

natural death in the case of His disciples before His coming again as exceptional.¹

As now the Jews in the days of Jesus understood by the kingdom of God the future state in which the Old Testament prophecies would be fulfilled, so Jesus in some utterances used it as a designation for the *future* state of salvation to be inaugurated by Himself at His coming again with divine authority, inasmuch as in this state He saw a true fulfilment of Old Testament promises. The idea has this meaning, where Jesus, in direct allusion to a saying respecting His coming again to judgment (Mark viii. 38), continues, "Verily I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God coming in power" (ix. 1); or where, in His exhortations rather to be cripples than by yielding to sinful lust to incur the loss of eternal life, He substitutes for the phrase "enter into life" (Mark ix. 43, 45), the phrase "enter into the kingdom of God"

¹ This is the only questionable position in the paper. Dr. Wendt has no doubt that the Lord placed His Second Coming in the existing generation, and Meyer agrees with him in this; see Meyer's notes in *Commentary on Matthew xxiv.*, and Remarks, vol. i. p. 162. Mark ix. 1 alone would not bear out Wendt's position. Much stronger passages are Matt. xxiv. 14, 30, 34. Other explanations may be consulted in the different commentators. If the literal interpretation of Wendt and Meyer is accepted, the difficulty is precisely of the same kind as the one in Mark xiii. 32, Matt. xxiv. 36, and must be solved, or left unsolved, in the same way. Whatever explanations are pertinent to the one case are pertinent to the other. Some would solve it by the Kenosis view of the Incarnation, but the Kenosis theory again raises difficulties of a very formidable kind. It will be observed that both Wendt and Meyer, while adopting the literal sense, do not attempt to reconcile it with the Christian faith as to Christ's Person. It seems best to leave the difficulty unexplained. The rest of the series of papers will be found full of instruction.—*Translator's Note.*

(ver. 47; cf. the relation of Mark x. 23 to ver. 17). So in the saying to his contemporaries, who are near to Him outwardly, but whom He will one day deny, because they are doers of unrighteousness: "There shall be groaning and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, but yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south, and sit down to eat in the kingdom of God" (Luke xiii. 28 f.). Again, in the saying to His disciples at the Last Supper: "Verily I say to you, that I will henceforth drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until the day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God" (Mark xiv. 25). So in the saying recorded by Luke at the farewell Supper: "Ye shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke xxii. 29 f.). Also in the Sermon on the Mount at the beginning of the beatitudes, which seem to me to be reproduced by Luke in a more original form than by Matthew, the kingdom of God has this meaning (Matt. v. 3; Luke vi. 20). For here the future salvation is put in contrast with present earthly misfortune. Happy he who gains this future salvation of God's kingdom, although poor and suffering on earth! Woe to him who loses future salvation although rich and prosperous on earth!

Very numerous these passages are not. But still in them it is really made clear that the idea of the kingdom of God has special reference to that future state of salvation. We must guard ourselves against applying this conclusion to many other utterances in which this special reference to the future state *might* possibly suit, but in which according to the context it is not *necessary*.

Wendt on the Self-Witness of Jesus.

BY REV. PROFESSOR JAMES ORR, D.D., EDINBURGH.

The Teaching of Jesus, by Professor H. H. Wendt, may be described as a remarkably fresh and original attempt at the interpretation of the teaching of Christ on the lines of a theology which accepts Him as the Supreme Revealer of God, but dissociates itself from the old Church doctrines

of His Person and atonement.¹ The first volume,

¹ H. H. Wendt is Professor of Theology at Heidelberg. Though a comparatively young man, he is already a leading representative of a school of theology which has risen into prominence in recent years in Germany, and seems likely to exercise considerable influence both there and in our own

which appeared in 1886, is mainly critical; the second, on "The Contents of the Teaching of Jesus," was published in 1890. On the critical investigation it is sufficient to remark that Dr. Wendt holds a peculiar view of the Gospel of John, regarding it as derived from a genuine apostolic source, yet only as respects the discourses, and not as respects the narratives. Of the five sections into which the second volume is divided, I propose to confine myself in this paper to the fourth—that on "The Testimony of Jesus to His Messiahship." This section is perhaps the most interesting of all, for it takes us directly into the heart of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus, and leads to the discussion of the subjects which must always be of supreme moment to those who desire to know what Christianity was in the mind of its own Founder—namely, the view of Jesus of His own Person and vocation, of the necessity and significance of His death, of His heavenly future, and of the attitude which He requires men to take up towards Him. It is at least of importance to know what an expounder like Wendt—whose book has taken a foremost place in the literature on Christ's doctrine—supposes the mind of Jesus to have been on these subjects.

