

## CHAPTER V.

### WHAT MESSIAH DID THE JEWS EXPECT?

It was an extremely narrow, and, indeed, false view, to regard the difference between Judaism and Christianity as confined to the question of the fulfillment of certain prophecies in Jesus of Nazareth. These predictions could only outline individual features in the Person and history of the Messiah. It is not thus that a likeness is recognized, but rather by the combination of the various features into a unity, and by the expression which gives it meaning. So far as we can gather from the Gospel narratives, no objection was ever taken to the fulfillment of individual prophecies in Jesus. But the general conception which the Rabbis had formed of the Messiah, differed totally from what was presented by the Prophet of Nazareth. Thus, what is the fundamental divergence between the two may be said to have existed long before the events which finally divided them. It is the combination of letters which constitute words, and the same letters may be combined into different words. Similarly, both Rabbinism and - what, by anticipation, we designate - Christianity might regard the same predictions as Messianic, and look for their fulfillment; while at the same time the Messianic ideal of the Synagogue might be quite other than that, to which the faith and hope of the Church have clung.

1. The most important point here is to keep in mind the organic *unity* of the Old Testament. Its predictions are not isolated, but features of one grand prophetic picture; its ritual and institutions parts of one great system; its history, not loosely connected events, but an organic development tending towards a definite end. Viewed in its innermost substance, the history of the Old Testament is not different from its typical institutions, nor yet these two from its predictions. The idea, underlying all, is God's gracious manifestation in the world - the Kingdom of God; the meaning of all - the establishment of this Kingdom upon earth. That gracious purpose was, so to speak, individualized, and the Kingdom actually established in the Messiah. Both the fundamental and the final relationship in view was that of God towards man, and of man towards God: the former as expressed by the word Father; the latter by that of Servant - or rather the combination of the two ideas: 'Son-Servant.' This was already implied in the so-called Protevangel; and in this sense also the words of Jesus hold true: 'Before Abraham came into being, I am.'

But, narrowing our survey to where the history of the Kingdom of God begins with that of Abraham, it was indeed as Jesus said: 'Your father Abraham rejoiced that he should see My day, and he saw it, and was glad.' For, all that followed from Abraham to the Messiah was one, and bore this twofold impress: heavenwards, that of Son; earthwards, that of Servant. Israel was God's Son - His 'first-born;' their history that of the children of God; their institutions those of the family of God; their predictions those of the household of God. And Israel was also the Servant of God - 'Jacob My Servant;' and its history, institutions, and predictions those of the Servant of the Lord. Yet not merely Servant, but Son-Servant - 'anointed' to such service. This idea was, so to speak, crystallized in the three great representative institutions of Israel. The 'Servant of the Lord' in relation to Israel's history was Kingship in Israel; the 'Servant of the Lord' in relation to Israel's ritual ordinances was the Priesthood in Israel; the 'Servant of the Lord' in relation to prediction was the Prophetic order. But all sprang from the same fundamental idea: that of the 'Servant of Jehovah.'

One step still remains. The Messiah and His history are not presented in the Old Testament as something separate from, or superadded to, Israel. The history, the institutions, and the predictions of Israel run up into Him. He is the typical Israelite, nay, typical Israel itself - alike the crown, the completion, and the representative of Israel. He is *the* Son of God and *the* Servant of the Lord; but in that highest and only true sense, which had given its meaning to all the preparatory development. As He was 'anointed' to be the 'Servant of the Lord,' not with the typical oil, but by 'the Spirit of Jehovah' 'upon' Him, so was He also the 'Son' in a unique sense. His organic connection with Israel is marked by the designations 'Seed of Abraham' and 'Son of David,' while at the same time He was essentially, what Israel was subordinately and typically: 'Thou art My Son - this day have I begotten Thee.' Hence also, in strictest truthfulness, the Evangelist could apply to the Messiah what referred to Israel, and see it fulfilled in His history: 'Out of Egypt have I called my Son.' And this other correlate idea, of Israel as 'the Servant of the Lord,' is also fully concentrated in the Messiah as the Representative Israelite, so that the Book of Isaiah, as the series of predictions in which His picture is most fully outlined, might be summarised as that concerning 'the Servant of Jehovah.' Moreover, the Messiah, as Representative Israelite,

combined in Himself as 'the Servant of the Lord' the threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King, and joined together the two ideas of 'Son' and 'Servant.' And the final combination and full exhibition of these two ideas was the fulfillment of the typical mission of Israel, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God among men.

