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THE DIVINE MESSIAH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The question whether the Old Testament has any testimony to give as to the Deity of our Lord, when strictly taken, resolves itself into the question whether the Old Testament holds out the promise of a Divine Messiah. To gather the intimations of a multiplicity in the Divine unity which may be thought to be discoverable in the Old Testament,¹ has an important indeed, but, in the first instance at least,² only an indirect bearing on this precise question. It may render, it is true, the primary service of removing any antecedent presumption against the witness of the Old Testament to the Deity of the Messiah, which may be supposed to arise from the strict monadism of Old Testament monotheism. It is quite conceivable, however, that the Messiah might be thought to be Divine, and yet God not be conceived pluralistically. And certainly there is no reason why, in the delivery of doctrine, the Deity of the Messiah might not be taught before the multiplicity in the unity of the Godhead had been revealed. In the history of Christian

¹ As H. P. Liddon does in the former portion of the lecture in which he deals with the "Anticipations of Christ's Divinity in the Old Testament" (*The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ*. Bampton Lectures for 1866. Ed. 4, 1869, pp. 44 ff.). Similarly E. W. Hengstenberg gives by far the greater part of his essay on "The Divinity of the Messiah in the Old Testament" (*Christology of the Old Testament*, 1829, E. T. of ed. 2, 1865, pp. 282-331),—namely from p. 284 on—to a discussion of the Angel of Jehovah.

² For such questions remain as, for example, whether the Angel of Jehovah be not identified in the Old Testament itself with the Messiah (Daniel, Malachi). So G. F. Oehler (art. "Messias" in Herzog's *Realencyc.*, p. 41; *Theol. des A. T.*, ii, pp. 144, 265; *The Theology of the Old Testament*, E. T. American ed., pp. 446, 528), A. Hilgenfeld, *Die jüdische Apokalyptik*, pp. 47 ff. Cf. E. Riehm, *Messianic Prophecy*, E. T. pp. 195, 282, who cites these references in order to oppose them.

doctrine the conviction of the Deity of Christ was the condition, not the result, of the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity.

It cannot be said in any case, therefore, that the discovery of a Divine Messiah in the Old Testament is dependent on the discovery also in the Old Testament of intimations of multiplicity in the unity of the Godhead. The two things go together in the sense that the discovery of either would be a natural preparation for the discovery of the other; that it would supply a matrix into which the other would nicely fit; and would set over against it a correlative doctrine with which it would readily unite to form a rational system. The two doctrines, though interdependent and mutually supporting one another in the system of which they form parts, are nevertheless not so dependent on one another that one of them might not conceivably be true without the other, and certainly not so that one could not conceivably be taught before the other. It seems in every way best, therefore, when inquiring after Old Testament intimations of the Deity of Christ, to keep this inquiry distinct from the parallel inquiry into possible Old Testament intimations of the multiplex constitution of the Godhead.

It is quite clear, at the outset, that the writers of the New Testament and Christ Himself understood the Old Testament to recognize and to teach that the Messiah was to be of divine nature. For example, they without hesitation support their own assertions of the Deity of Christ by appeals to Old Testament passages in which they find the Deity of the Messiah afore-proclaimed. This habit may be observed, as well as anywhere else perhaps, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. There, the author, after having announced the exalted nature of the Son, as the effulgence of the glory and the very image of the substance of God, illustrates His superiority to the angels, the highest of creatures, by appealing to a series of Old Testament passages, in which a "more excellent name" than is

given to angels is shown to belong of right to Him. The exaltation of the Son to the right hand of the majesty on high, he says, is in accordance with the intrinsic dignity of His person as manifested in this "more excellent name". The "more excellent name" which he cites from the Old Testament is in the first instance none other than that of Son itself, whence we learn that when the Old Testament gives to the Messiah the designation of Son of God—or we would better say, when it ascribes Sonship to God to Him (for it is after this broader fashion that the author develops his theme)—it ascribes to Him, in the view of the author of this Epistle, a super-angelic dignity of person.³ Of this Son, now, he goes on to say that, in contrast with the names of mere ministry given to the angels, there are ascribed to Him the supreme names of "God" and "Lord"; and with the names all the dignities and functions which they naturally connote. These great names of "God" and "Lord" are apparently not adduced as new names, additional to that of "Son", but as explications of the contents of that one "more excellent name"; and thus we are advised of the loftiness of the name of "Son" in the mind of this writer.⁴ From this catena of passages we perceive, then, that in the view of this writer the Old Testament presents to our contemplation a Messiah who is not merely transcendent but sheerly Divine; to whom the great names of "Son of God", "God", "Lord" belong of right, and to whom are ascribed all the dignities, powers and functions which these great names suggest.

³ This representation of the author, embodied in the sharp demand: "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son?" has given the commentators some trouble in view of the designation of the angels in the Old Testament as "Sons of God". The notes of A. B. Davidson and Franz Delitzsch may be profitably consulted. When G. Hollmann, *in loc.*, pp. 204, 5, remarks: "There is meant not the mere name of son, which is used in the Old Testament, as of the people, the king, and others, so also of angels but *the* name of Son, which is described in verses 2 and 3, according to its contents and its peculiarity," he is right in the substance of the matter but hardly in form.

⁴ Cf. Lünemann (in Meyer, E. T. p. 33) on the passage.

The passages of Scripture relied upon by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews to make his point are, broadly speaking, derived from what we know as the Messianic Psalms. More particularly, his argument depends especially on citations from the Second, Forty-fifth, and Hundred-and-tenth Psalms. Except for an allusion in Rev. xix. 8 the Forty-fifth Psalm is not elsewhere cited in the New Testament. But the Second and Hundred-and-tenth seem to have been much in the minds, and passages from them much on the lips, of its writers. To the Second, the very term Messiah, Christ, as applied to our Lord, goes back, as well as His loftier designation of Son of God; and it is adduced with great reverence as the Old Testament basis of these titles not only by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 5; v. 5), but by the original apostles (Acts iv. 24-26) and by Paul (Acts xiii. 33) as reported in the Acts, while its language has supplied to the Book of Revelation its standing phrases for describing the completeness of our Lord's conquest of the world (Rev. ii. 27; xii. 5; xix. 15). It was the Hundred-and-tenth Psalm which first gave expression to the Session of the Messiah at the right-hand of God, and not only is it repeatedly referred to with reference to this great fact by the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 13; v. 6; vii. 17-21; x. 13), but Paul adopts its language when speaking of the exaltation of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 25) and Peter, in his initial proclamation of the Gospel at Pentecost, employs it in proof that Jesus has been raised to the right-hand of God and made Lord of Salvation (Acts ii. 36-37). Even more to the point, Jesus Himself adduces it to confound His opponents, who, harping on the title "Son of David", had forgotten that David himself recognized this, his greater Son as also his Lord. "And Jesus answered and said, we read in Mark's narrative (xii. 35-37; cf. Mt. xxii. 45-46; Lk. xx. 41-44), "How say the Scribes that the Christ is the Son of David? David himself said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

