

PROPHECY AND HISTORY

PROPHECY AND HISTORY

IN RELATION TO

THE MESSIAH

The Darburton Lectures for 1880-1884

WITH

*TWO APPENDICES ON THE ARRANGEMENT, ANALYSIS, AND
RECENT CRITICISM OF THE PENTATEUCH*

BY

ALFRED EDERSHEIM, M.A. OXON., D.D., PH.D.

AUTHOR OF

'LIFE AND TIMES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH'

AUTHOR'S EDITION

NEW IMPRESSION

Wipf & Stock

PUBLISHERS

Eugene, Oregon

Wipf and Stock Publishers
199 W 8th Ave, Suite 3
Eugene, OR 97401

Prophecy and History in Relation to the Messiah
By Edersheim, Alfred
ISBN: 1-59752-117-5
Publication date 3/8/2005
Previously published by Longmans, 1901

TO

HENRY WACE, D.D.

*Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral; Preacher of Lincoln's Inn; Principal of
King's College, London; Honorary Chaplain to the Queen; and
Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury,*

IN SINCERE ESTEEM AND FRIENDSHIP.

PREFACE.

THE VOLUME herewith presented to the reader contains the Lectures delivered during the years 1880–84 in the Chapel of Lincoln's Inn on the foundation of Bishop Warburton. Its object, as expressed in the Will of the founder, is 'to prove the truth of revealed religion in general, and of the Christian in particular, from the completion of those prophecies in the Old and New Testaments which relate to the Christian Church, especially to the apostacy of Papal Rome.'

From the wide range of subjects thus opened, it was necessary to select one—and naturally that, which would most directly meet the present phase of theological discussion, and so best fulfil the purpose for which the Lectureship had been instituted. Not, indeed, that the primary object should be negative, either in the defence of Catholic truth from its assailants, or in the refutation of objections brought against it. For all proper defence of truth must

aim after this positive result: more clearly to define, and more accurately to set forth, that which is certainly believed among us. And this, in the good guidance of our God, is the higher meaning and issue of theological controversy. As every schism and separation indicate some truth which had been neglected, or temporarily ignored, by the Church, so each controversy marks some point on which the teaching of the Church had been wanting in clearness, accuracy, or fulness. And so every controversy, however bitter or threatening in its course, ultimately contributes to the establishment of truth—not merely, nor even principally, by the answer to objections which it calls forth, but by the fuller consideration of what had been invalidated, and the consequent wider and more accurate understanding of it. Thus, long after the din of controversy has ceased, with all of human infirmity attending it, and the never-ending conflict between truth and error has passed to another battle-field, the peaceful fruits of the contest remain as a permanent gain. In the end it may be so, that much that has proved indefensible—and which all along had only been held because it was traditional, and had never before been properly considered—may have to be given up; and that the old truth

may have to be presented in new forms, as the result of more accurate investigation and more scientific criticism. Yet still every contest, whatever its trials or the seeming loss, ultimately issues in what is better than victory—in real advance. But to each of us, who in loving loyalty has sought to contribute, according to his capacity, to the defence and further elucidation of what we cherish as the Revelation of God to man, comes this comfort of no small inward reassurance. We may have only partially succeeded in our effort; we may have even failed of success. But every defence and attempt at clearer elucidation, unless wholly ungrounded in reason or criticism, at least shows that defence and a clearer and higher position are possible, even though we may not have reached to it; and it points out the direction which others, perhaps more successful than we, may follow. Thus here also ‘both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.’ For, the end is certain—not that full and free criticism may be suppressed, but that it may be utilised, that so on the evening of the battle there may be assured peace, and the golden light shine around the old truth in her new garments of conquest, revealing the full perfection of her beauty.

Some contribution, however humble, towards this end, has been the object of these Lectures. Their form and limits prevented anything like the complete and scientific treatment which I could have wished. Yet the main questions concerning the Old Testament and its Messianic hope have been faced, and, in some respects, viewed under a new aspect. On Prophetism, as essentially distinguished from heathen divination ; on Prophecy, as distinct from prophecies ; on its wider relation to fulfilment ; as well as on other cognate subjects, the views here expressed will, I venture to think, be found different from those hitherto presented. It need scarcely be stated, that at the present time the questions connected with the Old Testament occupy the foreground of theological discussion. Whether, or not, there is in the Old Testament any prophecy in the true and, as we had regarded it, the Scriptural sense ; whether there were of old any directly God-sent prophets in Israel, with a message from heaven for the present, as well as for the future ; whether there was any Messianic hope from the beginning, and any conception of a spiritual Messiah ; nay, whether the state of religious belief in Israel was as we had hitherto imagined, or quite different ; whether, indeed, there were any Mosaic

