

## CHAPTER II

### THE LOVING AND INTIMATE SERVANT OF GOD

(1) Jesus' claim to be the Son of God in a unique sense rested in the first place on his experience of unique filial intimacy with God—(2) a sense which dated even from his boyhood, (3) became strikingly real to him at his Baptism and again at his Transfiguration, (4) was manifested in the frequency and the familiar language of his prayers, (5) and was given open expression in his so-called "Johannine" utterance. (6) It owed much to the affectionate and harmonious relations which had existed between himself and his human father. (7) It led him to feel the insufficiency of the idea of God as "King", and so in his teaching to lay unprecedented stress on God's Fatherhood. (8) It carried with it the ideal of loyal and unreserved obedience to the Divine Will, after the manner of "the Servant of the Lord" depicted in Deutero-Isaiah. (9) Jesus acts for God: his doings are God's doings. (10) As the basis of his claim to unique Sonship, it was more fundamental than the consciousness of Messiahship, which resulted from it.

(1) and (10). That Jesus did actually claim to be both *the* Son of God and the Jewish Messiah is historically undeniable. It is argued by some that the latter claim was the basis of the former and exhausted its significance.<sup>1</sup> That the two were closely allied is doubtless true; but that the consciousness of Messiahship was prior to that of Sonship is most improbable. The ground for believing that the sense of Sonship was prior is cumulative, and will become clearer as we proceed. I would here observe only that spiritual status is inherently likely to have been the cause of a sense of official vocation, rather than its consequence.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Montefiore, S.G.<sup>2</sup> I. cxxiii, 19, 85-87, II. 181.

<sup>2</sup> For the filial consciousness of Jesus, see, e.g., Holtzmann, *Theol.* i. 173-175; Bartlet in *H.D.C.G.* ii. 700 ab, 704; J. A. Robertson, *Spiritual Pilgrimage*, Sections I and II. Dr. H. J. Cadbury, on what seem to me quite insufficient grounds, apparently views positive speculation regarding the "religious experience" of Jesus as unwarranted and illusory, and denies—or at least sees no reason to believe—that Jesus enjoyed any exceptional sense of God's presence; he refers in this connexion to the largely-conventional character of references to the Deity customary among Moslems (*Peril*, 9,

(2) At the age of twelve, Jesus speaks of his presence in the Temple at Jerusalem as "being in my Father's (House)", to which therefore it was only natural for him to resort (Lk. ii. 49). His words, taken by themselves, could be translated, "(engaged) in the (affair)s of my Father"; but as the question under discussion was one of locality, the former translation is more likely to express the meaning of the original. We do not know how Luke came by the story; but there is no reason to doubt its substantial accuracy (incidentally the reference to Joseph and Mary as Jesus' "parents" [ii. 27, 41; cf. 33] if not Mary's allusion to Joseph as "thy father" [ii. 48], indicate that it ante-dated Luke's acceptance of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth). However translated, Jesus' reply reveals an extraordinary sense of the close relation between God and himself,<sup>1</sup> which could not, of course, at that early age have had anything to do with a claim to Messiahship.

(3) For the evidence regarding the Baptism and Transfiguration, see above, pp. 29f. While the Divine Sonship here attested undoubtedly has reference to the Messianic office, the forms in which it is expressed make it unlikely that it stands for Messiahship only. At his baptism Jesus "felt that he stood—and now he realised as never before the Messianic meaning of the fact—in that perfectly filial relation to God which was the destiny of man as originally created 'in the image of God', though it had been lost by Adam and never recovered until in his own experience and person".<sup>2</sup>

(4) For the significance of Jesus' use of the word "Abba" in addressing God in prayer, see above, pp. 28f. (3), 32 (6). The frequent allusions in the Gospels to Jesus praying are easily found, and do not need to be adduced here: cf. especially

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162-164, 176-181, 186-190). Cf. Bultmann, *Jesus*, 141f. (Jesus knew nothing of any mystical relation to God).

The filial consciousness of Jesus is believed to have been the basis of his claim to Messiahship, and not simply its consequence or equivalent, by Wendt (*Teaching*, i. 180f., 191, 393f., ii. 123f., 130), Holtzmann (*Theol.* i. 339, 352f., 413-415: "... Sein Messiasium war demnach die geschichtlich gebotene, die unvermeidliche Anschauungsform, in welche sich für seine Vorstellung der Erfahrungsgehalt seines religiösen Lebens, also sein Sohnesbewusstsein gekleidet hat"), Bartlet (*St. Mark*, 56, 93), Bartlet and Carlyle (*Christianity in Hist.* 26), Meyer (*Ursprung*, ii. 444), Box (*St. Matthew*, 30, 97), Peake (in *B.J.R.L.* VIII. i. 58f. [Jan. 1924]), Major (in *Mission*, etc. 112: "This theo-centric egoism is the very core of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus"), and others. See below, p. 52.