For convenience' sake the references in this paper are made to the recent English translation of Wendt's works (two vols.), though the liberty is taken of occasionally modifying the translation of passages.

Following the order of Wendt's chapters, we have to ask first—What did Jesus teach on the all-important subject of His own Person? It is Wendt's view (in this differing from Beyschlag and others) that, while allowing Himself to be openly acknowledged as Messiah only towards the close of His ministry, Jesus had borne within Himself the consciousness of His Messiahship ever since His baptism. Only thus, he thinks, can we explain the wonderful certainty and consistency of His teaching in regard to the kingdom of God. This consciousness of His Messiahship, again, Wendt supposes to stand in indissoluble connexion with the idea which Jesus entertained of the

country in the immediate future. His chief earlier work was a monograph on *The Notions of Flesh and Spirit in Biblical Usage*. The dates of the publication of the volumes of the present work are given above. The translation of Wendt's second volume is by the Rev. J. Wilson, and was published (in two vols.) by Messrs. Clark in 1892.

kingdom of God (Sect. III. of Wendt's work). It was His consciousness of perfectly corresponding to the nature of this kingdom which furnished the basis of His certainty of being the Messiah. But both of these things—both His view of the nature of the kingdom, and His view of the perfect conformity of His Person therewith—had a yet deeper root in the consciousness of that perfect filial relation to God which was the primary fact in His experience. In an earlier chapter, speaking of Christ's personal Messianic consciousness (i. p. 180), Wendt endeavours to show that Christ did not attain this Messianic consciousness without preparation. That preparation consisted in His having known and loved God from childhood as His Father, and in His having striven to fulfil God's will of love in upright obedience. "Only because He had already constantly lived and moved in this relation to God, which He deemed the normal and natural one, could the knowledge have come upon Him at His baptism with the sudden clearness of a revelation that on this very religious relation the peculiar nature of the expected kingdom of God rested, and that He Himself, in whom this relation had already found its complete and pure realisation, was called to be the Messianic Founder of the kingdom of God" (p. 136). It was out of this consciousness of perfect Sonship, then, that, according to Wendt, Christ came first to apprehend the true nature of the kingdom of God, and afterwards, from His own perfect agreement with the idea of this kingdom, came to apprehend that He must be the Messiah.

The next point to be investigated, therefore, is the nature of this root-consciousness in the experience of Jesus—namely, His sense of perfect Sonship. Here, in the first place, as respects Jesus Himself, Dr. Wendt simply accepts this fact as given. Jesus simply found Himself thus and thus,—grew up with the consciousness that He stood in this perfect filial relation,—and nothing is asked respecting either origin or cause. But in the next place, Wendt argues very strongly that the filial relation in which Jesus stood to the Father was in no way different from that which belongs to *all* members of His kingdom. "He stood to God," he says, "in a filial relation of such a kind as applied also to all His disciples, that is, He was the object of the fatherly, grace-bestowing love of God, and on His part He main-

tained a deportment of filial loving trust and obedience towards God" (ii. p. 124). It is recognised that Jesus, on certain occasions at least, spoke of Himself, in distinction from all others, as "the Son of God in a pre-eminent sense" (p. 125). This, however, is not to be understood as meaning that the relation between Jesus and God is different in kind from that which subsists between God and the members of His kingdom, but only that this relation of mutual love subsisted in unique perfection. "On the one hand, He knew Himself filled with a power which did not spring out of this world, but which God in fatherly love imparted to Him out of His own nature. . . . On the other hand, He knew also that He fulfilled the commands of God in perfect filial obedience, and in His own loving conduct resembled the conduct of God" (pp. 128, 129). He was "certain of *being* *κατ' ἐξοχήν* the Son of God, since He wholly fulfilled the conditions which were set before others in order to others *becoming* sons of God" (p. 129). Here, then, we have the key to the use by Jesus of the title "Son of God." In Jewish circles, likewise, this title was regarded, on the ground of Old Testament passages, as belonging to the Messiah; but whereas with the Jews it was only a secondary title, with very indefinite contents, in the case of Jesus it was primary, the expression of that inmost consciousness of His filial relation to God which was the source of His consciousness of Himself as Messiah.