institutions at all, or else the greater part of what we call such, if not the whole, dated from much later times—the central and most important portion of them, from after the Exile; whether, in short, our views on all these points have to be completely changed, so that, instead of the Law and the Prophets, we should have to speak of the Prophets and the Law; and, instead of Moses and the Prophets, of the Prophets and the Priests; and the larger part of Old Testament literature should be ascribed to Exilian and post-Exilian times, or bears the impress of their falsifications:—these are some of the questions which now engage theological thinkers, and which on the negative side are advocated by critics of such learning and skill, as to have secured, not only on the Continent, but even among ourselves, a large number of zealous adherents.

In these circumstances it would have seemed nothing short of dereliction of duty on the part of one holding such a lectureship—indeed, inconsistent with its real object—to have simply passed by such discussions. For, in my view at least, they concern not only critical questions, but the very essence of our faith in ‘the truth of revealed religion in general, and of the Christian in par-

ticular.' To say that Jesus is the Christ, means that He is the Messiah promised and predicted in the Old Testament; while the views above referred to respecting the history, legislation, institutions, and prophecies of the Old Testament, seem incompatible alike with Messianic predictions in the Christian sense, and even with real belief in the Divine authority of the larger portion of our Bible. And, if the Old Testament be thus surrendered, it is difficult to understand how the claims of the New, which is based on it, can be long or seriously sustained. Hence, while attempting to show the prophetic character of the Old Testament and its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, it seemed necessary to secure our position against attack both in front and rear. For the latter purpose I have sought to establish (in Lecture III.) what the primitive belief of the Church really was, by a reference to those portions of the Gospel-narratives which the most extreme negative criticism admits to be an authentic record of the faith of the early Christians, and by making similar examination of the apostolic testimony to the Gospel-facts in such of the apostolic writings of which the genuineness is not called in question. Having thus ascertained what was the earliest

tradition of the Church concerning the Christ, say about thirty years after the Crucifixion, I proceeded to inquire what light was thrown upon it by references in Talmudic writings, at the same time describing the earliest recorded intercourse between Jewish Teachers and Christians. By the side of this, there was a second, and, as running parallel to the first, a confirmatory line of evidence from witnesses, not only independent, but hostile. Here it has been sought to ascertain, on the one hand, the full import of the account given by Josephus of John the Baptist, which is generally admitted to be genuine; and, on the other, what light the well-known Epistle of Pliny the Younger about the Christians reflects upon the observances and the underlying belief of the Early Church. While thus the testimony of Josephus was seen to flash light upon the beginning of Christianity, that of Pliny reflected it back to about the year 80 or 90 of our era, the intermediate period—say, from about 60 of our era—being covered by what is admitted to have been the universal tradition of the Primitive Church.

Having thus secured my position in front, I also endeavoured to establish it in the rear, by an examination of the theories of recent criticism in regard

to the structure and order of the Old Testament, more especially of the Pentateuch legislation and the historical books, for the purpose of vindicating the Mosaic authorship of that legislation, and its accordance with the notices in the historical books.¹ Here an account was first given (in Lecture VII.) of the history and progress of recent criticism of the Pentateuch, from its inception to the present time, together with certain general objections to the latest theory of Wellhausen, and an indication of the wide-reaching sequences to which such views would lead. Next (in Lecture VIII.), the theory of Wellhausen was examined more in detail. The general position on our side of the question having been indicated, it was sought to show, by an analysis of the condition of Israel during the course of its history, that the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch legislation is accordant with the notices in the historical books of the Old Testament. Then the theory of our opponents was further combated, first, by certain fundamental objections to it, alike in principle and in detail; secondly, by some arguments intended to show the primitive and Mosaic character of the legislation and institutions of the

¹ Lectures VII. and VIII.

Pentateuch ; and, lastly, by a consideration of what, from an historical point of view, we should have expected to find—or else not to find—in the Pentateuch, if its date and construction had been as modern negative criticism asserts. The arguments in these respects are supported and supplemented by two longer Notes (at the end of Lecture VIII.), and by two Appendices, embodying chiefly the results of the critical labours of some German scholars. The second Note to Lecture VIII. will be found of great interest and importance to the critical student, giving, as it does, a revised list of the passages by which Dr. Hoffmann has proved that Ezekiel had before him, and had quoted from, those portions of the Pentateuch, the publication of which Wellhausen ascribes to the time of Ezra. Similarly, Appendix II. furnishes an abstract of the summary of Kleinert, giving a general analysis of the Pentateuch ; stating its own witness, and that of the other parts of the Old Testament, to its composition ; the various phases through which recent Pentateuch criticism has passed, and the reasons by which it is supported ; also an enumeration of the passages which are supposed to form what is regarded as the latest portion of the Pentateuch ; and, finally,

an account of some of the modifications which the Rabbis found it necessary to introduce in that part of the legislation, in order to adapt it to the practical requirements of later times.