Thus, in its final, as in its initial, stage it was the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth - brought about by the 'Servant' of the Lord, Who was to stricken humanity the God-sent 'Anointed Comforter' (*Mashiach ha-Menachem*): in this twofold sense of 'Comforter' of individuals ('the friend of sinners'), and 'Comforter' of Israel and of the world, reconciling the two, and bringing to both eternal salvation. And here the mission of Israel ended. It had passed through three stages. The first, or *historical*, was the preparation of the Kingdom of God; the second, or *ritual*, the typical presentation of that Kingdom; while the third, or *prophetic*, brought that Kingdom into actual contact with the kingdoms of the world. Accordingly, it is during the latter that the designation 'Son of David' (typical Israel) enlarged in the visions of Daniel into that of 'Son of Man' (the Head of redeemed humanity). It were a onesided view to regard the Babylonish exile as only a punishment for Israel's sin. There is, in truth, nothing in all God's dealings in history exclusively *punitive*. That were a merely negative element. But there is always a positive element also of actual progress; a step forward, even though in the taking of it something should have to be crushed. And this step forward was the development of the idea of the Kingdom of God in its relation to the world.

2. This organic unity of Israel and the Messiah explains how events, institutions, and predictions, which initially were purely Israelitish, could with truth be regarded as finding their full accomplishment in the Messiah. From this point of view the whole Old Testament becomes the perspective in which the figure of the Messiah stands out. And perhaps the most valuable element in Rabbinic excommentation on Messianic times is that in which, as so frequently, it is explained, that all the miracles and deliverances of Israel's past would be re-enacted, only in a much wider manner, in the days of the Messiah. Thus the whole past was symbolic, and typical of the future - the Old Testament the glass, through which the universal blessings of the latter days were seen. It is in this sense that we would understand the two sayings of the Talmud: 'All the prophets prophesied only of the days of the Messiah,' and 'The world was created only for the Messiah.'

In accordance with all this, the ancient Synagogue found references to the Messiah in many more passages of the Old Testament than those verbal predictions, to which we generally appeal; and the latter formed (as in the New Testament) a proportionately small, and secondary, element in the conception of the Messianic era. This is fully borne out by a detailed analysis of those passages in the Old Testament to which the ancient Synagogue referred as Messianic. Their number amounts to upwards of 456 (75 from the Pentateuch, 243 from the Prophets, and 138 from the Hagiographa), and their Messianic application is supported by more than 558 references to the most ancient Rabbinic writings. But comparatively few of these are what would be termed verbal predictions. Rather would it seem as if every event were regarded as prophetic, and every prophecy, whether by fact, or by word (prediction), as a light to cast its sheen on the future, until the picture of the Messianic age in the far back-ground stood out in the hundredfold variegated brightness of prophetic events, and prophetic utterances; or, as regarded the then state of Israel, till the darkness of their present night was lit up by a hundred constellations kindling in the sky overhead, and its lonely silence broken by echoes of heavenly voices, and strains of prophetic hymns borne on the breeze.

Of course, there was the danger that, amidst these dazzling lights, or in the crowd of figures, each so attractive, or else in the absorbing interest of the general picture, the grand central Personality should not engage the attention it claimed, and so the meaning of the whole be lost in the contemplation of its details. This danger was the greater from the absence of any deeper spiritual elements. All that Israel needed: 'study of the Law and good works,' lay within the reach of every one; and all that Israel hoped for, was national restoration and glory. Everything else was but means to these ends; the Messiah Himself only the grand instrument in attaining them. Thus viewed, the picture presented would be of Israel's exaltation, rather than of the salvation of the world. To this, and to the idea of Israel's exclusive spiritual position in the world, must be traced much, that otherwise would seem utterly irrational in the Rabbinic pictures of the latter days. But in such a picture there would be neither room nor occasion for a Messiah-Saviour, in the only sense in which such a heavenly mission could be rational, or the heart of humanity respond to it. The Rabbinic ideal of the Messiah was not that of 'a

light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel' - the satisfaction of the wants of humanity, and the completion of Israel's mission - but quite different, even to contrariety. Accordingly, there was a fundamental antagonism between the Rabbis and Christ, quite irrespective of the manner in which He carried out His Messianic work. On the other hand, it is equally noteworthy, that the purely national elements, which well nigh formed the sum total of Rabbinic expectation, scarcely entered into the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God. And the more we realise, that Jesus so fundamentally separated Himself from all the ideas of His time, the more evidential is it of the fact, that He was not the Messiah of Jewish conception, but derived His mission from a source unknown to, or at least ignored by, the leaders of His people.

