Prophecy and History
in Relation to the Messiah
The Warburton Lectures for 1880-1884
Alfred Edersheim

LECTURE 6
ON THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT IN PROPHECY: THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTED TO A SPIRITUAL FULFILMENT IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.
1 Peter 1:10, 11.

It needs not a detailed analysis of these verses to show how closely their teaching agrees with the record of St. Peter's preaching. For, in his first sermon on the day of Pentecost, and especially in his second on the occasion of his healing the lame man in the Temple, his argument addressed to the Jews was, as might have been expected, to this effect: There is nothing new or unexpected in what you see and hear; it is simply the fulfilment of prophecy, for 'all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have foretold of these days.'
But the Apostolic statement which we have chosen as text for this Lecture goes farther than this. It implies: Firstly, That all prophecy was the outcome of the Spirit of Christ in the prophets; secondly, that it pointed to the sufferings of the Messiah, and the glory that should follow; and, lastly, that while the prophets understood the general Messianic bearing of their prophecy, the details of the manner and time of its fulfilment were not understood by them, but remained reserved to the historical unfolding of the latter days.

This takes us another step in our argument. It sets before us the historical character of prophecy, as progressing *pari passu* with the history of Israel, till at last its meaning fully appears in its fulfilment. Accurately considered, this forms indeed part of that moral element which in the last Lecture was shown to be the great characteristic of Prophecy. For it was not something mechanical and dead, thrust upon the world, as it were, but an active power for good, which grew with the moral growth of the people, and unfolded with their capacity for receiving and understanding it. From the first all was present—as St. James puts it: 'Known to God from the first beginning' (Acts 15:18), or, in St. Paul's language, 'part of the mystery hid from all ages in God' (Eph 3:9,10), and finally made known in Christ. And each advance in history was preceded by Prophecy, of which the object was not only the announcement of events, but preparation for them. And because the

prophets, although they knew that their prophecies pointed to the end, understood not the time nor the manner of their fulfilment, therefore do we find so often the beginning and the end, the immediate and the final fulfilment, laid quite closely together, without apparent connection or transition—the Assur or Edom of the then present by the side of the final foes of the Kingdom; the Israel of the present along with that of the future; the restored services of the Temple beside the renewed worship of a Temple made without hands, and the heavenly beside the earthly Jerusalem. All this awaited the 'Let there be light' of the last days. Meantime that which was known to God from the beginning was successively revealed by Him through His prophets, for the spiritual training of His people. In the language of Amos (3:7), 'Surely Jehovah God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets to His servants the prophets'; and in that of Isaiah (42:9), 'Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.' And so Prophecy and History proceeded, the one as the forerunner of the other, the Spirit of Christ in the prophets ever pointing forward to the period of fulfilment. Then would all the great lines of prophecy meet, and in their meeting would their meaning become manifest.

If this historical view of prophecy characterised the preaching of St. Peter as the Apostle of the Jews, it is not less apparent in what may be termed the Biblical representatives of the opposite, or Alexandrian, direction: St. Stephen and the Epistle to the Hebrews; and in St. Paul, who in a marvellous degree combined the Palestinian and the Grecian direction. This explains how the largest part of St. Stephen's address to the Council was occupied by an historical sketch of God's Revelation, and of Israel's progressive disobedience thereto. Similarly, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, after a general introduction, chapters 3, 4, and 11, trace the prophetic view of Israel's history, while the intermediate chapters give that of Israel's institutions—and so the main proposition in chapter 2 is carried to its practical application in the concluding part of the Epistle. Lastly, we mark the same line of argument in the preaching of St. Paul to the Jews. Thus, in his first sermon in the Synagogue of Antioch, in Pisidia, the prophetic history of Israel from the Exodus to David is passed in review; then the predictions are referred to, which accompanied and explained this history, and pointed from David, nay from Moses and the Law, to Christ, the conclusion being an application of the prophetic warnings of Isaiah and Habakkuk to their contemporaries, as that of which the fulfilment threatened St. Paul's hearers (**Acts 13:17-41**). There is, indeed, another line of thought regarding prophecy, followed by St. Paul, and, so far as I know, by him alone, in which the absolute or dogmatic view of it is taken, the Law with its demands being presented as the schoolmaster unto Christ, while the provisions regarding sin and satisfaction—sacrifices and atonement—are shown to point to Christ as their fulfilment. To this aspect we shall refer in the sequel.