After this detailed statement only a brief account appears necessary of the general argument followed in these Lectures. At the outset, it was felt that no good purpose could be served by endeavouring once more to follow the line of reasoning which previous lecturers had so ably and learnedly traced. Besides, the general position taken as to the relation between Prophecy and prophecies, between fulfilment and prediction, and as to the order in which they should be studied, forbade any such attempt on my part. On the other hand, I wished, first, to study anew, and clearly to define, the points just mentioned, and then to trace the history of the great Messianic hope in the Old Testament, through all its stages, from its inception in the Paradise-promise to the last prophetic announcement by John the Baptist. Thus, 'Prophecy and History in relation to the Messiah' was to form the subject of the course. In pursuance of this, the first Lecture is intended to indicate the general ground taken up; tracing the origin of Christianity to the teach-

ing of the Old Testament, and showing that the great Messianic hope, of which Jesus presented the realisation, could not have originated in His time, nor close to it, nor yet in the centuries which had elapsed since the return from the Exile. Lecture II. carries the argument a step further, by showing that 'the Kingdom of God' had been the leading idea throughout the whole Old Testament. At the same time, the form in which prophecy of old was presented to successive generations, and the relation between prophecy and fulfilment, are discussed, while the character of prophetism is defined, and the development of heathenism by the side of Israel, and the ideal destiny of the latter, are traced. In a Note appended to Lecture II. the ordinary interpretation of Genesis xii. 3 is defended against the criticism of Professor Kuenen. Lecture III. establishes the position, that the New Testament presents Christ as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, by showing that this is borne out by unquestioned Christian, and by most important Jewish and heathen testimony (the Rabbis, Josephus, Pliny). Lecture IV. defines and lays down some fundamental principles in regard to 'prophecy' and 'fulfilment,' and discusses certain special prophecies. It also

explains the Biblical terms applied to the prophets, and the functions of 'the sons of the prophets;' and, lastly, refers to some prophecies in the New Testament. Lecture V. distinguishes between prophetism and heathen divination; exhibits the moral element in prophecy; and discusses the value of the two canons which the Old Testament furnishes for distinguishing the true from the false prophet. Lecture VI. treats both of the progressive character of prophecy, and of the spiritual element in it, and shows how both prophecy and the Old Testament as a whole point beyond themselves to a spiritual fulfilment in the Kingdom of God—marking also the development during the different stages of the history of Israel, to the fulfilment in Christ. Lectures VII. and VIII. are devoted to a defence of the views previously set forth concerning the Old Testament, and contain an examination of recent negative criticism, in regard to the Pentateuch and the historical books. Lecture IX. resumes the history of the Messianic idea. It discusses the general character of the post-exilian literature, and gives an analysis of the Apocrypha and of their teaching, of the new Hellenist direction, and of the bearing of all on the Messianic hope. A doctrinal and critical comparison

is also made between the Apocrypha and the Old Testament, and the points of difference are marked and explained. In Lecture X. the various movements of Jewish national life are traced in their bearing on the Messianic idea—especially the ‘Nationalist’ movement, of which, in a certain sense, the so-called Pseudepigraphic writings may be regarded as the religious literature. Lecture XI. gives an account and analysis of these Pseudepigraphic writings, marking especially their teaching concerning the Messiah and Messianic times. Lastly, Lecture XII. sets forth the last stage in Messianic prophecy—the mission and preaching of John the Baptist, and the fulfilment of all prophecy in Jesus the Messiah

To this analysis of the general argument, little of a personal character requires to be added. The literature of the subject has been sufficiently indicated in the foot-notes; it is not so large as to have made a special enumeration necessary at the beginning of this Volume. For obvious reasons I have, so far as possible, avoided all reference to living English writers, whether on one or the other side of the questions treated. Lastly—as regards the manner in which the subject has been treated in this book, every writer must be fully conscious, and, where the

highest truth is concerned, painfully sensible, of shortcomings in his attempt to realise the ideal which he had set before himself. In the present instance there were special difficulties—first, as already stated, from the form of these Lectures, and the space to which they were necessarily confined, which prevented that more full discussion which, in some parts, I could have desired. Besides this, I must mention at least one other disadvantage under which I laboured. From the circumstance that this course of Lectures not only extended over four years, but that the Lectures in each year had to be delivered at periods widely apart, occasional repetitions of the argument could not be avoided.