3. But still, as the Rabbinic ideas were at least based on the Old Testament, we need not wonder that they also embodied the chief features of the Messianic history. Accordingly, a careful perusal of their Scripture quotations shows, that the main postulates of the New Testament concerning the Messiah are fully supported by Rabbinic statements. Thus, such doctrines as the *pre-mundane existence* of the Messiah; His *elevation* above Moses, and even above the Angels; His *representative* character; His cruel *sufferings* and *derision*; His *violent death*, and that *for His people*; His *work* on behalf of the living and of the dead; His *redemption*, and restoration of Israel; the *opposition* of the Gentiles; their partial *judgment* and *conversion*; the *prevalence* of His *Law*; the *universal blessings* of the latter days; and His *Kingdom* - can be clearly deduced from unquestioned passages in ancient Rabbinic writings. Only, as we might expect, all is there indistinct, incoherent, unexplained, and from a much lower standpoint. At best, it is the lower stage of yet unfulfilled prophecy - the haze when the sun is about to rise, not the blaze when it has risen. Most painfully is this felt in connection with the one element on which the New Testament most insists. There is, indeed, in Rabbinic writings frequent reference to the sufferings, and even the death of the Messiah, and these are brought into connection with our sins - as how could it be otherwise in view of Isaiah liii. and other passages - and in one most remarkable comment the Messiah is represented as willingly taking upon Himself all these sufferings, on condition that all Israel - the living, the dead, and those yet unborn - should be saved, and that, in consequence of His work, God and Israel should be reconciled, and Satan cast into hell. But there is only the most indistinct reference to the removal of sin by the Messiah, in the sense of vicarious sufferings.

In connection with what has been stated, one most important point must be kept in view. So far as their opinions can be gathered from their writings, the great doctrines of Original Sin, and of the sinfulness of our whole nature, were not held by the ancient Rabbis. Of course, it is not meant that they denied the consequences of sin, either as concerned Adam himself, or his descendants; but the final result is far from that seriousness which attaches to the Fall in the New Testament, where it is presented as the basis of the need of a Redeemer, Who, as the Second Adam, restored what the first had lost. The difference is so fundamental as to render further explanation necessary.

The fall of Adam is ascribed to the envy of the Angels - not the fallen ones, for none were fallen, till God cast them down in consequence of their seduction of man. The Angels, having in vain tried to prevent the creation of man, at last conspired to lead him into sin as the only means of his ruin - the task being undertaken by *Sammael* (and his Angels), who in many respects was superior to the other Angelic princes. The instrument employed was the serpent, of whose original condition the strangest legends are told, probably to make the Biblical narrative appear more rational. The details of the story of the Fall, as told by the Rabbis, need not be here repeated, save to indicate its consequences. The first of these was the withdrawal of the Shekhinah from earth to the first heaven, while subsequent sins successively led to its further removal to the seventh heaven. This, however, can scarcely be considered a permanent sequel of sin, since the good deeds of seven righteous men, beginning with Abraham, brought it again, in the time of Moses, to earth. Six things Adam is said to have lost by his sin; but even these are to be restored to man by the Messiah. That the physical death of Adam was the consequence of his sin, is certainly taught. Otherwise he would have lived forever, like Enoch and Elijah. But although the fate which overtook Adam was to rest on all the world, and death came not only on our first father but on his descendants, and all creation lost its perfectness, yet even these temporal sequences are not universally admitted. It rather seems taught, that death was intended to be the fate of all, or sent to show the folly of men claiming Divine worship, or to test whether piety was real, the more so that with death the weary

struggle with our evil inclination ceased. It was needful to die when our work was done, that others might enter upon it. In each case death was the consequence of our own, not of Adam's sin. In fact, over these six - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam - the Angel of Death had had no absolute power. Nay, there was a time when all Israel were not only free from death, but like the Angels, and even higher than they. For, originally God had offered the Law to all Gentile nations, but they had refused to submit to it. But when Israel took on themselves the Law at Mount Sinai, the description in Psalm lxxxii. 6 applied literally to them. They would not have died, and were 'the sons of God.' But all this was lost by the sin of making the golden calf - although the Talmud marks that, if Israel had continued in that Angelic state, the nation would have ceased with that generation. Thus there were two divergent opinions - the one ascribing death to personal, the other tracing it to Adam's guilt.