David himself calleth Him Lord; and whence then is He his Son?" We shall let Johannes Weiss tell us what this means. The Scribes, says he,⁵ had built up a whole system of doctrine about the Messiah, and an important caption in it ran that He (according to the prophesy, for example, of Is. xi. 1) is (the present is timeless: He must be it: that is required by the doctrine) a descendant of David. "This declaration Jesus proves untenable, since David in his Psalm cx, inspired by the Holy Spirit, calls the Messiah his 'Lord', and, therefore, to put it bluntly, looks up to Him with religious veneration. . . . It follows from this that He must be a higher being than David himself. . . . Jesus accordingly shows here that his conception of the Messiah was different from the current political one. According to the Book of Daniel, and according to the convictions of the pious circle out of which the so-called Apocalypses came the Messiah comes down from heaven, 'the man on the clouds'. That Jesus also thought thus we have already seen." Johannes Weiss writes, of course, from his own point of view, which we do not share in many of its implications—as, for example, in the assumption that Jesus repudiates descent from David. He makes, however, the main matter perfectly clear. Jesus saw in the Hundred-and-tenth Psalms a reference to the transcendent Messiah in which He Himself believed.⁶ In Jesus' view, therefore, the transcendent Messiah is already an object of Old Testament revelation.

What Jesus and the writers of the New Testament saw in the Messianic references of the Psalms, it is natural that those who share their view-point should also see in them. How the matter looks to one of the most searching exponents of the Scriptures that God has as yet given His church—we mean E. W. Hengstenberg—he sums up himself

⁵ *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*,¹ I. p. 175.

⁶ Cf. the discussion of the meaning of Jesus' question and comment, F. Godet *in loc.* Luke (E. T. II. pp. 251-4): and also J. A. Alexander on Mk. xii 37.

for us in a passage brief enough to quote in its entirety.⁷ He has no difficulty in speaking directly of passages in the Psalms "which contain a reference to the superhuman nature of the Messiah;—passages," he adds,

"on which we must the less think of forcing another meaning as in the prophets (for example, in Is. ix, where even Hitzig is obliged to recognize it) there is found something unquestionably similar. Such indications [he continues] pervade all the Messianic Psalms; and quite naturally. For the more deeply the knowledge of human sinfulness, impotence and nothingness sunk into Israel (compare, for example, Ps. ciii. 14-16), the less could men remain satisfied with the thought of a merely human redeemer, who, according to the Israelitish manner of contemplation, could do extremely little. A human king (and all the strictly Messianic Psalms have to do with Messiah as king), even of the most glorious description, could never accomplish what the idea of the kingdom of God imperiously required, and what had been promised even in the first announcements respecting the Messiah, namely, the bringing the nations into obedience, blessing all the families of the earth, and acquiring the sovereignty of the world. In Psalm ii. 12, the Messiah is presented *simpliciter* as the Son of God, as He, confidence in whom brings salvation, whose wrath is perdition. In Psalm xlv. 6-7 He is named God, Elohim. In Psalm lxxii. 5, 7, 17, eternity of dominion is ascribed to Him. In Psalm cx. 1, He at last appears as the Lord of the community of saints and of David himself, sitting at the right-hand of the Almighty, and installed in the full enjoyment of Divine authority over heaven and earth.

That the state of the case may be fully before us, it will be useful to place by the side of this brief statement a somewhat more lengthy one, the tone of which very fairly represents the spirit of devout students of Scripture of the middle of last century. For a reason which will appear later, it seems to us to be an unusually instructive statement, to the entire compass of which it will repay us to give attention. We draw it from William Binnie's work on the Psalms:⁸

Respecting the Person of Christ, the testimony of the Psalms is copious and sufficiently distinct. For one thing, it is everywhere

⁷ *Commentary on the Psalms*, E. T. III, appendix, p. lvi, in the essay "On the Doctrinal Matter of the Psalms", near the beginning.

⁸ *The Psalms: Their History, Teachings and Use*. 1870, pp. 200 ff.

assumed that He is the Kinsman of His people. The Christ of the Old Testament is one who is to be born of the seed of *Abraham* and *family of David*. The modern Rationalists, in common with the unbelieving Jews of all ages, refuse to go further. They will not recognize in Him more than man, maintaining with great confidence that superhuman dignity is never attributed to the Messiah, either in the law, or the prophets, or the psalms. It would be strange indeed if the fact were so. The disciples were slow of heart to receive any truth that happened to lie out of the line of their prior expectations,—any truth of which the faithful who lived before the incarnation had had no presentiment; yet we know that they readily accepted the truth that Jesus was more than man. The Cross of Christ was long an offence to them. It was not without a long struggle that they were constrained to acknowledge the abrogation of the Mosaic law and the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles. But there is no trace of any similar struggle in regard to Christ's *superhuman dignity*. The moment Nathaniel recognized in Jesus of Nazareth the expected Redeemer, he cried out, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God"; and, long before the close of the public ministry, Peter, in the name of all the rest, made the articulate profession of faith, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." They believed Him to be the Son of God, in a sense in which it would have been blasphemy to affirm the same of any mere man. Instead, therefore, of deeming it a thing incredible, or highly improbable, that intimations of Christ's superhuman dignity should be found in the psalms, we think it in every way likely that they will be discoverable in a diligent search. In truth they are neither few nor recondite. Take these three verses:

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:

A scepter of equity is the scepter of Thy kingdom" (xlv. 6).

Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son;

This day have I begotten Thee" (ii. 7).

"Thus saith Jehovah to my Lord,

Sit Thou at my right hand,

Until I lay Thy foes as a footstool at Thy feet" (cx. 1).

I do not forget the attempts that have been made to put a lower sense on each of these passages. I do not think they are successful. But suppose it were admitted to be just possible to put on each of them separately, a meaning that should come short of the ascription of superhuman dignity to the Son of David, we should still be entitled to deduce an argument in favor of our interpretation from the fact that in so many separate places, He is spoken of in terms which most naturally suggest the thought of a superhuman person. From the exclamation of Nathaniel

it is evident that the thought did suggest itself to the Jews, before the veil of unbelief settled down upon their hearts in the reading of the Old Testament. The truth is that, if a man reject the eternal Godhead of Christ, he must either lay the Psalms aside or sing them with bated breath. The Messiah whom they celebrate is fairer than the sons of men, one whom the peoples will praise for ever and ever (Ps. xlv. 2, 17). The ancient Jews understood the particular psalm now quoted to refer to the Messiah; and no one who heartily believes in the inspiration of the Psalter will be at a loss to discern in it more testimony to the proper Divinity of the Hope of Israel than could well have been discovered before His incarnation and death lighted up so many dark places of the ancient Scriptures. It will be sufficient for our purpose to indicate a single example. The coming of Jehovah to establish a reign of righteousness in all the earth is exultingly announced in several lofty psalms. It may be doubted, indeed, whether the ancient Jews were able to link these to the person of the Messiah; but we are enabled to do it, and have good ground to know that it was of Him that the Spirit spoke in them from the first. The announcement is thus made in the Ninety-sixth Psalm:

11. "Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad;
 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;
 12. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein:
 Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy
 13. Before Jehovah: for He cometh, for He cometh to judge
 the earth:
 He shall judge the world with righteousness,
 And the peoples with His faithfulness."