That the statement and defence of views so widely differing from what may be described as the current of modern criticism, may call forth strong, perhaps even violent, contradiction, I must be prepared to find. This only will I say, that, within the conditions prescribed by this course, I have earnestly sought to set forth what I believe to be the truth of Revelation concerning Jesus the Messiah, as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, and the hope of Israel in all ages. To Him I would now commend this volume on its way to its unknown readers. As

the motto for it I would fain choose the opening sentence with which the first Gospel introduces the history, and on which it grounds the Messianic claims, of Jesus: *Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, υἱοῦ Δαβίδ, υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ*. And as my concluding words, I would transcribe these of the Venerable Bede: ‘Si autem Moyses et prophetæ de Christo locuti sunt, et eum per passionem in gloriam intraturum prædixerunt, quomodo gloriatur se esse Christianum, qui neque qualiter Scripturæ ad Christum pertineant, investigat; neque ad gloriam, quam cum Christo habere cupit, per passionem attingere desiderat?’

ALFRED EDERSHEIM.

8 BRADMORE ROAD, OXFORD:

January 6, 1885.

CONTENTS.

LECTURE	PAGE
I. ON THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT	1
II. ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS THE LEADING IDEA OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, AND ON CERTAIN RECENT CRITICISM CONCERNING THE ARRANGEMENT AND DATE OF THE CANON	28
III. THE FAITH AND RITES OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH ARE CONFIRMED BY INDUBITABLE CHRISTIAN, AND BY IMPORTANT NON-CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE	58
IV. ON SOME FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES REGARDING THE STUDY OF PROPHECY AND ITS FULFILMENT, TOGETHER WITH REMARKS ON CERTAIN SPECIAL PROPHECIES	102
V. ON PROPHETISM AND HEATHEN DIVINATION, THE MORAL ELEMENT IN OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY, AND THE BIBLICAL CANONS FOR DISTINGUISHING THE TRUE FROM THE FALSE PROPHET	187
VI. ON THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT IN PROPHECY: THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTED TO A SPIRITUAL FULFILMENT IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD	160
VII. ON THE HISTORY OF THE RECENT CRITICISM OF THE PENTATEUCH, AND ON SOME DIFFICULTIES CONNECTED WITH ITS RESULTS	191

LECTURE	PAGE
VIII. SOME FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE COM- POSITION AND DATE OF THE PENTATEUCH	230
IX. THE MESSIANIC IDEA IN THE LATER STAGES OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY: THE APOCRYPHA AND THEIR RELATION TO THE PAST AND THE FUTURE	289
X. ON THE DIFFERENT MOVEMENTS OF NATIONAL LIFE IN PALESTINE IN THEIR BEARING ON THE MESSIANIC IDEA; ON THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT IN ITS CON- NECTION WITH PSEUDEPIGRAPHIC LITERATURE; THE PSEUDEPIGRAPHA, AND THEIR CHARACTER	316
XI. ANALYSIS AND CONTENTS OF THE PSEUDEPIGRAPHIC WRITINGS; THEIR TEACHING CONCERNING THE MESSIAH AND MESSIANIC TIMES	337
XII. THE LAST STAGE IN MESSIANIC PROPHECY: JOHN THE BAPTIST; HIS CHARACTER AND PREACHING. THE FUL- FILMENT IN CHRIST	358

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX	
I. EICHHORN'S ARRANGEMENT OF GENESIS	371
II. ANALYSIS OF THE PENTATEUCH AND OF ITS CRITICISM	374

Erratum.

For (the more Germanic) 'Priest-Codes,' read always 'Priest-Codes.'

THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY.

LECTURE I.

ON THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

What think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is He?
ST. MATT. xxii. 42.

It requires little consideration to convince us that the question which we propose to discuss in the present course of Lectures, is, from the religious point of view, of supreme interest and importance. In truth, it concerns no less than the very origin of Christianity. Passing beyond the modifications and development which contact with the varied culture of many nations or outward events have effected in the course of these eighteen centuries; passing also through the obscurity around the early age of Christianity, due to insufficient or inexact records, we can happily reach clearer light. We know the period of the rise of Christianity, and, as it seems to me, we can better understand its connection with that which preceded its birth than with that which followed it,

and surrounded its infancy. Accordingly, it is in this manner that we here propose to study its origin: inquiring into its connection with that which had gone before, and of which it is the outcome, rather than treading our uncertain steps through the intricate mazes of often dubious tradition and apparently conflicting evidence up to the circumstances of its birth. Thus, the great question before us is this: Christianity, whence is it? The answer will in measure also decide that other: Christianity, what is it, divine or human; a revelation from heaven, or the outcome of determining circumstances? And its issue: is it the Church Universal, or only a new school of thought?

