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A STUDY OF THE MESSIANIC SECRET

Short Title

THE MESSIANIC SECRET IN ST. MARK

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Theological Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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June 1958

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A STUDY OF THE MESSIANIC SECRET
IN ST. MARK

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MESSIANIC SECRET
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The general purpose of this thesis is to provide a historical and theological study of the Messianic Secret. The following chapters include William Wrede, Albert Schweitzer, Hans Juergen Ebeling, Archibald M. Hunter, T. W. Manson, Vincent Taylor, Rudolf Otto, and Erik Sjoeberg. The source materials naturally are the works which these men have written. In general the men will be discussed in chronological order; however, when a close

CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MESSIANIC SECRET

The general purpose of this thesis is to provide an historical survey of the hidden Messiahship of Jesus in the Gospel According to St. Mark. At the beginning of the present century William Wrede gave this theological problem the appropriate label, "The Messianic Secret." In the almost sixty years that have passed since the time of Wrede, this problem has presented a challenge to a number of scholars. These scholars have offered various answers and solutions. The approach in this thesis will be to present the views that have been held by some of these men.

It would be impossible in a brief study such as this one to discuss everything that has been written on the subject of the Messianic secret. Hence the study will be limited to certain men who stand out as representative figures in this area and who have written perhaps most voluminously on the subject. The men to be discussed in the following chapters include William Wrede, Albert Schweitzer, Hans Juergen Ebeling, Archibald M. Hunter, T. W. Manson, Vincent Taylor, Rudolf Otto, and Erik Sjoeborg. The source materials naturally are the works which these men have written. In general the men will be discussed in chronological order; however, when a close

similarity in the views of two or three men makes it logical to discuss them together, chronology will be sacrificed for the sake of logical organization. In addition to the men mentioned above, there are several others who have made incidental, but nonetheless noteworthy, contributions to the solution of the Messianic secret. This latter miscellaneous grouping will be found in chapter seven.

In the final chapter we shall attempt to evaluate the views presented in the body of the thesis, to synthesize these various views into a sort of composite view, and to state our own conclusions.

In the present century every exegete and theologian who has worked with the Gospel of Mark has discovered that he must deal with the element of the Messianic secret. The impetus for this particular thesis has come from an interest in Mark's Gospel and from an interest in understanding and appreciating the contributions that St. Mark makes toward a theological interpretation of Jesus as the Messiah. It does not require a very thorough study of Mark's Gospel to discover that Jesus is here portrayed as both a revealed and a hidden Messiah. The passages that pertain to Jesus as the hidden Messiah are so numerous that the Messianic secret might be called the leitmotif of Mark's Gospel, that is, the dominant feature that occurs again and again throughout his work.

Before we discuss present-day views of the problem, it would be well to list and describe in brief fashion those passages in St. Mark that have an important bearing for any discussion of the Messianic secret. Among the pertinent passages are those in which Jesus commanded silence. The demons recognized Jesus; after He cast them out, He commanded them not to make Him known (1:23-25, 34; 3:11f.). After other miracles Jesus commanded the healed person or the witnesses not to say anything, for example, after cleansing the leper (1:44), after raising the daughter of Jairus (5:43), after healing the deaf and dumb man (7:36), and after restoring sight to the blind man (8:26). Jesus told the disciples to keep the secret that was revealed to them at Caesarea Philippi (8:30) and at the Transfiguration (9:9). Caesarea Philippi marks a sort of turning point in Mark's Gospel. Before this event even the disciples do not confess Jesus as the Messiah; after this event, the disciples know who Jesus is, but they still do not comprehend His particular concept of Messiahship.

Closely bound up with the commands to silence are those instances in which Jesus deliberately withdrew and attempted to hide from the people (1:45; 3:7,13; 6:46; 7:24; 9:30). In the context of these passages Jesus saw the danger that people would try to make Him the wrong kind of Messiah or that there would be a premature revelation of Messiahship.

The parables in St. Mark appear as a means of concealing the mystery from those who were outside the circle of the immediate disciples of Jesus (4:10-12,34). However, the fact that even the disciples often did not understand what Jesus was saying and doing shows that the secret of His person and rule was also beyond their grasp (6:52; 7:17-18; 8:17-21,32; 9:28,32; 10:10,35-45).

It seems quite obvious from Mark's Gospel that the Messianic hope of Israel centered around the Davidic Messiah and all the political and earthly connotations that were associated with the title "Son of David" (cf. 10:47f.; 11:10; 12:35-37). It is significant that in St. Mark's Gospel Jesus Himself does not appear in this role; He consciously tries to raise the vision of the people above the concept of the nationalistic Son of David.

Nowhere in St. Mark's Gospel does Jesus explicitly tell the disciples who He is. When Jesus is referred to as the Christ or as the Son of God, it is usually the word of someone else, of Mark (1:1), of God (1:11; 9:7), of the demoniacs (1:24; 3:11; 5:7), of Peter (8:29), of Caiaphas (14:61), of the chief priests and scribes (15:32), or of the centurion (15:39). When Jesus Himself uses one of these two terms, His hearers do not understand them as a self-designation (9:41; 12:6; 12:35; 13:21). Jesus seems to admit publicly to Messiahship in His positive reply to Caiaphas (14:62), but even here Caiaphas and the others

regard this as a blasphemous assertion.

Jesus spoke of Himself in ways that were mysterious to the people of His day. Already in 2:19-20 Jesus speaks of Himself as the Bridegroom who shall be taken away. Even more significant are the fourteen occurrences in which Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man. He used this title in three contexts: (1) In contexts that described His present authority (2:10,28); (2) in Passion contexts (8:31; 9:9,12,31; 10:33f.; 10:45; 14:21,41); and (3) in Parousia contexts (8:38; 13:26; 14:62). The most important of these for understanding the Messianic secret are the Passion sayings. It is evident from Mark's Gospel that the Passion of Jesus was necessary to lead men to a true concept of His Messiahship. This is evident not only from the great space which Mark devotes to the Passion, but also from the Passion predictions of Jesus. Besides the Passion sayings on the Bridegroom and the Son of Man, Jesus spoke of His suffering and death in the picture of the cup and baptism (10:38) and in the parable of the vineyard (12:1-12), especially in the picture of the beloved son (v. 6) and in the Old Testament picture of the rejected stone (vss. 10f.); He spoke of His impending death at His anointing in Bethany (14:8), at the Last Supper (14:24), and in the Old Testament picture of smiting the shepherd (14:27-28); He spoke of it again in Gethsemane (14:34,36) and in the forsaken cry from the cross (15:34). All of this emphasis on suffering is

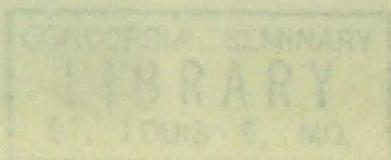
essential for understanding why the true Messiahship of Jesus remained concealed before His suffering and death took place.

On the basis of these many passages we easily recognize that there is such a thing as a leitmotif of the Messianic secret in St. Mark's Gospel. The questions that still remain for discussion in the following chapters are: What did the concept of Messiahship mean to Jesus? Why did He conceal His Messiahship? What did Messiahship mean to St. Mark? Why did he build his Gospel around the idea of the Messianic secret?

Wrede began with the premise that what we have in the written Gospels is the interpretation of the life of Jesus by the evangelists and not the actual life itself. The evangelists saw the life of Christ only through the eyes of their time and their community.¹ When Wrede discovered the leitmotif of the Messianic secret in St. Mark, he did not immediately explain it as a literary interpretation or invention on the part of Mark. Erace Bauer earlier had done this very thing.² Wrede rather held that the idea of the Messianic secret was current in certain circles to which

¹William Wrede, Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901), p. 2.

²Gilbert Schneider, The Secret of the Historical Jesus, translated by W. Montgomery (London: Kegan Paul and Charles Black, 1911), p. 342.



CHAPTER II

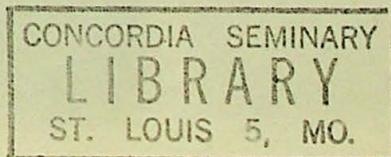
THE VIEW OF WILLIAM WREDE

In 1901 William Wrede wrote his monumental work, Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien. In this famous discussion he concentrated especially on St. Mark's Gospel. In his study of this Gospel he found in many passages an element to which he gave the title, "The Messianic Secret." From Wrede's study emerged a theory that has been responsible for almost every discussion of the Messianic secret since his day.

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¹William Wrede, Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901), p. 2.

²Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, translated by W. Montgomery (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1911), p. 342.



St. Mark belonged. It was the product of early Christian theology, which shaped the history of the life of Jesus according to its own conceptions. Yet Mark did not merely take over these current conceptions. He used them in a way that reflected his own views and his own manner and style of writing.³ Mark's purpose was not to write a life of Christ but to relate a life full of Messianic manifestations. The more a particular event fitted this major purpose, the more value it held for St. Mark to report it. Mark, Wrede says, had no real perception of an historical Jesus but rather a theological and dogmatic perception,⁴ in the sense that the motifs which Mark inserted gave movement and direction to his narrative. Hans Juergen Ebeling, however, modifies this view in the following statement:

Das Messiasgeheimnistmotiv ist bei Wrede ueberhaupt keine "theologische Vorstellung" im strengen Sinn des Wortes, sondern eine reine Hilfskonstruktion des Evangelisten zur Ueberwindung und Verbindung zweier geschichtlicher Tatbestande: der messianischen Verehrung Jesu in der Gemeinde und der unmessianischen Einstellung Jesu selbst.⁵

According to Wrede, Jesus did not claim to be the Messiah during His earthly life and ministry. His Messianic

³Wrede, op. cit., pp. 145f.

⁴Ibid., pp. 125, 129.