We know whose advent this is. No Christian can doubt that the proper response to the announcement is that furnished by the Book of Revelation, "Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus."

The circumstance which lends peculiar instructiveness to this statement is that, although conceived in a popular vein, and addressed rather to instruct the popular mind than to meet the difficulties raised by sceptical criticism; although written with absolutely no fear of sceptical criticism before the eye,—witness the unhesitating employment of John's Gospel as testimony to historical fact—and of course without knowledge of the phases of criticism which belong particularly to the twentieth century: it yet in all its main assertions fits so nicely into the present state of critical

opinion that it might well have been written yesterday instead of fifty years ago. For example, it was rather bold fifty years ago to declare that it was the cross purely and simply, and not the assertion of a superhuman dignity for Christ, which was an offence to our Lord's Jewish contemporaries. Such a declaration is a commonplace today. There are few things which are more vigorously asserted by the latest phase of sceptical criticism than that the doctrine of a superhuman Messiah was native to pre-Christian Judaism. "The house was already prepared", declares W. Bousset;⁹ "the faith in Jesus only needed to enter it." The whole secret of the Christology of the New Testament, explains Hermann Gunkel,¹⁰ lies in the fact that it was the Christology of pre-Christian Judaism before it was the Christology of Christianity. It came from afar—this picture of the heavenly King, he intimates; but it had taken such hold of men that they could not free themselves from it.

Nothing could lie further from the purpose of writers of this tendency, of course, than to justify faith in the superhuman nature of Jesus. Of nothing are they more firmly convinced than that Jesus was merely a man. The whole object of their particular reading of the history of the Jewish Messianic ideal is, indeed, to smooth the way for a credible account of the immediate acceptance of Jesus by His followers as a superhuman being, although He was really only human. The pre-Christian conception of the Messiah, they say, involved the ascription to Him of a superhuman nature, and the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah, therefore, necessarily carried with it the ascription to Him of a superhuman nature.¹¹ But one of the results of this point of view is, naturally, that the mind is released from the prepossessions which formerly hindered recognition of

⁹ *Die jüdische Apokalyptik*, p. 59.

¹⁰ *Zur religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments*, 1903, p. 93.

¹¹ Cf. W. Wrede, *Paul*, E. T. 1907. pp. 151 ff.; H. Weinel, *Saint Paul*, E. T. 1906, p. 313.

traces of belief in a superhuman Messiah in the earlier Jewish literature. Hermann Gunkel, for example, having concluded that the conception of the heavenly Christ must have arisen somewhere before the New Testament, and having found traces of it in the Jewish Apocalypses, is able to see something like it also, centuries earlier, in the prophets.¹² Traits of a mythical God-King shine through the picture which the Prophets draw of the Messiah. "He receives already in Isaiah names which belong literally to no man—God-Hero, Father of Eternity (Is. ix. 5); He is the King of the Golden Age, in which sheep and wolf lie down together (Is. xi.); especially striking is it that His birth is celebrated with various mysterious statements (Is. ix. 5, Mic. v. 2)—for a just-born human child cannot aid His people, though perhaps a Divine child can. It is observable that other prophets and many Psalmists speak of a God, who is to be King of the whole world; that is, Jahveh, whose coronation and ascension (Is. lxvii. 6, 9; lvii. 22) in the End-time are sung especially by many Psalmists." And so, he adds, we can feel no sort of wonder "when we meet in the later Apocalypses with a heavenly figure who is sometime to descend from heaven and establish a blessed kingdom on earth. This figure of the divine king is no new creation of Apocalyptic Judaism. It is the same figure which already lies at the basis of the prophetic hope."¹³ The appeal to such passages as Ps. xlv. 6; ii. 7; cx. 1; xcvi. 11-13, as indications that the Messiah was thought of by the Psalmists as a superhuman being may now, then, hope for a more sympathetic hearing, in critical circles, than could be expected for it fifty years ago.

It undoubtedly does not make for edification to observe the expedients which have been resorted to by expositors to escape recognizing that these Psalms do ascribe a superhuman nature and superhuman powers to the Messiah. What they have done with Ps. xlv. 6—to take it as an ex-

¹² *Op. cit.* p. 93.

¹³ *Op. cit.* pp. 24, 25.

ample¹⁴—"in order to avoid the addressing of the king with the word *Elohim*", as Franz Delitzsch puts it,¹⁵ may be conveniently glanced at in the summary statement given by J. A. Selbie.¹⁶ Rather than take it as it stands, they would prefer, it seems, to translate vilely, "Thy throne is God", "Thy throne of God", "Thy throne is of God", or to rewrite the text and make it say something else,—“Thy throne [its foundation is firmly fixed], God [has established it]”, or “Thy throne [shall be] for ever”.¹⁷ Even Franz Delitzsch who turns away from such violent avoidances,¹⁸ can permit the Psalmist his own word, only if he may be allowed an equally violent reduction of its meaning. Because, immediately after addressing the King by the great name of “God”,—a name which in this class of Psalms confessedly means just God and nothing else¹⁹—the Psalmist refers the King to “God, thy God”, Delitzsch supposes that the Psalmist must use “God” when applied to the King in some lowered sense. “Since elsewhere earthly authorities”, he reasons,

¹⁴ The helplessness with which they face the passage is illustrated by the note of G. S. Goodspeed, *Israel's Messianic Hope*, 1900, p. 69.

¹⁵ *Psalms*, E. T. II, p. 82. The spirit in which expositors approach the matter is illustrated by the remark of J. H. Kurtz, *Zur Theologie der Psalmen*, 1865, pp. 52 f.: if “God” can be taken in a lower sense here, it *must*. Kurtz wishes to translate, “Thy throne of God”.

¹⁶ Hastings' *B. D.* IV, pp. 756-7.

¹⁷ T. K. Cheyne, *The Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter*, 1891, pp. 181-2, while adopting the penultimate of these expedients, makes himself somewhat merry over the rest. In his *The Book of Psalms*, 1904, I, p. 198, he has eliminated the verse and no longer considers the (mutilated) Psalm to be addressed to an earthly king. “It has now”, he says, “become superfluous to look for a contemporary king as the hero of the poem. . . .” It is “really a Messianic poem; the King, as the Targum says, is ‘King Messiah’.” It is a “description of the ideal King”.

¹⁸ That is to say in his *Commentary on the Psalms*. In his later *Messianic Prophecy*, 1890, E. T. p. 115, he appears to accept the rendering, “Thy throne of God” as probable.