The difference to which we have referred as regards the mode of conducting our inquiry into the origin of Christianity, is the necessary sequence of the standpoint which we occupy in it, and connected with the results which we have in view. From earliest times the historical Church has traced its origin to that which had preceded it. Accordingly it has declared that Christianity was not indeed the counterpart, but the unfolding and the fulfilment of the Old Testament, and it has claimed that the Church was the true Israel of God. It has regarded the whole history of Israel as big with the promise of the world's salvation, and its institutions and promises as pointing to the establishment of a universal

kingdom of God upon earth by means of the Messiah. Hence it has set forth, in no hesitating language, that there is unity, continuity, and progress in the teaching of the Old Testament, and that all in it is prophetic¹ of the Christ. As against this view, which admittedly is both grand in its conception and logically consistent in its application, a certain school of modern criticism has followed a different mode of inquiry into the origin of the Church, and reached almost opposite results. Seeking to track the stream upwards, it has been declared that Christianity, as at present we know it, has been shaped by the circumstances, the people, and the culture with which on its introduction it was brought into contact ; that its origins were very simple, and due to natural, local and temporary causes ; in fact, that it is the result of a gradual accretion of different elements, all historically explicable, around a small and not very important nucleus of facts.

The theory just indicated has, it must be confessed, many attractions. It promises to destroy or supersede the miraculous by tracing to the operation of ordinary causes what otherwise would seem due to direct Divine agency, finding for it what is called 'a rational explanation,' that is, one level with our ordinary perceptions. And the contention is the

¹ I am here using the term in the ordinary sense, not in that which will be explained in the sequel.

more important since the Church view of the origin of Christianity implies, if correct, also unquestionable inferences about the Divine character of the Old Testament. Moreover, the new view is in seeming accordance with the general spirit of modern investigation, which everywhere discards preconceived purpose and unity of design, and explains that which is by the gradual operation of inherent forces, adapting themselves under the influence of surrounding circumstances. Lastly, it has the advantage of being set forth by writers not only of acknowledged learning, but of exceeding skill in pleading their case. By the weight of their authority, they too often set forth as undoubted results of critical research what others, even of their own school, have called in question, and which therefore, on any theory, cannot be grounded on indubitable or even clear evidence. Still more frequently, wide-reaching conclusions have been reared on what, after all, is a very narrow basis of facts ; most weighty considerations on the other side being either overlooked or ignored. In this manner it has become possible to construct a wholly new theory of the genesis of the Old and New Testament which presents the attraction of unity and consistency, is capable of removing all difficulties, whether real or suggested, and, in fact, is devised to meet them. But strange as it may seem, it is this very facility of explaining and

arranging everything which awakens our doubt and suspicion. In real life things do not move in precisely straight or rectangular lines, nor yet with the order and regularity of a tale. Many and varied influences are always at work, and the theory which professes precisely to fit, and exactly to explain, all phenomena though they had to be reconstructed for the purpose, resembles rather the invention of a speculator than the observed course of history.¹

Happily we shall avoid in our present inquiry all speculation, whether critical or metaphysical, seeking to answer what in the first place is an historical question by means of historical investigation. As a preliminary step, we purpose in the present Lecture to make it clear that the New Testament really points back to the Old. To put it more precisely: we hold that Christianity in its origin appealed to an existing state of expectancy, which was the outcome of a previous development; and further, that those ideas and hopes of which it professed to be the fulfilment had not first sprung up in the immediately preceding period—that is, in the centuries between the return from the Babylonish exile and the Birth of Christ—

¹ It is exceedingly interesting to me to find that a distinguished critic belonging to a very different school (Professor Nöldeke) has similarly expressed his objection to the new arrangement of the Pentateuch, proposed by Wellhausen. He denies any 'development along a straight line.' ('In der gesetzlichen Litteratur ist keine geradlinige Entwicklung zu erkennen.') Comp. Herzog, *Real-Encykl.*, 2nd edition, vol. xi. p. 444.

but stretched back through the whole course of Old Testament teaching.