When, however, we pass from the physical to the moral sequences of the fall, our Jewish authorities wholly fail us. They teach, that man is created with two inclinations - that to evil (the *Yetser ha-ra*), and that to good; the first working in him from the beginning, the latter coming gradually in the course of time. Yet, so far from guilt attaching to the *Yetser ha-ra*, its existence is absolutely necessary, if the world is to continue. In fact, as the Talmud expressly teaches, the evil desire or impulse was created by God Himself; while it is also asserted that, on seeing the consequences, God actually repented having done so. This gives quite another character to sin, as due to causes for which no blame attaches to man. On the other hand, as it is in the power of each wholly to overcome sin, and to gain life by study and works; as Israel at Mount Sinai had actually got rid of the *Yetser ha-ra*; and as there had been those, who were entirely righteous - there scarcely remains any moral sequence of Adam's fall to be considered. Similarly, the Apocrypha are silent on the subject, the only exception being the very strong language used in II. Esdras, which dates after the Christian era.

4. In the absence of felt need of deliverance from sin, we can understand, how Rabbinic tradition found no place for the Priestly office of the Messiah, and how even His claims to be the Prophet of His people are almost entirely overshadowed by His appearance as their King and Deliverer. This, indeed, was the ever-present want, pressing the more heavily as Israel's national sufferings seemed almost inexplicable, while they contrasted so sharply with the glory expected by the Rabbis. *Whence these sufferings?* From sin - national sin; the idolatry of former times; the prevalence of crimes and vices; the dereliction of God's ordinances; the neglect of instruction, of study, and of proper practice of His Law; and, in later days, the love of money and party strife. *But the seventy years' captivity had ceased, why not the present dispersion?* Because hypocrisy had been added to all other sins; because there had not been proper repentance; because of the half-heartedness of the Jewish proselytes; because of improper marriages, and other evil customs; and because of the gross dissoluteness of certain cities. The consequences appeared not only in the political condition of Israel, but in the land itself, in the absence of rain and dew, of fruitfulness and of plenty; in the general disorder of society; the cessation of piety and of religious study; and the silence of prophecy. As significantly summed up, Israel was without Priesthood, without law, without God. Nay, the world itself suffered in consequence of the destruction of the Temple. In a very remarkable passage, where it is explained, that the seventy bullocks offered during the Feast of Tabernacles were for the nations of the world, R. Jochanan deplors their fate, since while the Temple had stood the altar had atoned for the Gentiles, but who was now to do so? The light, which had shone from out the Temple windows into the world, had been extinguished. Indeed, but for the intercession of the Angels the world would now be destroyed. In the poetic language of the time, the heavens, sun, moon and stars, trees and mountains, even the Angels, mourned over the desolation of the Temple, and the very Angelic hosts had since been diminished. But, though the Divine Presence had been withdrawn, it still lingered near His own; it had followed them in all their banishments; it had suffered with them in all their sorrows. It is a touching legend, which represents the Shekhinah as still lingering over the western wall of the Temple - the only one supposed to be still standing. Nay, in language still bolder, and which cannot be fully reproduced, God Himself is represented as mourning over Jerusalem and the Temple. He has not entered His Palace since then, and His hair is wet with the dew. He weeps over His children and their desolateness, and displays in the heavens tokens of mourning, corresponding to those which an earthly monarch would show.

All this is to be gloriously set right, when the Lord turneth the captivity of Zion, and the Messiah cometh. *But when may He be expected, and what are the signs of His coming?* Or perhaps the question should thus be put: *Why are the redemption of Israel and the coming of the Messiah so unaccountably delayed?* It is here that the Synagogue finds itself in presence of an insoluble mystery. The explanations attempted are, confessedly, guesses, or rather attempts to evade the issue. The only course left is, authoritatively to impose silence on all such inquiries - the silence, as they would put it, of implicit, mournful submission to the inexplicable, in faith that somehow, when least expected, deliverance would come; or, as we would put it, the silence of ever-recurring disappointment and despair. Thus the grand hope of the Synagogue is, as it were, written in an epitaph on a broken tombstone, to be repeated by the thousands who, for these long centuries, have washed the ruins of the Sanctuary with unavailing tears.