¹⁹ Delitzsch himself says: “It is certainly true that the custom of the Elohim Psalms of using *Elohim* as of equal dignity with Jahve is not favorable to this supposition.”

are also called *Elohim* (Ex. xxi. 6; xxii. 7 ff.; Ps. lxxxii, cf. cxxxviii, 1) because they are God's representatives and the bearers of His image upon earth, so the king who is celebrated in this Psalm may be all the more readily styled *Elohim*, when in his heavenly beauty, his irresistible doxa or glory, and his divine holiness, he seems to the Psalmist to be the perfected realization of the close relationship in which God has set David and his seed to Himself. He calls Him *Elohim* just as Isaiah called the exalted royal child, whom he exultingly salutes in Ch. ix. 1-6, 'El Gibbor. He gives Him this name, because in the transparent exterior of His fair humanity, he sees the glory and holiness of God as having attained a salutary or merciful conspicuousness among men. At the same time, however, he guards this calling of the king by the name of *Elohim* against being misapprehended, by immediately distinguishing the God, who stands above him, from the divine king, by the words "*Elohim*, Thy God," which in the Korahitic Psalms, and in the Elohistie Psalms in general, is equivalent to "Jahve, thy God" (xlili. 4; xlviii. 15; l. 7), and the two words are accordingly united by *Munach*.

Delitzsch does not believe, indeed, that when this is said, all has been said. According to his view, this was all that the writer of the Psalm meant; he was as far as possible from assigning Deity in any sense to the King he was addressing; he applies the term "God" to Him only in a lower sense of the word. But "the Church," in adopting this Psalm into its sacred use, attached another meaning to it, referring a song "which took its origin from some passing occasion, as a song for all ages, to the great King of the future, the goal of its hope". Its prophetically Messianic sense was "therefore not the original sense of the Psalm", though it was very ancient,²⁰ and was, indeed, conferred upon it by its admission into the Psalter.²¹

It is a refreshing return to common sense when the new critical school renounces these artificialities of interpretation, and begins by recognizing that the Psalmist in calling the King "God", means precisely what he says, namely to

²⁰ How ancient we may learn from the remark: "Just as Ezek. xxi. 32 refers back to שִׁילָה, Gen xlix. 10, 'El Gibbôr, among the names of the Messiah in Is. ix. 6 (cf. Zech. xii. 18) refers back in a similar manner to Ps. xlv. 5."

²¹ *Psalms*, E. T. II, pp. 73-74; cf. I. p. 67 and especially p. 70; also *Hebrews*, E. T. I, p. 77, *Messianic Prophecy*, E. T. p. 114.

ascribe the Divine name to the King he is addressing. The sense is quite clear, says Hermann Gunkel,²² and we must not follow the multitude in explaining it away, and much less in altering the text. But, having recognized so much, Gunkel stops right there. The Messianic understanding of the Psalm (although that not only of the New Testament but of Judaism as well, from at least the time of the LXX), cannot come into consideration "for our scientific interpretation." Just an Israelitish king is meant, very likely Jeroboam II. That he is called "God" by the Psalmist is merely a solitary survival of a habit of speech common in the nations surrounding Israel, and, as we see here, not without its examples in Israel. "Veneration of kings as Gods was not rare in the ancient East; we are not surprised, therefore, that such a declaration meets us just once on the lips of an Israelitish singer. There was, no doubt, in ancient Israel a strong opposing current against such deification of the ruler; the genuine Jahve-religion, as it was advocated by the prophets, wishes that Jahve alone shall be God, and speaks with horror of everything human that would place itself by His side." We may learn from a passage like this, however,

that the distinction between the Divine and the human was not always and everywhere in Israel perfectly strictly conceived. There are many other passages also in which God and king are spoken of in the same breath; in which the king is compared with God or His angel; or in which he is called God's Son; and when Solomon built himself a throne, which stood on six steps flanked by lions, he imitated in it the throne of the highest God of heaven who sits high aloft above the seven heavenly stages, guarded by demons. Such a declaration as the singer's shows us, then, that there were tendencies approaching heathenism in ancient Israel, especially in the palace. In Israel, as elsewhere, it belonged to the court-style to promise an eternal dominion to the king, or eternal life to his house.

Hugo Gressmann²³ so far agrees with this, that he supposes that, in Ps. xlv. 6, we have a solitary "survival from

²² *Angewählte Psalmen*², 1911, pp. 106 f. Similarly H. Gressmann, *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdische Eschatologie*, 1905, pp. 255-256.

²³ *Op. cit.* pp. ff.

a period when it was more customary in Israel to call the king God"; "although", he adds, "the usage had perhaps never been very common". But he improves upon it by thinking of this custom as really little more than an instance of an inflated court-style, which had become acclimated in Israel, too, on the basis of general oriental models. The language which is employed of the king in such Psalms as the Second, Forty-fifth, Seventy-second and Hundred-and-tenth, cannot be taken literally, of course, of any earthly monarch. But, says Gressmann, it was never intended to be taken literally. It is merely the language of court-flattery and was fully understood to mean nothing. This was the language in which kings had been spoken of and to, say in Babylon, from of old. It had found its way, no doubt indirectly, possibly through Phoenicia, into Israel; and had been popularized there merely as a matter of court-form. Of course, it was gradually modified, in its Israelitish use, in the direction of an ever closer assimilation of it to the Israelitish point of view. The deification of the king, for example, regular in the case of the Babylonian-Assyrian kings and a dogma in Egypt, was more and more eliminated from the court-style as it was employed in Israel. "In the whole Old Testament, the (reigning) King is addressed only a single time by the title of God: 'Thy throne, O God, stands for ever and ever'" (Ps. xlv. 6). Other remnants of similarly inflated flattery have, however, better maintained their place. World-wide dominion is promised to the king; eternal life and power are ascribed to him; he is presented as the (adopted) Son of God. All such modes of speech are merely relics of a court-style which originated elsewhere, and which, as used in Israel, was without meaning. "From the technical designation of the king as Son of God (2 Sam. vii. 14, Psl. ii. 7) no inferences can be drawn as to the deification of the king. For it was merely the style to speak thus of the king, and, when it is the style to speak thus, nobody asks whether it has any meaning or not."²⁴ "The style permits the court-poet to

²⁴ P. 256.

praise any and every king as a world-ruler, even though the world which he really rules be no bigger than Israel."²⁵ What we learn from such language is not how Israel thought of its king, and much less how Israel thought of its Messiah. There is no reference to the Messiah in this language; and Israel did not think thus of its king. What we learn is only where Israel got its court-style, and how that court-style was slowly modified in its use in Israel, to suit Israelitish modes of conception, until it was at last almost cleansed of its assimilation of the monarch to God.