Along with this consciousness of His filial relation to God, however, went, on the other side, in Wendt's view, the consciousness of His creaturely limitation, separating Him as man from the infinite God. It is this which Wendt supposes to be designated by the other favourite title which Jesus applied to Himself—"Son of Man." This title, he thinks, has for its meaning—weak, creaturely man, the finite lowliness and weakness inherent in man as such, according to his origin and nature; and he tries to show by examination of passages that this is its significance where Christ uses it of Himself. The use of the title in the Book of Daniel he grants to be an exception. There it denotes rather what made man Godlike in distinction from the beasts. But the general Old Testament usage compels us, he thinks, to give to the title the sense of the creature weakness of man as opposed to the divine nature. The difficulty of this view is, that it requires us to attri-

bute a non-natural sense to many passages in the Gospels in which the highest Messianic functions—*e.g.* forgiveness of sins, lordship of the Sabbath, the judgment of the world—are claimed by Jesus, not, as the argument of Wendt would seem to require, despite of His being the Son of Man, but *because* He is the Son of Man (Mark ii. 28; John v. 27, etc.). I must also confess to a difficulty in conceiving the psychological possibility of the combination of the two elements in Christ's consciousness which Wendt's explanation requires—on the one hand, the ever-present sense of creaturely weakness and limitation, which could hardly exist without some feeling of distance from God, and of fear and restraint in His presence; and on the other, the perfect freedom and love of the filial relation.

These views of the meaning of the titles "Son of God" and "Son of Man" Wendt now thinks he finds confirmed by examination of the passages in John. At first sight, he grants, we have expressions in John which seem to indicate that Christ's Sonship is of a peculiar and heavenly order. Jesus is said to be not from beneath, but from above; He is declared to have come down from heaven, etc. There are also passages which appear directly to affirm His pre-existence. When, however, we look more closely into these sayings, we find, Wendt holds, that the former passages are all paralleled by others applied to believers. They, too, are not of the world, are of God, are one with Him, as He is one with the Father, etc. This is ingenious, but the majority of exegetes of the Fourth Gospel would allow that it is not convincing. All the expressions applied to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel are not applied to believers. *E.g.* believers are not said to have come down from heaven, to be in heaven, to have proceeded and come forth from God. Especially is this true of the pre-existence passages, of which Wendt gives a rather laboured explanation. The chief one,—John xvii. 5,—he admits, cannot be explained, as, *e.g.*, Benschlag would explain it, of mere ideal pre-existence. He accounts for it by New Testament modes of thought, according to which a heavenly good or glory which a person is to possess is conceived of as already in some way deposited and preserved for this person in heaven. Thus we read of treasure in heaven, of the hope laid up in heaven, etc. He argues that it is to miss the sense of the passage to suppose that Jesus meant to teach His

own pre-existence with the Father. The meaning is that the heavenly glory, which as Messiah He shall attain at the end of His earthly ministry, is already laid up for Him with God in heaven. It need scarcely be said that this is a very far-fetched, and, as I think, inadmissible interpretation of a very plain passage—"Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which *I had with Thee* before the world was!" Wendt thinks that if we admit a real pre-existence here, we must hold that the speaker had pre-existed as the man Jesus just as he was on earth—another palpable *non-sequitur*. The remaining passage—John viii. 58, "Before Abraham was, I am"—is held, on the other hand, to be explicable through the notion of ideal pre-existence, existence in the pre-determination and foreknowledge of God. He speaks, Wendt says, of His ideal existence for God, which He knew He always had as Messiah, simply as existence, as if it were a real existence. But why, on Wendt's theory, are believers also not regarded as pre-existent?

So much directly on Christ's Person. But these ideas receive further illustration when we now proceed, secondly, to speak of Christ's vocation, or work as Messiah. Here, in the first place, Wendt rejects the view that Christ began with the thought of setting up an earthly Messianic kingdom, and holds, as I think rightly, that Christ conceived clearly of the nature of His kingdom from the first. From the time of His temptation He definitely rejected all ideas of a kingly rule after the pattern of an earthly kingdom. "The essence of the kingdom was only sought in the pure realisation of the relation of men to God, corresponding to the fatherly character of God, in His reception of all gracious manifestations of God leading to everlasting heavenly life, and in His fulfilment of the will of God in genuine inward righteousness" (ii. p. 181). It is held, however, as we shall immediately see, that while clear as to the general nature of His kingdom, and as to the duty of renouncing all things for it, Christ did not at first recognise the necessity of His death. If we ask, then, what was the nature of Christ's Messianic activity as Founder of His kingdom, we get two answers. His activity was (1) that of a Teacher. His teaching, however, was of a nature which not only enriched men's knowledge, but put them in possession of the saving good which He preached. (2) That of an Example. Jesus founded