⁵Hans Juergen Ebeling, Das Messiasgeheimnis und die Botschaft des Marcus-Evangelisten (Berlin: Alfred Toepelmann, 1939), p. 12.

dignity was not affirmed in the Christian community until after His Resurrection. Wrede appeals to Mark 9:9 to show how everything leads up to the Resurrection.⁶ Yet he maintains that Jesus did not know that the Resurrection would bring Him Messianic status.⁷ He explains the Messianic secret as a literary device on the part of Mark to account for the lack of recognition before the Resurrection. The community and St. Mark attempted to explain the lack of Messianic claims in the life of Jesus by reading back into the gospel history the theory of the Messianic secret.

Wrede says that Mark believed that Jesus was the Messiah but that Jesus kept His Messiahship a secret during His life. For Mark the baptism of Jesus was the beginning of Messiahship, but the real recognition began first with the Resurrection.⁸ Mark, however, does not recognize any development in the Messiahship or in the disciples' recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. Mark did not think of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi as an epoch or turning point in the recognition of Jesus as Messiah.⁹ Wrede looks at all of these elements as the

⁶Wrede, op. cit., pp. 208, 213f.

⁷Ibid., p. 225.

⁸Ibid., p. 114.

⁹Ibid., pp. 108, 115.

unhistorical, theological view of St. Mark. The following two statements by Wrede pinpoint his view of St. Mark:

Waehrend seines Erdenlebens ist Jesu Messianitaet ueberhaupt Geheimnis und soll es sein; niemand-- ausser den Vertrauten Jesu--soll von ihr erfahren; mit der Auferstehung aber erfolgt die Entschleierung. Dies ist in der That der entscheidende Gedanke, die Pointe der Ganzen Auffassung des Markus.¹⁰

Sie laesst sich bezeichnen als die Nachwirkung der Anschauung, dass die Auferstehung der Anfang der Messianitaet ist, zu einer Zeit, wo man sachlich das Leben Jesu bereits mit messianischem Gehalte erfuehlt.¹¹

Wrede's view of the Messianic secret as a literary structure does not leave much room for any other explanation. He says that the reason for the secret was not that Jesus feared a sensual or earthly or political interpretation of Himself as the Messiah. If this were the case, Wrede claims that Jesus would then have told the people, "I am the Messiah, but not a political one."¹²

Wrede includes nearly everything in St. Mark under the leitmotif of the Messianic secret. He says that the secret includes all of Jesus' commands to silence: (1) To the demons (1:25,34; 3:12); (2) after other miracles (1:43-45; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26); and (3) after Peter's confession (8:30; 9:9). It includes the withdrawals of Jesus, His entire teaching, especially through parables (4:10-13),

¹⁰Ibid., p. 68.

¹¹Ibid., p. 228.

¹²Ibid., p. 39.

His statements on the Son of Man and the Bridegroom (2:10,19,20,28), and, in a derived sense, the necessity of His suffering, death, and Resurrection.¹³

Wrede's method of textual study and textual criticism is interesting. Whenever he is convinced that a passage is mysterious or that it belongs to the Messianic secret, he generally concludes that such a passage is a later belief of the Church and an interpretative and editorial feature inserted by Mark. This method leads Wrede to a very critical attitude toward Mark. He says that many passages are completely unhistorical and that others are given an improper historical significance by St. Mark. For example, in the case of the parables, which in Mark, according to Wrede, can be equated with riddles, he states, "Der Bericht des Markus ueber das Parabellehren Jesu ist voellig unhistorisch."¹⁴ He further says:

In diesem Falle ist also wenigstens deutlich, dass diese Bemerkungen vom Alleinsein auch ein Ausfluss der Anschauung des Evangelisten sind und nicht eine historische Notiz.¹⁵

As another example Wrede says that the witness of the demons to Jesus is to be stricken from the historical record; Mark inserted this witness to account for the fact

¹³Ibid., pp. 18f., 33f., 80.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 60f.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 65.

that the demons were an exception, to account for the fact that Jesus exorcized the demons.¹⁶

It is Wrede's opinion that other sections of Mark contain interpretative features. These sections are the baptism of Jesus, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the miracle feedings, the sea journeys, the Transfiguration, and the conversation between the angels and women at the grave.¹⁷ A list of passages that Wrede regards as Mark's invention would include at least the following: 1:23ff., 1:34,44; 3:11f.; 4:10-13,34; 5:6f.,43; 7:17-24,36; 8:26,30f.; 9:9,20,28f.,30f.; 10:32-34; 13:3ff.¹⁸

Wrede regards Mark's Gospel as so disarranged and unchronological that it is impossible to obtain from it a clear picture of the development of Jesus and His Messiahship.¹⁹ He believes that Mark is not always consistent in carrying out the leitmotif of the Messianic secret. In fact, he claims that the secret is a completely self-contradictory conception.²⁰ In 2:19f. Mark makes the statement concerning the Bridegroom sound mysterious to the

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 31f.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁸Vincent Taylor, "The Messianic Secret in Mark," The Expository Times, LIX (1947-48), 147.

¹⁹Wrede, op. cit., pp. 14, 21.

²⁰Ibid., p. 116.

original hearers of these words. Wrede says that this picture was so clear to Jesus' hearers that even every child understood that Jesus was here speaking of Himself and of His death.²¹

Where did St. Mark and the early Church obtain the theory of the Messianic secret? Wrede does not clearly answer this question; however, in his discussion he points to the fact that Jewish literature does speak of a hidden Messiah. The following statements bring this out:

Auch auf juedischem Boden begegnet uns der Gedanke, dass der Messias eine Zeit lang verborgen existiert, und zwar nicht blos im Himmel, was hier ja nichts bedeuten wuerde, sondern auf Erden.

Der Jude Trypho im Dialoge C.8:

"(Der) Christus [aber], wenn er auch (schon) geboren ist und irgend wo lebt (καὶ ἔστι πού), ist unbekannt und kennt sich auch selbst noch nicht, hat auch keinerlei Macht, bis dass Elias gekommen ist, ihn gesalbt und allen offenbar gemacht hat."

Die Verborgenheit seiner Herkunft erscheint als ein Kennzeichen des Messias. Verwandt ist auch das rabbinische Theologumenon, dass der Messias, nachdem er geboren ist, zunaechst wieder entrueckt wird, ehe er als Messias auftritt.²²

In these statements Wrede seems to imply that Mark developed the idea of the Messianic secret at least partly on the basis of current Jewish expectations of a hidden Messiah.

²¹Ibid., p. 20.

²²Ibid., pp. 211f.

CHAPTER III

THE VIEW OF ALBERT SCHWEITZER

Like William Wrede, Albert Schweitzer recognizes the Messianic secret in the Gospel According to St. Mark. He observes that the other Gospels which arose from Mark made the Messianic secret a subordinate idea and that they made the life of Jesus more openly Messianic in character.¹

Here, however, the similarity between Schweitzer and Wrede ends. Schweitzer becomes quite critical of the way in which Wrede interprets the secret. He agrees that the early Christians exerted a significant influence on the presentation and representation of the life of Jesus, but he maintains that it was not the nature of their faith to alter the basic ideas or to fabricate facts in the life of Jesus.² He does not believe that the Messianic secret was derived from the primitive theology of the early Christian community or from Mark's own idea. He has no sympathy for any solution that deprives Jesus of a Messianic

¹Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, translated by W. Montgomery (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1911), p. 338.

²Albert Schweitzer, The Mystery of the Kingdom of God, translated by Walter Lowrie (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1914), p. 8. Hereafter in this chapter Schweitzer's two works will be referred to merely as "Quest" and "Mystery."

self-consciousness during His ministry.³

Wrede had made the secret of the kingdom in Mark 4:10-12 the secret of the Messiahship of Jesus. Schweitzer reproves Wrede for thereby trying to subsume the more general mystery of the kingdom of God under the more special mystery of the Messiahship. He believes that the kingdom of God is a wider and more central idea than is Messiahship. He thinks that Wrede's view was due to the fact that by Mark's time the view of the parables was that Jesus revealed Himself to the disciples but concealed Himself from the multitude. Schweitzer disapproves of Wrede for also regarding the withdrawals of Jesus as a veiling of the Messiahship.⁴

The foregoing does not mean that Schweitzer wants to remove from the parables the character of a secret, but he regards the secret as a special kind that refers to some aspect of the kingdom of God. For example, in the parable of the sower, he says that the secret is that the sowing was so small, considering all that was lost, and yet the harvest of the kingdom was so great.⁵

Schweitzer cites three cases from St. Mark which gave Wrede much difficulty. These three cases are the confession

³Schweitzer, Quest, p. 11.

⁴Ibid., pp. 346f.

⁵Schweitzer, Mystery, pp. 106, 108.

at Caesarea Philippi, the entry into Jerusalem, and the profession of Messiahship before the high priest. Wrede believed that all of these passages imply an openly avowed Messiahship; hence he is practically forced to admit that they could hardly have been created by Mark but must belong to an earlier and divergent line of tradition. Schweitzer believes that the tradition for these three cases undermines Wrede's literary hypothesis.⁶

He thinks that Wrede is unnecessarily critical and skeptical of Mark's Gospel as genuine history. Schweitzer himself, however, becomes quite a critic at times. For example, he reverses the chronology of the confession at Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration; the Transfiguration must come first, he says, because it reveals the secret of Messiahship to the three, Peter, James, and John, whereas the revelation of Messiahship at Caesarea Philippi was extended to all twelve disciples.⁷ Yet he does not think that this is skepticism in the same sense or in the same degree in which he regards Wrede's view as "thoroughgoing skepticism."⁸

Schweitzer wants a solution of the Messianic secret that takes cognizance of the historical Jesus, but he does

⁶Schweitzer, Quest, p. 338.

⁷Schweitzer, Mystery, p. 180.

