre vom Reiche Gottes im neuen Testament*, 1891; O. Schmoller, *Die Lehre vom Reiche Gottes in den Schriften des neuen Testaments*, 1891; J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Christi vom Reiche Gottes*, 1892; A. Titius, *Jesu Lehre vom Reiche Gottes*, 1895; W. Lütgert, *Das Reich Gottes nach den synoptischen Evangelien*, 1895.

<sup>2</sup> So Beyschlag, *N. T. Theol.* I. 42 (Bk. I. ch. ii. § 1). Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus*, I. 371 (orig. p. 299), following Schürer, maintains

to earthly kingdoms, this Kingdom is heavenly in origin and character; it is governed by heavenly, that is, spiritual and eternal, laws.<sup>1</sup> It emanates from heaven, and heaven is the seat of the authority which obtains within it. Its law is the will of God. It exists among men in proportion as they live in conformity with the divine will, and realize in personal and social life the purposes of God's holy love. The Kingdom of God on earth is therefore the domain in which God's holy will is done in and among men.

We must now consider its relation to Old Testament ideas. Jewish religious thought was penetrated with the idea of a coming King and Kingdom. Out of Zion the law was to go forth (Is. ii. 3); the herald of good tidings should declare, Thy God reigneth (lii. 7); a great successor of David should sit upon the throne of Israel (Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 17). In later prophecies, under the stress of foreign oppression, the idea of a coming Kingdom of God which should overthrow all opposing powers came out in even stronger relief: "In the days of those kings

that "heaven" is here a metonymy for "God." The Rabbinical use of this periphrasis, to which Wendt appeals, cannot establish this view in the face of the fact that our sources never represent Jesus as using "heaven" as a name for God (*per contra*, see Mt. v. 34). Weiss understands by "Kingdom of heaven," the Kingdom to be perfected in heaven, in contrast to the Jewish theocracy. *Bibl. Theol.*, § 138, c. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Beyschlag, I. 42 (Bk. I. ch. ii. § 1), holds that it was the title which Jesus preferred to use. Wendt, *Teaching*, I. 371 (orig. p. 299), thinks that Jesus did not use the phrase, because Luke, even where he follows the *λόγια*, uses "Kingdom of God," and because the first evangelist, even when incorporating Mark into his narrative, employs "Kingdom of heaven." Cf. Briggs, *Messiah of the Gospels*, p. 79. Weiss, *Bibl. Theol.*, § 138, c. 8, gives a wholly different reason for holding that Jesus did not speak of the "Kingdom of heaven." The term was "selected by the evangelist, because with the fall of Jerusalem the hope of a perfecting of the theocracy in Israel on earth vanished." Bruce, *Kingdom of God*, p. 59, aptly points out that while Jesus' employment of the phrase (in the sense which Weiss attaches to it) would be quite out of the question on Weiss's theory that Jesus conceived of the Kingdom as consisting merely in the realization of Jewish theocratic hopes, it is quite competent to inquire whether his use of it is not in itself quite as probable as this theory. The phrase does not seem to be used in the eschatological sense which Weiss attaches to it. In any case, the natural meaning of the title does not favor Weiss's theory of Jesus' doctrine of the Kingdom.

shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Dan. ii. 44). The suffering and degradation of the nation under foreign rule during the years immediately preceding Christ's appearance served to intensify, if they also served to secularize, this expectation.

The prophetic declarations concerning the coming Kingdom are rooted, in turn, in the whole Old Testament conception of the relation of God to his people. The idea of a government of God among men—a "theocracy," as Josephus happily expressed it—was absolutely fundamental in the life of the Jewish nation. It lay at the basis of the covenant-relation. As God's "peculiar treasure," Israel was to be unto him "a Kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex. xix. 5, 6). When, therefore, Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God he spoke the language of current religious thought in Judaism. He touched a responsive chord in the heart of the nation. We may find just here the motive of Jesus in employing the term, and the fitness of it for the purposes of his teaching.

It is *a priori* probable from the dominance of the idea under consideration in Jewish thought that the phrase "Kingdom of God" was a current expression in Israel. The term is several times employed in the New Testament in such a way as to indicate that it was in common use among the people (Mk. xv. 43; Lk. xiv. 15, xvii. 20). The nation was living in constant expectation of its appearance (Lk. xix. 11; Acts i. 6). That Jesus' idea of the Kingdom was intended to have some connection with the Old Testament Messianic hope and with the expectations current in his time does not admit of reasonable doubt. The point to be determined is, How far was Jesus' conception of the Kingdom new? This question can be satisfactorily answered only after an investigation of the teaching of Jesus upon the subject. One or two general considerations, however, may here be presented.

The noblest minds in the Jewish nation, such as the great prophets, conceived it to be the destiny of Israel to bear the knowledge of God which she possessed to all mankind. The Messianic King was to have universal sway. His Kingdom was to be as wide as the world. The knowledge of Jehovah was to fill the earth. Nations should come to its light, and kings to the brightness of its rising (Is. lx. 3, 4; Jer. xxxi. 34). But to this splendid ideal the nation as a whole did not rise, and it sank farther and farther away from it as the time drew near the birth of Christ. The great coming good was more and more conceived of as a monopoly of divine favor to be enjoyed by Israel alone, and thus the Kingdom or reign of God, instead of embracing in its idea and intent the whole human family, became narrowed so as to include only the lineal descendants of Abraham. At the same time the idea of the Kingdom became more and more worldly, or political. The idea of power which, in the prophetic conception of the Kingdom had been combined with that of righteousness, became the dominant element in the Messianic hope. The Messiah was conceived of as a second David, who should reconstitute the Jewish nation in power and glory, throw off the yoke of foreign domination, and trample Israel's enemies in the dust. The later Jewish literature is permeated with this conception of the Messianic reign, and the New Testament contains unmistakable traces of its prevalence at the time of Christ.

The question now arises: Did Jesus fall into line with these Jewish conceptions or did he rise high above them even as they were cherished by the loftiest prophetic minds? Weiss has elaborated and defended the former view.<sup>1</sup> He holds that it was the expectation of Jesus to reconstitute the Jewish nation in freedom, prosperity, and happiness. The course of events, however, generally forced his mind away from the dream of political independence and temporal well being to the idea of founding a spiritual society composed of such as were possessed of certain qualities of heart.

<sup>1</sup> In his various writings, but most fully in his *Life of Christ*.



Now, while we do not deny a development in Jesus' doctrine of the Kingdom, we cannot help thinking that this is a statement of the case which the facts do not warrant. This theory does not attribute to the mind of Jesus as great a breadth and spirituality of view as the prophets themselves enjoyed. It is derogatory to the originality of Jesus. We maintain, on the contrary, that he took up the best ideals of Jewish prophecy and lifted them to even grander heights. He set aside the limitations of view in which the idea of the Kingdom of God had been apprehended in Old Testament times, and gave that idea its true universality and spirituality. The Kingdom of God was for him something larger, because more spiritual, than the Jewish state had ever been; something more spiritual than any outward organization could ever be. Jesus' idea of the Kingdom was rooted in the Old Testament, but it rose above the limited conceptions in which the Old Testament had presented the Messianic hope; much more did it rise above the popular ideals and stand in sharp contrast to them.

This view is confirmed by the very way in which Jesus appeared announcing his Kingdom. He proclaimed it as something new and distinctive. The time of preparation for it had passed; he was now to begin its establishment (Mk. i. 15). What he says of his truth in general is applicable to his doctrine of the Kingdom; it is new cloth and must not be stretched onto the old garment of Judaism; it is new wine and must not be put into old wine-skins (Mk. ii. 21, 22). It was not strange that the people were astonished at his teaching (Mt. vii. 28, 29; Mk. i. 27), because there was in it a breadth of view and an elevated spirituality to which they were wholly unaccustomed.

