

The Evangelical Quarterly

A Theological Review, International in Scope and Outlook, in Defence of the Historic Christian Faith

Editor: F. F. BRUCE, M.A., D.D.

VOL. XLI

OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 1969

No. 4

THE MESSIANIC SECRET IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT DISCOVERIES

by RICHARD N. LONGENECKER

THE "Messianic Secret" is not a dead issue in gospel studies; it is likely to be reopened with increased animation in the English-speaking world when Wrede's book appears in an English translation, which is at present being prepared. Far from being satisfied with Albert Schweitzer's dismissal of the "Wrede road" as a blind alley, many of our contemporaries are persuaded that it is the main road. Dr. Longenecker, Associate Professor of New Testament History and Theology in Trinity Divinity School, already well known as the author of "Paul: Apostle of Liberty", turns here from Pauline studies to consider Jewish parallels to the "Messianic Secret".

It was William Wrede who in 1901 first established the thesis that the reticence of Jesus to declare himself openly as Messiah is a Marcan device, which was continued in Matthew and Luke and which appears in revised form in John as a doctrine of "veiled glory". And it was Wrede who christened his discovery with the paradoxical, yet aptly descriptive, name of the "Messianic Secret".¹

Liberal Biblical scholarship has generally followed Wrede at this point, insisting that, though he awakened messianic expectations in others, Jesus himself did not think of his person or his ministry in messianic terms at all—and that what evidence there is to the contrary is the product of later *Gemeindeftheologie* and appears in the records through the impetus of Mark's ingenuity. To cite only one contemporary and representative example, Günther Bornkamm, in his widely read *Jesus of Nazareth*, asserts:

The idea of the Messianic secret in Mark so obviously presupposes the experience of Good Friday and Easter, and betrays itself as a theological and literary device of the evangelist, especially where we recognize the hand of the author, that it is impossible to treat it forthwith as a teaching of the historical Jesus. . . . Behind the doctrinal teaching concerning the Messianic secret there still dimly emerges the fact that Jesus' history was originally a non-Messianic history, which was portrayed in the light of the Messianic faith of the Church only after Easter.²

What differences there are among advocates of this position have

¹ W. Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901).

² G. Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. I. & F. McLuskey, with J. M. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 171-172.

to do mainly with refinements of Wrede's thought regarding the specific purpose of Mark's fabrication: (1) Was it to impose a Christology upon the non-christological tradition of early Palestinian Christianity, as Wrede himself and most have insisted? or, (2) Was it to tone down a "divine man" epiphany Christology which had arisen within a pre-Markan hellenistic Christian faith, as many Bultmannians assert?³

Even in circles where a less radical solution is proposed, the portrayal in the gospels of the secrecy of Jesus regarding his Messiahship and of his hesitancy as to the title itself poses a real problem. And it is this feature which properly has been seen to demand some explanation in any discussion of early Christology.

THE SECRET IN THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Repeatedly in the gospels Jesus is presented as both reticent to declare himself Messiah and actually demanding silence on the part of those who would. The demons, for example, are not allowed to speak "because they knew that he was the Christ (the Messiah)."⁴ John the Baptist's direct inquiry regarding Jesus' Messiahship is answered rather opaquely by reference to what was being done.⁵ And the disciples are commanded not to tell what they had seen on the Mount of Transfiguration until after the resurrection.⁶

Three passages, however, are usually seen as bringing us to the heart of the problem: (1) Peter's declaration "You are the Christ (the Messiah)!", and Jesus' response;⁷ (2) Caiaphas' query "Are you the Christ (the Messiah)?", and Jesus' response;⁸ and (3) Pilate's question "Are you King of the Jews?", and Jesus' response.⁹ In the first, Matthew's account records that Peter is commended for the appropriateness of his confession; though all three synoptic writers conclude the vignette with the statement that Jesus urged secrecy upon his disciples regarding the Messiahship. In Jesus' answer to Caiaphas, Mark has Jesus answering directly in the affirmative, though only after being asked twice, and Matthew presents him as responding somewhat enigmatically

³ E.g., H. Conzelmann, "Gegenwart und Zukunft in der synoptischen Tradition", *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, LIV (1957), 293-295.