⁸Schweitzer, Quest, p. 329.

not want just any historical view. He says:

Only that conception is historical which makes it intelligible how Jesus could take himself to be the Messiah without finding himself obliged to make this consciousness of his self as a factor in his public ministry for the Kingdom of God,--rather, how he was actually compelled to make the Messianic dignity of his person a secret.⁹

He reaches a solution that he calls thoroughgoing eschatology. He says that the Messianic consciousness held by Jesus was futuristic and eschatological in the same sense that the Messianic ideas and expectations of late Judaism were eschatological. The Jews were expecting a hidden Messiah who would be revealed sometime in the future.¹⁰

Jesus' Messiahship was a secret, not merely because he had forbidden it to be spoken, but in its very nature it was a secret, inasmuch as it could be realized only at a definite time in the future.¹¹

Schweitzer cites the Messianic title "Son of Man" to illustrate this futuristic character of the Messiah. It is his belief that the Son of Man and the historical Jesus are two distinct personalities to those people who had not come to know the secret, for Jesus is already present whereas the Son of Man is depicted as a figure yet to come. He regards as historical only those passages that speak of

⁹Schweitzer, Mystery, p. 6.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 188.

¹¹Ibid., p. 186.

the Son of Man in future terms. He says that the two references to the Son of Man in Mark 2:10 and 2:28 do not belong to the original statements made by Jesus.¹²

It is the view of Schweitzer that Jesus certainly was the Messiah and knew Himself to be such although He never posed as the Messiah or sought for faith in Himself as such. True faith, he says, did not consist in faith in the person of Jesus but faith in His message of the nearness of the kingdom of God.¹³ The secret of His existence as Messiah was disclosed to Jesus already at His baptism; yet He did not dare thereafter to act like the Messiah because His mission was to labor for the kingdom as the unrecognized and hidden Messiah.¹⁴

Jesus was a Messiah who during his public ministry would not be one, did not need to be, and might not be, for the sake of fulfilling his mission! It is thus that history puts the problem.¹⁵

To verify the preceding view Schweitzer points to the inability of the public to know the secret of the Messiahship. The cries of the demoniacs and of the blind man did not make the people aware of who Jesus was. Who would believe the demoniacs anyway? The ovation at the entry

¹²Ibid., pp. 191, 195.

¹³Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 254.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 134f.

into Jerusalem was not a Messianic ovation.¹⁶ Schweitzer concludes that there are only three revelations of the secret of Messiahship. These are the Transfiguration, the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi, and the betrayal by Judas and subsequent admission by Jesus to the high priest. It was this last revelation that was fatal, for it brought about the death of Jesus. He was condemned as Messiah although He had never appeared in that role. In no one of these revelations did Jesus Himself make the Messianic claim or voluntarily give up His Messianic secret. It was wrung from Him by the pressure of events. Jesus was recognized as the Messiah through a supernatural revelation from God in heaven. Jesus Himself laid claim to Messiahship only from the moment of His Resurrection.¹⁷

It is Schweitzer's conviction that when Jesus sent out the twelve disciples to preach, to heal, and to suffer the pre-Messianic tribulations, He believed that this mission would usher in the Messianic kingdom of God (Mark 6:7-13). The mission failed; the kingdom which Jesus expected so soon did not appear. This fact drove Jesus into solitude to ponder again the secret of His person and to seek new light on the mystery of the kingdom. The answer which Jesus then received from Scripture was this, "He whom God

¹⁶Schweitzer, Quest, pp. 394f.

¹⁷Schweitzer, Mystery, pp. 127, 210, 217f.

has destined to reign in glory accomplishes it upon himself by being tried as a malefactor and condemned."¹⁸ It then became clear to Jesus that Messianic consciousness included the idea of His own suffering, that the pre-Messianic tribulations would be fulfilled in His own Passion and death at Jerusalem, and that only after this would the eschatological kingdom arrive. It is thus that Jesus came to associate His mission with the Suffering Servant in the prophecies of Isaiah.

Jesus' idea of the Passion is in the end completely absorbed in that of the Deutero-Isaiah. Like the servant of the Lord, He too is destined to reign in glory. But first He appears, meek and unrecognized, in the role of a preacher who works righteousness. He must pass also through suffering and humiliation ere God permits the glorious consummation to dawn. What He endures is an atonement for the iniquity of others. This is a secret between Himself and God.¹⁹

Another famous and eloquent passage from the writings of Schweitzer summarizes His view of Jesus quite well:

There is silence all around. The Baptist appears, and cries: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Soon after that comes Jesus, and in the knowledge that He is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution, which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and He throws Himself upon it. Then it does turn, and crushes Him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions, He has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 233f., 264f.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 238.

spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to His purpose, is hanging upon it still. That is His victory and His reign.²⁰

²⁰Schweitzer, Quest, pp. 368f.

CHAPTER IV

THE VIEW OF HANS JUERGEN EBELING

The view of Hans Ebeling approximates the view that William Wrede held perhaps more closely than any other man to be discussed in this paper. He resembles Wrede in a number of ways. Like Wrede he believes that Jesus was the revealed Messiah only after the Resurrection. His view of the Messianic secret is described in the following words:

Jesus ist der Verklaerte wahrhaft erst seit seiner Auferstehung, erst seit dem Termin ist die himmlische Herrlichkeit, die durch Gottes Gnade seine Juenger an Christus erleben durften, als Wirklichkeit da. Darum, weil sie noch zukuenftig ist, soll sie verschwiegen werden eben bis sie Gegenwart, Realitaet geworden ist: Christus muss erst endgueltig verklaert, sein irdisches Leben vollendet haben und in Gottes Herrlichkeit zurueckgekehrt sein, auferstanden sein.¹

Ebeling believes that the Messianic secret was a "Hilfskonstruktion" invented by St. Mark to account for the fact that the early Church recognized Jesus as the Messiah, even though the historic Jesus Himself had no Messianic concept and knew no Messianic aspirations.² Like Wrede, Ebeling holds the tenet that Mark's Gospel is not a biography or history, but it is kerygma, the

¹Hans Juergen Ebeling, Das Messiasgeheimnis und die Botschaft des Marcus-Evangelisten (Berlin: Alfred Toepelmann, 1939), pp. 201f.

²Ibid., pp. 8, 12.

expression of the faith of the Church, Mark's own interpretation of the life of Jesus; it is Passion history of the death of Christ preceded by a detailed introduction, which is but a backward look from the Passion.³ When he says that Mark's Gospel is kerygma, he means that a person must look away from the historical question of the real life of Jesus and must ask only what is the meaning that the evangelist intends to convey to his readers. This, he says, is the only way to arrive at an answer to the relationship between the hidden and the revealed Messiah.

Diese--historisch, psychologisch unmögliche--
Verbindung von Verbot und Offenbarung erhaelt ihren Sinn aus der richtigen Schau des Verhaeltnisses, in dem der Evangelist zu seinen Hoerern und Lesern steht. Dies Verhaeltnis bestimmt die Botschaft und die Art ihrer Ausrichtung in der Welt grundlegend: die Predigt ruft den Menschen auf zum Gehorsam, indem sie die dem Glauben vorausgegebene Wirklichkeit darstellt, die Realitaet jener Tatsache, dass ueberall, wo Gottes Wort einen Menschen erfasst, er hingehen und die Kunde weitertragen muss.⁴

Later on in his book he says:

Die Einheit des Evangeliums liegt nicht in einem wie auch immer gearteten Leben Jesu, sondern in dem, was der Evangelist dem Leser durch seine Darstellung vor die Augen und vor das Bewusstsein ruecken will und rueckt: in Jesu *Ἰησοῦς*. Von hier aus ist Abzweckung und Sinn des Evangeliums zu interpretieren: der epiphane, nicht der verborgene und verhuellte Gottessohn, tritt dem Leser vor die Augen in gleichem Masse, wie er als solcher auch dem Evangelisten lebendig war. Wir haben also von irgendwelchen

³Ibid., p. 221.

⁴Ibid., p. 145.

Tatbestanden aus dem Leben Jesu voellig abzusehen, weil der Evangelist selbst nicht darauf reflektiert, sondern als der Zeuge Christi voellig der Gemeinde zugewandt ist.⁵

The important thing for Ebeling is that the readers of Mark's Gospel saw here the revealed, not the hidden, Messiah, for Mark was proclaiming the epiphany of the Son of God.

A brief look into what Ebeling has to say about the commands to silence and about the parables will give a better idea of how he regards the Christian kerygma in St. Mark. He describes Mark's treatment of the commands to silence in the following words: "Das Verbot ist nur das Widerlager, um den Tatbestand zu demonstrieren, dass der Eindruck des Wirkens Jesu mit unvergleichlicher Wucht Bahn bricht."⁶ Mark did not regard the commands to silence as a veiling; he regarded them as revelation.

Likewise concerning the parables, especially the passage in Mark 4:10-12, Ebeling states that it is certain that Mark looked upon the parables as proclamations and revelations of the divine wisdom and will; they were a means by which God Himself through His Word encounters His chosen ones; it was only to these chosen ones, to the disciples, that the content of the secret should be

⁵Ibid., p. 178.

⁶Ibid., p. 131.

mediated. To the uninitiated on the outside the parables were but symbolic speech which they were not able to understand.⁷

Ebeling's theology is sound enough. His mistake was that he explained the revelation of the Messianic secret as only a literary motif, whereas the apocalyptic view was that there would be a revelation of a real divine secret.⁸

⁷Ibid., pp. 183-186.

⁸Erik Sjoeborg, Der Verborgene Menschensohn in den Evangelien (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1955), p. 121.

CHAPTER V

THE VIEWS OF ARCHIBALD M. HUNTER, T. W. MANSON, AND VINCENT TAYLOR

The views of the three men named above will be discussed separately in this chapter. The fact that their views are brought together in the same chapter is to show that they have something in common with each other in their interpretation of the Messianic secret. All three of these men believe that the concept of Messiahship held by Jesus was opposed to the concept held by His contemporaries. Furthermore, all three of them connect the Son of Man in St. Mark with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. This is not to say, as will be seen in the following chapters, that these men have been the only ones to hold such beliefs.