But we have still more direct proof that Jesus' idea of the Kingdom was far removed from this notion of a prosperous political commonwealth. The Gospels narrate a series of incidents in which his view comes out in strongest contrast to that conception. What else, indeed, is the meaning of his temptation at the very beginning of his ministry? Whatever view be taken of the historical

character of that event, all our sources bear witness to the fact that on the very threshold of his public work Jesus faced the choice between the temporal and spiritual conceptions of his messiahship. The popular demand for a wonder-working leader who should achieve power and glory in the world he promptly and decisively repudiated. He chose instead the method of spiritual leadership and the way of self-sacrifice.

The same idea of the Kingdom is clearly reflected when, being asked, who is greatest in the Kingdom of God, he replies that humility is the test of greatness in that Kingdom (Mt. xviii. 4). Of similar import is his saying that he who serves most is greatest in his Kingdom (Mt. xx. 26). But even more sharply does the contrast between the political conception of the Kingdom and Jesus' idea appear when, being asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God should come, he said, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, There! for lo, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Lk. xvii. 20, 21). In view of this contrast we are not surprised to find that after the resurrection his disciples had not entered sufficiently into his thought to suppose that the expected Kingdom had yet been established. "We hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel" (Lk. xxiv. 21), they said, but it is clear that they regarded this hope as disappointed. To the same purpose was the question which they put to him during the forty days: "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6). It is obvious that by the redemption of Israel and the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel they referred to the reestablishment of the Jewish state and the fulfilment of the nation's hopes for temporal prosperity and victory over its foes. Jesus' whole teaching and conduct during his entire ministry had not seemed to them, who had constantly heard and observed him, to have accomplished anything in this direction. From their standpoint he had done nothing which looked toward Israel's redemption. It may not be perfectly easy to explain why, on the supposition that Jesus'

view was in sharp contrast to the popular idea, his disciples had not been able to rise into fuller sympathy with his conception; but it is certainly far harder to explain why, on the supposition that his view resembled the popular expectation, the disciples, who still cherished the popular idea, should have regarded his teaching and action as standing in sharpest contrast to all their long-cherished hopes. No conclusion is warranted except this, that the teaching of Jesus concerning his Kingdom and his method of establishing it were so wholly out of line with the ambitions and expectations of the Jewish people that even his own disciples were ready, at the end of his public career, to declare his anticipated work a failure. But this conclusion may be further tested by what Jesus directly taught concerning the nature of the Kingdom and the method of its progress.

Jesus taught that membership in the Kingdom was dependent upon certain ethical and spiritual qualities. The Kingdom is composed of those who possess a certain kind of character. It cannot, therefore, be an outward organization whose members are bound together by any such bonds as common ancestry, language, self-interest, or the occupancy of a common territory. If Matthew's version of the beatitudes is followed, they contain a forcible setting forth of the spiritual qualifications for membership in the Kingdom. Humility, meekness, eager desire for righteousness, mercifulness, purity of heart, and peacemaking are the conditions of participating in the Kingdom and the characteristics of its members. It has been the more common view of interpreters that Matthew's version was more original than Luke's (vi. 20 *sq.*) which represents Jesus as offering the blessings of the Kingdom to those who are *literally*, rather than *spiritually*, poor, hungry, and sorrowing.<sup>1</sup> But if Luke's version is followed, the inward,

<sup>1</sup> So, for example, Tholuck, Meyer, and Weiss. Meyer says: "Certainly Luke has the *later* form of the tradition, which of necessity took its rise in consequence of the affliction of the persecuted Christians, etc. This, also, is especially true of the denunciations of woe, which were still unknown to the first evangelist." *Commentary, ad loc.* Lk. vi. 20.

spiritual nature of the Kingdom is clearly implied. It cannot be supposed that Jesus teaches that the physically poor, wretched, and outcast, *as such*, compose his Kingdom. He must mean (according to Luke) that the blessings of the Kingdom are a reward for hardships and sufferings voluntarily endured. The Kingdom is a compensation for distress, calamity, and want because it is a spiritual treasure. Its joys and comforts are an antidote for the miseries of earth. In this view of the original import of the beatitudes, even more than in that which Matthew has given, is the Kingdom presented as a spiritual good, a boon to the inner life. In either case, participation in it must be dependent upon inner conditions or qualities of life. Formally different as the beatitudes are in the two Gospels, both versions clearly imply the spiritual nature of the Kingdom.

One of the most significant hints respecting the nature of the Kingdom is contained in the Lord's prayer. Jesus taught his disciples to pray: "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (Mt. vi. 10). The second of these petitions is an explanation and amplification of the first.<sup>1</sup> The Kingdom comes in proportion

Holtzmann, Wendt, and Briggs, however, hold to the greater originality of Luke's version. According to Wendt, the beatitudes originally expressed, not the conditions of participating in the salvation of the Kingdom, but the worth of this salvation: Even the poor are really rich; the sorrowful are really happy, if they possess this heavenly good. The woes are regarded as the reverse side of these blessings. *Lehre Jesu*, pp. 53-57. A similar view is taken by Briggs, who urges literary considerations in favor of the originality of Luke, and lays stress upon the voluntariness of the poverty and hardships which were the condition of sharing in the blessings of the Kingdom. *Messiah of the Gospels*, pp. 172, 173.

<sup>1</sup> Wendt, *Lehre Jesu*, pp. 97, 98, following Luke's version (xi. 2 sq.) of the prayer in preference to Matthew's, treats the words: "Thy will be done," etc., as an addition by the first evangelist. No reason is given for this judgment, and it seems to involve an unwarranted impoverishment of the prayer. Weiss justly remarks that the first petition points to the preliminary condition, the third to the final purpose of the coming Kingdom, thus suggesting a logical sequence and completeness of thought. Moreover, a reminiscence of the third petition is found not only in Matthew (xxvi. 42), but in Luke (xxii. 42). "Luke," adds Weiss, "has omitted this petition, because if the second one is fully granted, it involves the fulfilment of the third; and that was sufficient for his Gentile readers. It was not without special purpose, however, that Jesus added this request.

as God's will is done among men. The Kingdom is composed of all who obey that will. The perfect doing of God's will by men would be the perfection of his Kingdom on earth. Although Jesus has nowhere explicitly defined the phrase, Kingdom of God, a clear view of its essential nature, as he conceived it, is implied in these words. They justify the conclusion that by the Kingdom of God Jesus meant "the reign of divine love exercised by God in his grace over human hearts believing in his love, and constrained thereby to yield him grateful affection and devoted service."<sup>1</sup>

Another prominent idea of Jesus respecting the Kingdom is that it is a growing affair. Its coming is a long historical process. Various aspects of this progress of the Kingdom in the world are set forth in a group of parables which are designed to illustrate its nature. One of the most significant of these is preserved by Mark alone (iv. 26-29). It likens the growth of the Kingdom to the slow and mysterious development of seed-grain when it is sown in the earth. It pictures the husbandman as sowing the seed and then waiting while Nature does her work. He sleeps and rises awaiting the movement of the divinely appointed process, and powerless to understand the mystery of growth. Meantime, the natural processes are going forward. "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." "So is the Kingdom of God." It comes slowly, silently, mysteriously. Divine forces are operating to carry forward its development. In a rudimentary form the Kingdom of God had always been in the world; in an important sense it came when Christ came and entered upon his historic mission; but in a still wider view it keeps on coming through all the courses of human history, and

The perfect realization of the Kingdom of God will undoubtedly bring with it the fulness of all promised blessings, but the desires of the disciples were still preponderatingly directed to the external welfare of the nation." *Life of Christ*, II. 350 (Bk. IV. ch. xi.); cf. *Das Matthäusevangelium*, p. 184.