The parallel between Delitzsch's and Gressmann's treatments of Ps. xlv. 6 should not be missed. Both start with the recognition that the Psalmist addresses the king as "God". Both set themselves at once to empty that fact of its significance. Delitzsch pursues a philological method, and concludes that, in such a connection, "God" does not mean God, but rather something which is not God. Gressmann follows the religio-historical method, and concludes that, in such instances, "God" means just nothing at all; it is mere bombast. That the view taken of the Psalm by either was not the view taken of it by those who gave it a place in the Psalter, at least, each is compelled to allow. It owes its place in the Psalter in fact, as neither would deny, precisely to its not having been understood to speak meaninglessly, or even moderately, of any earthly king, but, in the loftiest of ascriptions, of King Messiah. The question which presses for answer is whether it is possible thus to evacuate the language of the Psalm of its meaning. That Gressmann's method of evacuating it has some tactical advantage over that of the "psychological school" may be admitted. He is at least relieved from the necessity of accounting for the language employed from the Psalmist's own experience. He avoids so far, therefore, the impact of the pointed questions of Ernst Sellin:²⁶ "When did an Anointed of Juda ever have dominion over the peoples of

²⁵ P. 262.

²⁶ *Der alttestamentliche Prophetismus*, 1912, p. 169.

72:8
 the earth, against which they could rebel? When were the ends of the earth really promised by God to such an one, for his possession (Ps. ii.)? When and how could a king of Israel be called 'God', and his sons be constituted princes over the whole world, as is done in Ps. xlv. 7, 17; when did such an one rule from the Euphrates to the end of the earth, like the king of (lxxviii. 8;) and finally when did such an one lead a host out of the dew of the morning and hold judgment among the peoples like him of ex. 6?" But what advantage is it to escape these questions, only to fall into the way of the still more pointed one, When was it possible in Israel to ascribe to its kings *simpliciter* such Divine qualities and functions? Or, as Sellin sharply puts it, How could a king in Israel be directly addressed as God, as in Ps. xlv. 6?²⁷

Is it adequate to say that it was natural for Israel to imitate the court-style of its neighbors, and that this court-style in its Israelitish employment had worn itself down, through long years of use, into a mere set of meaningless words? Kings had not existed in Israel for ever and ever; and Israel differed from the surrounding nations precisely in this—that there was but one God in Israel, and the king was not this God. "The deification of princes is everywhere else directly perhorrescent in Israel", remarks Sellin, and declares that there is but one solution possible: "a hymn which celebrated the Divine World-Savior is taken as

²⁷ Cf. T. K. Cheyne, *The Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter*, 1891, p. 181: "But from the severely monotheistic Jewish point of view, to represent this king as God, was impossible (Zech. xii. 8 is no proof to the contrary)." Also Gunkel, when speaking of Ps. xx, writes (*Ausgewählte Psalmen*³, p. 40 f.): "The piety is accordingly clear, which guards the singer from glorifying the king too much. This tone dominates also the other Royal Songs (xx, xxii, cx, ii) contained in the Psalter; they do not, or at least not in the first rank, glorify the king, but the God who protects and blesses him; a somewhat different 'more heathenish' note sounds, on the other hand, in the very ancient song, Ps. xlv. The deification of the King which was at home in the ancient orient from primitive times, was certainly an abomination to these pious people."

the basis of a wedding-song addressed to an earthly king, and he is lauded as the introducer of the new age, which this world-savior is expected sometime to introduce."²⁸ That is to say, on the foundation of the new religio-historical point of view, Sellin returns in effect (although not altogether without defect, it must be allowed) to the old typical-messianic method of interpreting these Psalms.²⁹ They speak of the contemporary kings, but through them they speak of the Great King yet to come. And their language can receive its full meaning only when it is read with reference to Him.

In order that we may apprehend Sellin's point of view, we shall need to have it before us in a somewhat broadened statement.³⁰ What we are particularly indebted to him for is the clearness with which he throws up to observation the main fact, that the center of Israel's eschatology lay in the settled expectation of the universal establishment of the reign of Jehovah. The way he puts it is, "Jahve is to come and simply be manifested as Lord—that is the kernel of the whole eschatology."³¹ But alongside of this expecta-

²⁸ *Die israelitisch-jüdische Heilandserwartung*⁵, 1909, p. 16 (the second and third parts of the fifth volume of the *Biblische Zeit- und Streitfragen*).

²⁹ *Prophetismus*, p. 129: "The right way to solve the riddle has been pointed out by Gunkel, though only by a modernization of what used to be contended for by Franz Delitzsch and others, when they said that David was here always the type of the Messiah. Hymns were written by court-poets to actual Israelitish or Jewish kings, on the occasion of their coronation or marriage, which transferred to them the long existent hope of the divine world-savior, and these songs became also prophecies."

³⁰ An admirable account of Sellin's views in their historical setting has been given to the readers of this REVIEW (October, 1913, vol. xi, pp. 630-649) by J. Oscar Boyd under the title of "The Source of Israel's Eschatology". W. Nowack's criticisms of the *Heilandserwartung* in the *Theologische Rundschau* for 1912, vol. xv, pp. 91-96, and of the *Prophetismus* in the same Journal for 1914, vol. xvii, pp. 65-68, are also worth consulting.

³¹ *Prophetismus*, p. 174. Cf. p. 172: "The coming of God as Lord and King, we have already presented as the kernel of the Old-Israelitish Eschatology of woe and weal."

tion there runs, he tells us, throughout the literature, the hope of the coming of a world-savior, the coming of whom is described in much the same language as the coming of Jehovah Himself. We may be tempted to identify the two after a fashion which will eliminate Jehovah's coming in favor of that of this savior: Jehovah comes only in His representative. The difficulty is that, in the documents, the identification goes beyond the coming to the figures themselves. Nor will it quite meet the case to say that Jehovah's representative is clothed with the attributes of Jehovah. The epithets given to Him pass beyond official identification and imply personal identity. And yet not such personal identity as excludes all distinction, or even all subordination. We are confronted in this figure with a problem very similar to that which meets us in the mysterious figure of the Angel of Jehovah and similar methods of solving it will naturally occur to us. Now, as Sellin makes clear, this figure of a world-savior is both original and aboriginal in Israel. It was not, as Gunkel and Gressmann imagine, derived at a comparatively late date from the myths of Israel's oriental neighbors. The myths of Israel's oriental neighbors, in point of fact, knew nothing of such a figure. "The old-oriental literature," writes Sellin,³² "has been searched with the greatest zeal, especially during the last decade for traces of a hope of a Divine Savior, of a new era of salvation to be brought in by him, and a return of Paradise. . . . But I hold it to be my duty to say at once without reserve, that not the slightest trace of proof has been adduced, that this era is to be introduced by a great and miraculous Divine-human ruler of the End-time. Absolutely all that has been said, up to today, of an old-oriental 'expectation of a redeemer-king' is merely construction,—or, where is there a Babylonian or Egyptian text which speaks of such a future redeemer as Jacob's blessing speaks of Shiloh,—and the like? . . . *The eschatological king is*

³² P. 175.

not known by the ancient orient.”³³ It is quite possible that in expounding and adorning its expectation, Israel may have employed figures and conceptions derived from without. But the expectation itself is certainly its own. “The specifically Israelitish character and the original parentage of its kernel are firmly established; and its roots are not set in mythology but in the religion of Israel, in Israel’s belief in the God of Sinai, to whom in the end the world must belong.”³⁴

Throughout the whole course of the history of Israel, we may trace this expectation of a Savior running parallel with the fundamental expectation of the coming of God as Ruler and King. The parallel is very complete.