5. *Why delayeth the Messiah His coming?* Since the brief and broken sunshine of the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, the sky overhead has ever grown darker, nor have even the terrible storms, which have burst over Israel, reft the canopy of cloud. The first captivity passed, why not the second? This is the painful question ever and again discussed by the Rabbis. Can they mean it seriously, that the sins of the second, are more grievous than those which caused the first dispersion; or that they of the first captivity repented, but not they of the second? What constitutes this repentance which yet remains to be made? But the reasoning becomes absolutely self-contradictory when, together with the assertion that, if Israel repented but one day, the Messiah would come, we are told, that Israel will not repent till Elijah comes. Besides, bold as the language is, there is truth in the expostulation, which the Midrash puts into the mouth of the congregation of Israel: 'Lord of the world, it depends on Thee that we repent.' Such truth, that, although at first the Divine reply is a repetition of Zechar. i. 3, yet, when Israel reiterates the words, 'Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned,' supporting them by Ps lxxxv. 4, the argument proves unanswerable.

Other conditions of Israel's deliverance are, indeed, mentioned. But we can scarcely regard the Synagogue as seriously making the coming of Messiah dependent on their realization. Among the most touching of these is a beautiful passage (almost reminding us of Heb. xi.), in which Israel's future deliverance is described as the reward of faith. Similarly beautiful is the thought, that, when God redeems Israel, it will be amidst their weeping. But neither can this be regarded as the condition of Messiah's coming; nor yet such generalities as the observance of the Law, or of some special commandments. The very variety of suggestions shows, how utterly unable the Synagogue felt to indicate any condition to be fulfilled by Israel. Such vague statements, as that the salvation of Israel depended on the merits of the patriarchs, or on that of one of them, cannot help us to a solution; and the long discussion in the Talmud leaves no doubt, that the final and most sober opinion was, that the time of Messiah's coming depended not on repentance, nor any other condition, but on the mercy of God, when the time fixed had arrived. But even so, we are again thrown into doubt by the statement, that it might be either hastened or retarded by Israel's bearing!

In these circumstances, any attempt at determining the date of Messiah's coming would be even more hypothetical than such calculations generally are. Guesses on the subject could only be grounded on imaginary symbolisms. Of such we have examples in the Talmud. Thus, some fixed the date at 4000 years after the Creation - curiously enough, about the era of Christ - though Israel's sin had blotted out the whole past from the reckoning; others at 4291 from the Creation; others again expected it at the beginning, or end, of the eighty-fifth Jubilee - with this proviso, that it would not take place earlier; and so on, through equally groundless conjectures. A comparatively late work speaks of five monarchies - Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and Ishmael. During the last of these God would hear the cry of Israel, and the Messiah come, after a terrible war between Rome and Ishmael (the West and the East). But as the rule of these monarchies was to last altogether one day (= 1000 years), less two-thirds of an hour (1 hour = 83 ½ years); it would follow, that their domination would last 944 4/9 years. Again, according to Jewish tradition, the rule of Babylon had lasted 70, that of Medo-Persia 34, and that of Greece 180 years, leaving 660 4/9 years for Rome and Ishmael. Thus the date for the expected Advent of the Messiah would have been about 661 after the destruction of Jerusalem, or about the year 729 of the Christian era.

In the category of guesses we must also place such vague statements, as that the Messiah would come, when all were righteous, or all wicked; or else nine months after the empire of Rome had extended over the whole world; or when all the souls, predestined to inhabit bodies, had been on earth. But as, after years of unrelieved sufferings, the Synagogue had to acknowledge that, one by one, all the terms had passed, and as despair settled on the heart of Israel, it came to be generally thought, that the time of Messiah's Advent could not be known beforehand, and that speculation on the subject was dangerous, sinful, even damnable. The time of the end had, indeed, been revealed to two sons of Adam, Jacob and David; but neither of them had been allowed to make it known. In view of this, it can scarcely be regarded as more than a symbolical, though significant guess, when the future redemption of Israel is expected on the Paschal Day, the 15th of Nisan.

6. We now approach this most difficult and delicate question: What was the expectation of the ancient Synagogue, as regarded the Nature, Person, and qualifications of the Messiah? In answering it - not at present from the Old Testament, but from the views expressed in Rabbinic literature, and, so far as we can gather from the Gospel-narratives, from those cherished by the contemporaries of Christ - two inferences seem evident. First, the idea of a Divine Personality, and of the union of the two Natures in the Messiah, seems to have been foreign to the Jewish auditory of Jesus of Nazareth, and even at first to His disciples. Secondly, they appear to have regarded the Messiah as far above the ordinary human, royal, prophetic, and even Angelic type, to such extent, that the boundary-line separating it from Divine Personality is of the narrowest, so that, when the conviction of the reality of the Messianic manifestation in Jesus burst on their minds, this boundary-line was easily, almost naturally, overstepped, and those who would have shrunk from framing their belief in such dogmatic form, readily owned and worshipped Him as the Son of God. Nor need we wonder at this, even taking the highest view of Old Testament prophecy. For here also the principle applies, which underlies one of St. Paul's most wide-reaching utterance: 'We prophesy in part.' In the nature of it, all prophecy presents but *disjecta, membra*, and it almost seems, as if we had to take our stand in the prophet's valley of vision (Ezek. xxxvii.), waiting till, at the bidding of the Lord, the scattered bones should be joined into a body, to which the breath of the Spirit would give life.