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, *Kingdom of God*, p. 46.

reaches its culmination only in the completion of the work of redemption.

Of the other parables which are based upon the analogy between spiritual and natural growth (Mt. xiii.) that of the Sower is designed to depict the reception with which his truth meets from various classes of hearers; that of the Mustard-seed describes the great results which flow from small beginnings — the *extension* of the Kingdom, while the parable of the Leaven depicts the tendency of the Kingdom to permeate society — the *intensive* development of the spiritual life in humanity.

The incomparable value of the Kingdom, justifying the greatest sacrifice in order to obtain it, is set forth in the parables of the Treasure hid in the field and in that of the Merchant seeking goodly pearls, while the parables of Tares and of the Drag-net set forth the idea that the outward appearance of belonging to the Kingdom will be assumed by some who are not genuine members of it; there will be counterfeit Christians whom God alone can distinguish from the true. These parables also serve, indirectly, to illustrate the nature of the Kingdom's development. It encounters constant hindrance and embarrassment arising from the insusceptibility and wickedness with which it constantly meets, and is compelled to contend.

Again, the Kingdom is universal in its design and scope. It is for all who fulfil the spiritual conditions of participating in its benefits. It knows no racial, social, or territorial limits. It is true that Christ offered himself and his Kingdom to the Jewish people. They were the people of revelation. Their history had been a special preparation for the coming of the Kingdom in its completed idea and form. To them, therefore, an economic precedence was accorded, in agreement with the providential law which Paul afterwards enunciated: "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. i. 16). The Jews were the "sons of the Kingdom" (Matt. viii. 12) by right and privilege, but not in such a sense that they should not be "cast forth" in case they failed to fulfil the conditions of repent-

ance, humility, and purity of heart. This the nation as a whole did. "Therefore," said Jesus, "the Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Mt. xxi. 43).

The teaching of Jesus concerning his Kingdom has everywhere the note of universality in it. It was for all men who would enter it. The most abandoned sinners might enter it, and did enter it in greater numbers than did the religious leaders of the time (Mt. xxi. 31). To say that the Kingdom is universal in idea is but to say that Christ came to save the lost. The Kingdom is a gracious boon to sinful and needy humanity. Its universality is involved in its spirituality. No external limitations can be imposed upon its destination so long as the conditions of entering it are internal. As for the apostle Paul the universality of the gospel stood connected with the inner condition of receiving it, namely, faith, so in the teaching of Jesus there is the closest connection between the spiritual conditions of entering the Kingdom and its essential universality. John the Baptist may have conceived of the Kingdom of God whose coming he heralded as consisting of a purified Israel—the "wheat" of the nation which should be left after the "chaff" had been winnowed out and consumed by the Messiah, but the conception of Jesus was vastly broader and higher. He knew that his Kingdom was not to come in the world by any quick transformation of the Jewish nation as such or by some sudden stroke of divine power—as the people expected and as even the prophets often described it as doing. He knew that it would not spring up complete in some great crisis, but that its coming would be a great and gradual movement of God in history which should go on through the ages.

It results from this conception that the Kingdom may be spoken of now as present, now as future. It was already present in its beginnings when Jesus was on earth, yet its consummation was future. He dwells now on the one, now on the other aspect of his Kingdom without speaking explicitly of the relation of the two aspects and without any consciousness of contradiction between them. That

which involves a world-historical process must be, at any given moment, in the nature of the case, both past, present, and future.

The most explicit recognition of the Kingdom as a present fact is found in such passages as: "The Kingdom of God is among you" (*ἐντὸς ὑμῶν*, Lk. xvii. 21); "The Kingdom of God is come upon you" (*ἐφ' ὑμᾶς*, Mt. xii. 28). But numerous other passages imply the same idea, as when Jesus says that from the days of John the Baptist the Kingdom of heaven was being taken by violence (Mt. xi. 12) — stormed, as it were, by the lost and perishing in their eager desire to enter it. In like manner the parables of the Sower, the Tares, the Mustard-seed, and the Leaven all rest upon the view that the Kingdom is a present force which has already begun to develop itself in the world. Jesus spoke of persons who were entering it at the time (Mt. xxi. 31; xxiii. 13), and called upon men to seek it (Mt. vi. 33), and to enter the narrow door into *life* (Mt. vii. 13), which is but a name for the blessing of the Kingdom. Moreover, the humblest member of the Kingdom of God (Mt. xi. 11), that is, the least disciple of Christ, is said to be greater than John the Baptist; that is, he enjoys greater privileges and stands upon a higher plane of revelation. This saying assumes that the Kingdom is a present reality.

And yet, entrance into the Kingdom is often spoken of as something that is to take place in the future, and the Kingdom itself described as something that is yet to come. When Jesus said, on one occasion, that some of those who heard him speak should not die till they saw the Kingdom of God come with power (Mk. ix. 1), he doubtless referred to some future epoch at which the Kingdom should advance to a new stage of its development. When, again, he spoke of the time when men should come from the east and from the west to sit down in the Kingdom of God (Lk. xiii. 29), and when, at the last supper, he referred to the repast which he should enjoy with his disciples in the Kingdom of God (Mk. xiv. 25), he seems clearly to have had in mind the consummation of the Kingdom in



heaven. He probably spoke of the Kingdom in this eschatological sense when he said to his disciples that unless their righteousness exceeded that of the scribes and Pharisees they should not enter into the Kingdom of God (Mt. v. 20). Both the present and the future aspect of the Kingdom are recognized in the words: "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein" (Mk. x. 15).

The question now arises: On what principle is this apparent inconsistency in the use of the title to be explained? Some scholars hold that, at the beginning of his ministry, Jesus did expect that his Kingdom in its heavenly perfection was to be suddenly and miraculously introduced, and that he afterwards came to perceive that the Kingdom was to be established on earth by a process of development.<sup>1</sup> On this view one set of expressions might be regarded as reflecting his less mature conception, and the other as disclosing a new aspect of his thought concerning the Kingdom. The capital objection to this theory is that we do not find Jesus speaking in his earlier sayings of his Kingdom as belonging to some future epoch, and supplementing this idea later by referring to it as already present, and as subject to an earthly development.<sup>2</sup>

Another solution is that Jesus always thought of his Kingdom as future, and the apparent references to it as already present are merely proleptic, and really refer to the course of Christian history which must precede the coming of the Kingdom. This view is frequently expressed in Meyer's *Commentary*. It seems to me to proceed upon an unnatural interpretation of many texts. It is, for example, a singular inversion of a natural sequence of ideas to suppose that the petition: "Thy Kingdom come," refers to the end of the world, and that the succeeding petition, "Thy will be done on earth," etc., refers to a condition which must be fulfilled in the life of believers before the previous petition can be realized. It is

<sup>1</sup> So, substantially, Beyschlag, *Leben Jesu*, and Baldensperger, *Das Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed critique of this theory, see Wendt, *Teaching*, I. 380 sq.

equally unnatural to interpret the words: "The Kingdom of God is among you," as meaning only that the Messiah, the King and bearer of the Kingdom, was in their midst (Meyer).

