

Already He has been Creator and Preserver, Deliverer and Saviour. We have made these discoveries. For the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt and the salvation from the bondage of sin are acts of history. They both belong to our past. In relation to them both we walk by sight. And how great is our astonishment, first at the provocation in the Wilderness, and next at the crucifixion on Calvary. Is it possible that, in our astonishment at the blindness of the Israelites, we are in the same condemnation through disobedience?

It is possible. For Jahweh has not yet made

the last revelation of Himself. To us still He says, I WILL BE. It is not given to any generation of men to walk entirely by sight. In the last book of the Bible there is a hint that when the new revelation comes it will come with a new name. But to whom will it come? It will come to him that overcometh. 'He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name' (Rev 3¹²).

The Self-Consciousness of Jesus and the Servant of the Lord.

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III.

The Influence of Isaiah.

WHEN did Jesus become conscious that His Messianic career must issue in death? Is any light attainable on the problem? How is this conviction related to His Messianic consciousness as a whole? How is it related to His consciousness of Sonship? We will attempt to discuss these far-reaching questions, not with the view of reaching definite, far less, final answers, for that is impossible, but in order, at least, to indicate that much remains to be done in this direction; that hints may be collected from the Gospels which, in any case, suggest possible solutions; that many scholars have made rash assertions because they have not clearly realized the situation. Take, for example, such a statement as that of Schwartzkopff, by no means a hasty investigator (*Prophecies of Jesus Christ concerning His death*, etc., Eng. tr. p. 26): 'No doubt he must have clearly seen from the beginning that suffering awaited him in his Messianic mission. . . . But that did not necessarily mean that the struggle would end in death. . . . [Old Testament] predictions made no

reference to a death of the Messiah. No doubt Is 53 foreshadowed the death of the Servant of the Lord, but this was explained away by the exposition of the Rabbis.' This paragraph implies that Is 53 had no special importance for the consciousness of Jesus, who would, Schwartzkopff supposes, be guided by the interpretations current in His time. We may narrow down our inquiry, then, to this: Did Jesus identify Himself with the O.T. figure of the Servant of Jehovah, and at what stage in His consciousness of Messiahship did this identification take place?

Even a cursory study of the Gospels reveals most clearly the extraordinary influence of O.T. Scripture on the mind of Jesus. It is not too much to say that His thought is steeped in O.T. religious conceptions. This can be in no sense surprising. The converse would have been quite inexplicable. If His human nature were to undergo any development at all (and, of course, a real humanity presupposes this, as the N.T. explicitly recognizes), a supremely powerful influence

must have been that of the piety which He found existing, and the sources from which that piety received its nurture. The purer the piety, the more ardently must it have turned to the prophets and psalmists, who had surpassed the other O.T. writers in loftiness of spiritual vision. Obviously the circle in which Jesus was brought up belonged to the most devout in the land. They 'waited for the consolation of Israel,' and this expectancy was mainly based on the wonderful prophetic pictures of the future. No doubt, as we discover from the mental history of the Twelve, the national idea must still have been very prominent in their Messianic hopes. Probably for that reason, the mysterious figure of the Servant of Jehovah would scarcely appeal to them. We have already seen how small a place it took in Jewish theology. It is of interest to note in passing that the translators of the O.T. into Greek, to a large extent failed to understand the conception, a fact which can be discovered from various portions of their translation of Is 53.

From His earliest years, the O.T. must have been peculiarly prized by Jesus. His soul would respond to the revelation of God which had come to illumine the world, even before He had reached that stage of intellectual growth and experience of life at which the Divine purpose, in all its grandeur, took ever more definite shape for His consciousness, and at which He felt, with deepening insight, the central meaning of His own place in the history of redemption.

Many interpreters of the Gospels have attempted to discuss the beginnings, in the spiritual experience of Jesus, of that wonderful process whose issue is disclosed in the narratives of His Baptism and Temptation. At best, this must be a precarious endeavour. For we dare not estimate the potentialities of the religious consciousness of Jesus by the standards of our own spiritual development. Thus, to say, with Holtzmann (*N.T. Theologie*, i. p. 270): 'The consciousness of being Son of God is the simplest and purest expression of attained religious perfection,' is to leave the matter precisely where it was. For it is just this 'attained religious perfection' which constitutes the problem. How did this 'attaining' relate itself to His mental and spiritual growth? How did His consciousness of Sonship emerge into the full light of mental recognition? Was there possible, in His case, any spiritual attitude towards God, without this filial

consciousness? It seems to us that only a preconceived view of history can doubt the authenticity of the beautiful incident recorded in Lk 2⁴¹⁻⁵⁰. There is not a trace of the legendary apparent in it. It is one of these recollections, traceable to Mary herself, which give their special character and colour to the earlier narratives of Luke. The interest of the scene culminates in the words of the boy Jesus: 'Knew ye not that I must be about my Father's business (or, in my Father's house)?' Here already is the consciousness of a special relationship to God.