the kingdom of God, not only by His ministry of word, but by the example of His own actions. His whole practical and beneficent activity was part of His work. Reference is made here by Wendt to His miraculous activity—specially his casting out devils and cures of sickness. Jesus, it is acknowledged, had undoubtedly the conviction of being able, by the power of God, to bring to the trustful miraculous help in earthly distress. It is still left doubtful, nevertheless, how far, in Wendt's view, these cures were really what we would call miraculous, or were merely cases of faith-healing—the result of "moral therapeutics." He holds, at anyrate, that the sayings about cleansing the lepers and raising the dead are not authentic. As respects the *sphere* of Christ's activity, Wendt shows that while Jesus bound Himself on principle to the limitation of His work to Israel,—*i.e.* as knowing the greatness of the field, and His own power of limited work,—He yet did not restrict the scope of His kingdom to Israel, but viewed it as in its future development a kingdom for all mankind.

Of special importance in this connexion is the third chapter in Wendt's treatment, to which we now come—that, namely, which relates to the necessity and significance of the death of the Messiah. It was observed above, in speaking of the vocation of the Messiah, that Wendt supposes that Jesus did not include in this the necessity of His death. While teaching from the first the duty of a renunciation of all things for the kingdom of God, He did not apprehend that this involved for Him a violent and shameful death. He may have begun, Wendt thinks, with the hope of success in His mission. But towards the end of His life, He saw that death was inevitable. This leads to a discussion of the sense in which Jesus viewed His death as related to the objects of His kingdom. The main passages considered are Mark x. 45—"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many," and the sayings at the Last Supper. Wendt is very elaborate here, and evidently feels himself in considerable straits in attempting to give a clear and consistent meaning to these passages. For while recognising quite frankly that Jesus attributes a sacrificial character to His death,—nay, regards it as necessary for the establishment of His kingdom,—Wendt yet thinks it necessary to dissociate from this death every idea of the forgiveness of

sins. The Church afterwards, he admits, read this meaning into Christ's words,—in fact, added to His words the clause in Matthew xxvi. 28, "which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The fourth Evangelist, too, he allows, puts this meaning into the mouth of the Baptist, and has it in his First Epistle. But Wendt holds that for Jesus Himself there was no intention of this kind. "Jesus Himself," he says, "has, neither in the words at the Last Supper nor elsewhere, expressed this special reference of the saving significance of His death for the benefit of the forgiveness of sins" (ii. p. 241). Jesus did not teach, Wendt thinks, the forgiveness of sins through His own mediation at all! When He speaks of giving His life a ransom for many, his idea is that of deliverance from *servitude*, as in Matthew xi. 28. Yet Wendt cannot get away from the admission that in some sense Christ attached a saving significance to His death in the sayings at the Last Supper. What that is, he tries to express in such words as these—"He declared His death to be such a sacrifice as would form a sure seal, of blissful import for His disciples, on the new covenant of the kingdom of God,—not in the idea that God needed this sacrifice in order that His saving grace might have existence,—but yet in the assurance that His obedience, ratified by His death, because of the actual value which it has in God's eyes, would also become an *actually operative motive* for God to ratify His gracious will in the case of His disciples" (ii. pp. 245, 246); or again, "Already in the Old Testament legislation there stood the promise of God to reward, with mercy to thousands, the faithfulness of those who kept the covenant (Ex. xx. 6); how could not Jesus, with His still higher idea of the mercy and faithfulness of God, entertain also the certainty that God would superabundantly repay, with blessing to thousands, namely, to all members of the community of His kingdom, the perfect obedience of His beloved Son" (ii. p. 239)? Similar ideas of the significance of Christ's death Wendt finds in the Gospel of John. I need only refer to his interpretation of the words, "My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John vi. 51). This means, Wendt thinks, that Jesus "ascribes to Himself and His flesh and blood, that is, His creature nature, this saving significance, inasmuch as in His earthly creature life He is the bearer of a verbal message which originates from the Spirit of God" (ii. p. 209).

Could the evisceration of the meaning of a pregnant passage much further go?