We conclude, therefore, that the varied language of Jesus respecting the coming of this Kingdom is best explained by supposing him to have taken a comprehensive view of its nature and progress. He conceived of the Kingdom as already present, but in its fuller development and in its final perfection it was still future. This large, free use of the term, according to which now one, now another, aspect of the Kingdom is dwelt upon, renders it impossible to define the Kingdom adequately in any single formula. It is difficult to define, not because it means nothing in particular, but because it means so much. Specific features of Christ's conception of the subject will come up for consideration as we proceed.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SON OF MAN

To determine the meaning of the title "Son of man" is one of the most difficult tasks which confronts the student of the New Testament. When we carefully examine the passages in which it is used in the Synoptics we find that they naturally fall into three classes. In one group of sayings the title is used with reference to Jesus' earthly life: "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Mk. ii. 10); "is Lord of the Sabbath" (ii. 28); "hath not where to lay his head" (Mt. viii. 20); "is come to seek and to save that which is lost" (Lk. xix. 10). In a second group the title is associated with his sufferings and death: "The Son of man must suffer many things" (Mk. viii. 31); "is delivered up into the hands of men" (Mk. ix. 31); "goeth (to death) even as it is written of him" (Mk. xiv. 21). In a third group the title is used in connection with his parousia. Examples of this usage are: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (Mt. xxiv. 31), and "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him," etc. (Mt. xxv. 31). The second of these groups of passages emphasizes the humiliation, the third the majesty, of the Son of man. Most of the passages of the first group may be regarded as more or less akin to those of the second or the third. The question, then, may be put in this form: Does the title denote primarily humiliation, or some kindred thought, or does it suggest exaltation and majesty?

A preliminary question arises here: was "the Son of man" a current Messianic title in Jesus' time? Most

scholars have answered this question in the negative.<sup>1</sup> In favor of this view it is said that Jesus' use of the title perplexed the Jews, who thereby showed that they were not familiar with it: "How sayest thou, 'the Son of man' must be lifted up? Who is this, 'the Son of man'?" (Jn. xii. 34). But to this it is replied that it was the strangeness of the *new conception* of the Son of man, not the strangeness of the title itself, which perplexed the Jews. The idea that the Messianic Son of man should suffer death was what surprised and shocked them, and led them to say: "We have been taught to think that the Messiah abides forever; who is this Son of man who must suffer and die?"<sup>2</sup> The conclusion that the designation was not a current Messianic title has also been derived from the question which drew out Peter's confession (Mt. xvi. 13). Jesus asks: "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" Various replies are given, among them Peter's that he is the Messiah, showing that "the Son of man" in this question could not have been understood by the disciples as a synonym for the Messiah. This would be a forcible consideration but for the fact that Matthew's version of the incident is an amplification of the simpler narrative in Mark (viii. 27), where the title "Son of man" is not employed in the conversation. Moreover, it is not found in Luke's version of the narrative (ix. 18 *sq.*). No conclusion, therefore, can be drawn from this passage, although, as Professor Bruce has pointed out, it may still be claimed that "the substitution of the title for the personal pronoun by the first evangelist is significant, as showing that at the time when his Gospel was written, the name 'Son of man' was not regarded as a synonym for Christ."<sup>3</sup>

A much more forcible argument in favor of the supposition that "the Son of man" was not a Messianic title in

<sup>1</sup> So Stanton, *The Jewish and the Christian Messiah*, p. 240; Drummond, *The Jewish Messiah*, p. 284; cf. Ch. I. Sec. IV.; Holtzmann, *Neutest. Theol.* I. 262.

<sup>2</sup> So Meyer *in loco*, and Schürer, *The Jewish People*, Div. II. Vol. III. p. 69 (§ 32. 2).

<sup>3</sup> *The Kingdom of God*, pp. 167, 168.

current use in Jesus' day is, that although he carefully avoided making a public declaration of his messiahship, and sought to prevent such a declaration from being made by others down to the end of his Galilean ministry, he applies the name "Son of man" to himself frequently and from the first. If the title had been understood as a synonym for Messiah, this use of it would have been equivalent to a declaration of his messiahship. It is replied that Jesus used the title enigmatically, meaning by it something quite different from what it meant in popular usage.<sup>1</sup> But this answer is hardly sufficient, because if the phrase had been a current Messianic title, the people would have understood him by the use of it to proclaim himself as the Messiah, whatever differences there might have been between their conceptions and his of Messiah's character and work. It is easy to see how in the application to himself of a current Messianic title, he might mean more than the people meant by it, but it is not easy to see how he could have meant less than to proclaim that he *was* the Messiah. In that case how could his use of it have been really "enigmatic"? Another consideration looking towards the conclusion that the phrase was not a current Messianic title is this: "the Son of man" was a self-designation of Jesus. The evangelists have not themselves applied this name to him, and they lead us to infer that his immediate disciples did not.<sup>2</sup> Why should they have refrained from the use of a familiar Messianic title which he himself so freely employed? The reply is made that the fact that they refrained from its use was due to its enigmatic character;<sup>3</sup> but was it really enigmatic if familiar to them and to the people generally as a synonym for Messiah? These last two considerations seem to me to have a good deal of weight in favor of the view that the title was not commonly used or understood as a name for the Messiah.

<sup>1</sup> So R. H. Charles, *Book of Enoch*; appendix B: "The Son of Man; its Origin and Meaning," p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> The title is used but once in the N. T. by another than Jesus himself — by Stephen (Acts vii. 56).

<sup>3</sup> Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

The bearing upon our inquiry of the use which is made of the phrase "Son of man," in the similitudes of the Book of Enoch (chs. xxxvii.-lxxi.), is uncertain, because their date is disputed. In those chapters the title is frequently used as a Messianic designation, as, for example: "And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of man, who he was, and whence he was," etc. (xlvi. 1); "For the Son of man has appeared and sits on the throne of his glory," etc. (lxix. 29). If these portions of the book are post-Christian, the passages would merely illustrate the Messianic sense which the title had in Christian usage. If, on the contrary, they are pre-Christian,<sup>1</sup> we should have one example (if the only one), of a Messianic use of the title to which the usage of Jesus may have attached itself. Even on this view, however, we could not be sure that Jesus was familiar with this usage, and it might have been too limited and exceptional to have influenced his own.

When these various considerations are taken together, we think that they establish the conclusion that the title was *not* in current use as a designation of the Messiah. It was not, however, an unknown term; it was found in the Old Testament. It may have been occasionally employed in a Messianic sense, but it was not current coin in the speech of the people concerning the Messiah. There was something distinctive in Jesus' use of it. Although not a new title, it received from his hand a certain stamp of originality and uniqueness.

We turn, then, to the question of its origin and connection with Old Testament language. The Hebrew use of the term "son" to denote a relation of likeness or participation in that to which sonship is predicated, is familiar, and has passed over into the New Testament. The "son of the handmaid" (Gal. iv. 30) is a servant; the "sons of the Kingdom" (Mt. viii. 12) are those who should participate in its truths and blessings. So a "son of man" may mean simply one who shares human qualities,

<sup>1</sup> As Schürer maintains, *Jewish People*, Div. II. Vol. III. p. 66 (§ 32. 2); Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 30, assigns the Similitudes to 95-64 B.C.

as, for example, frailty or mortality, in contrast to God, thus:—

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him,  
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

(Ps. viii. 4.)

In this way “Son of man” becomes an emphatic designation for man in his characteristic attributes of weakness and helplessness (Num. xxiii. 19; Job xvi. 21; xxv. 6). In this sense the title is applied about eighty times to Ezekiel as a reminder of his weakness and mortality, and as an incentive to humility in the fulfilment of his prophetic calling.