We may safely assume that the historic and prophetic character of the Old Testament, as preparing for, and pointing to, the Messiah, would not be seriously questioned by the Synagogue—at least, by the orthodox part of it—however strenuously the fulfilment of the prophetic Scriptures in Christ might be denied. But if the Divine authority of the Old Testament is accepted, it appears to me only

possible to challenge the New Testament conclusion on one of three grounds:—*First*, it might be contended that the Old Testament must be taken in an exclusively literal sense. We have already shown that this could not have been the case in reference to the prophecies of the coming Kingdom of God. But it might be argued against our general view of the prophetic character of the Old Testament, that at least the ordinances and institutions of the Old Testament had no further meaning beyond themselves, no absolutely spiritual bearing—were merely external, and not intended to be superseded by a new and spiritual dispensation to which they pointed. Or else, *secondly*, it might be maintained that what may be called the Christian view of the Messianic idea in the Old Testament is entirely imaginary and erroneous. Or, *thirdly*, it might be said that even if that view were correct, the Old Testament picture of the Messiah was essentially different from that presented by Jesus of Nazareth.

As concerns these three objections, I think I may say that the last may be dismissed without discussion. For, if it were proved that the Old Testament pointed beyond itself to a larger and a spiritual Law, rites, and institutions, and if, besides, it were shown that the Christian view of the messianic idea in the Old Testament is correct, few would, I suppose, be disposed to question the inference that Jesus Christ did embody the Old Testament ideal as conceived by the Church. In such case we would have only to appeal to history, and it would almost seem logically impossible to resist the argument from the historical Church. And if it were further objected that a great majority of Christ's contemporaries did not recognise in Him the Old Testament picture of the Messiah, this answer would be sufficient, that these men had no longer the proper Messianic ideal before their minds; that their conception of Him was no longer true to the Old Testament, nor yet spiritual, but that traditionalism had overgrown and crushed out the Old Testament teaching in its higher bearing: in one sentence,—that the religion of the Old Testament had already become transformed into Judaism. Our Lord indeed bade them search the Old Testament Scriptures as bearing testimony to Him, but their eyes were holden by the hand of their Pharisaic leaders, and their heart was hardened not to perceive their meaning. And this: that the contemporaries of Christ, or at least a majority of them, under the teaching of traditionalism, did not any longer occupy the Old Testament standpoint in its spiritual presentation of the Messiah, we are prepared to affirm as a substantive proposition. Accordingly, we have here to deal really with only these two questions: Did the Old Testament in its ordinances and rites point to something spiritual, and indicate that its observances were only temporary, intended to merge into a new and spiritual dispensation? And, again, as quite kindred, and, indeed, connected with it: Is what may be called the Christian view of the Messianic idea and ideal in the Old Testament the correct one? The first of these questions has in part been touched upon in the previous Lecture, but it must now receive more systematic and detailed consideration.

I. The Old Testament embodies not only a code of outward observances, but points beyond their letter to a deeper spiritual meaning in the present, and to a higher spiritual fulfilment in the future. This does not involve, even in part, the old principle of allegorical interpretation which characterised Alexandrian Judaism or

Jewish Hellenism, although I am ready to admit that this embodied a certain aspect of truth, as is even witnessed by the manner in which it prospered and bore good fruit. But Alexandrian allegorism was not only exegetically ungrounded; it had no historical basis, and was purely imaginative in its origin and character, with all of attractiveness, but also of logical defect, which this implies. It invented—or at least discovered—the interpretation for the sake of the truth which it wished to teach. Not so the mode of interpretation which we propose to adopt. Method is not fanciful, but historical, inasmuch as it proceeds on that which actually was, and seeks to explain institutions, not by what they may be supposed to mean, but by the meaning which in other parts of the Old Testament, notably in the prophetic writings and the Psalms, is expressly attached to them. This will appear as we pass in review the principal institutions of the Old Testament.

