

must have received a strong impulse from the ministry of Ezekiel. If the Jews were to be restored to their own land and hold permanently the central place in the world that his programme assigns to them, Yahweh must control the foreign nations, and either destroy them or cause them to acknowledge His supremacy and holiness. An important passage such as Is. 2/2-4, Mic. 4/1-4, belongs to a different, though as to time a parallel, strain of thought, and is related to the spirit of Deutero-Isaiah. The early post-exilic prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, look forward with pathetic longing to a speedy convulsion, to be followed by a reign of peace and prosperity for Jerusalem (Hag. 2, Zech. 2). In a loose fashion all passages are called "Messianic" that promise and describe this time of blessedness, when "the meek shall inherit the earth"; but in the strictest sense only such passages should bear that name which set forth the ideal King as a mediator between Yahweh and His people. The discussion of this branch of the subject is complicated by the difference of opinion among scholars as to the collective or individual interpretation of "the Servant passages" in Deutero-Isaiah and the phrase "Son of Man" in Daniel. It is difficult, with our views on the date of the documents, to prove that a definite belief in a personal Messiah existed before the Exile. In Ezekiel's priestly system a prince or new David is mentioned, but could not have a leading rôle. But when men of faith brooded over the sorrows and failures of the nation, they could not believe that the promises given to Judah and David had received their final fulfilment, and they looked forward to a more real fulfilment of Yahweh's ancient promises. Some might believe in a fixed time, which man's work could neither hasten nor hinder; others might regard patient study of the Law or militant enterprise as the real preparation. In one sense there was pessimism, despair of the present order of things; in another sense there was faith in an overruling Providence and the rich possibilities of the future. The present ruler might be invested with Messianic attributes, or there might be expectation of a supernatural being coming with the great catastrophe. He might be a mighty warrior wreaking vengeance on the heathen, or