<sup>1</sup> Wendt, *Teaching*, i. 95f.; Holtzmann, *Synopt.* 323, *Theol.* i. 175 ("Für solche Intensität des religiösen Lebens schon im Kinde mag immerhin Lc 2 49 ein bezeichnender Zug erhalten sein").

<sup>2</sup> Bartlet and Carlyle, *Christianity in Hist.* 22. Cf. Manson, *Teaching*, 102-104.

Lk. v. 16 1 (his custom), Lk. vi. 12 1, possibly L (a whole night spent in prayer).<sup>1</sup>

(5) The precise wording—like the historical reliability and the exact interpretation—of the so-called “Johannine” saying of Jesus in Lk. x. 22 = Mt. xi. 27 Q has been the subject of much discussion. A probable form of the original saying is, “All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one comes to know the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son desires to reveal (Him)”.<sup>2</sup> I have argued above (p. 33) for the originality of this passage as an actual saying of Jesus. Whatever form of words we choose as most likely to be what Jesus, according to Q, really said, the utterance very clearly implies a uniquely-close intimacy between him and God.<sup>3</sup>

(6) That Jesus’ stress on the Fatherhood of God owed much to the happy relations between himself and Joseph is, of course, a conjecture, but a very reasonable one. It is inherently unlikely that he could have drawn the parallels he did between the human and the Divine paternal benevolence, if his own human father had not in earlier years meant much to him. Between him and his mother, on the contrary, there does not seem to have been anything like a close understanding (Mk. iii. 21 [unparalleled in Lk. and Mt.]; Mk. iii. 31–35 = Lk. viii. 19–21 = Mt. xii. 46–50).<sup>4</sup>

(7) Without in any way undervaluing the importance of the conception of God as Father among the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus (see above, p. 28 n. 1), we can be in no sort of doubt as to the greatness and the novelty of the emphasis which he himself placed upon it. While using it at times in the way that had apparently become familiar to devout Jews, he made it in a new fashion a basis for delineating the nature and the ways of God, and charged it with a fullness and depth of meaning which for his hearers had no precedent.<sup>5</sup> With him it was no mere theological commonplace, but a fundamental and all-important reality, founded upon his own direct experience of communion with God, and becoming more sacred and

<sup>1</sup> For the prayer in Gethsemane, cf. Manson, *Teaching*, 104f., 198.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Holtzmann, *Theol.* i. 345–351, and McNeile, *St. Matthew*, 162–166, where the literature on the subject is summarized.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Dalman, *W.J.* 282–287; Dodd in *Myst. Christi*, 63; Manson, *Teaching*, 109–113.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Holtzmann, *Theol.* i. 162; Klausner, *Jes. of Naz.* 235, 280; Montefiore, *S.G.* II. 119; W. H. Stubbs in *E.T.* xlii. 425–428 (June 1931); L. Weatherhead, *His Life and Ours* (1932), 63f.; S. Pearce Carey, *Jesus* (1939), 22f.

<sup>5</sup> Per contra, Cadbury, *Peril*, 94: “Even religiously the fatherhood of God is neither a novelty nor a new emphasis with Jesus”.

more full of meaning as his life-course brought him nearer and nearer to its tragic climax.<sup>1</sup>

(8) If God the Father be the supremely-real Presence and the supreme object of trust and love (Mk. xii. 28-31 = Mt. xxii. 34-40 : cf. Lk. x. 25-27 L), it follows that life must be lived in strenuous and unqualified obedience to Him.<sup>2</sup> Jesus must be, not only the beloved and chosen Son, but the loyal and submissive Servant, of God. Only those who, like him, did the Will of God, would he recognize as his true kinsmen (Mk. iii. 33-35 = Lk. viii. 21 = Mt. xii. 48-50). This sense of being engaged entirely in God's service led him to apply to himself, and enabled him to derive support and guidance from, the Deutero-Isaianic passages portraying the Servant of the Lord and describing his experiences (Isa. xlii. 1-4, xlix. 1-6, l. 4-9, lii. 13-14. 12, with the addition of lxi. 1ff. as similar in spirit, although not using the actual word "servant"). The evidence that Jesus applied these passages to himself is not abundant, and has been felt by some to be inadequate; but cumulatively it is quite sufficient to warrant belief. It is as follows:—

(a) Isaiah xlii. 1 (like other phrases in the same book—xliv. 2, lxii. 4) is echoed in the voice from heaven at the Baptism and the Transfiguration (see the passages from Mk. and probably also from Q and L quoted above, pp. 29f.).