If we were to view the introduction of Christianity into Palestine, and its spread throughout the heathen world, as an isolated fact, it would seem simply and absolutely inexplicable. For it cannot be conceived that One should have arisen and claimed to be the Messiah ; appealed in confirmation to Moses and the prophets ; professed to institute a kingdom of God upon earth ; and in so doing gained the ear of the multitude and gathered devoted disciples ; that, moreover, the temporal and spiritual rulers of Israel should have entered into controversy with Him, not as to the foundation, but merely as to the justice of His claims : and yet that all this should have represented an entirely new movement. We would at least have expected some reference to this circumstance. In thus describing in general outline what Christ professed, did, and experienced, I am not asserting what even the most negative criticism will deny. For even if we were to eliminate from our Synoptic Gospels any part that is called in question by the most extreme criticism, and banish the fourth Gospel to the end of the second century, regarding it as a tissue of ecclesiastical symbolism—sufficient would still remain to establish this position, that Christ professed to be the Old Testament Messiah and to bring the Kingdom of God ; that He gathered adherents ; and that the justice

of His claims was resisted by the Jewish authorities ; while at the same time the fact of *a* Messiahship, and the expectation of *a* Kingdom of God, were never called in question. I am warranted in going a step farther and saying, that the unquestioned facts in the Gospel history not only imply the existence of Messianic ideas and expectations, but their depth and intenseness. Only such a state of feeling could explain how One Who taught such evidently unwelcome doctrine was so widely listened to and followed. And the argument as to this Messianic expectancy at the time would only become stronger in measure as we denied the claims of Jesus. For, if even the minimum of such ideas had been a novelty—if no Messianic expectations existed at the time—surely the maximum as formulated by Jesus, and so opposed to Jewish prejudices, could never have been asserted.

All this seems almost self-evident. Yet, to make sure of our position, let me here remind you of what may be termed the most superficial, as certainly they are the least questionable, facts in the Gospel history. Surely, the crowds which from all parts of the country, and from all classes of society, flocked to the preparatory preaching of the Baptist, and submitted to the rite which he introduced, as not only the New Testament but Josephus attests, at least indicate that the proclamation of the Kingdom of

God had wakened an echo throughout the land. And again, as we watch the multitudes which everywhere followed the preaching of Jesus; remember how they would fain have proclaimed Him King; and how even at the close of His ministry they greeted Him with *Hosannas* at His entry into Jerusalem, and this in face of the danger threatening them in such a movement from the presence of one so anti-Jewish and so suspicious as Pilate, we cannot but feel convinced not only of the existence, but of the intenseness, of the Messianic hope among the people at large.

It is, indeed, true that all such ideas and hopes are influenced, at least in their intensity and expression, by the circumstances of the time. They gain in depth and earnestness in proportion to the national abasement and suffering. Never did the Messianic hopes of the inspired Prophets rise higher; never was their faith wider in its range, or brighter in its glow; never their utterance of it more passionately assured, than when Israel had sunk to the lowest stage of outward depression. Because the conviction of the prophets and of Israel was so unshakably firm as regarded the glorious future, therefore it was that in such times they most deeply felt and most earnestly expressed the need of fleeing into the strong refuge of a certain future, the realising expectancy of which put a song into their mouth in the night

time. So also was it in the long centuries of disappointment, and of apparently increasing unlikelihood that the Hope of Israel should ever become a Reality, that the Apocalyptic visions of the Pseudepigraphic writers gained in vividness and realism of colouring. Similarly, the most pathetically expectant elegies of mediæval Rabbinism date from the times of persecution. In truth it scarcely seems exaggeration to say, that throughout the history of Israel we can trace the times of bitterest sorrows by their brightest Messianic expectations, as if that golden harvest waved richest where the ploughshare had drawn the furrows deepest, and the precious seed been watered by blood and tears. And so the Talmud connects the coming of the Messiah with the time of bitterest woes, when Galilee would be laid waste, and the very mangers turned into coffins, when war and famine had desolated the land, and all righteousness and truth disappeared.¹ Similarly, the mystic Midrash² sees in the dove in the clefts of the rocks, to whom comes the call, 'Let me hear thy voice,' a picture of Israel as, fleeing before the hawk, it descries, in the rock-cleft, a serpent, and in agony of fear and distress beats its wings and raises piteous cries, which presently bring it the help and deliverance of its Lord. But this intensification of the Messianic hope in times

¹ Sanh 97 a.

² On Cant. ii. 14.

when national glory seemed farthest removed, is only another evidence of the universality and depth of the Messianic hope. And if final proof were required of its existence, it is surely to be found in the circumstance that such hopes were independent of Jesus of Nazareth ; that they equally attached themselves to false Messiahs, of whom not less than about sixty are mentioned, and who, despite the absurdity of their pretensions, carried after them such large numbers of the people ; and, in the case of so clumsy an impostor as Bar Kokhba, even some of the leading Rabbis, kindling fanaticism to the extent of a conflict which severely tasked the resources of imperial Rome. Nay, is it not so that this hope has survived eighteen centuries, not only of bitter persecution, but of chilling disappointment? Though disowned by the nerveless rationalism of modern Jews, it kindles up in every service of the Synagogue ; it flings its many-coloured light over every product of Rabbinic literature ; and as year by year each family of the banished gathers around the Paschal table, the memorial of Israel's birth-night and first deliverance, it still rises in the impassioned plaintive cry of mingled sorrow and longing which rings into the desolate silence of these many centuries : 'This year here—next year in Jerusalem !'