The View of Archibald M. Hunter

Hunter states that Jesus was the Messiah and knew that He was but that during His public ministry He made no overt or public claims to this fact. He deliberately veiled His Messiahship and silenced everyone in Galilee who attempted to start Messianic rumors. Jesus had good reasons. He knew that He was not the Messiah whom the Jews expected. He did not want to waken false hopes among them. At Caesarea Philippi Peter did not like the concept of

Messiahship which Jesus held; there is no reason to believe that the multitude would have liked it any better. Too, Jesus knew that Rome was on the lookout for possible Messiahs and that Rome had her own swift ways of suppressing Messianic movements of any kind.¹

It is Hunter's view that it was for these two reasons that Jesus chose for Himself a title that was mysterious, non-political, and non-committal, the title "Son of Man." He chose this title from the background of Daniel 7:13-14, where the Son of Man is depicted as a sovereign, exalted, and triumphant being, who bears the divine rule and dwells with the saints of the Most High. However, along with this picture Jesus combined the idea of service, suffering, and sacrifice.² According to Hunter, Jesus saw this combination of triumph and suffering already in the words spoken from heaven at His baptism (Mark 1:11). He describes the combination in the following words:

"Thou art my [beloved] Son" is the coronation formula of the Messianic king of Israel (Ps. ii. 7); "With thee I am well pleased" is the ordination formula of Isaiah's Servant of the Lord (Isa. xlii. 1). This remarkable combination cannot be accidental. It was His own calling, His own destiny that Jesus saw in the ideal king of Israel and the lowly servant of Isaiah.³

¹Archibald M. Hunter, The Work and Words of Jesus (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950), pp. 47, 82.

²Ibid., p. 86.

³Ibid., p. 37.

Hunter stresses the fact that the picture of a Suffering Son of Man becomes even more clear in St. Mark's Gospel when Jesus later on three occasions frankly told His disciples that the Son of Man must suffer and die (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34). Here Jesus clearly was echoing the Servant Poem of Isaiah 53. Here was a Messiah whom no Jew could envisage, a Messiah who takes on Himself the form of a servant. Here was the staggering truth that made men stumble, the truth that Jesus, in His vocation as the Son of Man, must go the way of the Suffering Servant of the Lord.⁴

The View of T. W. Manson

Manson attempts to answer the question, "If Jesus was the Messiah, why did He not lay claim to the title and why did He even at and after Caesarea Philippi command silence?" He gives one of his answers in the following words:

the Messiahship of Jesus was something which each man must discover for himself by his own insight and understanding. . . . The recognition of the Messiah depends, not on the acceptance of any human testimony or authority, but on the working of a divinely illuminated understanding.⁵

Manson regards the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi as the watershed of Gospel history, yes, of world

⁴Ibid., p. 49.

⁵T. W. Manson, The Teaching of Jesus (Cambridge: University Press, 1951), p. 203.

history.⁶ It is only after this event that Jesus used the title "Son of Man" in its Messianic sense and only in sayings addressed to His disciples. Nevertheless, He still forbade them to speak of Him as Messiah because they were not yet ready to grasp and accept His unique concept of Messiahship. Jesus made no compromise in maintaining that His task as the Son of Man and the glory and success of this task were of a completely different kind from the gaudy triumphs on which the hearts of the disciples were set.⁷

According to Manson, when Jesus used the title "Son of Man," this title had both communal and individual application. It was communal in the sense that it embodied the Remnant idea of the Old Testament, the picture of the kingdom of the saints of the Most High in Daniel 7, and the communal picture of the Son of Man in Enoch 37-69. However, when Jesus used the name, Manson admits that it then became especially a personal and individual self-designation; the name then represented an individual, personal Messiah, just as it did already in the Similitudes of Enoch 70-71. Jesus saw that He is the Son of Man because He alone was equal to the claims of the Son of Man

⁶Ibid., p. 210.

⁷T. W. Manson, The Servant-Messiah (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), p. 72.

ideal. Jesus saw that it was His mission as the Son of Man to create the kingdom of the saints of the Most High. Even more significant, says Manson, the Son of Man and the Messiah were united in the one person of Jesus.⁸ Jesus knew that the Messianic ministry was His task. He also knew that the destiny of the Son of Man must be His destiny in order to fulfill the Messianic ministry. He saw that He must be the Servant-Messiah and a Suffering Son of Man in the same person with the victorious Messiah and the ruling Son of Man.

Even the Messiah is only God's servant--indeed, just because he is Messiah he must be pre-eminently God's servant. The Messiah is the chief man in Israel: then he must be the servant of all. But above all he must be completely and unreservedly the servant of the Lord (the Ebed Yahweh).⁹

The View of Vincent Taylor

Vincent Taylor has no difficulty in rejecting the extreme view of the Messianic secret held by William Wrede. Wrede had said that the secret was a literary device invented by Mark to explain why the Messiahship was not recognized until after the Resurrection. To refute this theory in its extreme form, Taylor presents a number of convincing arguments. He gives several reasons for

⁸Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, pp. 227, 268.

⁹Manson, The Servant-Messiah, pp. 57f.

believing that Jesus was the Messiah already during His public ministry. He says that the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi, the Transfiguration, the entry into Jerusalem, the trial of Jesus, especially His reply to Caiaphas, and the inscription on the cross are all strong attestations to the presence of Messianic tensions during the ministry of Jesus. The question of Messiahship was a burning issue already at that time. In addition, he says that the Resurrection of itself would not have suggested a claim to Messianic dignity, that the Crucifixion is inexplicable unless Jesus was condemned as a Messianic pretender, and that the preachers in the early Church would not have jeopardized their lives by inventing such an offensive idea as a Crucified Messiah.¹⁰

It is Taylor's belief that the Messianic secret was not invented by Mark, but that it was an integral part of the historic tradition. He does not believe that it was Mark's manner, as a rule, to create, recast, obscure, or embellish the actual situations and historical narratives which were transmitted to him. Even though Mark wrote with the pen of a Roman Christian, his Jesus is the Jesus of Galilee. Taylor regards Mark as a rather objective reporter; this objectivity gives his Gospel great historical

¹⁰Vincent Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1952), pp. 122f.

value. He writes:

Contrary to the views of Wrede, Mark's treatment of the idea of the Messianic Secret, so far from being a doctrinal construction, preserves, as no other Gospel does, an original element in the thought of Jesus, and the same must be said of the Evangelist's emphasis upon the idea of Messianic suffering.¹¹

What is it that leads Taylor to conclude that Mark is a factual reporter? The answer is that Taylor has examined, for example, the story of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi and has found here a true, life-like picture of Peter as the spokesman, as the one who remonstrates with Jesus and receives a stern rebuke from Him. This, he concludes, is a very personal account that describes what actually happened.¹² Again Taylor looks at Mark's report of the entry into Jerusalem and finds here local expressions, vivid descriptions of what happened, the restrained nature of the acclamation, and the strange manner in which the account breaks off without any suggestion of a triumphal entry. He states, "These characteristics suggest the eyewitness rather than the artist."¹³ These two passages, along with several others such as Mark's implied purpose of his Gospel (1:1), the description of the miracles, the commands to silence, and

¹¹Ibid., p. 133.

¹²Ibid., p. 374.

¹³Ibid., p. 452.

the fact that in this Gospel Jesus nowhere expressly calls Himself the Christ, convince Taylor that Mark's Gospel was of a very primitive character and that his purpose was to serve historical as well as religious ends.

The foregoing paragraphs are not meant to imply that Taylor takes an exactly opposite view from that of Wrede. In fact, he heartily agrees that Mark's Gospel is kerygma and that in many respects the doctrinal, apologetic, liturgical, and catechetical interests of a living Christian Church lay behind the selection and use of material by Mark.¹⁴ However, Taylor carefully adds that what the early Church believed and taught was based upon what Jesus had taught and done.¹⁵

When Taylor studies individual passages, he is often ready to admit that Mark may well have over-played and over-pressed the idea of the Messianic secret and that Mark does reflect his own theology. He says that the confession of the demons in 3:11 represents Mark's theology and conviction that Jesus is superhuman. He states that the confession, "You are the Son of God," cannot be explained as a Messianic title, but that it was only a "Christianized version of the cries of the possessed."¹⁶

¹⁴Vincent Taylor, "The Messianic Secret in Mark," The Expository Times, LIX (1947-48), 148.

¹⁵Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark, p. 134.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 228.

Taylor agrees that Jesus probably spoke the words recorded in Mark 4:11-12, but not in connection with the parables. He thinks that Mark put the words into this context "in consequence of his belief that Jesus used parables to conceal His meaning from 'those without.'"¹⁷

Similarly, Taylor believes that Mark tends to over-emphasize the dullness of the disciples in 7:17-19¹⁸ and that the injunction to secrecy in 8:26 is probably an editorial feature added by Mark which reflects his intense interest in the idea of the Messianic secret.¹⁹

In spite of such varied criticisms Taylor wishes in general to preserve the historical value of Mark's Gospel. He is convinced that there is a better answer to the problem of the Messianic secret than the answer which Wrede gave. The first part of Taylor's answer is that the current Messianic excitement prevailing in Judaism was not compatible with the concept of Messiahship held by Jesus. Jesus refused to avow His Messiahship publicly or to call Himself the Christ; He wanted to reject the current nationalistic and political expectations associated with the Messiah.²⁰ Jesus was no mere wonder-working Messiah.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 255.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 344.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 373.

²⁰Vincent Taylor, The Names of Jesus (London: Macmillan and Co., 1953), p. 20.