We have already seen that the initiatory rite of the Covenant, circumcision, was, even in the Pentateuch, presented in its symbolic aspect, and shown to point to another circumcision, that of the lips and the heart, which in the future would become a great spiritual reality to all men. It is in this view of circumcision that Moses speaks of himself as of 'uncircumcised lips,' that is, as unprepared for great spiritual work (Exo 6:12), while in Leviticus 26:41 we read of 'uncircumcised hearts,' and in Deuteronomy the command to circumcise the heart is explained as equivalent to being 'no more stiff-necked' (10:16). Quite in accordance with this view, Jeremiah expresses his call to repentance in the words: 'Circumcise yourselves to Jehovah, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem' (4:4). And that this was intended to point to something very real, appears from the circumstance that it forms the great Divine promise of the latter days: 'Jehovah thy God will circumcise thine heart…to love Jehovah thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul' (Deut 30:6). Circumcision then was not a merely outward rite, but symbolic of a spiritual reality; and it pointed beyond itself to the time of its spiritual accomplishment. Accordingly we find that in the prophetic writings it is associated with the glory of the latter days. Thus Isaiah calls on the Holy City to awake and put on her beautiful garments, for that henceforth the uncircumcised and the unclean would no more enter her gates (52:1). And that the outward rite could not have been referred to, appears from this, that Jeremiah foretells that the days would come when Jehovah would equally punish the circumcised with the uncircumcised, for that while the Gentiles were uncircumcised, 'all the house of Israel were uncircumcised in the heart' (9:26). But what is this other than the New Testament argument of St. Paul: 'He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God' (Rom 2:28,29).[1]

And as in regard to circumcision, so, and perhaps even more emphatically, as to sacrifices. The spiritual, as distinguished from the merely external, view of sacrifices is always prominently brought forward. Even the well-known (and too often misapplied) words of Samuel to Saul: 'To obey is better than sacrifices, and to hearken than the fat of rams' (1 Sam 15:22),[2] not only imply that sacrifices had a

deeper meaning and bearing than the mere outward act, but that this was generally known and admitted. But when we pass beyond this to the prophetic writings and the Psalms, which, as Professor Delitzsch well reminds us, must be taken into account in all such discussions, the teaching of the Old Testament unmistakably is, that sacrifices pointed to a higher reality. Psalm 50 reads like a withering irony on the mere *opus operatum* of sacrifices, as if God would eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats (v 13). In Psalm 51 the penitent pleads: 'Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit' (vv 16.17). It is in the same spirit and manner that Isaiah (1:11-14), Jeremiah (6:20), Amos (5:21,22), Hosea (6:6), and Micah (6:6-8) speak of sacrifices as in themselves of no value. And we are carried beyond this chiefly negative view in this most important retrospect of the Prophet Jeremiah, 'I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people (7:22,23). It almost seems as if it were intended to teach the absolute worthlessness of sacrifices, viewed by themselves, and to point to the substitution of a spiritual worship in their room. We seem to be catching a faint whisper of these words in the Epistle to the Hebrews: 'It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins' (10:4). And beyond this did the prophets speak of another sacrifice which would be of intrinsic value. Thus we read it in Psalm 40: 'Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire…Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, oh my God' (vv 6-8). However the exegesis of this passage may be disputed, we believe that it presents this threefold view of sacrifices: their symbolical and transitional character; the moral element in them; and the great Sacrifice of inherent value by the self-surrender of the Righteous One—and that it points forward to, and finds its fullest explanation in, the great prediction of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah.[3]