A hope so wide-reaching, so intense and enduring cannot, I submit, have been the outcome of one

particular phase in the history of the people. Its roots must have struck far deeper than one period of the nation's life; it must be the innermost meaning of their history, the final expression of that long course of teaching in the Law and in the Prophets which, all unconsciously to themselves, has become the very life-blood of Israel's faith.

But on a point of such importance we are not left to general inferences. Even at this preliminary stage of our inquiry, we can appeal to unquestionable evidence that the ideas and hopes which Jesus of Nazareth professed to realise did not arise at His period, nor yet close to it. More than this, we are prepared to show grounds for maintaining that the great Messianic expectation did not originate in the period between the close of the Old Testament Canon and the Birth of Christ. In such case the plain inference would be, that it must be traced up to the Old Testament itself, in the course of whose teaching we must seek its origin, growth, and gradual development.

In regard to the first point just referred to, it may, I think, be fairly argued, that if the idea of the Messiah and His kingdom had originated in the period of Christ, if indeed it had been new, the teaching of Jesus would have either reflected this, at least in its main features, or else indicated and vindicated the fact and the grounds of divergence from the past. In this respect it is most significant, that while Christ

so emphatically accentuated the differences between His own and the teaching of the Pharisees, as regarded the most important matters of the Law, He never referred to any such as subsisting between His own and the Messianic ideas of his contemporaries—at least, in their general conception. On the contrary, all implies that, so far from these Messianic expectations first emerging at or near that period, they had been long existing, and indeed had lost their definiteness in a more vague and general expectancy which assumed the colouring of the times. A similar inference comes to us from a consideration of the preparatory Messianic announcement by the Baptist, the questions which it elicited, and the indefinite form of his answers. It represents a very strong but a general expectancy, rather than such definite expectations as one would associate with their recent origination. On the other hand, it is quite evident that Jesus of Nazareth, as He is presented to us in the Gospel history, did not meet the special form which the Messianic thinking of His contemporaries had taken, when called upon to assume a concrete form in accordance with the general direction of the time. For not only did they reject His teaching, denounce Him as an impostor, and crucify Him as a blasphemer, but even His own disciples and followers neither anticipated nor fully understood, in many respects even misunderstood, His doctrine,

were utterly unprepared for His death, and had no expectation of His resurrection. In other words, each of the three great elements in His history, came as a surprise upon them.

Whatever outward agreement may therefore be traced between the sayings of Christ and contemporary thought, this at least is quite evident, that He did not embody the precise Messianic ideal of His time. And here we must observe an important distinction. In one sense Jesus Christ certainly was a man of His time : He spoke the language of His time, and He addressed Himself by word and deed to the men, the ideas, and the circumstances of His time. Had it been otherwise, He would not have been an historical personage, nor could He have been a true Christ. The more closely therefore we trace the features of His time in His words and actions, in the people introduced on the stage of the Gospel history, and in the general *mise en scène*, the more clearly do we prove the general historical truthfulness of the narrative—that it is true to the time. But in another and higher sense Jesus Christ was not the man of His time, spake not, acted not, aimed not, as they ; and hence the great body of the people rejected, denounced, and crucified, while even His own so often misunderstood and were surprised by Him.

What has just been stated naturally leads to the

last point in our present inquiry. It has been shown that the Messianic idea could not have originated in the time of Jesus Christ, nor presumably in that immediately preceding. But between the time of Jesus Christ and the close of the Old Testament Canon—or, to avoid controversy, let us say the time of Ezra—roughly speaking, four and a half centuries intervened. Could it be that the great hope of Israel had sprung up during any part of the troubled history of that period? Without at present entering into detailed examination, sufficient reasons can be shown to make this the most unlikely hypothesis. For,—