A few words must now be devoted to Wendt's treatment of another subject—namely, that of the heavenly future of the Messiah. Two points here demand special attention. First, there are the sayings of Jesus about His own resurrection—*e.g.* Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 23, xx. 19. These words of Jesus, announcing that on the third day He would rise again, Wendt allows that the disciples subsequently interpreted, on the ground of certain experiences they had, of a bodily resurrection. But this, he thinks, was not their meaning for Christ Himself. His words were intended to convey no more than the idea that Jesus would, "after the briefest possible delay, be awakened from death to the heavenly life with God" (ii. p. 266): *i.e.* He would pass through Sheol, but would not be detained there, but would be received to be with God, where He anticipates reunion with His disciples. Very ingenious—only too much so—is his interpretation of the passage in Mark xiv. 28—"But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee." These words by no means imply, Wendt thinks, that Jesus would go first into Galilee, and there await the disciples, but that He would (spiritually) accompany them into Galilee, going before them as their leader, as the shepherd goes before the sheep. But, second, there are the eschatological discourses—the return in glory, etc.—which occasion him much more difficulty. Wendt is fair enough to recognise that it is needless to try to explain the eschatological sayings out of the influence on Christ's mind of the current Apocalyptic mythology. They must, he sees, have some origin in his own Messianic consciousness, and he fully admits the greatness and gravity of the claim which they involve. Yet when all this is done, he only comes back to this as the thought implied in them, that they are intended to convey "the continuance of His Messianic significance in the kingdom of God in spite of His death" (ii. p. 283)—a vague expression, which may mean much or little, according to what the critic chooses to put into it.

The chief point of interest in the closing chapter of this section on "the conduct required in men towards the Person of the Messiah," is Wendt's recognition of the fact that Jesus requires that, in view of His death, "His disciples should come into a relation to Him as *the Dying One*, and

should recognise and use for themselves the saving significance of His death" (ii. p. 316). This leads to further explanations on the meaning of the words in the institution of the Last Supper, on which we need not delay. It may only be observed that the remarkable and solemn importance which it is admitted that Christ in these words attributed to His sacrificial death does not seem adequately accounted for by Wendt's very meagre interpretation of their meaning.

We are now in a position to sum up and estimate Wendt's view of the teaching of Jesus on the all-important subject of His own Messiahship. One thing very clear is that Jesus, in Wendt's view, is not more than man. Jesus, indeed, holds a unique place in history. He is the Son of God *κατ' ἐξοχήν*. But the Sonship which Wendt recognises in Him is an ethical Sonship, not different in kind from that of ordinary believers—only pre-eminent and perfect in degree. Even on his own showing, however, Wendt has difficulty in keeping the Personality of Jesus within this merely human limit. The attributes he assigns to Him are too great to be borne by one who is not more than man. The perfect Revelation of God, the Founder of the kingdom of God, the Sinless One, the Giver of eternal life, the Dying One, whose death has a saving significance for the world,—this, regard it as we will, is a distinctly supernatural and super-human Personality. Still more instructive is it to observe what Wendt has to cut out in order to keep the Person of Jesus within the limits which he recognises. He has to prune down the sayings of John regarding the Sonship and the pre-existence,

has to explain away the fact of the resurrection, has to evaporate into a truism the sayings about the Second Advent and the claim of Christ to judge the world, has to put a weak and arbitrary sense on the passages connecting the forgiveness of sins with His death. Yet the parts of the gospel testimony which he rejects agree better with the parts which he retains than his own theory does. The view of Christ's Person affects the treatment of all the other subjects. It is a meagre notion of Christ's relation to His kingdom to say that He founded it only by His teaching and example. This scarcely rises higher than the Socinian or Deistic conception, which we thought we had left behind. If the significance of Christ's death for the founding of His kingdom is subsequently recognised, it is only as a kind of afterthought. Even then it is not brought into any organic connexion with man's salvation. As respects the resurrection, it is extremely doubtful if Wendt accepts it in the literal sense. The whole of the eschatological part of the teaching of the Gospels becomes of little significance. If Wendt's expositions were correct, it would be difficult to find a basis for the Apostolic doctrine of Christ's Person and work; while, if that doctrine is accepted, it clearly needs a broader foundation than Wendt's theory allows. At the same time, every reader must acknowledge the exceedingly lucid and suggestive character of Wendt's exposition within its own limits, and cannot but feel grateful for the interesting lines of connexion shown to exist at every point between the teaching of John's Gospel and that of the Synoptics.

Keswick at Home.

An Exposition of Recent Teaching on Holiness.

INTRODUCTION.

BY THE REV. G. H. C. MACGREGOR, M.A., ABERDEEN.

ONE of the most interesting and hopeful signs of Church life at present is the extraordinary interest taken by Christian people in the subject of Holiness. For the time being the doctrine of Justification has dropped into the background, and the doctrine of Sanctification is being eagerly discussed. We read of holiness conventions here, and meet-

ings for the deepening of spiritual life there; and on all sides we hear believers crying, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

How is this extraordinary interest in the question of sanctification to be explained? Ultimately, I believe by the working of the Spirit of God, who