The argument, which we have sought to set forth, gains greatly in cogency as we remember that these utterances were not caused by any depreciation, on the part of the prophets, either of sacrifices or of the other ritual observances of the Old Testament. On the contrary, if we read in Psalm 51 that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, we find it immediately followed by this: 'Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offerings and whole burnt-offerings; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar' (v 19). And, again, it is the same Psalmist who so earnestly pants after spiritual fellowship with the Living God, who also longs to go up to the hill of God, to His tabernacle and altar (Psalm 42, 43).
Most important in this respect are the references in the prophecies of Daniel and Malachi, but especially those in the book of Ezekiel, to ritual and Levitical ordinances. They prove beyond question that the prophetic standpoint did not imply any depreciation of the ordinances and institutions of the Law. And yet by the side of all this we find what some have, in perhaps exaggerated language, termed an anti-ritual direction. The solution of this seeming difficulty must not be sought in the supposed priority of the Prophets to the Law, but in another consideration which forms one of the main points in prophecy. Ultimately all prophecy points to 'the last [latter] days,' or the end of days (the *Acharith hayyamim*). This was to be the goal

of the religious development and of the history of Israel. Thus we read it in the prophecy of Hosea (3:5), that after many days in which Israel would be without king or sacrifices—true or false—they would return and seek Jehovah their God and David their king, and fear Jehovah and His goodness in the latter days (the *Acharith hayyamim*). It was not for a gradual development into a more spiritual worship that the Prophets looked; their gaze was bent on the *Acharith hayyamim*. They expected not a religious reformation but a renovation, not the cessation of sacrifices but the fulfilment of their prophetic idea in the latter days, which were those of the expected Messiah and of His Kingdom. But, for the reason previously indicated, that they knew not the manner nor the time of fulfilment, these two—the present and the future—lay as yet in close, and to them, though not to us, undistinguished, contiguity. Thus Jeremiah introduces the sacrificial services into a restored Jerusalem, the starting point of his prophecy being the return from the Babylonish captivity, and its goal-point that from the final dispersion of Israel, or the latter days (Jer 17:26; 31:14; **33:10-16**). The same undistinguished conjunction appears in the prophetic Book of Isaiah. In the **56th chapter** of it we have a burning description of 'the latter days.' Then would the sons of the strangers join themselves to Jehovah and be brought to the Holy Mountain, and their burnt-offerings and sacrifices be accepted on His altar, because His house would be called a house of prayer for all nations. It is not an enlargement but a transformation of the Jewish dispensation which is here anticipated; not a conversion to Israel, but to Israel's God; not a merging of all nations into Israel, but a breaking down of separating walls; not a universal Synagogue, but a universal Church, in which all that had been national, preparatory, symbolic, typical, would merge into the spiritual reality of fulfilment. But what is this prophecy from the Book of Isaiah other than a prediction of the words of Christ concerning those other sheep of His not of the Jewish fold, whom He must bring, and who should hear His voice, that so there might be one flock and one Shepherd—words (John 10:16) which He consecrated by His latest prayer (John 17:20,21). Assuredly, it seems as difficult to understand how the fourth Gospel which records this can be regarded as un-Jewish, as how these prophecies of Isaiah can be represented as merely Jewish and anti-Gentile.

To pass over other and kindred prophetic utterances, those in the **60th chapter** of the Book of Isaiah must claim our attention, as specially illustrative in our present argument. Here we find in strange juxtaposition two apparently contradictory series of facts. The prophecy opens with what almost seems a denunciation of Temple and sacrificial worship. Heaven was God's throne, and earth His footstool: where then was the house which man would build for Him, unless it were in the heart of the humble and contrite? Similarly, as regarded sacrifices, he that offered a lamb or an oblation was in the view of the prophet as if he had killed some unclean animal. And yet, by the side of these apparent denunciations, we have a glowing description of the restoration of that very Temple and of its sacrifices, yet of such kind that the Gentiles would, not as proselytes of righteousness, but as proselytes to God, have their part in all, by the side of spiritually converted Israel. Surely, clearer evidence than this could not be given, that the present was ever regarded as prophetic of the future; that the future was presented in the language and forms of the present; and

that the sacrifices, which symbolised spiritual realities, were also typical of that future in 'the latter days,' when around the Great Sacrifice, and in the great World-Temple of the Church, all nations would be gathered.