In Dan. vii. a symbolic description is given of foreign nations under the designation of “beasts.” Finally, the seer beholds, in contrast to these powers whose dominion ceases, another figure coming with the clouds of heaven and establishing an everlasting Kingdom: “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. vii. 13, 14). This passage is commonly understood to be a picture of Israel which, in contrast to the “beasts,” the foreign nations, is likened to the noble human form. That it describes the nation, rather than an individual, is rendered probable by verse 27: “And the Kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High,” etc. The phrase “one like unto a son of man” was no doubt popularly understood as referring to the person of the Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some modern scholars hold this interpretation. Schultz says: “Daniel probably thinks of the Messiah as descending in the last days from heaven, where he dwells with God, and revealing himself in a heavenly form like one of the angel-princes whom the book is elsewhere accustomed to describe as ‘like unto a son of man’” (Dan. viii. 15; x. 5, 16). *O. T. Theol.* II. 439, 440.

It is this passage which, without doubt, underlies the usage of the Book of Enoch.

It may be regarded as in the highest degree probable that the use of the title "Son of man" by our Lord had a point of connection with this passage. If so, the connection would suggest that "the Son of man" was a title of dignity, and that it belonged to Jesus as the founder of the imperishable Kingdom of God. The apocalyptic origin and use of the term would, moreover, accord well with Jesus' frequent use of the title in connection with his assertions concerning his parousia and the consummation of his Kingdom.

A brief survey must now be taken of the principal theories which have been common among scholars respecting the meaning which Jesus attached to this self-designation. Among these we note the following:

(1) The title meant for Jesus simply "the Messiah," and was derived directly from Dan. vii. 13. So, *e.g.*, Meyer: "Jesus means nothing else by this title than 'the Messiah'; he means nothing else than the Son of man in the prophecy of Daniel."<sup>1</sup> This view encounters the difficulty, already noted, that if Jesus meant by the title simply "the Messiah," he would have been proclaiming his messiahship from the beginning of his ministry, which is quite contrary to the Synoptic representation. This theory fits very well the use of the title in the apocalyptic passages, but is inadequate in view of such references as those to the ministrations and non-ascetic life of the Son of man.

(2) "Son of man" means the ideal, typical, representative man. This interpretation has been widely current since Schleiermacher. The following are typical expressions of it:

"He calls himself 'Son of man' because he had appeared as a man; because he belonged to mankind; because he had done such great things for human nature; because he was himself the realized ideal of humanity."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Commentary* on Mt. viii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Neander, *Life of Christ* (Bohn ed.), p. 99.



Reuss says that what is declared by the title "Son of man" is the fact of "the realization of the moral ideal in the person of him who assumed such a name."<sup>1</sup> Stanton says: "It is clear that Christ by his phrase represented himself as the head, the type, the ideal of the race."<sup>2</sup> The view advanced by Baur and others, who speak of the Son of man as one *qui humani nihil a se alienum putat*, and combine this conception with the Danielic idea of majesty, is hardly more than a variation of this theory. Examples of the way in which the theory is applied are: Since the sabbath was made *for man* (Mk. ii. 27), it falls within the province of his authority who, as the representative man, makes all human interests his care. The Son of man, although he is the ideal man, has not where to lay his head (Mt. viii. 20).

Attractive as this theory is, and true as its fundamental idea is, in itself considered, there is a serious difficulty in supposing that Jesus used the title under consideration in the sense proposed. The theory finds no point of connection between Jesus' use of the term and that which we observe in the Old Testament, unless it combines its characteristic idea, somewhat arbitrarily, with the conception in Daniel. The extra-Biblical use of the phrase lends no support to this interpretation. In fact, this explanation is too abstract and philosophical to be native to Palestinian Judaism, and bears the marks of modern reflection.

(3) The title may be regarded as connected, primarily, with the Old Testament representations which use the phrase to emphasize finite lowliness and weakness (in Ezekiel and elsewhere). The popular interpretation of Dan. vii. 13 in a Messianic sense enabled Jesus to avail himself of the phrase as a Messianic designation, although for his mind its content was derived from the Old Testament representations, which use the term "Son of man" to express creaturehood, weakness, and lowliness. For him there was no contradiction between the Messianic dignity and the human weakness, humility, and suffering

<sup>1</sup> *History of Christian Theology*, I. 199 (orig. I. 231).

<sup>2</sup> *The Jewish and Christian Messiah*, p. 246.

in which his Messianic work should be wrought. On this view we may say that the Daniel passage supplies the *form*, and the other Old Testament expressions concerning the Son of man the *content* of Jesus' idea. This view is elaborated by Wendt.<sup>1</sup> I must say respecting it that it does not seem natural to explain a Messianic title by reference to an Old Testament usage which was not Messianic and was not popularly supposed to be. Moreover, this explanation does not seem to accord very well with the majesty which is ascribed to the Son of man in the apocalyptic passages in our sources; nor does it seem to me that Wendt succeeds in giving a natural explanation of its use in the passages concerning forgiveness and the sabbath (Mk. ii. 7, 28).<sup>2</sup>

(4) Another type of explanation makes use of the Old Testament concept of the Servant of Jehovah in explaining the title. Mr. Vernon Bartlet has combined this idea with the theory which I have just explained.<sup>3</sup> Rev. R. H. Charles combines that idea with the notion of majesty found in Daniel, which he regards as the primal source of the designation.<sup>4</sup> According to this view, the notion which is given in Daniel has been influenced and developed by apocalyptic usage, such as we find in the Book of Enoch. In that book the Son of man is a supernatural Being, who sits upon God's throne and possesses universal dominion. The conception furnished by Daniel seems to have been blended with the idea of the Servant of Jehovah, found in the exilic Isaiah. Now when Jesus took up the title, he transformed the conception, as he did all popular ideas, by giving it a deeper or more spiritual significance. This transformation is best understood if we suppose that the idea of majesty derived from Daniel was modified and spiritualized by having combined with it the idea of the suffering Servant of Jehovah, as pre-

<sup>1</sup> *Teaching of Jesus*, II. 139 sq. (orig. p. 440 sq.).

<sup>2</sup> *Teaching of Jesus*, II. 145 (orig. p. 445).

<sup>3</sup> *The Expositor*, December, 1892.

<sup>4</sup> *The Book of Enoch*; appendix B: "The Son of Man; its Origin and Meaning" (1893).

sented in the second Isaiah. Thus Jesus' use of the title would be analogous to the one clear example of its Messianic import in pre-Christian literature — its use in the Book of Enoch.

“These two conceptions,” says Mr. Charles, “though outwardly antithetic, are, through the transformation of the former, reconciled and fulfilled in a deeper unity — in the New Testament Son of man.”<sup>1</sup> In Jesus these two characters meet and blend. He is supernatural, majestic, and powerful, but his glory is displayed in self-renunciation and service. His greatness is his condescending and sacrificial love. He *is* greatest, but, as such, is servant of all, “If then, we bear in mind the inward synthesis of these two ideals of the past in an ideal, nay, in a Personality transcending them both, we shall find little difficulty in understanding the startling contrasts that present themselves in the New Testament in connection with this designation.”<sup>2</sup> Accordingly it is explained that although the Son of man is homeless, yet he is Lord of the sabbath; although despised, rejected, and crucified, yet he is Judge of mankind.

While this view, no doubt, contains important elements of truth, it encounters the difficulties which we have already noticed in the supposition that “the Son of man” was a current Messianic title. The apparent combination of these two Messianic ideals of Daniel and Isaiah in the Book of Enoch gives but a very uncertain basis for the conclusion that Jesus made a similar combination of them in the title “Son of man.” This conclusion must remain precarious while the date of the Similitudes remains so uncertain, and is especially so in view of the doubt that Jesus was in any case familiar with them.<sup>3</sup>

We have seen that, in all probability, our Lord's use of the title had some historical connection with the passage in Daniel. That may, therefore, be made the starting-point

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 316.