“He too is the ruler over the peoples (Gen. xlix. 10; Ps. lxxii. 11), to the ends of the earth (Deut. xxxiii. 27; Mic. v. 3; Zech. ix. 10 f.), the scepter-bearer over the nations (Numb. xxiv. 17-19; Ps. xlv. 17) to whose dominion there are no limits (Is. ix. 6), etc.; he too bears sometimes but not often the title of “King” (Ps. xlv. 2; lxxii. 1; Zech. ix. 9; Jer. xviii. 5), elsewhere those of “Judge” (Mic. v. 1), “Father” (ix. 5), “Anointed” or “Son of Jehovah” (Ps. ii. 2, 7). Precisely as the activity of the one, so that of the other is three-fold: it is his to destroy the enemies (Numb. xxiv. 17 b; Deut. xxxiii. 17; Ps. ii. 9; xlv. 6; cx. 1, 2, 5); he has to judge (Is. ix. 6 b; xi. 3; Jer. xxiii. 56; Ps. lxxii. 6); and finally he has to “save” (Zech. ix. 9; Jer. xxiii. 6; Ps. lxii. 4, 12), above all by bringing social betterment, Paradise, and universal peace (Gen. xlvi. 11, 12; Is. vii. 15, xi. 4, 6-9; Mic. iv. a, 5; Zech. iii. 9 b, 10; ix. 10 Ps. lxii, 12, 16)³⁵. . . . Moreover he is given a name, “Immanuel”, by which his appearance is notified as the fulfilment of Balaam’s prophecy of the end of the days, “Jahve, his God, is with him”; and he is further designated as “Star” (Numb. xxiv. 1), as “God-Hero” (Is. ix. 6), as “God’s Son” (Ps. ii. 7); . . . [and] exegesis is continually bringing us back to the idea that Is. vii. 14, Mic. iii. 2 assume thoroughly a miraculous birth for him without the aid of a man; . . . [and] there is promised to him when scarcely born, the dominion of the world (Gen. xlix. 10; Is. ix. 5, Mic. v. 3).³⁶

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³³ We observe that even Meinhold thanks Sellin for saying this: “I am glad that Sellin declares strongly and clearly that ‘the eschatological king is not known to the ancient orient’—naturally Israel excepted” (*Theolog. Literaturzeitung*, 1913, 19, 580).

³⁴ P. 183.

³⁵ Pp. 172-3.

³⁶ P. 173.

The kernel of the whole matter is this:³⁷ "Israel's savior is, throughout the whole course of the Old Testament history the counterpart of the World-God who is sometime to bring woe and weal; precisely as of the one, so of the other there sounds out—from the oldest to the latest sources—although, no doubt with external differences, the mighty 'He comes' (*cf.* Gen. xlix. 10), 'He appears' (Mat. xxiv. 17), 'He cometh' (Zech. ix. 9), 'He is born' (Is. vii. 14, ix. 4), 'He comes forth' (xi. 1), 'He comes forth' (Mc. v. 1), 'He is raised up' (Jer. xxiii. 5), 'until He comes' (Eg. ii. 32), 'I will raise up' (xxxiv. 23), 'I bring' (Zech. iv. 8), 'I saw, there come' (Dan. vii. 13)." This continually recurring assurance that the Paradise-prince will come to destroy all enemies and judge even to the ends of the earth, forms the deepest core of the mystery—it is expressed by a single word in Hebrew, *בֹּאֵי*, in English, "He comes."³⁸ It stamps the religion of the Old Testament as specifically a religion of hope. "Yes, for us the Old Testament religion, from the very beginning is a religion of hope, prepared from the very beginning sometime to become the world-religion; the Old Testament God from the beginning the God of heaven and earth; who, it is true, first of all chose only that one people, but looked forward to the day when He should destroy all other Gods and bring all other peoples to His feet."³⁹ It is from Sinai, and from the revelation-act at Sinai alone that this religion of hope can have derived. "Here, and only here, can a foundation be laid for viewing the whole history from the point of sight of waiting for the appearance of the world-God, who is to fill the universe with His glory."⁴⁰ But as no man could look upon this His glory and live, an organ for its manifestation was necessary, and a type of this organ was given in the Paradisiacal man, who, though a creature of God, was made in the image of the Divine glory

³⁷ P. 181.

³⁸ P. 193.

³⁹ P. 192.

⁴⁰ P. 182.

and destined for communion with Him and the enjoyment of dominion over the world. Back to this figure, the old-oriental directed his eyes. "But in the old-Israelitish eschatology, this backwards directed longing became suddenly something wholly different—a clear, distinct, religiously oriented, historical expectation directed to the future: Jahve, the God of Sinai, will Himself, in this man, who, no doubt, is a creature, but who was with Him before the mountains were,—in this, His Chosen-One, His Servant, His Son—Himself come to establish the world-dominion, to judge Israel, and the peoples, to bring Paradise and the world-peace. There is no parallel to this assured confidence in the ancient orient."⁴¹

There are elements in this brilliant piece of constructive work which will require correction. The use made of the Paradisiacal man in the account given of the origin of Israel's expectation of a Savior, and the apparently defective Christology in part founded upon this, attract dissenting attention. But this ought not to blind us to the value of the broad presentation given us here of the eschatological hope of Israel, including, as it does, the correlation of the hope of the coming Savior with the hope of what we have been accustomed to speak of as "the advent of Jehovah." It has been usual to separate these two things mechanically and to set them over against one another as quite independent, and indeed never even osculating, items of Israel's belief.⁴² Gunkel even represents them as mutually exclusive. "In the whole eschatology," he says,⁴³ "we can distinguish two tendencies, both of which speak of a coming King; whereas the one calls the king David or David's Son, in the other Jahve Himself in the Ruler of the future; everywhere where God's kingdom is spoken of, the human

⁴¹ P. 182.

⁴² E.g. E. Riehm, *Messianic Prophecy*, E. T. ed. 2, 1896, p. 281, supporting himself on Oehler, *Prolegomena zur Theologie des A.T.*, pp. 67 f. and art. "Messias," in Herzog's *Realencyclopaedia*, p. 408 f. So also Ottley, Hastings' *B.D.* 8, p. 45a, repeating Riehm.