⁴ Lk. 4: 41; accepting also the reading of B for Mk. 1: 34.

⁵ Mt. 11: 2-6, Lk. 7: 18-23.

⁶ Mt. 17: 9, Mk. 9: 9-10; cf. Lk. 9: 36.

⁷ Mt. 16: 13-20; Mk. 8: 27-30; Lk. 9: 18-21.

⁸ Mt. 26: 57-66; Mk. 14: 53-64.

⁹ Mt. 27: 11-14; Mk. 15: 2-5; Lk. 23: 3; Jn. 18: 33-38.

after being adjured by the high priest. And in both Matthew and Mark, Jesus' reply goes on to speak in terms of the "Son of Man" and not Messiahship, though the question was specifically directed to the latter. Jesus' response to Pilate may not have direct bearing on the issue at hand, though it does indicate at least that Jesus did not understand his Messiahship in political terms.

By more conservative scholars, the contexts of these passages are understood as laden with nationalistic overtones, and thus the varied reporting of Jesus' answers to indicate (1) his rejection of a Jewish concept of political Messiahship, (2) his reserve toward the title itself due to a very difficult view of its essential nature, yet (3) his willingness to accept the ascription when given in a more spiritual setting or when authoritatively demanded of him.¹⁰ In substantial agreement, though with significant divergence, Oscar Cullmann has argued for Jesus' absolute rejection of a Jewish concept of Messiahship coupled with his extreme reserve toward the title himself because of its contemporary connotations—in fact, his conscious avoidance of the designation rather than even any occasional acceptance of it.¹¹ In the interview with Pilate, there is an implicit rejection of that affirmed; and in the replies to Caiaphas' question and Peter's acclamation, as Cullmann understands them, Jesus remained non-committal.¹² Cullmann believes Jesus to have been the Messiah. And further, he believes Jesus to have been conscious of this status—his awareness of continuity with the Old Testament as expressed in his claim to fulfilment would make this inevitable. But Cullmann understands Jesus to have consciously avoided the title Messiah since political kingship was so firmly wedded to it. Bultmannians (including so-called "post-Bultmannians") assert Jesus' denial of the title *per se*, alleging that he viewed himself only as "Messiah-designate" in his ministry and believed that full Messiahship awaited the future

¹⁰ E.g., V. Taylor, *The Names of Jesus* (London: MacMillan, 1953), p. 20; *idem*, *The Person of Christ in New Testament Teaching* (London: MacMillan, 1958), p. 4; V. H. Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), pp. 112-113; A. J. B. Higgins, *Jesus and the Son of Man* (London: Lutterworth, 1964), pp. 18-19.

¹¹ O. Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple—Apostle—Martyr*, trans. F. V. Filson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), pp. 170-184; *idem*, *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. S. C. Guthrie and C. A. M. Hall (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), pp. 117-127. Cf. also G. S. Duncan, *Jesus, Son of Man* (London: Nisbet, 1947), pp. 125-126.

¹² Cullmann discounts the statement of Jn. 4: 26 as more the nomenclature of the Fourth Evangelist than that of Jesus (*Christology*, p. 125, n. 4).

coming of the Son of Man at the *parousia*.¹³ Thus these passages are understood as Jesus' absolute rejection of both the Jewish idea of Messiah and the title itself being properly ascribed to him, Messiahship being recognized by Jesus as "a diabolical temptation".¹⁴

Despite the Bultmannian denial of any messianic self-consciousness and the Cullmannian insistence on a conscious avoidance of the title, however, Jesus was crucified as a messianic pretender. This is indeed a fact of significance in the later use of the title in the Church, as Ferdinand Hahn insists.¹⁵ But has it no importance in our understanding of Jesus himself?

One is bound to wonder how a man who made explicit messianic claim for himself, as Cullmann insists, or who absolutely rejected the ascription and did so little that was out of the ordinary, as the Bultmannians assert, could have aroused the intense opposition of Judaism to himself along messianic lines that culminated in his death. Of course "misunderstanding" may be appealed to in explanation, as is so often done. But is this not too easy a way out of the difficulty? Perhaps Jesus' enemies were more perceptive than we credit them. And perhaps lack of insight in this case should be laid at doors more modern. One becomes highly suspicious that such is the case when evidence is hustled out of court on basically theological grounds in order to prove that there is no evidence, whether it be the allocating of passages to a later time in order to demonstrate the lack of a messianic self-consciousness on the part of Jesus or the emending of a text in order to dispute its *prima facie* meaning as to Jesus' occasional acceptance of the title.