To the same effect is what the Old Testament says concerning the Levitical priesthood. It is not the Epistle to the Hebrews only, but the Old Testament itself, which teaches that, beyond the letter, there was a deeper significance attaching to the Old Testament idea of the priesthood; and that, beyond the present institutions and ministry in the outward Temple, it pointed to higher spiritual realities, of which it was both symbolic and prophetic. Even the circumstance that the Levites were appointed in place of the first-born in Israel, (Num 8:16,17) is most significant. Like the claim to the first-fruits, it indicated the claim of Jehovah upon His people. This fundamental principle includes all detailed instruction that was afterwards given. Accordingly, we find that in Exodus 19:5, 6, all Israel are designated Jehovah's peculiar possession, although only on condition of being faithful to the covenant. It is in this sense also that we understand it, that all Israel 'shall be to me a kingdom of priests.' The same view of the meaning of the priesthood, as typical of God-consecration, is expressed in the Book of Deuteronomy (7:6; 14:2; 32:9), in the Psalms (135:4), and in the prophetic books (Isa 41:9; 43:1). But the final fulfilment of this fundamental idea was reserved for the future—and is presented in that mysterious priesthood after the order of Melchisedec (Psa 110:4), and in that prophecy concerning 'the latter days,' when, with reference to a far other than the Aaronic priesthood, one probably including the Gentiles also, this promise was to become true: 'And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith Jehovah' (Isa 66:21). And as we recall the circumstances of Israel in relation to Babylon, and the stage of revelation when these words were uttered, and compare, or rather contrast them with the narrow Judaism of the time of Christ, we can in some measure realise the spiritual altitude of these prophecies, and feel that we must look in the pages of the New Testament for their fulfilment.

But it is not only one or another institution, but the whole Old Testament, which points beyond itself and to a higher fulfilment in the future. Here we specially mark how frequently and emphatically the Law is referred to, not as a code of outward commandments, but in its deeper and spiritual bearing on the inward man. This especially in the Book of Psalms, which may be described as being equally of the Law and the Prophets, converting the teaching of both into spiritual life-blood. Here we would refer, as a most characteristic instance, to the teaching of the Psalms in regard to holiness and forgiveness, which, as in the New Testament, are conjoined. A prominent influence in reference to these two is ascribed to the Law—necessarily, not as a code of outward commandments, but in its spiritual aspect. Thus in **Psalm 19** the Law of the Lord is spoken of as 'converting the heart,' the prayer being immediately added for forgiveness of secret sins. Similarly, in **Psalm 51** the prayer for forgiveness is joined to one for the creation of a new heart by the Spirit. This conjunction of the prayer for forgiveness with that for regeneration is exceedingly characteristic of the spirituality of religious aspiration. **Psalm 119** may be described as a grand eulogy of the Law in this aspect of it. And when, with the time of Israel's completed inward departure from God, came that of their greatest

outward need, the Prophet was not commissioned to give them any new commandment, still less to admonish to strict observance of the old, but to bring the promise, which characteristically was to this effect, that God would give them a new heart to know Him that He was Jehovah (Jer 24:7). And that it was not in any wise connected with ignoration of the Law, nor, on the other hand, expected in conjunction with a return to its merely outward ordinances, appears from this, that the great promise of 'the latter days'—of the Messianic time of completion—was, that Jehovah would then make a new covenant with Israel, not according to that when He brought them out of Egypt, but one in which He would put His Law in their inward parts, and write it on their hearts. And most important as adding yet another element: then would one man no longer teach his neighbour, but all be taught directly of God (Jer 31:31-34). This indicates the existence of the old elements, while at the same time it points to an entire change in the future. Then would not only the old Covenant and the old Law, but even prophetism be superseded, or rather fulfilled. All this in the 'latter days,' or Messianic time, when, as Zechariah predicts, all ritual ordinances would merge in that universal consecration to God, in which 'Holiness unto Jehovah,' the inscription on the High-Priest's mitre, would, so to speak, be that on all vessels in common use in Jerusalem (Zech 14:20,21). But what does all this mean, when translated into the prose language of history, but the fulfilment of the Law in its spiritual aspect, such as we find it described in the Epistles of St. Paul and, indeed, throughout the whole New Testament?