⁴³ *Ausgewählte-Psalmen*³, pp. 191 f.

king is lacking, for a 'Messiah' has no place in 'God's kingdom.'" Charles A. Briggs, while he does not go so far as to represent these two elements of Old Testament eschatology as mutually contradictory, yet thinks, equally extremely, of the whole body of Old Testament Messianic hopes as a congeries of unharmonized items standing off in isolation from one another. "There are in the Old Testament," he says,⁴⁴ "two distinct lines of Messianic idea—the one predicting the advent of God for redemption and judgment, the other predicting the advent of a redemptive man. The redemptive man is conceived sometimes as the Seed of the Woman or Seed of Abraham, as the Lion of Judah, as the Second Moses, as the Son of David, the Son of God, the Messiah, as the Martyr Servant, as the Priest King, as the Master Shepherd, as the Son of Man. It is impossible to combine these in any unity, so far as the Old Testament is concerned. And there is not the slightest indication that there is any coincidence of the line of the divine advent with the line of the advent of any of these human Messiahs." The effect of a comprehensive presentation of the material like Sellin's is thoroughly to do away with such impressions. The complete synthesis of the various representations waits, of course, for the fulfilment of them all in one Person. But it becomes clear at least that the hope of the coming of the world-savior, which includes in it the more specifically defined "Messianic" hope, is but another aspect of the hope of the coming of Jehovah to judge the world and to introduce the eternal kingdom of peace. One of the results of this is that the testimony of the Old Testament to "the transcendent Messiah" becomes pervasive. We no longer look for it in a text here and there which we are tempted to explain away as unexpected, perhaps intolerable, exaggerations, but rather see it involved in the entire drift of the eschatological expectations of the Old Testament, and view the special texts in which it finds par-

⁴⁴ *The Incarnation of the Word*, 1902, p. 173 f.

ticularly poignant expression as only the natural high lights thrown up upon the surface of the general picture.

This underlying coalescence of the advent of Messiah and the advent of Jehovah is perhaps more commonly vaguely felt than is generally recognized. It seems to be thus felt—in his own way and from his own point of view, of course,—by Gressmann.⁴⁵

In the Israelitish eschatology [he writes] the Messiah and Jahve alternate. That is already intelligible, because the Messiah is ultimately a Divine figure, a God-king, and is thus elevated into the sphere of Deity. It becomes more intelligible when we observe a second parallel fact. Almost everywhere where Jahve meets us in the eschatology of weal, He is presented in a quite distinctive way. We can refer the descriptions which are given of Him and the functions which are ascribed to Him to the conception of the eschatological king. With respect to the thing, not to the person, the Jahve here described and the Messiah were originally as it seems counterparts: the functions of the two are still almost identical. The Messiah is described more as a King exalted into God, Jahve more as God exalted into the King. It is no doubt possible that in the eschatology which influenced the Israelitish religion, a single figure which united in itself the traits of both, occupied a middle ground. In its passage to Israel this figure was divided, and the one, the more divine, side of its being was assigned to Jahve, the other, the more human side of its being to the Messiah. The eschatological hero, which originally bore rich mythical traits, that are still perceptible in the older prophecy, up to Isaiah and Micah, is in the course of time ever more degraded into an earthly king, and acquired a purely national character. Jahve, however, was inhibited from this development, since He could not lose the Divine type. Accordingly we may perhaps again ascribe to the *original* eschatological figure the things which in the *present* tradition are no longer said of the Messiah, but only now of Jahve.⁴⁶

Such a speculation cannot commend itself to sober thought; but the fact that it suggests itself to Gressmann hints of what he finds in the Old Testament descriptions of the Messiah, and of the relation which the hope of His coming bore to the hope of the advent of Jehovah, and indeed which His person bore to the person of Jehovah. He who reads the Old Testament, however cursorily, will not

⁴⁵ *Der Ursprung*, etc., p. 294.

⁴⁶ P. 301.

escape a sense, however dim, that he is brought into contact in it with a Messiah who is more than human in the fundamental basis of His being, and in whose coming Jehovah visits His people in some more than representative sense.

It is naturally the customary representation of Franz Delitzsch that the two lines of prediction never meet in the pages of the Old Testament, but wait for their conjunction until He to whom they both point had come. Says he:⁴⁷

For the announcement of salvation in the Old Testament runs on two parallel lines: the one has for its termination the Anointed of Jahve, who rules all nations out of Zion; the other the Lord Himself, sitting above the Cherubim, to whom all the earth does homage. These two lines do not meet in the Old Testament; it is only the fulfilment that makes it plain, that the advent of the Anointed One and the advent of Jahve are one and the same. . . . An allegory may serve to illustrate the way in which the Old Testament proclamation of salvation unfolds itself. The Old Testament in relation to the Day of the New Testament is Night. In this Night there rise in opposite directions, two stars of Promise. The one describes its path from above downwards; it is the promise of Jahve who is about to come. The other describes its path from below upwards: it is the hope which rests on the seed of David, the prophecy of the Son of David, which at the outset assumes a thoroughly human and merely earthly character. These two stars meet at last, they blend together into one star: the Night vanishes and it is Day. This one Star is Jesus Christ, Jahve and the Son of David in one person, the King of Israel and at the same time the Redeemer of the world—in a word, the God-man!⁴⁸

Elsewhere however he speaks with a juster divination:⁴⁹

We find indeed undeniable traces in the Old Testament of a prophetic *per. sentiment* that the great Messias of the future, who was destined to accomplish what had been vainly looked for in David and Solomon, etc., should also present in His own person an

⁴⁷ *Psalms*, E. T. I, p. 67 f., cf. p. 70.

⁴⁸ *Psalms*, E.T. II, p. 300 (on Ps. lxxxii). Cf. the similar statement of W. T. Davidson, in Hastings' *B.D.* IV, p. 151. Delitzsch seems to imply that it is only to Jehovah and not to the Messiah that the function of Savior is ascribed (cf. G. Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, p. 295); this can be sustained only if we take the term "the Messiah" in too narrow a sense.

⁴⁹ *Hebrews*, E. T. I, p. 79.

unexampled union of human and divine. The mystery of the incarnation is still veiled through the Old Testament, and yet the two great lines of prophecy running through it—one leading on to a final manifestation of Jehovah, the other to the advent of a Son of David—do so meet and coalesce at certain points, as by the light thus generated, to burst through the veil. This is as clear as day in the one passage, where the Messiah is plainly called אֵל גִּבּוֹר (the Mighty God), an ancient traditional appellation for the Most High (Deut. x. 17; 22:17; cf. Jer. xxxii. ③; Neh. ix. 32; Ps. xxiv. 8). And so (Jer. xxiii. 6) He is entitled “Jehovah our righteousness”, following which, as Biesenthal has shown (p. 7), the ancient synagogue recognized Jehovah (יְהוָה) as one of the names of the Messiah.⁵⁰

That the New Testament writers throughout proceed on the assumption that all those Old Testament passages in which the Advent of Jehovah is spoken of refer to the coming of the Messiah, Delitzsch himself is led to tell us when commenting on the catena of passages adduced in the first chapter of Hebrews in support of the Deity of Christ, among which are some of this kind.⁵¹ Their consciousness of the identity of the two comings “finds an utterance”, as Delitzsch reminds us, “at the very threshold of the evangelical history.” (Lk. i. 17, 26) when Malachi’s prediction of the coming of Elijah “before the day of Jehovah” to prepare His way, is adduced as fulfilled in John the Baptist the forerunner of Jesus.⁵² We shall at once recall also the similar appeal of all three of the Synoptic Gospels to Is. xliii. 3, as fulfilled in John the Baptist. In Jesus they saw all the lines of Messianic prediction converge; and they declare Him no less the Jehovah who was expected to come to save His people, than the Son of David or the Suffering Servant of God. “When St. Mark tells us”, remarks Charles A. Briggs justly, “that St. John the Baptist was the herald of the advent of Yahweh, at the beginning of the Gospel, what else can he mean than that Jesus Christ whose redemptive

⁵⁰ Cf. on this Messianic title, A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 1883, I, p. 178, who gives the references.