These two inferences, derived from the Gospel-narratives, are in exact accordance with the whole line of ancient Jewish teaching. Beginning with the LXX. rendering of Genesis xlix. 10, and especially of Numbers xxiv. 7, 17, we gather, that the Kingdom of the Messiah was higher than any that is earthly, and destined to subdue them all. But the rendering of Psalm lxxii. 5, 7; Psalm cx. 3; and especially of Isaiah ix., carries us much farther. They convey the idea, that the existence of this Messiah was regarded as premundane (before the moon, before the morning-star), and eternal, and His Person and dignity as superior to that of men and Angels: 'the Angel of the Great Council,' probably 'the Angel of the Face' - a view fully confirmed by the rendering of the Targum. The silence of the Apocrypha about the Person of the Messiah is so strange, as to be scarcely explained by the consideration, that those books were composed when the need of a Messiah for the deliverance of Israel was not painfully felt. All the more striking are the allusions in the Pseudepigraphic Writings, although these also do not carry us beyond our two inferences. Thus, the third book of the Sibylline Oracles - which, with few exceptions, dates from more than a century and a half before Christ - presents a picture of Messianic times, generally admitted to have formed the basis of Virgil's description of the Golden Age, and of similar heathen expectations. In these Oracles, 170 years before Christ, the Messiah is '*the King sent from heaven*' who would 'judge every man in blood and splendour of fire.' Similarly, the vision of Messianic times opens with a reference to 'the King Whom *God will send from the sun.*' That a superhuman Kingdom of eternal duration, such as this vision paints, should have a superhuman King, seems almost a necessary corollary.

Even more distinct are the statements in the so-called 'Book of Enoch.' Critics are substantially agreed, that the oldest part of it dates from between 150 and 130 b.c. The part next in date is full of Messianic allusions; but, as a certain class of modern writers has ascribed to it a post-Christian date, and, however ungrounded, to Christian authorship, it may be better not to refer to it in the present argument, the more so as we have other testimony from the time of Herod. Not to speak, therefore, of such peculiar designations of the Messiah as 'the Woman's Son,' 'the Son of Man,' 'the Elect,' and 'the Just One,' we mark that the Messiah is expressly designed in the oldest portion as 'the Son of God' ('I and My Son'). That this implies, not, indeed, essential

Sonship, but infinite superiority over all other servants of God, and rule over them, appears from the mystic description of the Messiah as 'the first of the [now changed] white bulls,' 'the great Animal among them, having great and black horns on His head' - Whom 'all the beasts of the field and all the fowls of heaven dread, and to Whom they cry at all times.'

Still more explicit is that beautiful collection of eighteen Psalms, dating from about half a century before Christ, which bears the name of 'the Psalter of Solomon.' A chaste anticipation of the Messianic Kingdom is followed by a full description of its need and its blessings, to which the concluding Psalm forms an apt epilogue. The King Who reigns is of the house of David. He is the Son of David, Who comes at the time known to God only, to reign over Israel. He is a righteous King, taught of God. He is Christ the Lord. (exactly as in the LXX. translations of Lamentations iv. 20). '*He is pure from sin,*' which qualifies Him for ruling His people, and banishing sinners by His word. 'Never in His days will He be infirm towards His God, since God renders Him strong in the Holy Ghost,' wise in counsel, with might and righteousness ('mighty in deed and word'). The blessing of the Lord being upon Him, He does not fail. 'This is the beauty of the King of Israel, Whom God hath chosen, to set Him over the house of Israel to rule it.' Thus invincible, not by outward might, but in His God, He will bring His people the blessings of restoration to their tribal possessions, and of righteousness, but break in pieces His enemies, not by outward weapons, but by the word of His mouth; purify Jerusalem, and judge the nations, who will be subject to His rule, and behold and own His glory. Manifestly, this is not an earthly Kingdom, nor yet an earthly King.

