

ment. If Daniel be canonical, as we hold, then the idea of the Messiah must have developed in biblical times; and, if it be, as some hold, the earliest of the Pseudepigraphic writings (spurious productions bearing the name of some Old Testament character), dating from between 150 and 200 B. C., it is still probable that an idea, which was then fully developed, must have had its beginnings in biblical ages. That the expectation could not have arisen subsequently to the Exile may be urged from its monarchic form, a form which it would hardly assume when the national spirit was theocratic and anti-monarchic; and may be inferred, also, from the hope that the coming One would be of the royal line of David, a hope which would hardly be born at the time when nothing was more marked than the almost utter disappearance of the House of David. Nor do we find the post-exilian Rabbinitism any more in harmony with the sacerdotal element in the idea of the Messiah. Indeed, as far as Rabbinitism had a Messianic expectation, it was a very materialistic one, hardly extending beyond the anticipation of a political deliverance.

Having posited the Messianic idea in Old Testament times, the author asserts that Jesus Christ exhausted the true Messianic promise in the facts and truths of His personal character, work and kingdom. The primitive church from the first believed in the record of the Gospels, and on this faith grounded its confidence in the Messiahship of Jesus. When we have taken this definite position in relation to Jesus Christ, we go back to the Old Testament, bearing with us two principles; the one to be the touchstone of Messianic prophecy, and the other to be our key and guide as to its meaning and reference. The former is one which was fundamental in the Synagogue: the whole of the Old Testament in institutions, history and prophecy has a relation and application to the great coming One and His kingdom. The latter is one which condemns the criticism of the Old Testament as an isolated book: the Old Testament prophecy must be interpreted in the light of the fulfilment of the Gospels. In addition to these two guiding lights, we are given two other less important directions, of which the first is, that prophecy always starts from historical data in the prophets present; and the second is, that the fulfilment in each case not only covers, but is wider than the mere letter of the prophecy, and than either the hearers or the speaker had perceived.

It is interesting to notice the development of the great promise throughout the Old Testament, when the correctness of the chronological order of the respective portions known as the Law and the prophets is allowed. From the Prot-Evangelium, a universalistic promise to humanity as such and for humanity, to the particularistic pledge to Abraham, but with an outlook upon all the families of the earth, and thence to the election of Israel as the servant of Jehovah; a nation which was a prophecy in itself, and whose institutions and legislation and history were pregnant with the promise of a Race-Saviour and a race-wide blessing, until we reach the culmination of the development in the prophets; types in nations, individuals and institutions are here, but there is a new feature introduced in the frequency of direct reference to the Messiah and the characteristics of His rule. After the prophets we have no clearer or fuller presentation of the Messianic idea, but rather a declension. Promise had ceased and expectancy based upon the promise, as unfolded by Jehovah in Revelation, began its course alone. The progressive result we see in the Apocryphal writings, in the Pseudepigrapha, in Philo and in the literature of Rabbinitism as well as in the Gospel pictures of the grovelling conceptions held by high and low alike concerning Him who was to appear. Before the fulfilment fully came, the expectancy was broken in upon by the preparatory preach-