Jesus did not desire this type of publicity. He wanted to prevent futile Messianic demonstrations. He did not want to arouse the enthusiasm of the Jews into such an inflammable state that they would use His presence as the basis for an attempted revolt against Rome. Taylor is aware that this last explanation for the secret, namely, fear of revolution, is perilously close to suggesting that Jesus was playing for safety.²¹ For this reason he says:

The fuller explanation is the immense gap between popular views and messiahship as Jesus understood it. For him it was not merely an office, but a redemptive ministry to which he was committed. He did not deny that he was the Messiah, but he could not accept a title which, in terms of current expectation, ran counter to his conceptions of his mission.²²

He expresses his view most clearly in the following words:

Jesus imposed silence because of the nature of Messiahship as He conceived it to be. To Him it was not primarily a matter of status but of action. In His own estimation Jesus is Messiah in His works of healing, His exorcisms, His victory over Satanic powers, His suffering, dying, rising, and coming with the clouds of heaven. Messiahship is a destiny; it is that which He does, that which the Father is pleased to accomplish in Him and which He fulfills in filial love. It is for this reason that He silences the demoniacs and commands His disciples to tell no man His secret till after the Resurrection. The Messiah already, He would not be the Messiah until His destiny was fulfilled. We may agree that it is necessary to read the Story in terms of doctrine; but the doctrine is that of Jesus Himself. This view of the Messianic Secret is in line with the

²¹Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark, p. 123.

²²Vincent Taylor, The Life and Ministry of Jesus (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), pp. 89f.

interpretation seems more probable. He says that it may be both communal and personal also in the thought of Jesus.²⁷ At the time of Jesus, "Son of Man" was not a current, or at least not a well-known, Messianic title. Perhaps it was this very reason that prompted Jesus to use it. It was for this very reason that Jesus was able to use the title in Mark 2:10 and in Passion and Parousia sayings as a reference to Himself as the Messiah without being understood by the people and without even wanting to be understood by them, especially if in His own estimation He was Messias absconditus.²⁸

It is Taylor's belief that Jesus chose the title "Son of Man" partly in contrast to the ruling conception of the human Son of David. Because the title by itself did not convey much meaning, it is to be noted especially that Jesus used it in Passion contexts and thereby re-interpreted the name in terms of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53.²⁹ Concerning this particular use Taylor writes at length as follows:

It is the name chosen by Him, in conscious preference, we must suppose, to the more colourless "Christos" and the human and nationalistic title "Son of David." It expresses the idea of lordship, of rule over the

²⁷Taylor, The Names of Jesus, pp. 31f.

²⁸Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark, p. 200.

²⁹Taylor, The Names of Jesus, pp. 27, 32.

Messianic community, and its associations are supernatural. Strange to the Gentile world, it embodies His conception of Messiahship, as the more familiar names could not do, and perhaps in particular the idea of a concealed Messiahship yet to be manifested in action. Whether in this respect it is influenced by I Enoch xlvi. 2,3,6 we cannot tell, but undoubtedly there is a certain similarity in the idea of the Son of Man named in the presence of the Lord of Spirits, chosen and hidden before the creation of the world and for evermore. And this we must believe to be the idea of Jesus Himself, if we reject, as we are compelled to reject, Wrede's hypothesis that the "Messianic Secret" is a literary device of Mark. And yet, even so the Son of Man concept is not wide and rich enough to express what Jesus believes concerning His person and work. That is why He reinterprets the idea in terms of the Suffering Servant, teaches that the Son of Man must suffer, and in this persuasion goes deliberately to Jerusalem to die, convinced that He is fulfilling the purpose of His Father, with which He has completely identified Himself.³⁰

Taylor traces the combination of Messiah and Servant all the way back to the voice from heaven at the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1:11). He says:

It is not clear from the Markan account that at this point Jesus was conscious of being the Suffering Servant, for the words quoted are from Isa. xlii, and not liii, but it is reasonable to infer that His sense of a suffering destiny is lineally connected with the initial experience of baptism.³¹

Taylor finds clear echoes of Isaiah 53 in at least six passages in Mark's Gospel (8:31; 9:31; 10:33f.; 9:12b; 10:45; 14:21).

When Jesus combined the idea of victory and triumph

³⁰Ibid., p. 35.

³¹Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark, pp. 618f.

with the idea of suffering and death and when He combined the Messiah and Son of Man with the Suffering Servant, this was something new and unique. This was a complete transformation of the doctrine of the Son of Man. For Taylor this is the tremendous explanation why Jesus kept the Messianic secret.³²

³²Taylor, Jesus and His Sacrifice, pp. 32, 47.

CHAPTER VI

THE VIEWS OF RUDOLF OTTO AND ERIK SJOEBERG

In their research Rudolf Otto and Erik Sjoeberg have done a careful study of Jewish literature, especially Jewish apocalyptic literature. They are convinced that a perception of the hidden Son of Man in Enoch is extremely important for understanding the Messianic secret in St. Mark. Like the three men discussed in the preceding chapter, they are also convinced that an understanding of Jesus as the suffering Messiah is necessary for explaining the Messianic secret. They believe that Messiahship is something that is both open and hidden at the same time.

The View of Rudolf Otto

Otto does not agree with Wrede that the idea of the Messianic secret was invented sometime after the life of Jesus.¹ He rather believes that Jesus was the Son of Man and knew that He was but that He did not teach and reveal this truth to anyone except to His disciples. He says that the attitude shown by Jesus was in complete harmony with the logic of Enoch's apocalyptic. In Enoch 62:6-7

¹Rudolf Otto, The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, translated from the German by Floyd V. Filson and Bertram Lee-Woolf (London: Lutterworth Press, 1943), p. 253.

the Son of Man is revealed and concealed at the same time. He does not reveal Himself, but God the Most High does the revealing and concealing. God reveals Him not to all the world but to the elect.² According to the logic of Enoch's Messianism, it could not be part of the mission of Jesus to teach the secret of His person; rather it was His calling to act as the eschatological Redeemer; it was His calling to heal, forgive, threaten, comfort, and preach the kingdom in order that men might see that the kingdom of God was already operative and at work.³

Otto regards Caesarea Philippi as the turning point in Mark's Gospel. Before this event Jesus did not speak of Himself as the Messiah even to His disciples. After this event He did tell them who He was; He had to tell them; He could tell them now because, according to Matthew 16:17, the manifestation of Messiahship at Caesarea had occurred from God's side. What Jesus now told them was that there was a divine necessity for Him to suffer and die. He taught them that it was of the very essence and vocation of the Son of Man that He be delivered into the hands of the unrighteous.⁴ This suffering and humiliation was necessary not primarily as personal self-authentication

²Ibid., p. 192.

³Ibid., pp. 219f.

⁴Ibid., p. 222.

but as a Messianic act. His suffering had Messianic significance. Jesus combined in His one person the Son of Man in Enoch and the despised, God-smitten Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. This was a new teaching and an offensive idea to the disciples and to all the people. "All this was so hard a saying and so much opposed to the religious faith of these very people, that one must marvel that there was not more than one Judas among them."⁵ The combination of the Christ with the Suffering Servant was a new synthesis of which no one had thought or could think. It was not only unprecedented; it must have seemed blasphemous (cf. Mark 14:64).⁶ The fact that Jesus was to be the suffering Messiah explains why He also for a time had to appear as the hidden Messiah.

The View of Erik Sjoeberg

In the first part of his book Erik Sjoeberg reports that all of the New Testament with the exception of Acts and James reflects the mysterious character of the Gospel. He finds that St. Paul expressly speaks of a revealed mystery in I Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians. Actually I Corinthians speaks of various mysteries; Ephesians and Colossians speak of Christ as the one great,

⁵Ibid., p. 255.

⁶Ibid., p. 246.

revealed mystery. In Ephesians the emphasis is on a revelation of the secret to the whole world; in the other two letters the revelation is only for Christians.⁷ In the summary statement to the first chapter of his work Sjoeberg makes the following assertions:

1. Early Christianity lived in the apocalyptic tradition. Heavenly things are hidden mysteries for men until God reveals them by special revelation.
2. The greatest mystery is Christ, who was hidden since the earliest time in heaven, but is now revealed on earth.
3. This is revealed to the Apostles and to the Church, but not to the world and to unbelievers; only at the Parousia will the secret be revealed to the world.
4. This idea of an open secret comes from Jewish apocalyptic, not from any Hellenistic-Gnostic view.
5. The Resurrection first sets forth Jesus in His Messianic kingship. This is not to say that an unmessianic concept of His earthly life is the proper one, but it is merely a way of explaining the contrast between the hidden Messiah and the enthroned Messiah.⁸

When Sjoeberg examines the Messianic secret in St. Mark, he immediately excludes the possibility that Mark merely took over a dogmatic conception of the secret without understanding it. He rather believes that Mark interpreted the secret according to his own beliefs and gave it a new sense and meaning. The question then is how Mark himself understood the secret. Sjoeberg says that

⁷Erik Sjoeberg, Der Verborgene Menschensohn in den Evangelien (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1955), pp. 13-17.

⁸Ibid., pp. 39f.

Wrede's theory does not answer this question.⁹

Sjoeberg's answer is that, according to the belief of the early Church, the death and Resurrection of Jesus signified "das In-Erscheinung-Treten" of the redemptive secret which had been hidden since the creation of the world. Mark's purpose was to give expression to this particular Christian belief. In Mark's day the problem of trying to solve the relationship between the historical Jesus and the faith of the Church simply did not exist.¹⁰

Sjoeberg would agree with Wrede, Dibelius, Bultmann, and others to the extent of saying that much of the material in Mark's Gospel is due to Mark's creation or to his particular view. However, he stresses a number of times that the fact of the hidden Messiah is well grounded in the historical tradition. The Messianic secret is not a dogmatic, apologetic, kerygmatic, or contradictory conception. It is an historical fact in the life of Jesus.¹¹

As examples of the fact that Mark sometimes put words into the mouth of Jesus, Sjoeberg cites the theory of parables (Mark 4:11-12), the commands to silence after healing the demoniacs (1:34; 3:11f.) and after other

⁹Ibid., pp. 115f.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 130.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 126, 132, 162f., 219.

healing miracles, and the commands to silence after Peter's confession (8:30) and after the Transfiguration (9:9). He draws attention to the fact that the theory of parables has more to do with the secret of the kingdom than with the Messianic secret and that most of the parables have nothing to do with the Messianic secret. Sjoeborg does admit, however, that certain parables contain the secret; some of them do set forth the Messiahship of Jesus although they are not understood by the hearers.¹²

On the other side of the picture, as evidence that the Messianic secret was a reality in the life of Jesus, Sjoeborg points to the true lack of understanding of the disciples and to the healing miracles. He says that the traditional story of the demoniacs does set forth the hidden Messiahship of Jesus and that the various healing miracles were witnesses of the hidden Messiah. They do not arise from Mark's own conception, but from the fact that the Messiahship is at once open and secret.¹³

Although Sjoeborg regards the miracles as revelations of the Messiahship of Jesus, he says that they were not really revelations to the people then, for they did not recognize or understand them as such, at least not before Caesarea Philippi. Similarly, he states that Mark 3:19f.