But even this is not all. If **Psalm 51** had combined these two, the spiritual renewal of the heart and the forgiveness of sins, we are told that in the days of the promised New Covenant this would be the gift of God to all His people. Thus Jeremiah connects with the prediction of the new Law, which was to be written on the heart when man's teaching would give place to universal knowledge of God, this promise deeply significant, even if in its then form it applied to Israel: 'For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more' (Jer 31:34). Similarly Ezekiel, the priest-prophet, speaks of the time when God would sprinkle clean water upon them, and cleanse them from their filthiness, give them a new heart, put His Spirit within them, take away their stony heart, and make them to walk in His statutes (Eze 36:25-27). And that these promises would find their fulfilment in the time of the Messiah, the Son of David, is thus expressly stated by the same prophet in the following chapter of his predictions: 'And David my servant shall be king over them: and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them' (Eze 37:24). And this is what Ezekiel emphatically designates as the covenant of peace, the everlasting covenant which God would make (Eze 37:26-28). Lastly, with this also agrees both the saying of Zechariah (13:1): 'In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness,' and this of Micah (7:19,20), that God would cast all their sins into the depths of the sea, and thus 'perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham' which He had 'sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.'

Detailed as these references have been, they have only brought us, as it were, to the threshold. For beyond all these individual predictions we have the glowing descriptions by all the prophets, but especially in the Book of Isaiah, of the time of the new covenant, with its blessings to Israel and to mankind. That these bear reference to a spiritual world-wide dispensation in the Messianic days needs scarcely argument, any more than that all the conditions of it have been fulfilled in that dispensation which was introduced under the New Testament. It could scarcely be imagined that at any future period Judaism, whether of the Rabbinic or the Rationalistic kind, would unfold into such a universal religion and Kingdom of God, as the Prophets describe. In such case the alternative must be, either to renounce the Old Testament hope, or to translate it into the platitudes of a vapid Deism. Or else if we cling to the spiritual hope set before us by the Prophets, then must we look for the wider fulfilment of all in that dispensation which is set before us in the New Testament, even though it may not yet appear as a concrete reality, but as that towards which we are tending, and which forms the promise and the goal of the present development.

From Judaism, which is either an anachronism, or a revolt against the inmost idea of the Old Testament, we turn again to the Old Testament, and in regard to it claim to have established these positions: that the Old Testament itself pointed to spiritual realities of which the external and the then present were confessedly and consciously the symbols. And, secondly, that in this it pointed for the fulfilment of all to the 'latter' or Messianic days.

Another, and a kindred argument, comes to us from what we have previously referred to as the absolute or dogmatic view of the prophetic character of the Old Testament, as taken by St. Paul. In this aspect he regards the whole Old Testament as prophetic of the New, 'the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets' (Rom 3:21). From what might be called the purely rational standpoint, it might be argued, and, indeed, was argued in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the ceremonial and ritual Law could not have been intended as permanent, nor its provisions have been regarded as sufficient for the atonement of sin. But St. Paul takes even higher ground than this. As he explains it, the Law could not reach within, and, therefore, did not remove, rather did it call out, that sin on which it pronounced the sentence of death. Accordingly, the object of the Law could only have been to call forth longing after salvation. It follows, that the Law could only have been intended as a temporary institution and to be a schoolmaster unto Christ. But the grace to which it pointed was from the first, and long before the Law, conveyed unto the fathers in the promise which could not have been annulled by that which came after, and which was only intended for temporary purposes and to serve as preparation for the future. Such is the argument of the Epistle to the Romans, of a portion of the 2nd to the Corinthians, and especially of that to the Galatians, the main position being summed up in these words: 'Is the Law then against the promises of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that

believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:21-26).

II. The detailed answer which we have sought to give to the first question we had proposed to ourselves, in measure also implies that to the second great inquiry: whether or not what may be called the Christian view of the Messianic idea and ideal is true to the Old Testament. What we have still to say, may perhaps be best presented in the form of a rapid review of the historical development through which the fundamental religious ideas passed in Israel.