That Jesus understood his ministry in terms of Messiahship is the underlying presupposition in the narratives concerning the baptism, the temptation in the wilderness, the transfiguration, and the "triumphal entry"; and it is implicit in his controversy with the Pharisees regarding the nature of Messiahship.¹⁶ And if we are

¹³ R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. K. Grobel (London: SCM, 1952), I, 26-27; F. Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), pp. 159-179; R. H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology* (New York: Scribner's, 1965), pp. 109-111.

¹⁴ R. H. Fuller, *ibid.*, pp. 109, 159. Fuller cites Cullmann in support here; but Cullmann's point is that "Jesus saw the hand of Satan at work in the contemporary Jewish concept of the Messiah", not in the title *per se* (*Christology*, p. 124; *Peter*, p. 178).

¹⁵ Cf. F. Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel*, pp. 178-179.

¹⁶ Mt. 22: 41-46; Mk. 12: 35-37; Lk. 20: 41-44.

not permitted to appeal to the responses of Jesus to Peter and the high priest—both of which I personally consider valid appeals, though to varying degrees¹⁷—at least in John 4: 26 there is the account of Jesus' acceptance of the title in the statement to the Samaritan woman, "I that speak to you am he". Despite the fact that he absolutely refused to associate himself with the contemporary idea of a political Messiahship, even to the point of withdrawing from his followers when they attempted to foist it upon him,¹⁸ Jesus could nonetheless hardly have claimed to be the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy without at least implying that he was in some sense the Messiah of Israel's hope. For, at the very least, "the idea of the Messiah is important to the extent that it establishes a continuity between the work of Jesus and the mission of the chosen people of Israel".¹⁹

PARALLELS FROM QUMRAN AND MURABBA'AT

The portrait of Jesus in the gospels in regard to Messiahship is indeed rather baffling, composed as it of such elements as, on the one hand, (1) a radical rejection of the current Jewish idea of the Messiah, (2) an extreme reserve toward the title itself, and (3) explicit commands to his disciples and others not to speak of him in messianic terms, while, on the other hand, (4) a messianic consciousness underlying many of his actions and statements, (5) the acclaim of others as to his Messiahship, (6) an occasional acceptance of this appellation, and (7) the express explication of his ministry in messianic terms after the resurrection, as presented in Luke 24. For those unwilling to solve the dilemma by setting aside any of the factors, the explanation has usually centred on the fact that contemporary Jewish messianology was so wedded to nationalistic concepts as to offer no fit vehicle of communication for Jesus' message in most cases—though where he could accept certain elements within that messianic hope and where he could heighten others, Jesus did so. And certainly this explanation is as good as any, and more historically founded than most.

In 1959, however, David Flusser, in an article dealing with the treatment of 2 Samuel 7 in 4QFlorilegium, suggested, almost in passing, that the data comprising the heart of the Messianic Secret

¹⁷ Cf. E. G. Jay, *Son of Man, Son of God* (London: S.P.C.K., 1965), pp. 14-18; B. H. Branscomb, *The Gospel of Mark* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1937), pp. 150-153; V. H. Neufeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-113.

¹⁸ Jn. 6: 15.

¹⁹ As Cullmann says in defence of Jesus' messianic consciousness (*Christology*, pp. 126-127), though, of course, according to Cullmann, Jesus refused to accept the title because of its associations.

in the Gospels can be paralleled to a great extent in material found at Qumran and at Murabba'at, and that behind the hesitancy of Jesus, the Qumran Teacher of Righteousness, and Simeon ben Kosebah to assert their claims more positively lies a common motif that is basic in Jewish thought.²⁰ It is this suggestion which I believe needs further explication and which I propose goes far toward resolving more adequately this most vexing problem.