It is plainly beyond the range of our conception to attempt to formulate the form of thought or feeling in which this consciousness emerged on the mental horizon of Jesus. Some scholars, e.g. H. J. Holtzmann, believe that Jesus 'referred the name "Son of God" to Himself as the Chosen of the Divine love, so that God as Father formed the correlative conception thereto' (*op. cit.* i. p. 267). Here, again, the problem really still remains. By means of what kind of experience did Jesus realize this Divine 'choice' of Himself? Others, e.g. Baldensperger (*op. cit.* p. 221), hold that this feeling of Sonship was 'no earlier and no later than his consciousness of Messiahship.' Such an hypothesis can be nothing else than arbitrary. The only approach towards any apprehension of the situation is from the known facts of Jesus' experience. These are only recorded fragmentarily, but the nature of them is sufficiently clear from such passages as Mt 11²⁷, 'All things were delivered to me by my Father: and no one fully knoweth (*ἐπιγινώσκει*) the Son, except the Father; nor doth any one fully know the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son is willing to reveal him.' Complete mutual knowledge is the foundation of the relationship between the Father and the Son. The very use of the names Father and Son implies that that knowledge is *love*. Pure and unalloyed love toward God—that is the basis of the filial consciousness of Jesus. This love, which is the fundamental element in His personality, instinctively craves for fellowship and finds it. The love of God in unstinted measure meets His love. In that wonderful relationship He finds Himself. At what point in His developing consciousness that became clearly manifest is, after all, of secondary importance. We believe it is presupposed by the incident quoted above.

The momentous question is: How will this all-

absorbing fellowship, which is the heart and centre of His life, affect His outlook on the world? Necessarily as boundless love for men, taking the highest form which the highest love can take, the desire that they should attain to the likeness of God. This attitude was no doubt fully developed by the time of which it could be said: 'Jesus progressed in wisdom and age, and in favour with God and men' (Lk 2⁵²). But a love like this, which was the core of Jesus' self-consciousness, must, from the outset, work in His nature with tremendous motive power. It is impossible to conceive of it as a mere satisfying emotion. It must, of necessity, prompt to activity. And only one kind of activity can be associated with it as effect: that of definitely bringing men under the sway of God.

Now, as an integral part of the whole Divine saving purpose, as the next step in the self-revelation of God, one particular order of functions connected itself by a fundamental fitness with the whole bent of Jesus' thought and feeling. It was the Messiahship. The most vital element in the piety of the godliest people He knew was involved in their Messianic hopes. The authoritative ground for these hopes lay in the great forecasts of the prophets and psalmists. Jesus went to the sources. His delight in the earlier revelation was unalloyed. He searched the Scriptures for Himself. And for Him their meaning shone forth with a brightness which no other had discovered. The Divine intention took shape before the gaze of His soul. He saw the wisdom of God preparing the way for a final issue of salvation. And these ultimate operations, which were to usher in a splendid new order, were found constantly to attach themselves to an ideal person, the anointed King, who should be God's vicegerent upon earth. This was the expectation which stirred in the hearts of His devoutest friends. The picture was a glorious one: God triumphing over the oppressors of His people; God vindicating the chosen race through His kingly representative. In the Book of Daniel, which He knew, a book of extraordinary influence in that period, there was a remarkable picture of a Kingdom of the Saints which should overpower the brutal world-kingdoms, symbolized by the four beasts (Dn 7²⁻²⁷). In this kingdom dominion was given to 'one like unto a Son of man' (v. 13). In one important apocalyptic writing (En 37-71) this mysterious Figure was identified with

Messiah.¹ We know what significant use Jesus made of these conceptions.