<sup>3</sup> *Cf.* Briggs, *The Messiah of the Gospels*, p. 25; Weiss, *Bibl. Theol.* § 16, a.

in any effort to explain its meaning. We have also found good reason for believing that it was not a synonym for Messiah, but that it had for the mind of Jesus some unique and distinctive meaning. In naming himself by preference "Son of man" he did not proclaim himself as Messiah. Yet by the title he must have meant to connote qualities which were fundamental in his character.

At this point a philological consideration is brought to view which seems important for the discussion. Jesus spoke Aramaic; *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* is a Greek translation of the Aramaic term *barnasha* which he used. Wellhausen says: "With emphasis Jesus uniformly used this most universal generic name (Son of man) to designate his own ego. But that name signifies *man* and nothing further; the Arameans have no other expression for the conception."<sup>1</sup> Wellhausen further maintains that the use of the title by Jesus has no connection with Dan. vii. 13, and that it was because the first Christians erroneously understood the title as a Messianic designation that they translated it by *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, instead of by *ὁ ἄνθρωπος*, its proper meaning. These opinions, however, are inferences which do not necessarily follow from the alleged Aramaic usage of the phrase.

It by no means follows from the fact that "Son of man" in Aramaic is a generic designation for *man* that Jesus could have meant nothing distinctive by the word. By the way in which he used it and the emphasis which he placed upon it, he would be able to impart to it a distinctive signification. Particularly would this be the case if, as is probable, the title was in some degree familiar as a designation of majesty. The Gospels show that Jesus did not avoid the use of the simple *I*. If "the Son of man" had been for him a perfectly colorless synonym for the personal pronoun *I*, he would need to have said *this* Son of man, in order to give the phrase any force as a self-designation. He must, therefore, have used the title to

<sup>1</sup> *Israelit. u. Jüd. Geschichte*, p. 312. A critique of Wellhausen's view by Oettli will be found in No. 6 of the *Basler Kirchenfreund* (1895). For other references, see Holtzmann, *Neutest. Theol.* I. 256.

mark in some way what was peculiar to himself.<sup>1</sup> The question, then, takes this form: What sort of dignity, what kind of a claim, did Jesus implicitly assert in so naming himself? It is probable that the title designated for Jesus characteristics of his personality which accorded with his peculiar life-work. We have seen that the conception which best represented his life-task was that of the Kingdom of God. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that as Son of man he conceives himself as head and founder of the Kingdom of God. The origin and use of the title, so far as we can trace them, accord with this supposition. In Daniel it is the theocratic king who is likened to a son of man. If the usage, of which that in the Book of Enoch is an illustration, influenced our Lord's employment of the term, it would quite naturally fall into line with this explanation, as the Son of man there appears as the glorious founder and head of God's Kingdom. The use of the title in our sources accords well with this view. As his Kingdom is both present and future, so, as Son of man, he has certain experiences to undergo in founding the Kingdom here on earth and a manifestation in glory awaiting him in the consummation of that Kingdom. Especially does this explanation fit the apocalyptic passages which speak of the Son of man as coming in his Kingdom. But since it is through healing, teaching, suffering, and death that Jesus is to establish his Kingdom, it is no less natural to find the Son of man described as engaged in these various works and experiences connected with his calling.

To substantially this conclusion an increasing number of scholars now adhere. Despite minor points of difference they agree in making the title in question correlative to the Kingdom of God. I will present a few illustrations:—

Weiss says: "No doubt every Israelite who believed in Scripture could, in consequence of prophecy, know of a Son of man who, because Jehovah would bring about the completion of salvation through him, had such a divine

<sup>1</sup> See Beyschlag, *N. T. Theol.* I. 67 (Bk. I. ch. iii. § 5).

calling as no one had ever had, and as no one after him could have." <sup>1</sup>

The conclusion of Beyschlag is similar. After reviewing the passage, he says: "All these widely diverging utterances have one thing in common; they all treat of the official sufferings and doings of Jesus; they all speak of him in so far as he has the task of setting up the Kingdom upon earth." "The Son of man is the divinely invested bearer of the Kingdom that descends from above, that is to be founded from heaven; it is he who brings in the Kingdom of God." <sup>2</sup>

Holtzmann concludes his investigation thus: "Jesus is and is called Son of man, on the one hand, in every place where by forgiving and healing, teaching and suffering, he proclaims, extends, and represents the Kingdom of God; but, on the other hand, and especially where, coming on the clouds of heaven, he consummates the Kingdom." <sup>3</sup>

This view admits of a natural application to the passages which present the greatest difficulties for other theories. It falls within his province as the founder of the Kingdom to forgive sins (Mk. ii. 10), and to interpret the true significance and use of the sabbath (Mk. ii. 28). The living of a natural, social (non-ascetic) life (Mt. xi. 19) and the relinquishment of the comforts of home-life (Mt. viii. 20) were conditions for the fulfilment of his heavenly vocation. To speak against his person is less heinous than to deride the Holy Spirit of truth and goodness which speaks in his words and deeds (Mk. iii. 28, 29). To seek and to save the lost (Lk. xix. 10) is an essential part of his work who offers the blessings of his Kingdom to the most wretched and sinful. All these passages of the first group (see page 41) depict or allude to aspects of his work as founder of the Kingdom. The numerous passages which refer to the sufferings and death of the Son of man (Mk. viii. 31; ix. 31; Mt. ix. 12; Lk. xxiv. 7, *et al.*) simply describe an essential condition for the fulfilment of his calling, — an expe-

<sup>1</sup> *Bibl. Theol.* § 16, b.      <sup>2</sup> *N. T. Theol.* I. 64 (Bk. I. ch. iii. § 5).

<sup>3</sup> *Neutest. Theol.* I. 253.

rience which he knew both from prophecy and from his own consciousness to be essential to the completion of work.

But corresponding to the rejection, suffering, and death which he is to experience is the glory with which the Son of man shall come in his Kingdom. The humiliation is offset by the exaltation. And there is no contradiction between these, since he who most humbles himself shall be most exalted (Lk. xiv. 11). The King comes to his throne by the way of the cross. Humility and majesty meet and blend in the character and experience of the Son of man.

Was the title, then, for Jesus' own mind a name for Messiah? I believe we must adopt the conclusion to which our whole investigation points, that it had Messianic significance for Jesus; that it was a veiled designation of his messiahship. We have seen that it was not in popular use as a Messianic title. Its use by our Lord would not therefore carry an explicit assertion of messiahship. His use of it involved the claim of a unique mission, a calling distinguishing him from all others. As his disciples came to know the nature of that calling, they would inevitably conclude that it veiled the claim and involved the fact that he was the Messiah. In this way the term, though not in itself an equivalent for Messiah, would easily become a Messianic title in actual usage. In the later usage which the Synoptics reflect — the apocalyptic usage — the title could only have been understood by the disciples as a practical equivalent for Messiah, or, at least, as implying messiahship. The term as used by Jesus was more generic than Messiah, and just on this account it was adapted to his use. But the head and founder of the Kingdom of God was in reality the Messiah, and the more explicit he made his claim to found and complete his Kingdom, the more naturally would "Son of man" assume the character of a Messianic title. And thus this "most unassuming name," "this title which is no title, but the avoidance of every such thing,"<sup>1</sup> easily came to signify what it was used to veil but no less truly implied.

<sup>1</sup> Beyschlag, *N. T. Theol.* I. 66 (Bk. I. ch. iii. § 6).

## CHAPTER V

### THE SON OF GOD

IT is noticeable that Jesus in speaking of God to the people, or even to his own disciples, never uses the term "Our Father." He speaks of himself as God's Son, and of others as sons of God, but he does not class himself along with other men under a common term. He does not speak of God's fatherhood as if it had the same meaning for him and for them. He says: "my Father," and "your Father"; for example: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father," etc. (Mt. xi. 27); "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of," etc. (Mt. vi. 8). Only once, so far as our sources inform us, does Jesus use the phrase "our Father," and that is in giving a form of prayer for the use of his disciples. No example can be adduced in which he comprehends himself and them together in a single term as being in the same sense "sons of God."