¹²Ibid., pp. 113, 219, 225, 228.

¹³Ibid., pp. 163, 225ff.

and 3:27 were Messianic speech, but they were not explicit Messianic proclamations. At this point Sjoeborg takes issue with Wrede and says that although the Passion predictions were clear to Mark's readers, they were not clear to the original hearers. He thinks that Wrede had no warrant in reducing the significance of Caesarea Philippi.¹⁴ Like Wrede, Sjoeborg does not believe that Jesus gradually developed a Messianic consciousness or that the disciples gradually developed an insight and perception into the secret of the person of Jesus. Yet he does argue that Caesarea marks the turning point in the Gospel; it divides the life of Jesus into two periods. Before Caesarea the disciples did not even know that Jesus was the Messiah (Mark 4:41; 6:51f.; 8:16ff.); from Caesarea onward they recognize who Jesus is, and now Jesus begins to speak much more intimately with them about His Messianic destiny, about His impending death in Jerusalem. Here is where the Messianic secret still prevailed, for even though the disciples now knew Jesus as the Messiah, yet His Messianic destiny as a suffering, dying, and rising Messiah still seemed inconceivable to them (Mark 9:33f.; 10:38f.). They still expected merely a ruling Messiah and an earthly kingdom in whose rule they would share.¹⁵

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 103f.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 104, 112.

When St. Mark presents the Messianic secret as a secret that is both hidden and revealed, he is reflecting not his own view but the view of Jewish apocalyptic. Sjoeborg discusses at length the relationship between the concept of the Son of Man in Enoch and the meaning of the Son of Man in the words of Jesus. He believes that just as Enoch is to be identified with the Son of Man in the parables of Enoch, so Jesus identified Himself with the Son of Man.¹⁶

What is the picture of the Son of Man in Enoch? The following four passages provide a quick overview:

Enoch 46:2-3: 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, (and) why he went with the Head of Days? And he answered and said unto me: "This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him and whose lot hath the pre-eminence before the Lord of Spirits in uprightness for ever."

Enoch 48:6: And for this reason hath he [the Son of Man] been chosen and hidden before Him, before the creation of the world and for evermore.

Enoch 62:7: For from the beginning the Son of Man was hidden, and the Most High preserved him in the presence of His might, and revealed him to the elect.

Enoch 69:26: And there was great joy amongst them, and they blessed and glorified and extolled because the name of that Son of Man had been revealed unto them.¹⁷

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 147-189.

¹⁷The translation used above is from R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), II.

These passages indicate that the emphasis in Enoch is at least two-fold: (1) The Son of Man is a pre-existent Messiah who is hidden in heaven; (2) God revealed this Son of Man to the elect. From the first emphasis Sjoeborg concludes (1) that the hidden Messiah was an essential belief of Jewish apocalyptic, (2) that on the basis of this belief the Messianic secret was a necessary element in the life of Jesus, and (3) that the Messianic secret was therefore a means by which Jesus could really reveal Himself as the hidden Messiah and therefore the true Messiah. Sjoeborg's view is that the Messianic secret in the life of Jesus was itself a means of revelation.¹⁸

If the above is true, then why were the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus unable to recognize that He, the hidden Messiah, was the fulfillment and embodiment of the hidden Son of Man depicted in Enoch? Sjoeborg answers that the belief in a hidden Messiah did not characterize all of Judaism; the belief did not arise from the Old Testament, and it was not a common belief at the time of Christ. Furthermore, the very fact that He was the hidden Messiah signified that He would continue unrecognized until He was revealed in the end-time.¹⁹

Sjoeborg draws attention to the fact that Enoch and

¹⁸Sjoeborg, op. cit., pp. 237, 245.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 41.

the other apocalyptic writings do not speak of the Messiah as a figure on earth who awaits His future revelation.

This particular belief comes from Rabbinic sources in the period from 100 to 200 A.D.²⁰ Yet in the person of Jesus the two ideas of a hidden, heavenly Messiah and of a Messiah on earth are combined. Sjoeborg combines the two ideas when he says, "Der aus dem Himmel kommende Messias lebt eine Zeit lang auf der Erde, ehe er als Messias hervortritt."²¹

In the following words Sjoeborg summarizes his view that on the basis of Jewish beliefs Jesus had to appear as the hidden Son of Man:

Durch die Juedischen Parallelen wird . . . deutlich, dass das Messiasgeheimnis ein notwendiges Element des Glaubens an den schon vor der letzten Offenbarung auf der Erde auftretenden Messias ist. Wenn Jesus sich als den Messias angesehen hat, musste er, weil er jetzt nicht zum endzeitlichen Gericht kam, als der verborgene Messias auftreten. . . . Auf der Erde musste Jesus vor der endzeitlichen Offenbarung gemaess den juedischen Voraussetzungen der verborgene Menschensohn sein.²²

Sjoeborg devotes a portion of his work to discuss Jesus as the suffering Messiah. He observes that in Jewish thought before and at the time of Christ there was no idea that the hidden Son of Man of Daniel-Enoch and the

²⁰Ibid., p. 96.

²¹Ibid., p. 57.

²²Ibid., pp. 218f.

Suffering Servant of Isaiah could be combined in one person, for the belief then was that the Son of Man would have no earthly existence before His eschatological triumph.²³ He says that it cannot be determined just when Isaiah 53 was first interpreted Messianically, perhaps from the very time when it was written; however, it is clear that at the time of Jesus His Passion sayings were a stumbling-block even to His disciples; a suffering Messiah was not part of the Jewish Messianic hope. In fact, it flatly contradicted their hopes.²⁴ The first evidence that Sjoeborg finds of a suffering Messiah or of a suffering for the sins of others is in rather late Midrash or Rabbinic literature after 100 A.D., for example, Rab bSanh. 98b and Pesiqta rabbati 34-37.²⁵ This view leads to an explanation of the secret that is similar to views held by Hunter, Taylor, Otto, and others, namely, that the synthesis of the ruling Son of Man and the Suffering Servant in the person of Jesus was something entirely new and strange to Jewish thinking.

In summary, the following quotation gives a good over-all picture of the view held by Sjoeborg:

²³Ibid., pp. 70f.

²⁴Ibid., p. 264.

²⁵Ibid., p. 96.

Das Messiasgeheimnis ist also keine sekundaere Konstruktion des Mark. oder der Gemeindeueberlieferung. Sie gehoert als integrierendes Moment zum Bilde des schon vor dem letzten Gericht auf der Erde wirkenden Menschensohnes. Sie gehoert darum auch zur geschichtlichen Wirklichkeit des Lebens Jesu, des Menschensohnes.

Die markinische Auffassung des Messiasgeheimnisses ist dagegen sekundaer. Der Evangelist hat die in der Ueberlieferung vorliegenden Zuege zugespitzt, indem er Jesus den Willen zuschrieb, die Erkenntnis seiner Messianitaet ausserhalb der kleinen Gruppe der Auserwaehlten zu verhindern. Auch ein solches Benehmen waere nach den juedischen Menschensohnvorstellungen verstaendlich. Aber die Ueberlieferung zeugt davon, dass Jesus nicht so gehandelt hat. Er hat nicht seine Messianitaet in dieser Weise verbergen wollen. Er hat sie vielmehr in seinen Worten und Taten durchschimmern lassen. Er hat sie dadurch in geheimnisvoller Weise angedeutet, ohne das Geheimnis zu entschleiern, aber doch so, dass eine Moeglichkeit bestand, es zu entdecken. Hier stand man vor einer Offenbarung--es kam aber darauf an, ob man sie erkannte. Wenn das geschah, war es letzten Endes eine Gabe Gottes.²⁶

²⁶Ibid., p. 246.

CHAPTER VII

MISCELLANEOUS VIEWS

Already toward the end of the nineteenth century Alfred Edersheim declared that the concept of Messiahship held by Jesus was different from the concept held by the Jews of His time. He said that Jesus "derived His mission from a source unknown to, or at least ignored by, the leaders of His people."¹ Several pages later on, in speaking of the Son of Man in Enoch 37-71, he stated that this part of Enoch is most likely to be dated in the reign of Herod the Great (47-4 B.C.). Hence Jesus could very well have been reflecting Enoch when He spoke of Himself as the Son of Man.²

After the turn of the century Gustaf Dalman similarly held that the position and work of the Messiah, as conceived by Jesus, greatly transcended the Messianic expectations of the people. Jesus chose the title "Son of Man" because this was not a current Jewish name for the Messiah. For the evangelists, as well as for any Hellenist, the title intentionally veiled the Messianic character of Jesus.³

¹Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (37th edition; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), I, 164.

²Ibid., p. 173.

³Gustaf Dalman, The Words of Jesus, translated by D. M. Kay (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), pp. 241, 255, 305f.