It is widely accepted that behind the sectarian group represented by the Dead Sea Scrolls stood an historical figure—probably the founder, though certainly the inspiration and guiding light of the group—who is highly extolled in the literature of the community. What is not so often realized is that in the *Hodayot*, which may reasonably be assumed to have been written by this personage himself, the laudatory epitaphs used elsewhere in the writings from Qumran are not employed, though the consciousness signalled in the titles underlies the whole of the Thanksgiving Hymns. In the Zadokite Document and in the peshar comments on Psalm 37 and Habakkuk 1-2, for example, he is identified as the "Teacher of Righteousness" (*moreh has-sedeq*),²¹ whereas the *Hodayot* contains no instance of the use of this title. The consciousness underlying the title, however, is echoed in the Hymns relatively frequently; for instance, in such a statement as "And thou, O my God, hast placed in my mouth rain [divine teaching] as an early shower of rain".²² And it is reflected in the claim of the writer: "Thou hast sent me as a banner to the elect of righteousness, as one who interprets with knowledge deep, mysterious things; as a touchstone for them that seek the truth, a standard for them that love correction".²³ In addition, in the Manual of Discipline the Teacher seems to be accepted as a Second Moses,²⁴ and in the Zadokite Fragments and the Habakkuk Commentary

²⁰ D. Flusser, "Two Notes on the Midrash on 2 Sam. vii", *Israel Exploration Journal*, IX (2, 1959), 107-109.

²¹ CDC 1.11 (1: 7), 6.11 (8: 10), 20.1 (9: 29), 20.28 (9: 50), 20.32 (9: 53); 4QPs. 37 at 2.14-16 (on 37: 24); 1QHab. 1.13 (on 1: 4), 2.2 (on 1: 4-5), 5.10 (on 1: 13), 7.4 (on 2: 2), 8.3 (on 2: 4), 2.10 (on 2: 8), 9.5 (on 2: 15). Cf. also 1QMic. 2.5 (on 1: 5).

²² 1QH 8.16. See also 8.17-26 where this figure of rain (divine teaching given through the teacher at Qumran) is continued. Cf. also 5.9-12; 7.20-27; 11.3-18; 12.3, 11-23.

²³ 1QH 2.13-14.

²⁴ Cf. N. Wieder, "The 'Law-Interpreter' of the Sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Second Moses", *Journal of Jewish Studies*, IV (4, 1953), 158-175; see also W. H. Brownlee, "Messianic Motifs of Qumran and the New Testament", *New Testament Studies*, III (1, 1956), 17, in agreement and for a bibliography of early interpreters taking this position.

as the Giver of the Covenant,²⁵ which ascriptions find their counterparts less directly in the Hymns in such words as: "I do thank thee, O Lord, for my face thou hast enlightened for thy covenant's sake. Yea, from evening until morning do I seek thee; and as the sure dawn for perfect illumination hast thou appeared to me".²⁶ And throughout the literature of Qumran there is evidence that the Teacher was understood in messianic terms, probably as the Prophet who was to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah or Messiahs;²⁷ which association allusively comes to expression in the *Hodayot* via the frequent employment of terminology drawn from the Isaian Servant Songs.²⁸

This same phenomenon of (1) external acclamation, (2) reticence on the part of the individual to speak of himself in the terms others were using, yet (3) a consciousness on that individual's part of the ultimate validity of the titles employed, seems to be true as well of Simeon ben Kosebah, the leader of the Jewish revolt against Hadrian, and of the materials from his desert headquarters at Wadi Murabba'at. We know from rabbinic sources that with his initial victories over Roman power there arose a wild enthusiasm among the Jewish populace as to Simeon's Messiahship and Kingship, and that this enthusiasm engulfed even the leading rabbi of the day, Rabbi Akiba.²⁹ But what must be noted is that from the few remains of his letters at Murabba'at, there is evidence only that Simeon ben Kosebah called himself Prince (*nasi*), and not King or Messiah, even though he undoubtedly expected to fulfil the messianic expectations of his people as he understood them.³⁰

What is the explanation of such data? To this, citing what he asserts to be a common Jewish pattern of thought, David Flusser pertinently observes: "From the strictly theological point of view no man can be defined as a messiah before he has accomplished the task of the anointed".³¹ In the Jewish view, that is, the

²⁵ CDC 6.19 (8: 15), 19.33-34 (9: 28), 20.12 (9: 37); 1QHab. 2.7-8 (on 1: 5).

