

pression it was likely to create on those who heard Him, and was the actual impression left on the minds of foes as well as friends. Both alike understood Him to assert His divinity.

But apart from the natural suggestion of the phrase, there is the association it had come to acquire in the Jewish mind before He assumed it at all. It is the name used in the book of Daniel to designate the Messiah, and was so taken by the Jewish interpreters. They could never hear it, therefore, without importing into it the Messianic idea—an idea which He never repudiates, though He leaves them to infer it, rather than positively asserts it.

Now, of course it is conceivable that, while this is the case, He might have used the name in individual instances without making that aspect at all prominent, and might have had in His mind rather His character as the ideal or representative man. In that case it would have been merely an emphatic statement of the completeness or perfection of His manhood. But in this instance, where perhaps more than in any other, such a supposition would be appropriate, it seems to be quite excluded by a statement which is found in the parallel passage of Matthew's gospel. After pleading the conduct of the priests in the temple, who by offering sacrifices profane the Sabbath, and yet are blameless, He adds: "But I say unto you that One greater than the temple is here." (Matt. vii., 8.) It was obviously not His lower dignity of which He was thinking at the time, but the higher. His lordship over the Sabbath was not in virtue of His perfect manhood simply, but in virtue of His Messiahship as well—that which made Him greater than the temple, just as it made Him greater than Jonah, the most successful of the prophets, or Solomon the wisest of the kings of Israel. (Matt. xii., 41, 42.) Anything less than that must, I think, fail to satisfy the mind of any dispassionate reader who takes the three synoptic accounts together.

But we have still to determine what this Messianic lordship over the Sabbath consists in.

It can hardly mean, as some suggest, that He claims the right to disregard it altogether Himself or allow His disciples to do so in His presence, without good reason, just because He was the Messiah. This might seem to be hinted at in the comparison with the temple, if there was anything else to sustain it. But we never find Christ taking up any such arbitrary attitude on any question of the law. On all occasions He submitted Himself to the law as a matter of principle even when He felt that as the Messiah He might have done otherwise, as in the case of the payment of the temple tax. (Matt. xvii., 24-27.) Nor is there any need to suppose that He regarded Himself as doing otherwise here. His defence is not that He