Paul Billerbeck ascribes to Enoch 37-71 a date either before 64 B.C. or soon after the entrance of the Parthians into Palestine and says that the Son of Man was a Messianic name in these chapters of Enoch. However, in Jesus' day the name was not a common name for the Messiah; it was foreign to rabbinic Judaism; it was unrecognized by the masses.⁴ Furthermore, when Jesus spoke of the Son of Man as a Messiah who must suffer and die, this too was foreign to Jewish thinking. Billerbeck says that it cannot be determined just when Isaiah 53 was first interpreted Messianically, but in rabbinic literature the Messianic significance does not appear until after 200 A.D.⁵ In the following quotation he notes that the Jewish synagogue thought of the suffering Messiah and the dying Messiah as two different persons:

Die alte Synagoge kennt einen leidenden Messiah, dem aber kein Tod beschieden ist, das ist der Messias ben David, u. sie kennt einen sterbenden Messias, von dem aber kein Leiden ausgesagt wird, das ist der Messias ben Joseph.⁶

⁴Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Das Evangelium nach Matthaeus, in Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1922), pp. 957-959.

⁵Ibid., p. 481.

⁶Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Das Evangelium nach Markus, Lukas, und Johannes und die Apostelgeschichte, in Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1924), pp. 273f. He notes here that the idea of a Messiah who came from Joseph's line did not occur until about 150 A.D.

In a similar vein Karl Kuhn finds that certain passages in the Dead Sea Scrolls speak of two Messiahs, the Messiah of Aaron and the Messiah of Israel (1 QSa ii:12-17; 1 QS vi; ix:10-11). The Messiah of Aaron is to be the high priest and head of the entire congregation of Israel. The Messiah of Israel is to be the political leader, subordinate and second in rank to the former.⁷ In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, R. H. Charles discovered passages that speak of two Messiahs, one from the tribe of Levi and one from the tribe of Judah. These Testaments belong to the cycle of Essene writings just as do the Qumran Scrolls.⁸

Billerbeck found evidence in certain New Testament passages that in Jesus' day a suffering Messiah did not correspond with Jewish hopes (cf. Mt. 16:21ff.; Mk. 8:31ff.; 9:31f.; Lk. 24:20f.; Acts 17:3; I Cor. 1:23; Gal. 5:11).⁹

Similarly, Emil Schuerer says that the lack of Jewish belief in an atoning suffering of the Messiah seems to be "proved by the conduct of both the disciples and opponents

⁷Krister Stendahl, editor, The Scrolls and the New Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), pp. 54-57.

⁸R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), II, 294.

⁹Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., p. 274.

of Jesus (Matt. xvi. 22; Luke xviii. 34, xxiv. 21; John xii. 34)."¹⁰

R. H. Charles has made a great contribution toward an understanding of the theological significance of Enoch. He ascribes to Enoch 37-71 a date of 105-64 B.C. He notes that nearly all of the New Testament writers were acquainted with this apocalyptic writing. Jude quotes it as Enoch's genuine work (Jude 14). Barnabas quotes it as Scripture. The authors of the Book of Jubilees, the Apocalypse of Baruch, and IV Extra were influenced by it. The early Church fathers and apologists regarded Enoch with all the weight of a canonical book.¹¹ Charles lists the following passages as pertinent for a Son of Man theology in Enoch: 46:2-4; 48:2-3,6; 60:10; 62:5,7,9,14; 63:11; 69:26f.,29; 70:1; 71:14,17.¹²

Charles did not find any indication in Enoch that the Son of Man would be a suffering Messiah. The only reference he found to suffering is in the fragments of a Zadokite work written in 18-8 B.C. These fragments have a bare and brief reference to a six days' punishment of the Messiah.¹³

¹⁰Emil Schuerer, A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924), Division II, Vol. II, 186f.

¹¹Charles, op. cit., pp. 163f.

¹²Ibid., pp. 214-216.

¹³Ibid., p. 785.

Oscar Cullmann finds no evidence in the Dead Sea Scrolls that the Teacher of Righteousness voluntarily would take upon himself the mysterious role of the Suffering Servant. There is nothing here about a vicarious suffering and an atoning death.¹⁴

In another writing Charles concludes that the combinations of kingdom and Messiah and of Suffering Servant and Messiah were not part of pre-Christian Jewish thought.

The Jewish prophet. . . found no difficulty in conceiving that kingdom without a Messiah. . . . In Jewish prophecy and apocalyptic the Messiah was no organic factor of the kingdom.

He goes on to say:

Prior to the advent of Christianity, Jewish exegetes seem never to have apprehended the Messianic significance of the suffering Servant of Yahweh. The idea of a crucified Messiah was an impossible conception to the Judaism of that period.¹⁵

H. D. A. Major believes that Jesus was more than a prophet, that He was the Messiah and claimed to be such, and that proof of this is seen in His historic ministry and in the disillusionment of His disciples upon His suffering and death. If He had been only a prophet, His death would not have shattered their hopes. Major finds it difficult to believe that the Messianic secret was

¹⁴Stendahl, op. cit., p. 31.

¹⁵R. H. Charles, Religious Development between the Old and the New Testaments (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), pp. 75-77.

invented by Mark or by the primitive disciples after the Resurrection of Jesus. He declares that the secret with its stages of unveiling and recognition in Mark is too unexpected and too original for such a belief. He says that Matthew's tendency to confuse these stages and John's deliberate correction of Mark on this point are further evidence that the Messianic secret was part of Jesus' own concept and that Mark was reporting what was historically true. According to Major, Jesus did more than just take over the apocalyptic views of Messiahship. He filled these views with a new and original content.¹⁶

Julius Schniewind stresses that Mark was not writing a biography of Jesus. He was not trying to depict a development of Jesus Himself or a development in the eyes of the disciples, for the disciples lacked real understanding to the very end; they saw and knew Jesus only as their risen Lord. Schniewind says that Mark's purpose, like that of the other evangelists, was to proclaim Jesus as God's Messiah, but in such a way that in Mark the Messiahship appears as a secret in the words, works, behavior, and suffering of Jesus.¹⁷

¹⁶H. D. A. Major, T. W. Manson, and C. J. Wright, The Mission and Message of Jesus (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1938), xxii-xxv.

¹⁷Julius Schniewind, Das Evangelium nach Markus, in Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), pp. 40f.

Schniewind agrees with Wrede that the Messianic secret was revealed to the early Christians only after the Resurrection; even though the Resurrection did not prove Messiahship, it did set Jesus in complete rule as King and Messiah. The early church did not originate the idea of the Messianic secret. This idea was firmly rooted in the total work and words of Jesus. Jesus lived in the beliefs of Judaism just as did the early Church.¹⁸

Included in Jewish belief was not only the concept of the hidden Son of Man, but also the concept of a suffering Messiah. Schniewind believes that the passages in Enoch 39:6 and 53:6, which call the Son of Man the Chosen and Righteous One, demand the explanation that already in Judaism at that time the Suffering Servant of Isaiah was set alongside the other-worldly Messiah. Jesus thus did not give a new concept to the Messiah but merely took over this idea of a suffering Messiah. This is not to say that in the day of Enoch or the day of Jesus the average Jew connected the idea of the Chosen One with the Suffering Servant. It is clear from the Transfiguration narrative that the disciples failed to see that the beloved Son was also the Suffering Servant (Mt. 17:1-8; Mk. 9:2-8; Lk. 9:28-36). If Schniewind's view of Enoch is correct, why

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 116, 163.

then did Jesus appear as the hidden Messiah? Why was His prediction of suffering such an offense to Peter (Mk. 8:32)? Schniewind's answer is that either Peter did not think of Jesus as a suffering Messiah at all or Peter's idea of a suffering Messiah was contrary to the one that Jesus held.¹⁹

In speaking of the Messianic secret in St. Mark, Schniewind includes the references to the Son of Man as a secret title for the Messiah, the implication already at the baptism that Jesus was the Servant of God and the Messiah, the theory of parables in Mark 4:10-13, and the blind man's confession of Jesus as the Son of David in Mark 10:47. He says that the song at the entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:9-10) is not tied up with the secret, for the throng did not see that the secret was the secret of a humble king on the way to His death.²⁰

Quite recently Joachim Jeremias has completed a study of the Servant of God in Deutero-Isaiah. In this study he reports that the Messianic interpretation of certain servant passages in Deutero-Isaiah can most probably be traced to pre-Christian times. For evidence he cites the Old Testament Peshitta with its variations of the Hebrew text. He says that the Peshitta saw in

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 116f.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 48, 59, 75, 145, 147.

the servant a figure who is despised and slain. It explains Isaiah 53, including the passages about suffering, in a Messianic sense.²¹ Alongside this study, Zimmerli says that the Greek translator of the Septuagint must have seen in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 a future Messianic figure, for he translates Isaiah 52:14f. as a future and understands Isaiah 53:1ff. as prophetic perfects.²² However, Jeremias emphasizes that $\pi\alpha\tilde{\iota}\varsigma \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ in the Old Testament and in late Judaism was never a real title for the Messiah. This is shown by the fact that the name as a Messianic designation was restricted without exception to divine discourse.²³

²¹W. Zimmerli and J. Jeremias, The Servant of God (Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1957), pp. 57, 60f.

²²Ibid., pp. 41f.

²³Ibid., pp. 50, 86.

CHAPTER VIII

A COMPOSITE VIEW AND SYNTHESIS

From the views presented in the body of this thesis it is obvious that various solutions have been offered to the question of the Messianic secret. In many respects one solution often seems to preclude and contradict another solution. The proposed solutions confront us with a number of vital questions: Should any one solution be accepted or rejected in toto? Is it possible to harmonize the seemingly contradictory solutions? It is possible to develop a composite view which presupposes that every solution is worthy of consideration and has some contribution to make toward an acceptable theory of the Messianic secret? Our attempt in this final chapter is to present such a composite view.