²⁶ 1QH 4.5-6. Cf. also 1.21; 4.22-28; 7.10. 20-27.

²⁷ Cf. W. H. Brownlee, "Messianic Motifs", *op. cit.*, pp. 18-20, 26, 195-198.

²⁸ E.g., 1QH 7.6-7; 8.26-27, 35-36; 9.29-32; 13.18-19; 14.25; 17.26; 18.14.

²⁹ Cf. L. Finkelstein, *Akiba* (Cleveland: World, 1962), p. 269. Of course not everyone acclaimed him Messiah and King, as indicated in the Aramaic play on the name ranging from Bar Kokbah ("Son of the Star") to Bar Kozebah ("Son of the Lie").

³⁰ D. Flusser, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

³¹ *Ibid.*

function and work must be accomplished first before the title may be rightfully claimed. And in this, Jesus, the Qumran Teacher of Righteousness, and Simeon ben Kosebah seem to be in agreement, though their concepts of Messiahship and each's understanding of his own place in the Messianic Age differed radically.

THE DECLARATION OF MESSIAHSHIP

It is both interesting and illuminating to observe that only in Luke 24: 26 and 24: 46, accounts of the post-resurrection appearances, is Jesus presented as directly initiating the discussion regarding his Messiahship and as relating the Old Testament to himself in explicit messianic terms. But then he was able to reinterpret the title by reference to the immediately past events. And then he had accomplished the messianic task which he came to perform, thus allowing him to so speak openly.

The gospels, then, present Jesus as possessing a messianic self-consciousness during his ministry, and yet, in the main, hesitating to speak of himself as Messiah until after the resurrection. And this same pattern of (1) messianic consciousness, (2) messianic secrecy, and (3) messianic declaration is discernible elsewhere in the New Testament.

In Acts 2: 22-35, while acknowledging heavenly attestation of Jesus during his earthly ministry, Peter is reported as centering his attention upon the fact that God "raised him up", with the conclusion being: "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made (*epoiēsen*) him both Lord and Christ". In 1 John 5: 6, this pattern is reflected in the words: "This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and the blood". A closely connected concept to that of Messiah is that of God's "Son", or the "Son of God", as is now clearly seen from the *peshet* comment on 2 Samuel 7: 14 in 4QFlorilegium.³² In Acts 13: 33-37, quoting particularly Psalm 2: 7, and in the pre-Pauline portion of Romans 1: 3-4, the Sonship of Jesus is proclaimed as having been "declared" by the resurrection of the dead, which, because of this association of concepts, has an obvious bearing on the theme of the Messiahship of Jesus.

Somewhat less direct, though still of significance here, are certain Christological affirmations in the Letter to the Hebrews. In

³² On the words of 2 Sam. 7: 14a, "I will be unto him a father, and he shall be unto me a son", the comment in 4QFlor. is: "The 'he' in question is the Branch of David who shall function in Zion in the Last Days"; thus equating the messianic "Son of David" with God's "Son".

Hebrews 2: 10 it is stated that the "pioneer of salvation" was made "perfect through suffering"; and in Hebrews 5: 8-9 the picture is of a Son who "learned obedience through what he suffered", and thus was "made perfect" and has become "the source of eternal salvation". And this thought of the necessity of suffering in order in some way to bring about the complete perfection of Jesus seems to be reflected in Hebrews 2: 14; 4: 15; and 1 Peter 4: 1 as well.

CONCLUSION

Much has been made of the Messianic Secret during the past century, usually to the denial of a messianic self-consciousness in Jesus and to the discrediting of the narrative which would suggest such. Now, however, with additional light thrown on the question from Qumran and from Murabba'at, it appears that all of the elements giving rise to the discussion are factors intrinsic to early Jewish thought generally and to the New Testament presentation of Jesus as the Messiah in particular, and that no one element can be set aside as extraneous or of foreign import without affecting the warp and woof of the whole.