If we now turn to works dating after the Christian era, we would naturally expect them, either simply to reproduce earlier opinions, or, from opposition to Christ, to present the Messiah in a less exalted manner. But since, strange to say, they even more strongly assert the high dignity of the Messiah, we are warranted in regarding this as the rooted belief of the Synagogue. This estimate of the Messiah may be gathered from IV Esdras, with which the kindred picture of the Messiah and His reign in the Apocalypse of Baruch may be compared. But even in strictly Rabbinic documents, the *premundane*, if not the eternal *existence of the Messiah* appears as matter of common belief. Such is the view expressed in the Targum on Is. ix. 6, and in that on Micah v. 2. But the Midrash on Prov. viii. 9 expressly mentions the Messiah among the seven things created before the world. The passage is the more important, as it throws light on quite a series of others, in which the *Name of the Messiah* is said to have been created before the world. Even if this were an ideal conception, it would prove the Messiah to be elevated above the ordinary conditions of humanity. But it means much more than this, since not only the existence of the Messiah long before His actual appearance, but His *premundane* state are clearly taught in other places. In the Talmud it is not only implied, that the Messiah may already be among the living, but a strange story is related, according to which He had actually been born in the royal palace at Bethlehem, bore the name *Menachem* (Comforter), was discovered by one R. Judan through a peculiar device, but had been carried away by a storm. Similarly, the Babylon Talmud represents Him as sitting at the gate of Imperial Rome. In general, the idea of the Messiah's appearance and concealment is familiar to Jewish tradition. But the Rabbis go much farther back, and declare that from the time of Judah's marriage, 'God busied Himself with creating the light of the Messiah,' it being significantly added that, 'before the first oppressor [Pharaoh] was born, the final deliverer [Messiah, the son of David] was already born.' In another passage the Messiah is expressly identified with *Anani*, and therefore represented as pre-existent long before his actual manifestation. The same inference may be drawn from His emphatic designation as the First. Lastly, in Yalkut on Is. lx., the words 'In Thy light shall we see light' (Ps. xxxvi. 9) are explained as meaning, that this is the light of the Messiah, - the same which God had at the first pronounced to be very good, and which, before the world was created, He had hid beneath the throne of His glory for the Messiah and His age. When Satan asked for whom it was reserved, he was told that it was destined for Him Who would put him to shame, and destroy him. And when, at his request, he was shown the Messiah, he fell on his face and owned, that the Messiah would in the future cast him and the Gentiles into Gehenna. Whatever else may be inferred from it, this passage clearly implies not only the pre-existence, but the *premundane* existence of the Messiah.

But, indeed, it carries us much farther. For, a Messiah, pre-existent, in the Presence of God, and destined to subdue Satan and cast him into hell, could not have been regarded as *an ordinary man*. It is indeed true that,

as the history of Elijah, so that of the Messiah is throughout compared with that of Moses, the 'first' with 'the last Redeemer.' As Moses was educated at the court of Pharaoh, so the Messiah dwells in Rome (or Edom) among His enemies. Like Moses He comes, withdraws, and comes again. Like Moses He works deliverance. But here the analogy ceases, for, whereas the redemption by Moses was temporary and comparatively small, that of the Messiah would be eternal and absolute. All the marvels connected with Moses were to be intensified in the Messiah. The ass on which the Messiah would ride - and this humble estate was only caused by Israel's sin - would be not only that on which Moses had come back to Egypt, but also that which Abraham had used when he went to offer up Isaac, and which had been specially created on the eve of the world's first Sabbath. Similarly, the horns of the ram caught in the thicket, which was offered instead of Isaac, were destined for blowing - the left one by the Almighty on Mount Sinai, the right and larger one by the Messiah, when He would gather the outcasts of Israel (Is. xxvii. 13). Again, the 'rod' of the Messiah was that of Aaron, which had budded, blossomed, and burst into fruit; as also that on which Jacob had leaned, and which, through Judah, had passed to all the kings of Israel, till the destruction of the Temple. And so the principle that 'the later Deliverer would be like the first' was carried into every detail. *As the first Deliverer brought down the Manna, so the Messiah as the first Deliverer had made a spring of water to rise, so would the second.*