But the most wonderful picture of all lay aside from the beaten track of expectation. It was the picture in the second part of Isaiah of the *Servant of Jehovah*. As we have seen, it was scarcely, by any Jewish scholars, associated with the person of Messiah. For it seemed to lack the characteristically Messianic features. And yet it must have arrested the attention of Jesus, as soon as He began to read and study the prophets. We cannot tell, of course, whether our Lord interpreted the description as belonging to a personification or to a person. The question is not of importance. The crucial matter consists in the qualities here portrayed. He is the chosen of God, in whom the heart of God delights (42¹). Yet there is nothing of pomp or fame in his aspect. He is gentle, self-restrained, quiet (42²). He deals tenderly with the weak and wavering (42³). He grows up without any ostentation (53²). There is nothing at the outset to attract men's attention (*ibid.*). As his career progresses, there is a strange blending of loftiness and lowliness. He is 'called in righteousness' to 'open the blind eyes.' He is to bring forth judgment (*i.e.* the true religion) to the nations. And yet his course is one of trial and suffering. He gives his back to the smiters: he hides not his face from shame and spitting (50⁶). He is despised and rejected of men (53³). It pleases the Lord to bruise him (53¹⁰). He is wounded for the transgressions of his brethren, bruised for their iniquities: by his stripes they are healed (53⁵). His soul is made a guilt-offering. But as the issue, he shall see a seed, he shall lengthen his days, as God's righteous Servant he shall win righteousness for many (53^{10,11}). It is not surprising that this conception seemed to the scribes to contradict the traditional Messianic pictures. Here was a figure wholly different from the powerful King who should maintain the traditions of David's victorious throne. Yet nowhere else in the O.T. is the idea of a Saviour so expressly delineated. The two pictures stand before the mind of Jesus: the Anointed King; the Suffering Servant. Must He not have reflected upon them long and earnestly? Must He not have weighed and estimated their meaning and value in the light of His own consciousness of an unsullied vision of the heart of God? Need there be a contradiction between their functions? Might

¹ Compare the Psalms of Solomon.

not the kingliest vocation of God's Anointed be that of gracious and tender service? Nay, must not self-forgetting service be the most perfect outcome of the heart of God, which He had discovered in His own experience to be pure and unmixed love? But this is *His* discovery. His most pious friends are barely able to understand Him; indeed, many are utterly bewildered. Even in the Scriptures of the O.T. there are only dim foreshadowings of this profoundest of all spiritual truths. For His soul alone it is clear as noon-day. Is not this discovery a signal mark of the Divine purpose? Is not this saving purpose interwoven with His experience? Is not He the chosen of the most High? Are these features of the Servant the lineaments of His life as consecrated to this supreme vocation? Is He to be 'despised and rejected of men': to 'bear the sins of many and make intercession for the transgressors': to 'make his soul a guilt-offering': as God's righteous Servant 'to win righteousness for many'?

The high probability that in the silent years at Nazareth He should arrive at this identification is surely by this time apparent. We believe that it almost passes into a certainty in the light of His baptism-experience. This crisis in His career is the first opportunity which the Gospels afford us of estimating the actual situation as it existed for the self-consciousness of Jesus. Numerous interpretations have been given of Jesus' resolution to be baptized by John in Jordan. We do not propose to discuss these. But let us assume, for the moment, that He had begun to associate His own vocation with the mysterious and yet so appealing Figure of the Servant, an assumption which we have already shown to be thoroughly reasonable. An epoch has arisen in the popular religion. The Baptist has sounded the note of repentance. Crowds are flocking to the Jordan, confessing their sins, and through the symbolic act of baptism indicating their desire to enter upon a new life. This new life is to be a preparation for, if not an entrance into, the approaching kingdom of God. The movement must appeal with peculiar solemnity to Jesus. It is the kind of spiritual crisis, no doubt, for which He has been waiting. If the news reaches Him, as doubtless it must, of the actual terms in which John proclaims his message, telling of One mightier than he, who is to come, the burden of men's need which lies upon His heart, the yearning love which constrains Him to devote

Himself to the service of His fellows—these influences will bring Him forth to associate Himself with the crucial opportunity which has arisen. What shall be His attitude towards this religious upheaval, this extraordinary demonstration of repentance?

If Jesus, by this time, had begun to interpret His own divinely appointed vocation in the light of the experiences of the Servant, one conviction must have taken a central place in His consciousness: the conviction that His career was to be *vicarious*. For no element was so unique, so impressive in the prophet's delineation as this. Yet what element would so directly appeal to Him? The controlling power in His being was the compassion of His boundless love seeking an outlet for its expression in self-forgetting service. To make Himself one with that erring humanity which He had learned to know, in its burdens, its sorrows, and its sins, was an aim truly befitting Him who felt that through His experience the living God was drawing near to man. Surely it was this vicarious impulse which urged Him to the banks of the Jordan. He had no personal sin to confess: in His consciousness there was no place for personal repentance. But how could He more effectively dedicate Himself to that vocation, whose vicarious character was shaping itself, or had already shaped itself for thought and feeling, than by taking His place beside the penitents and identifying His pure will with their confessions? 'Suffer it to be so now,' He urged, when John hesitated, 'for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness' (*πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην*).