The recognition of this fact must have a profound effect upon current studies in New Testament Biblical theology. If this indeed be the case, no longer will it be possible to dismiss Messiahship as a foundational element in the earliest Christian Christology in favour of some more fundamental title, as, for example, a "Son of Man" concept, as is commonly done today. The messianic self-consciousness of Jesus and the foundational nature of the affirmation "Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah)" must be seriously dealt with if we are to understand aright the earliest Christian faith. For though he was in a certain sense "Messiah-elect" (even "Messiah-designate", if that term be thoroughly disinfected) during his ministry, Jesus was declared Messiah in fact not just *after* his passion and resurrection but *because of* his passion and resurrection—and, it must be insisted, in continuity with his own self-consciousness during the ministry.

*Trinity Evangelical Divinity School,
Deerfield, Illinois, U.S.A.*

service mean to those who participated? It was life or death²⁹ and the feeding was that on the body and blood of Christ spiritually and by grace.³⁰

As for the mass, it was the occasion of blasphemy³¹ because the teaching was that the priest "hath such power over Christ's body, as to make God and man, once at the least every day, of a wafer cake".³² Also in connection with the mass he denied that there was any such teaching in the scriptures as to allow a sacrifice of the altar to satisfy "and pay the price of sins, both of the dead and of the quick".³³

As to the presence of Christ in the sacrament he denied a Real Presence such as the Catholics taught,³⁴ but he allowed a presence which had nothing to do with a carnal presence of Christ's body in the elements. For him there was a spiritual presence and by grace.³⁵

We can see then that the teaching he held was diametrically opposed to that of the Catholics. He did not misunderstand their teaching or react to a false understanding of the mass. He, like the other Reformers, was clear as to the teaching the Catholics held, and that teaching he opposed.³⁶ This is important at a time when ecumenical approaches are liable to gloss over differences in doctrine. Such differences in the understanding of the sacrament of the Lord's Table caused blood to be spilled in the sixteenth century, and we would be irresponsible if we were to think that such bloodshed was caused by anything other than doctrinal positions.

But what were the grounds on which Ridley stood and held his position? There were three, and it was his roots in the Scriptures, the Fathers and Ratramnus which made him the power that he was in the Reformation debates. He was steeped in the Scriptures and his use of them was profuse. He would not speak "wittingly or willingly in any point against God's word".³⁷ His knowledge of the scriptures was matched by his knowledge of the Fathers. "His immense patristic learning gave him a decided advantage over all his antagonists."³⁸ Whilst he quotes freely from them and makes appeal to over thirty

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 8-9; cf. p. 161.

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 235.

³¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 206.

³² *Op. cit.*, p. 56.

³³ *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

³⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 198.

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 223, 238.

³⁶ For discussion as to alleged misunderstandings on the part of the Reformers of Catholic teaching see F. Clark, *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformers* (Darton, 1960).

³⁷ Ridley, *Works* (PS), p. 193.

³⁸ Introduction to Ridley's *Works* (PS), p. xii.

writers, he uses them as witnesses and upholders of the teaching he finds in the Scripture, for he believed they understood the true meaning of Christ.³⁹ One of the writers to whom he made appeal was Ratramnus, a ninth-century monk and writer. It was this writer who, as we have seen, had "pulled him by the ear"⁴⁰ and thus brought him to a true understanding of the sacrament. Whilst the Catholics made an attempt to suggest that the book was a Protestant forgery, the importance of Ratramnus was that such a book as his had been written as late as the ninth century and accepted at the time as orthodox teaching.

His teaching was clear and it had made Ridley search again the scriptures. From that time forward Ridley held the Reformed teaching on the sacrament and that teaching he was industrious in promoting. His was a clear and incisive mind making him the man most to be feared of the Protestant disputants. The Catholics had summed him up well and knew that, if they could destroy his teaching, then the religion of Latimer and Cranmer would fall also. In that Cranmer recanted after the death of Ridley and Latimer that judgement was right, but the great mistake made by the Catholics was at the trial of Ridley and Latimer when, instead of examining the aged and less scholarly Latimer first and making him falter, they examined Ridley first and he did not waver one bit. With that example it is no wonder that Latimer stood firm.

Ridley's death was a cruel and brave death, but it ought to be his teaching and the grounds on which he held that teaching which take a more prominent place.

Arthingworth, Market Harborough.

³⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 206.