The ante-patriarchal age may be described as the stage of infancy. During its course the general foundations were laid, and that condition of things was established to which the provisions of the Divine Covenant would in the future apply. The grand facts which then emerged to view were these: Man's original God-relation, as God- created, and still God-like; law, sin, death, and the promise of final recovery. But sin was not only an outward transgression of an outward command. Springing from evil thoughts within, sin would progress to its furthest limits, and that which had begun in disobedience to the Divine Father would end in murder of the human brother. Yet by the side of sin appeared also from the first, and on the ground of the Divine promise, the *origines* of worship; Divine warning also, and Divine acknowledgment, as well as Divine judgment. Next emerged the grand outlines of the distinction between those who called upon God, and who followed the merely material, and with the increase of the latter, the corruption of the former, and thereupon a universal judgment, yet with preservation of the believing righteous. From this sprung a new order of society, still bearing, however, the Cain seal of judgment, which resulted in the confusion of tongues, and the severance of mankind into separate nations. By the side of these *origines* might range, as their counterpart, the historic fulfilment in the New Testament, beginning with the Incarnation of the Christ, and ending with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

What here distinguishes and gives such unique grandeur to the Old Testament narrative, is that it professes to give not the physical, philosophical, literary, nor political, but the purely moral and spiritual history of our *origines*, at the same time laying the foundations of the most distant future. Even the hope of such a future is significant, since heathenism as such had no *Acherith hayyamim*. To the Old Testament the future is everything: the condition of its existence, the *rationale* of its aim, the impelling power of its development. It comes into our world, young, fresh, and tending towards a Divine manhood. And, dim as the primæval promise may be, it *is* the Gospel. For it tells us that man is not to be for ever oppressed by sin, but that sin is in the end to be utterly crushed, and that out of the moral contest between the Representative of humanity and that of sin, of which the condition is suffering to the former, victory and universal deliverance would come.
The next period was the patriarchal stage, or the age of childhood. It is characterised by a child's simplicity of faith, and absoluteness of obedience. The

great future now appeared mainly through its contrast to the present. The lonely wanderer was to become the father of all nations; the homeless pilgrim, the heir of all the land, nay, of all the earth. This sets forth another feature in the development of the Kingdom of God: that of the contrast between the seen and the unseen, the present and the future, appearance and reality. And this also is most fully exhibited in the history of Christ and His Church. Moreover, on further consideration, it will be perceived that this must be the necessary outcome of the prevalence of evil, and of that contest of suffering which is the characteristic of the Kingdom of God, when introduced into the world. But at the same time the original promise began also to assume more definite form. These two things were now clearly marked in the further unfolding of the promise: that its starting-point was to be in the individual, 'in Thee'; and that its goal- point was 'all nations,' which were to be blessed in Him. But to mark this starting-point was to enter into covenant, as God did with Abraham, as father of the faithful. The sign of it was circumcision, which indicated that, while this covenant was to be transmitted from father to son, its transmission was not to be merely by hereditary descent, but that it also implied personal submission to God's ordinance, and voluntary taking up of the covenant obligations. From this point onwards alike the starting and the goal-point are marked with ever increasing clearness.

The period which we next reach, and which may be designated as that of Israel's youth, was the constituent period of the Covenant history. The promise which had found its location in an individual, and then in the patriarchal family, was now to enter the field of the world, being, so to speak, embodied in a nation, whose life, history, and predictions were to be identified with the Kingdom of God. The idea, which was symbolically and typically presented in the history and institutions of Israel was—as we have seen—that of the Servant of the Lord, in opposition to that service of sin which was unto death. This, with all of struggle and suffering, but also with the ultimate victory, attaching to it. The whole subsequent history of Israel was the outcome and development of that in the patriarchal and ante-patriarchal period. Alike the ceremonial, the ritual, and the moral Law, as well as the promises, have their explanation and starting-point in the idea of the Servant of the Lord. The same contrast between the seen and the unseen, the present and the future, which had emerged in patriarchal history, characterised that of Israel in their relation to the other nations of the world. And the varying events which befell Israel were determined by their faithful adherence, or the opposite, to the Divine idea which they were intended to embody.[4]

Another stage, and we reach the period of the monarchy, which was that of Israel's manhood and maturity. To the idea of priesthood and of prophetism, which had during the previous period been expressed in outward form, that of royalty was now added, but still with the underlying principle of the King as 'the servant of the Lord.' The great promise connected first with the patriarchs as God's anointed, and then with Israel as a royal nation, now attached itself to Israel's king, and became, so to speak, individualised in David and his seed. The picture presented in the history of David is still that of the suffering servant of Jehovah. But, by the side of it, that of the reigning servant of God is also placed. And as we follow the outward history of

Israel, its great spiritual lessons appear with increasing clearness. The fate of the people is more distinctly shown to be dependent upon faithfulness to the covenant; the prophets point out with growing clearness the spiritual character of the Law and its institutions; above all, the great hope of Israel in regard to the spiritual kingdom and the king over all nations, is presented with ever-increasing particularity and definiteness as being the goal of fulfilment.