We have seen that Jesus' favorite self-designation was "the Son of man." There is no passage in the Synoptic Gospels in which Jesus explicitly calls himself "Son of God." He does so, however, by very clear implication in two instances: in Mt. xi. 27, where he says "my Father," and adds: "no one knoweth *the Son*, save the *Father*," etc., where "the Son" clearly implies the complement, "of God." So, also, in Mk. xiii. 32: "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither *the Son*, but *the Father*." God is "the Father," "my Father"; Jesus is "the Son," *i.e.*, God's Son.

By less direct implication Jesus is twice represented as the Son of God: (1) in the parable of the Vineyard (Mk. xii. 1 *sq.*). The lord of the vineyard is Jehovah, and the



vineyard is the Jewish nation. The master sent to this people a succession of his "servants," the prophets, "that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruits of the vineyard." The people rejected and killed them. At length he sent his own son, but he received the same shameful treatment: "He had yet one, a beloved son: he sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. But these husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard" (*vv.* 6-8). This son is Jesus himself. (2) Somewhat less prominent is the implication of Jesus' sonship in the parable of the Marriage Feast in Mt. xxii. 2 *sq.*: "The Kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, who made a marriage feast for his son," etc. The parable pictures under the image of a wedding festival the joys and blessings of Christ's Kingdom to which the Jews are first bidden. Upon their refusal to participate in them the messengers are sent to the heathen with the gospel-invitation.<sup>1</sup> We have thus but four cases in which Jesus of his own accord refers to himself by implication as the Son of God, and two of these are quite indirect and incidental. We shall see, however, that he acquiesces in the application of the title which is made to him by others.

The title under consideration is applied to Jesus by others under the most varying conditions. All the Synoptics record that a divine voice came to him out of heaven after his baptism: "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased" (Mk. i. 11; Lk. iii. 22; Mt. iii. 17). In somewhat varying form the same utterance is said by all (Mk. ix. 8; Lk. ix. 35; Mt. xvii. 5) to have been addressed to him at his transfiguration. In these expressions the characteristic thought seems to be that as Son of God he is the special object of the Father's good pleasure. In

<sup>1</sup> Difficult critical questions beset this parable. By many it is regarded as a variation of the parable of the Great Feast given in Lk. xiv. 16 *sq.* to which Matthew has given an anti-Jewish turn. Wendt, *Lehre Jesu*, p. 134, regards *vv.* 11-14 as a distinct parable which naturally follows the parable as given by Luke. He thinks it had some introductory formula prefixed to it which he supplies by the conjectural use of *v.* 2.

the temptation-narrative as given by Luke and Matthew Satan addresses Jesus, hypothetically, thus: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones become bread" (Mt. iv. 3; Lk. iv. 3). Here the Son of God is evidently the wonder-working Messiah who, if genuine, will establish his claims by startling exhibitions of arbitrary power. In all three sources the Gadarene demoniacs are said to address Jesus as Son of God (Mk. v. 7; Lk. viii. 28; Mt. viii. 29), by which the chosen of God, probably the Messiah, seems to be meant.

On one occasion (only in Mt. xiv. 33) he is worshipped by a company of disciples, who say: "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." In Matthew's version of Peter's confession the words used are: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. xvi. 16), but both Mark (viii. 29) and Luke (ix. 20) have shorter forms in which the title in question is not used. In the other cases where the title is applied to Jesus it is found on the lips of his enemies. Thus the high priest addressing him at his trial, demands: "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mk. xiv. 61; cf. Mt. xxvi. 63). Jesus answers affirmatively. According to Matthew the multitude at the cross revile Jesus and say: "If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Mt. xxvii. 40), but in the parallel passages we have instead of the title "Son of God," "the Christ, the King of Israel" (Mk. xv. 32), and "the King of the Jews" (Lk. xxiii. 37). Once more: Mark (whom Matthew follows) ascribes to the centurion at the crucifixion the confession: "Truly this man was a Son of God" (Mk. xv. 39; Mt. xxvii. 54). If the Roman soldier used this particular title,<sup>1</sup> he probably understood it as meaning *hero* or *demi-god*.

Such is the usage in our sources. Before inquiring further into the import of the title it is necessary to examine its historical origin and basis in the Old Testament.

We find the title "sons of God" applied to the following persons in the Old Testament: (1) Angels. In a

<sup>1</sup> Luke ascribes to him the more general expression: "Certainly this was a righteous man" (xxiii. 47).

fragment of some very ancient mythology preserved in Gen. vi. 1-4, these "sons of God" are said to have united with the daughters of men, — a union from which a race of heroes was produced.<sup>1</sup> In Job i. 6 and ii. 1 the "sons of God" are spoken of as presenting themselves before the Lord. This may be called a poetical use of the term.

(2) Magistrates. In Ps. lxxxii. the judges are reprovèd for their unjust judgments and are thus addressed:

"I said ye are gods (*elohim*),  
And all of you sons of the Most High.  
Nevertheless ye shall die like men," etc. (vv. 6, 7).

*Cf.* Ex. xxii. 28: "Thou shalt not revile *elohim* (R. V., "God"; margin, "the judges"), nor curse a ruler of thy people." The same use of *elohim* is found in xxi. 6 and xxii. 8. It is quite certain that *elohim* is here a collective name, which was employed in the oldest usage to denote the tribunal or oracle which was established to declare the divine will.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Individual Israelites. "Ye are sons unto Jehovah your God," etc. "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord," etc. (Deut. xiv. 1, 2). The title is applied in Hos. i. 10 to members of the northern kingdom of Israel who should become reunited with Judah in the common blessings of Jehovah's covenant: "In the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God."

(4) The theocratic king: "He (David) shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son," etc. (2 Sam. vii. 14). *Cf.* Ps. lxxxix. 27: "I will make him (the king of Israel) my first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth." *Cf.* Ps. ii. 7: "Jeho-

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* what Plato says in *Cratylus*, 33: "Do you not know that the heroes are demigods? All of them sprang either from the love of a god for a mortal woman, or of a mortal man for a goddess." For an elaborate discussion and full illustration of this legend in antiquity, see Lenormant, *Beginnings of History*, ch. vii.

<sup>2</sup> LXX.: πρὸς τὸ κριτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. See the Hebrew *Lexicon* of Brown, Briggs, and Driver, under אֱלֹהִים.

vah said unto me (the anointed king), Thou art my son ; this day have I begotten thee ” (installed thee in thy kingly office).

(5) The nation of Israel: “ Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, my firstborn,” etc. (Ex. iv. 22). This relation is still more fully elaborated in the song of Moses (Deut. xxii. 6-10).<sup>1</sup>

From these examples it will be seen that the Old Testament idea of sonship to God is that of special nearness to him — of special endowments or privileges conferred by him. The nation, its members, especially its king, bear this name as the chosen representatives of Jehovah — the special objects of his providential favor and the agents for accomplishing his will. A “ son of God ” in the Old Testament sense is one uniquely loved, chosen, and endowed by God. The title is not used as a specific designation for the Messiah, although the passages cited in which the ideal theocratic king is called Jehovah’s “ son ” and “ first-born,” point to the appropriateness with which the Messiah might be called *par éminence* “ the Son of God.” The historical basis of such a usage is undoubtedly laid in the Old Testament. If the head of the nation is in a peculiar sense God’s son, with even greater propriety may the antitypical king who is to sit on David’s throne forever and establish his kingdom to all generations be so designated. In this usage which we have traced, we find, no doubt, the generic sense which the title bears in its application to Jesus, although we may expect to find something distinctive in that application of it.