But even this is not all. That the Messiah had, without any instruction, attained to knowledge of God; and that He had received, directly from Him, all wisdom, knowledge, counsel, and grace, is comparatively little, since the same was claimed for Abraham, Job, and Hezekiah. But we are told that, when God showed Moses all his successors, the spirit of wisdom and knowledge in the Messiah equalled that of all the others together. The Messiah would be 'greater than the Patriarchs,' higher than Moses, and even *loftier than the ministering Angels*. In view of this we can understand, how the Midrash on Psalm xxi. 3 should apply to the Messiah, in all its literality, that 'God would set His own crown on His head,' and clothe Him with His 'honour and majesty.' It is only consistent that the same Midrash should assign to the Messiah the Divine designations: 'Jehovah is a Man of War,' and 'Jehovah our Righteousness.' One other quotation, from perhaps the most spiritual Jewish commentary, must be added, reminding us of that outburst of adoring wonder which once greeted Jesus of Nazareth. The passage first refers to the seven garments with which God successively robed Himself - the first of 'honour and glory,' at creation; the second of 'majesty,' at the Red Sea; the third of 'strength,' at the giving of the Law; the fourth 'white,' when He blotteth out the sins of Israel; the fifth of 'zeal,' when He avengeth them of their enemies; the sixth of 'righteousness,' at the time when the Messiah should be revealed; and the seventh 'red,' when He would take vengeance on Edom (Rome). 'But,' continues the commentary, 'the garment with which in the future He will clothe the Messiah, its splendour will extend from one end of the world to the other, as it is written: "As a bridegroom priestly in headgear." And Israel are astounded at His light, and say: Blessed the hour in which the Messiah was created; blessed the womb whence He issued; blessed the generation that sees Him; blessed the eye that is worthy to behold Him; because the opening of His lips is blessing and peace, and His speech quieting of the spirit. Glory and majesty are in His appearance (vesture), and confidence and tranquillity in His words; and on His tongue compassion and forgiveness; His prayer is a sweet-smelling odour, and His supplication holiness and purity. Happy Israel, what is reserved for you! Thus it is written: "How manifold is Thy goodness, which Thou hast reserved to them that fear Thee." Such a King Messiah might well be represented as sitting at the Right Hand of God, while Abraham was only at His left; nay, as throwing forth His Right Hand, while God stood up to war for Him.

It is not without hesitation, that we make reference to Jewish allusions to the miraculous birth of the Saviour. Yet there are two expressions, which convey the idea, if not of superhuman origin, yet of some great mystery attaching to His birth. The first occurs in connection with the birth of Seth. 'Rabbi Tanchuma said, in the name of Rabbi Samuel: Eve had respect [had regard, looked forward] to that Seed which is to come from another place. And who is this? This is Messiah the King.' The second appears in the narrative of the crime of Lot's daughters: 'It is not written "that we may preserve a son from our father," but "seed from our father." This is that seed which is coming from another place. And who is this? This is the King Messiah.'

That a superhuman character attached, if not to the Personality, yet to the Mission of the Messiah, appears from three passages, in which the expression, 'The Spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the deep,'



is thus paraphrased: 'This is the Spirit of the King Messiah.' Whether this implies some activity of the Messiah in connection with creation, or only that, from the first, His Mission was to have a bearing on all creation, it elevates His character and work above every other agency, human or Angelic. And, without pressing the argument, it is at least very remarkable that even the Ineffable Name *Jehovah* is expressly attributed to the Messiah. The whole of this passage, beginning at p. 147 b, is very curious and deeply interesting. It would lead too far to quote fact becomes the more significant, when we recall that one of the most familiar names of the Messiah was *Anani* - He Who cometh in the clouds of heaven.

In what has been stated, no reference has been made to the final conquests of Messiah, to His reign with all its wonders, or to the subdual of all nation - in short, to what are commonly called 'the last things.' This will be treated in another connection. Nor is it contented that, whatever individuals may have expected, the Synagogue taught the doctrine of the Divine Personality of the Messiah, as held by the Christian Church. On the other hand, the cumulative evidence just presented must leave on the mind at least this conviction, that the Messiah expected was far above the conditions of the most exalted of God's servants, even His Angels; in short, so closely bordering on the Divine, that it was almost impossible to distinguish Him therefrom. In such circumstances, it only needed the personal conviction, that He, Who taught and wrought as none other, was really the Messiah, to kindle at His word into the adoring confession, that He was indeed 'the Son of the Living God.' And once that point reached, the mind, looking back through the teaching of the Synagogue, would, with increasing clearness, perceive that, however ill-understood in the past, this had been all along the sum of the whole Old Testament. Thus, we can understand alike the preparedness for, and yet the gradualness of conviction on this point; then, the increasing clearness with which it emerged in the consciousness of the disciples; and, finally, the unhesitating distinctness with which it was put forward in Apostolic teaching as the fundamental article of belief to the Church.