The prophetic line which indicated the starting point was now well-nigh completely traced; that in regard to the goal-point yet remained to be more fully marked. This was done in the last stage of Israel's history before the great pause of expectancy—that of the exile. It was the period of Israel's decay; but, as always, the casting off of Israel was to become the bringing in of the Gentiles. Israel was now placed in closest contact with the great world-monarchies, and those new relations gave rise to another stage, in which the grand hope entered, so to speak, on its world-mission and history. Israel was to become a John the Baptist to the heathen world; a voice in the wilderness crying to them of the coming Christ. Once more did Providence and grace work together. The greatest miracle was accomplished without sign of outward miracle. The Jewish dispersion, the spread of Grecian culture, and the establishment of the rule of Imperial Rome, were the three great factors, acting independently yet harmoniously towards one great object. Then, after the pause of expectancy, when, as regarded literary preparation, Grecianism, and, as regarded political preparation, the rule of ancient Rome, had united all mankind, the Old Testament in its Greek rendering, and the New Testament in its old and new world-meaning, could go forth into the arena of the world. And so the days of Cæsar Augustus became those of the coming of Christ, and of the final fulfilment of prophecy.

Clearly as, from the standpoint of fulfilment, we perceive all this, we can readily understand how till after the coming of Christ it would appear only dimly even to those who believed. But there is one book in the Old Testament which, more than any other, must have kept alive these thoughts and hopes in Israel. It is the Book of Psalms. Let it be borne in mind that this was at the same time the liturgy, the hymnody, and in great measure the dogmatics of the Old Testament Church. Then realise that its first beginnings date from the primitive and, in some respects, barbaric times of Saul. And yet, in a sense, it has been, and still is to the Church and to individuals, what it had been to Israel during the changeful periods of their troubled history. Its grandeur of God-conception, its intense pathos of suffering, its sweet tenderness of feeling, its child-like simplicity of faith, and the absoluteness of its trustfulness, still best express our deepest religious experience. And, beyond these subjective characteristics, are the objective earnestness of its God-proclamation into the wide world, its view of the City of God as the ideal State, its expectancy of the fulfilment of all the promises, and of the beatification of the world. Above all does it set forth in clear lineaments the portraiture of the Messiah-King. Thither all the lines of thought run up. The wail of the righteous Sufferer leads up to the agonies of the Cross; the shout of the king to the gladness of the Resurrection-morning. Over and above the noise of many waves and the rebellion of heathen nations rises loud, clear, and for ever, the God-assertion of His kingdom

upon earth, and the God-proclamation of the Christ into all the world. The answering voices of the Church and of ransomed nations, that stretch forth their hands towards Him, respond: 'He hath made us, and for Himself; we are His flock and the sheep of His pasture'; all nations shall worship Him—ride forth prosperously, and reign forever, 'David's greater Son!'

1. We may here note as an illustrative passage per contra, Ber. R. 48, where Abraham is said to be seated at the gate of Gehenna, so as to prevent those of Israel who were circumcised falling into its flames. But, as regards grievous sinners in Israel, he puts upon them the foreskins of such children as have died before they could be circumcised, and then casts them into Gehenna.

2. Fairly interpreted they only convey that in the alternative between obedience and the mere opus operatum of sacrifices, the former is the more important; but they do not imply any depreciation of sacrifices such as some critics contend for. The critical exaggeration in this case resembles that in regard to the Pauline teaching about the Law.

3. For more on the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, please see An Exposition of Isaiah Chapter 53 by David Baron.

4. For more on the "Servant of the Lord" please see An Exposition of Isaiah 53 by David Baron.