Among extra-canonical Jewish writings only the Book of Enoch and fourth Esdras employ the title in question. Examples of its use are as follows: (Jehovah speaks) “ For I and my Son will unite with them forever in the paths of uprightness in their lives ; and ye will have peace.”<sup>2</sup> “ For my Son, Messiah, shall be revealed with those that are with him,” etc. (4 Es. vii. 28). “ And it shall come to pass after these years that my Son, Christ,

<sup>1</sup> See Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy*, pp. 100, 129.

<sup>2</sup> *Enoch*, CV. 2.

shall die," etc. (4 Es. vii. 29). The title is similarly used several times in chs. xiii and xiv.

This usage is clearly a reproduction of that found in the Old Testament, but with this distinctive feature that "my Son" is here almost a synonym for "Messiah." Since the Messiah is the special object of Jehovah's love and favor he is preëminently *his Son*. This sonship to God was inseparable from the idea of messiahship. Only one who was the Son of God in a special sense could be the Messiah. From Jewish usage, then, it appears that the title was in occasional use as an approximate synonym for "the Messiah." This same relation between the two terms seems to exist in the New Testament usage. In Matthew's version of Peter's confession the two titles are united in such a way as to indicate that they are kindred but not strictly synonymous: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. xvi. 16).<sup>1</sup> The same correlation is found in the language of the high priest: "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mk. xiv. 61; cf. Mt. xxvi. 63). In both these cases the title has an official sound. It is noticeable how Jesus in speaking of himself in both connections call himself "the Son of man." The title which was closely allied to "the Messiah" he carefully avoided, except when speaking of that intimate fellowship which he sustained with the Father. Jesus did indeed admit that the title was applicable to him in its official sense, but in his own spontaneous use of it he denoted by it rather a personal relation of fellowship and intimacy with God. "According to the Jewish idea" (which is reflected in the two passages just noticed), "the Messianic king was *also* 'Son of God'; according to Jesus' idea, 'the Son of God' *as such* was the Messianic king."<sup>2</sup>

We now turn to a more particular examination of Jesus' direct use of the title in its application to himself and to

<sup>1</sup> If the shorter forms in Mark and Luke be regarded as more original than this, we have still the significance of the first evangelist's combination of the titles to consider.

<sup>2</sup> Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus*, II. 133 (orig. p. 436).

others. The most significant passage is one which both Matthew and Luke have preserved from the Logia: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Mt. xi. 27; Lk. x. 22). Here Jesus asserts in connection with his sonship to God a unique and incomparable knowledge of God and intimacy with him. That the sonship of Jesus, as here asserted, has in it something distinctive as compared to the sonship of other men, cannot be doubted. Besides the affirmation of an altogether exceptional mutual knowledge between him and God, we observe that God is to him *the Father* and he is to God *the Son* in an absolute sense. In addition to these considerations it must be remembered that Jesus never elsewhere puts himself in the same category with others when speaking of God's fatherhood or men's sonship to God. Is the sonship of Jesus to God essentially different from that of other men, or is it different only in degree; different in the sense of being normal and perfect while theirs is but partially realized in fact?

This inquiry raises another question: What constitutes men "sons of God"? Glorified spirits are said to resemble the angels and so to be "sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Lk. xx. 36). Peacemakers are "sons of God" (Mt. v. 9), and men are required to love all men, even their enemies, in order that they may become (*γένησθε*) sons of their Father who is in heaven (Mt. v. 45). Thus it appears that conformity to God's will, likeness to him in moral motives and action, constitutes men sons of God. God is perfectly good; he blesses all, the unjust as well as the just. Men become sons of God by becoming like him. This likeness of men to God in its perfection would involve completeness of love (Mt. v. 48).

Now it is noticeable that other men *become* sons of God; Jesus *is* the Son of God without qualification. He does not have to attain this sonship by gradual or partial approach, but possesses it from the first. He perfectly

fulfils the divine will, absolutely conforms to the divine good pleasure. He perfectly knows God as his Father in the most intimate and unbroken fellowship. The title *Son* is for him rather personal than official; as he uses it, it emphasizes rather his relation to God than his relation to his life-work. In view of these distinctive features of Jesus' language concerning his own sonship and that of other men, our previous question recurs: Was his sonship different from that of other men in degree only or also in kind?

All will admit that his sonship is unique in the sense that its ideal is perfectly realized in him, while in others it is but partially fulfilled. Beyschlag says that there is in his sonship "a sublimity and uniqueness of his relation to God which raises him above all other sons of men."<sup>1</sup> He regards the sinlessness of Jesus as proving that his relation to the Father is original, perfect, and absolute, and that his sonship is thus perfect and absolute, while that of others is but partial and relative.<sup>2</sup> Wendt thinks that Jesus occasionally "designated himself in distinction from all others as 'the Son of God' in a preëminent sense." "He has thus regarded himself as 'the Son of God' *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, since he knew that this mutual relation of loving intercourse subsisted between God and himself in unique perfection."<sup>3</sup>

Most recent scholars also agree that the term "Son of God" as used in the Synoptics is primarily an ethical one. It emphasizes the perfect union, the absolute intimacy, and mutual knowledge which subsist between the Father and Jesus. It is, as we have seen, a personal rather than an official name. It speaks of a relation sustained to God, whether applied to Jesus or to others. The term is not used in a metaphysical sense as denoting community of essence. If the use of the title involves something more than ethical union, it must be by suggestion and implication, rather than by direct assertion. Those

<sup>1</sup> *N. T. Theol.* I. 71 (Bk. I. ch. iii. § 8).

<sup>2</sup> *Leben Jesu*, pp. 178, 179.

<sup>3</sup> *Teaching of Jesus*, II. 125, 128 (orig. pp. 429, 432).

who hold that it implies no such significance may fairly challenge their opponents to show that it *does*. They stand upon the direct and primary reference of the title and may maintain that its import is exclusively ethical until something more is shown to be involved in it.

It is not strange that at this point there should be a dividing of the ways. Wendt, for example, holds that the language of our sources does not warrant us in ascribing to the paternal and filial relation which Jesus regarded as existing between God and himself, a character different in principle from the paternal and filial relation which, according to his teaching, exists between God and the members of his Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Beyschlag, after reviewing the passage, says very emphatically: "All these facts make it so certain that the consciousness of Jesus was at bottom purely human, that only an unconquerable dogmatic prejudice, springing from scholastic tradition and misunderstanding of what religion requires, can resist the force of this testimony."<sup>2</sup> He maintains the sinlessness of Jesus and the absolute ethical uniqueness of his relation to God, but asserts that the notion that these facts involve a consciousness of preëxistence or any character transcending human perfection is "a very curious error," through falling into which Paul and John started the Church on a wrong path in the development of theology.

A widely different conclusion is drawn by Reuss. After discussing the title "Son of God," he concludes that the relationship which it emphasizes is, indeed, ethical. But he adds that its use necessarily gives rise to further reflection. "In other words," he continues, "this moral relation, if it is really such as we have just described, does not explain itself, nor is it explained, by any analogies supplied by the history of man. We are necessarily led to regard it as the manifestation of a metaphysical relation of a much higher order, and absolutely beyond the reach of any analogy our world can furnish."<sup>3</sup> Reuss

<sup>1</sup> *Teaching of Jesus*, II. 124 (orig. p. 429).

<sup>2</sup> *N. T. Theol.* I. 75 (Bk. I. ch. iii. § 10).

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Christ. Theol.* I. 202 (orig. I. 234, 235).