We wish to guard against exaggeration of evidence, but this remarkable saying seems full of illumination.¹ Various colourless explanations of the arresting word *δικαιοσύνην* have been given by commentators. When it is viewed in its intimate connexion with the step which Jesus was about to take, the step of consecration to what He knew was His Divine calling, by an act of self-identification with sinners, it is at least natural to look for light upon the word in that context in which Jesus must have felt Himself so

¹ Since these articles were written, Principal Garvie's most suggestive *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus* has come into my hands. I find that he has interpreted this saying on precisely the same lines as I have followed. More than once he has strongly emphasized, from the same standpoint, the high importance of the Servant conception for the consciousness of Jesus.

completely at home. Now the idea of *δικαίος* is prominent throughout the Songs of the Servant. That is one of his most characteristic epithets. And its intimate bearing on the passage before us is discernible in Is 53, 'My Servant the righteous, righteousness wins He for many, and their guilt He takes for his load' (so G. A. Smith, *Isaiah*, vol. ii. p. 345).

The outcome of this act of self-dedication for Jesus was of incomparable significance. It embraced a clear assurance of His Sonship and a fresh equipment with the Spirit. Let us attempt to realize what that implied. While these experiences, from the psychological standpoint, might be regarded as two aspects of the one spiritual fact, and while, in any case, they were necessarily inseparable from each other, it is legitimate to isolate them, in seeking to analyse their meaning. The assurance of the Sonship is the seal of God set upon that maturing experience of Jesus which culminated in His step of self-consecration to His mission. Here He reaches certainty as to the infallibility of His discernment in finding Himself in the crowning personification of the earlier revelation. He *is* the righteous Servant: He is God's chosen in whom He delights. Jehovah has called Him, and will hold His hand (Is 42⁶). But in union with this marvellous consciousness, which, in its ripest form, is the climax of His spiritual growth, comes the sense of a new and unparalleled endowment with the Divine Spirit. From the result of this endowment, as recorded in the Gospels, which describe Jesus as being led or driven into the wilderness by the Spirit, we may gather that its main effect was to urge Him forward to His vocation, strong in the might of God. Here, too, He would find a corroboration of His earlier discovery. For one of the most typical features

of the Servant is that God has put His Spirit upon Him (42²; cf. 61¹).

The renewed consciousness of His equipment is the signal for decisive activity. And immediately the reaction supervenes. The intensity of His eagerness to be up and doing creates a crisis in His inner life. As He confronts the stupendous task of establishing the kingdom of God, doubts press in upon His soul. 'If thou be the Son of God'—the point of gravity lies there. How shall He assure Himself that His conviction is true? Is it safe to set out on this enterprise with no further guarantee? His temptation is to test the situation by employing the superhuman powers, of which He is conscious, for material ends which, at the same time, will procure His acknowledgment as Messiah. But the *nature* of His Messiahship is itself involved in such tests. If He yields, He is committing Himself to earthly and political ideals. To be greeted as Messiah on these conditions has nothing spiritual about it. It is simply to adopt the rôle expected by the national party. Jesus thrusts the suggestion away from Him in horror. In each instance He repels the temptation by casting Himself directly upon God. Of remarkable significance is Mt 4⁴, 'Not by bread only shall man live, but by every word proceeding through the mouth of God.' This reminds us of His dependence on the earlier revelation. And there can be little doubt that when He had to choose between competing Messianic ideals, there stood clearly before His mind the figure of the Suffering Servant with which He had already identified Himself. For that was what His decision in the wilderness meant: the casting aside of the attractions of political authority and exaltation, and the deliberate choice of attainment through service, a service which essentially involved suffering.

Modern Positive Theology.

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GERMAN theologians are at present much interested in the rise of a new Theological School, which claims to be at once modern and positive—the legitimate heir of the orthodox dogmatic tradition. The leaders of this movement are Superintendent

Theodor Kaftan, of Kiel, and Professor Reinhold Seeberg, of Berlin. They are agreed, however, not so much in matters of detail as in principle and intention, and neither can be regarded as in any way responsible for the other. The younger men,