(b) Isaiah lxi. 1f. was read by Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth; and after reading the passage he added, "To-day has this Scripture been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. iv. 17-21 L).

(c) Isaiah liii. 12 was explicitly applied by Jesus to himself

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dalman, *W.J.* 189-194; Manson, *Teaching*, 24f., 93-115. The latter gives the most detailed study I know of the teaching of Jesus on the subject. Ignoring for the most part the distinction between "my Father", "your Father", etc., classifying the references according to the Gospel-documents to which they belong, and allowing for the tendency of Mt. to insert the word in passages where the sources did not warrant it, Dr. Manson comes to the conclusion that, before Peter's confession at Caesarea-Philippi, Jesus hardly ever, if at all, spoke of God as Father. He further argues that, even after Caesarea-Philippi, he used the term "Father" for God only in prayer or in speaking to his inner circle of Disciples. Bearing in mind the custom of contemporary Judaism, Jesus' consciousness of special Sonship from his baptism onwards (not to mention his boyhood), and the condition of our Gospel-sources, I feel doubtful as to whether the chronological distinction holds good quite as definitely as Dr. Manson believes, and still more so as to his restriction of the utterances to those made in the presence of Disciples. But these points do not seriously affect the main issue with which I am here concerned; and I fully agree with Dr. Manson in his insistence on the meaning of the language in question, as I have represented it in the text above. "The question is at once posed", he says (94), with reference to the New-Testament teaching generally, "What did Jesus do to this old belief in the Fatherhood of God to give it such power and influence over the lives of men?"

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Manson, *Teaching*, 105, 115, 168, 197f.

at the Last Supper : " I tell you, this which has been written must be accomplished in regard to me, ' And he was reckoned among the transgressors ' " (Lk. xxii. 37 L).

(d) Isaiah liii. 11f. (" My servant will make *many* righteous ", and " he bore away the sin of *many* ") are twice clearly echoed in the words of Jesus—firstly, when he said that " the Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for *many* " (Mk. x. 45 = Mt. xx. 28), and secondly, when at the Last Supper he said that his blood was " being poured out on behalf of *many* " (Mk. xiv. 24 = Mt. xxvi. 28).<sup>1</sup>

(9) The quasi-identification of himself with the Deutero-Isaianic Servant of God and the entire self-dedication to God's work involved in this identification carried with it the implication that his own activities are virtually the activities of God Himself. Thus it was that, when he expelled the demons, he expelled them " by the finger of God " (Lk. xi. 20 = Mt. xii. 28 Q: the latter has " spirit " for " finger "),<sup>2</sup> and when he dismissed the cured madman in the land of the Gerasenes, he bade him tell his friends " how much the Lord has done for thee, and how merciful He has been to thee " (Mk. v. 19 = Lk. viii. 39 : by " the Lord " Jesus certainly meant God, as Luke's parallel actually states; but the following verse in Mk. seems to show that Mark thought " the Lord " was Jesus himself. Cf. Lk. v. 17 l; Mk. ii. 12 = Lk. v. 26 = Mt. ix. 8). Thus too he declares that whoever receives or rejects him receives or rejects in so doing the God who sent him (Mk. ix. 37 = Lk. ix. 48 = Mt. x. 40; Lk. x. 16 L or possibly l or Q). The three parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son, particularly the sentences with which they severally close (Lk. xv. 7, 10 Q or L [cf. Mt. xviii. 13f. Q or M or m]; Lk. xv. 32 L), bring God's concern over wayward human lives into a very close relationship with Jesus' own activity (cf. Lk. xv. 2 l; also Mk. ii. 15-17 = Lk. v. 29-32 = Mt. ix. 10-12, 13b, and see generally the following chapter). In Lk. xxiv. 49 l or l, Jesus says he will send upon the Disciples the Spirit promised them by God : but as a post-Resurrection saying, this is likely to be a creation of the early Church rather than an actual saying of Jesus : in any case, it does not refer to his earthly ministry.

(10) See above, p. 34.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Moffatt, *Theol. of the Gospels*, 139-149; Rawlinson, *St. Mark*, 254-256; Otto, *Kingdom*, 250-253 (he sees another quotation of Isaiah liii in Mk. ix. 12 = Mt. xvii. 12); V. Taylor, *Sacrifice*, 46-48.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Otto, *Kingdom*, 168f.