In the final analysis the problem of the Messianic secret seems to focus on Jesus as the suffering Son of Man. In the history of scholarship the attempted solutions to this problem have been divided into two camps. One camp has begun with the premise that there is nothing to prevent a belief that Jesus held the conception of Himself as the suffering Son of Man. The other camp says that there is nothing to prevent a belief that this conception arose from the experience and reflection of the primitive

Christian Church and from the view of the evangelists in particular. With which persons does the burden of proof lie, with those who believe that the Gospels give a correct historical picture of the life of Christ or with those who believe that the Gospels reflect the faith and life of the Church? John Knox poses these questions in a recent book; he believes that the view of the second camp is just as plausible as the view of the first camp. Even if the Gospels are dated within three decades after the life of Christ, Knox believes that the Church then could have attributed words to Jesus which He did not actually speak. He believes that the Church could have produced the faith by which it lives. This is not saying that the Church is an "ethicospiritual perpetual-motion machine."¹

Knox does not believe that either camp has really asked the right question or come up with the right answer. He says that the consciousness which Jesus had was not a consciousness of Himself as the suffering Son of Man and the Messiah-Servant, but a consciousness of God's will, God's love, and God's sovereignty, the consciousness of being called to bear witness in word and deed to the kingdom of God. The real answer for Knox is the God of history, regardless of whether God gave the answer through

¹John Knox, The Death of Christ (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), pp. 37-39, 47-50.

the historical Jesus or through the Church and its kerygma.² Knox certainly is right when he says that the questions of the two opposing camps have been exaggerated. In the following words he correctly asserts that the Christian faith does not depend on which premise a person holds:

The Christian faith is not a belief that Jesus entertained certain ideas, which therefore must be true; it is rather the conviction, grounded in the concrete realities of the Church's life (including the memory of Jesus himself), that his career was the central element in a divine and supremely significant event.³

In some respects we would agree with John Knox. It is often difficult, perhaps even unnecessary, and well-nigh impossible to separate the historical Jesus from the Church's kerygma, record from revelation, history from doctrinal interpretation. The Gospels are not historical monographs intended to satisfy the curiosity of twentieth century graduate students of history. They are not neutral books. They are religious, theological literature designed to lead persons to eternal life. Wrede was right in saying that what we have in St. Mark's Gospel is at least to a great extent the evangelist's interpretation of the life of Jesus.⁴ Ebeling properly stated that the Gospels are kerygma, not biography, and that the evangelist's

²Ibid., pp. 50, 112.

³Ibid., p. 122.

⁴W. Wrede, Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901), p. 2.

purpose for his readers is of paramount importance.⁵

Taylor correctly stressed that apologetic, liturgical, catechetical, and dogmatic purposes lay behind the selection and use of much of the material in Mark.⁶ These views are necessary to explain the differences between Mark and the other Gospels.

It should be stated that an acceptance of these views does not affect the basic nature and content of Christian faith, nor does it affect one's view of the authority of Scripture. The authority of Scripture does not depend on getting back to the ipsissima verba of Jesus in their original context. To proclaim the Word of God does not mean proclaiming the precise words of Jesus, but it includes the idea that the Holy Spirit worked in the early Church by a process which we call guidance and in the evangelists by a process which we call inspiration. The Spirit was operating in their view of the words and works of Jesus.

Although we would agree with John Knox in the preceding paragraphs, there is considerable evidence that he has given too much credit to the creative powers of the early Church and the evangelists at the expense of ignoring

⁵Hans Juergen Ebeling, Das Messiasgeheimnis und die Botschaft des Marcus-Evangelisten (Berlin: Alfred Toepelmann, 1939), pp. 145f.

⁶Vincent Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1952), p. 130.

the historical Jesus. Even though the Gospels reflect the faith and theology of the early Church, Schweitzer calls attention to the fact that it was the very nature of the early Christian faith that it did not alter the main ideas or fabricate facts in the life of Jesus.⁷ Taylor adds that the kerygma of Mark and the early Church was based on what Jesus Himself had done and taught and that the ideas of the Messianic secret and of Messianic suffering were original with Jesus Himself.⁸ John A. Allan notes that a theological view of the Gospels does not mean an extreme skepticism of the life of Jesus and does not mean that the Gospels grew up quite uncontrolled by the memories of eyewitnesses. He believes that Mark's convictions and interpretations do correspond broadly to the original facts and events. Allan says that the faith which Mark reveals is the faith that responds to the historical event of Christ as this confronts a man; the faith that Mark conveys is the kind of faith that Jesus meant to create, and the testimony that Mark bears is the kind of testimony for the bearing of which Christ called His apostles.⁹

⁷Albert Schweitzer, The Mystery of the Kingdom of God, translated by Walter Lowrie (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1914), p. 8.

⁸Taylor, op. cit., pp. 133f.

⁹John A. Allan, "The Gospel of the Son of God Crucified," Interpretation, IX (April 1955), 131, 133, 135, 142f.

We agree with Hoskyns and Davey that the difficult Christology which weaves all the threads of the life of Christ into a single and complete fabric was not imposed by St. Mark. Hoskyns and Davey say:

No single strand of evidence deprives Jesus of the conscious sense that he was bringing into being a new order and working out a purpose--in complete isolation. Nowhere in the New Testament are the writers imposing an interpretation upon a history. The history contains the purpose, and is indeed controlled by it. That is to say, the historian is dealing in the end with an historical figure fully conscious of a task which had to be done, and fully conscious also that the only future which mattered for men and women depended upon the completion of his task. The future order, which it was the purpose of Jesus to bring into being, depended upon what he said and did, and finally upon his death. This conscious purpose gave a clear unity to his words and actions, so that the actions interpret the words and the words the actions.¹⁰

Despite what John Knox says, there is evidence that Jesus already during His public ministry thought of Himself as the Messiah, the hidden Messiah and the suffering Son of Man. For evidence Taylor points to Peter's confession, the entry into Jerusalem, the trial, the inscription on the cross, the crucifixion, and the Church's belief in and proclamation of a crucified Messiah after the Resurrection; Taylor says these are inexplicable unless Jesus was the Messiah during His ministry.¹¹ It is true that the

¹⁰Sir Edwin Hoskyns and Noel Davey, The Riddle of The New Testament, (Third edition; London: Faber and Faber, 1947), p. 172.

¹¹Taylor, op. cit., pp. 122f.

Resurrection set Jesus in complete rule as King and Messiah and that the disciples and the masses were not able to understand the nature of His Messiahship until His suffering, death, and Resurrection were past events; it may be for this very reason that Jesus concealed His Messiahship until these events. Yet it is noteworthy that the Resurrection of itself did not carry a claim to Messianic dignity.

We feel that Sjoeberg's evidence is important and adequate for showing that Jesus was and had to be the hidden Messiah. On the basis of the Jewish hypothesis of the hidden Son of Man in Enoch, the Messianic secret was an essential part of the life of Jesus. By appearing as the hidden Messiah, Jesus was actually revealing Himself as the true Messiah. The Messianic secret was a means of revelation.¹²

In Mark's Gospel the life and work of Jesus is portrayed as a synthesis between the apocalyptic Son of Man and the Suffering Servant. It is clear that this synthesis was unfamiliar, yes, even blasphemous, to the Jewish masses. The question is whether this synthesis belonged to Jesus Himself or whether it was Mark's way of portraying Jesus in order to account for the Messianic

¹²Erik Sjoeberg, Der Verborgene Menschensohn in den Evangelien (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1955), pp. 237, 245.

secret. Evidence indicates that it belonged to Jesus Himself. Nearly every scholar today accepts the Son of Man saying in Mark 10:45 as one of the genuine sayings of Jesus.¹³ In this saying Jesus combined the Son of Man of Enoch with the Servant of Deutero-Isaiah. In every case in which the title "Son of Man" occurs in the Gospels, it is a title and name used only by Jesus Himself. If the title and conception behind the title are to be credited to the view of the evangelists, it seems highly unusual that they never used it in narrative sections described in the third person. It should also be noted that Jesus often used future, eschatological terms in speaking of Himself as the Son of Man.

On the basis of these pieces of evidence we arrive at a sort of composite view and synthesis. We shall attempt to synthesize the evidence as we state our conclusions in the following sentences. Mark consciously built his Gospel around the leitmotif of the Messianic secret. He gave this motif particular emphasis through his selection of material and through his style of reporting. He makes it possible for his readers to see here the revealed Messiah, but he shows them that the witnesses of the words and works of Jesus did not understand when Jesus spoke and acted. He shows them that the Messiah was speaking and working, but

¹³Taylor, op. cit., pp. 445f.

He was doing this as the hidden Messiah whose secret was not clear until after the Resurrection. However, Mark did not invent the idea of the Messianic secret, nor was it an invention of the primitive Church. Jesus Himself intentionally veiled His Messiahship for the following reasons:

1. Hidden Messiahship was itself a means of revelation.
2. The idea of a suffering Messiah was a view which contradicted the hopes of the disciples and of the Jewish nation.
3. The Messiahship of Jesus can never be grasped or understood apart from the actual events of His suffering, death, and Resurrection.
4. Although the kingdom that Jesus came to proclaim and to establish belongs in the realm of realized eschatology, it is nonetheless an eschatological kingdom.

It is our firm conviction that these reasons provide the real explanation why Jesus was compelled to make the Messianic dignity of His person a secret.

As we today look back at the person of Jesus in the Gospel of St. Mark, we find that this Jesus is the Christ; hidden Messiahship is now revealed to us. We say with Erik Sjoeborg that the Messianic secret is an "open secret,"¹⁴

¹⁴Sjoeborg, op. cit., p. 13.

with Martin Dibelius that Mark's Gospel is "a book of secret epiphanies,"¹⁵ and with Otto Piper that here is the "secret purpose of a king."¹⁶ Here we see Jesus as the revealed and victorious Messiah-King. Here Jesus stands as Victor for the very reason that He was the hidden Son of Man and Suffering Servant.

¹⁵Martin Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel, translated from the German by Bertram Lee-Woolf (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 230.

¹⁶Otto A. Piper, "The Mystery of the Kingdom of God," Interpretation, I (April 1947), 187.

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