First. It is impossible to believe that such a hope could have newly sprung up without leaving at least some mark of its origin, and some trace of its growth in the history and literature of the time. Whatever darkness may rest on certain aspects in the development of thought and religion at that period, especially at the beginning of it, or on such questions as the institution of the so-called ‘Great Synagogue,’ or the influence and development of the new direction of external legalism, or of the national and anti-Grecian party, yet all these tendencies are marked in the history and literature of that period. And it seems unthinkable that the one great, the all-dominant idea in the religion of Israel, the hope of a Jewish Messiah-King, who would bear rule over a

world converted to God, should have originated without one trace of its birth and gradual development. But as a matter of fact there is not in the history, nor yet in the literature of that period any appearance of a small commencement, a growth, or a gradual development of the Messianic idea, such as would be requisite on the theory in question. On the other hand, it deserves special notice that such a development is very clearly traceable throughout the Canon of the Old Testament, and that *pari passu* with the progress of Israel's history. It is needless to say that this tells its own most important lesson, both as regards the internal unity of the Old Testament and the origin and development of the Messianic idea. But at present we are only so far concerned with it as to mark that no such progression appears either in Apocryphal, Pseudepigraphic, Alexandrian, or Rabbinic literature. In some respects, indeed, there is retrogression rather than progression in this matter, and this not only in the writings of Philo, where the Messianic idea is, so to speak, sublimated into generalities, but in the Apocrypha, where it is only obscurely referred to. But alike in the one case and in the other, not only is its existence implied, but a previous fuller development of it.

As regards Rabbinic literature, it is universally known that any references to the great Messianic

hope of Israel occurring in its pages appear in the most developed form. The only question, therefore, can be in reference to that special kind of literature which bears the name of Pseudepigraphic Writings,¹ and which may in general be described as Apocalyptic in character. Naturally we expect to find the Messianic hope most fully expressed in such works. But although we mark variety and addition of detail in the various books, there is no trace of any development in the underlying conception of the Messiah and His kingdom. As a crucial instance we may here refer to the Book of Daniel, the authorship and date of which are in controversy. According to the testimony of the Church, the Book of Daniel—or at least the greater portion of it—dates from the time of the Exile; according to a large section of modern critics, from about that of Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.). In the one case it would belong to the Biblical, in the other to the Pseudepigraphic writings. We have our own decided convictions on this point. But for the present argument it matters not which of the two views is the correct one. Clearly in the Book of Daniel we have the idea of the Messiah and His kingdom in its full development.

¹ The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, in contradistinction to the Apocrypha, are a series of spurious writings mostly professing to be derived from Old Testament personages or else dealing with Old Testament events, but all of them Apocalyptic, though in varying measure, and bearing distinctly, though in different degree, on the Messianic Kingdom. For their fuller characterisation and enumeration, see Lecture X.

If the Book of Daniel belongs to the Canon, then the idea must have existed fully developed in Biblical times ; if, on the contrary, it should be regarded as the earliest of the Pseudepigraphic writings, it affords undoubted evidence that the Messianic idea did not gradually develop, but existed in its fullest form in the earliest literary monument of that class. But we can go back farther than this. For,—

Secondly. If the Messianic hope had sprung up during or immediately after the exile, we should scarcely have expected it to cluster round the House of David, nor to centre in the ‘Son of David.’ For nothing is more marked than the decadence and almost disappearance of the House of David in that period. A national hope of this kind could scarcely have sprung up when the royalty of David was not only matter of the past, but when its restoration was comparatively so little thought of or desired, that the descendants of the Davidic house seem in great measure to have become lost in the mass of the people. And the argument becomes all the stronger as we notice how, with the lapse of time, the Davidic line became increasingly an historical remembrance or a theological idea, rather than a present power or reality. Throughout the Old Testament Davidic descent is always the most prominent element in all Messianic pictures, while in later writings it recedes into the background, as

something in the long past which must be brought forth anew. In this respect, also, it is characteristic that the name 'Son of David' was the most distinctive title claimed by, and given to Jesus, while in the case of all spurious Messianic movements this occupied only a subordinate, if any, place.

Thirdly. We may press the argument yet one step farther, and express a strong doubt whether, if this hope had originated in the post exilian period, it would have connected itself with any distinctly monarchic aspirations. The general genius of Judaism is against it, and throughout the whole post-exilian history and literature there is certainly not a trace of any wish for the restoration of the old, or the establishment of any new monarchy. This silence is of itself significant. On the other hand, we have on at least three critical occasions—in the time of Pompey, during the governorship of Gabinius (about 66 B.C.), and after the death of Herod—the distinct expression of objections to monarchical rule and of preference for an oligarchy as conformable to ancient traditions.¹ And if it be supposed that such objections mainly applied to the Herodian house, the attentive student of that period cannot fail to observe that the rapid change of public opinion in regard to the Maccabees from that of unbounded popular enthusiasm to the extreme of general hatred may be

¹ Jos. *Ant.* xiv. 3. 2; comp. xiv. 5. 4; *War*, ii. 6. 2.