⁵¹ *Hebrews*, E. T. I, pp. 71-72.

⁵² Cf. A. B. Davidson, *Old Testament Prophecy*, 1913, p. 412. Cf. also pp. 311, and 147.

life is the theme of his Gospel was the very Yahweh?" And, we add, what can he mean except that, in predicting this advent of Jehovah, Isaiah was proclaiming the Deity of the Messiah in whose coming it was to be fulfilled? The same is true also, of course, of Matthew and Luke in their parallel passages, so that Briggs is thoroughly justified⁵³ in summing up "with confidence" in the remark that "the three Synoptic Evangelists agree in thinking of Jesus Christ as the Yahweh of the Old Testament, and that His advent, as heralded by St. John the Baptist, was the Divine advent of the Second Isaiah, as well as the human advent of the Servant of Yahweh; in other words that they saw in Jesus Christ the Messiah of history, the coincidence of the line of the divine redeemer with the line of the human Messiah; that they saw all the Messianic ideals combine in Him." The only difference between John and the other Evangelists here is that the identification of the Baptist with the voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of Jehovah", which the others make on their own account, John quotes from the lips of the Baptist. Briggs thinks the identification can scarcely have been made by the Baptist.⁵⁴ Such a judgment is certainly rash in view of the exalted conception which the Baptist in any event expresses of Him whose mere forerunner he undoubtedly recognizes himself as being. His shoelatchets he declares himself unworthy to unloose; he calls Him the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world; he even gives Him the great name of the Son of God—a name which in this context must surely bear its metaphysical sense (*cf.* verses 7 and 25). Beginning on this note, the New Testament proceeds throughout its whole extent on the unchanging supposition that in the coming of Jesus Christ there is fulfilled the repeated Old Testament promise, made in Psalm and Prophet alike, that God is to visit His people, in His own good time, to save them. It is therefore, indeed, so we are told, that He is

⁵³ P. 182.

⁵⁴ P. 171.

called Jesus,—precisely because “it is He that shall save His people from their sins”—He, that is, Jesus, shall save His people, that is, Jesus’ people,—in fulfilment of the promise of the Saving Jehovah.

Among the high lights thrown up on the surface of the general picture of the Divine Messiah, as it lies on the pages of the Old Testament, such a passage as Is. ix. 6 challenges attention with the same insistency as Ps. xlv. 6, and has met with much the same treatment at the hands of the expositors. There have always been some, of course, who have not shrunk from reading the passage as it stands, and giving it its obvious meaning. Outstanding instances are supplied by E. W. Hengstenberg and J. A. Alexander. Alexander, speaking of the hypothesis that by the child mentioned by the prophet Hezekiah is meant—an hypothesis once much in vogue, but now out of date—and the unnatural explanations of particular terms which it compelled, writes:⁵⁵

The necessity of such explanations is sufficient to condemn the exegetical hypothesis involving it, and shows that this hypothesis has only been adopted to avoid the natural and striking application of the words to Jesus Christ, as the promised *child*, emphatically *born for us* and *given to us*, as the *Son of God*, and the *Son of man*, as being *wonderful* in his person, works, and *sufferings*—a *counsellor*, prophet, and authoritative teacher of the truth, a wise administrator of the Church, and confidential adviser of the individual believer—a real man but yet the *mighty God*—eternal in his own existence, and the *giver of eternal life* to others—the great *peace-maker* between God and man, between Jew and Gentile, the umpire between nations, the abolisher of war, and the giver of internal peace to all who *being justified by faith have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom. v. 1). The doctrine that this prophecy relates to the Messiah was not disputed even by the Jews, until the violence of the anti-Christian controversy drove them from the ground which their own progenitors had steadfastly maintained. In this departure from the truth they have been followed by some learned writers who are Christians only in the name, and to whom may be applied with little alteration, what one of them (Gesenius) has

⁵⁵ *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, 1874, I, p. 204.

said with respect to the ancient versions of this very text, viz. that the general meaning put upon it may be viewed as the criterion of a Christian or an anti-Christian writer.

Hengstenberg's remarks we prefer to give through the medium of T. K. Cheyne, who, in one of the stages of his ever-shifting opinion, adopts the core of them as his own. In an essay on "The Christian Element in the Book of Isaiah", Cheyne remarks:⁵⁶

Both parts of Isaiah give us to understand clearly (and not as a mere *ὁπνοια*) that the agent of Jehovah in the work of government and redemption is himself divine. Not indeed the much vexed passage in iv. 2, where, even if the date of this prophecy allowed us to suppose an allusion to the Messiah, "sprout of Jehovah" is much too vague a phrase to be a synonym of "God's Only-begotten Son". But the not less famous *'El Gibbōr* in ix. 6 may and must still be quoted. As Hengstenberg remarks it "can only signify God-Hero, a Hero who is infinitely exalted above all human heroes by the circumstance that he is *God*. To the attempts at weakening the import of the name, the passage x. 21, [where *'El Gibbōr* is used of Jehovah] opposes a very inconvenient obstacle."⁵⁷ And who can doubt that, granting the subject of chap. liii. to be an individual, he must be the incarnation of the Divine?

Cheyne's direct comment on the passage itself in this work needs to be read in the light of these remarks to preserve it from ambiguity; but he doubtless means it to be taken in much the same sense which he unambiguously expresses here. "The meaning of the phrase," he declares,⁵⁸ "is defined by x. 21, where it occurs again of Jehovah"; that is to say, the Messiah is declared to be God in the same sense in which Jehovah is God. When he proceeds to say, "It would be uncritical to infer that Isaiah held the metaphysical oneness of the Messiah with Jehovah," he does not require to mean more than that Isaiah is not to be inferred to have as yet clearly formulated in his mind the doctrine of the Trinity,—and need not be supposed to have adjusted in his thinking the Deity of the Messiah to the

⁵⁶ *The Prophecies of Isaiah*³, 1884, II, p. 209.

⁵⁷ *Christology of the Old Testament*, Edinburgh ed., II, p. 88.

⁵⁸ *Op. cit.*, I, p. 61 f.

fundamental doctrine of the unity of the Godhead. But when he goes on to say, "But he evidently does conceive the Messiah, somewhat as the Egyptians, Assyrians and Babylonians regarded their kings, as an earthly representative of Divinity (see on xiv. 13-14)", the comparison, although probably inevitable, yet tends to lower the conception of 'El Gibbor beyond its power to stretch. Accordingly Cheyne continues: "No doubt the development of Messianic doctrine was accelerated by contact with foreign nations; still it is in harmony with fundamental Biblical ideas and expressions. This particular title of Messiah is, no doubt, unique. But if even a Davidic king may be described as 'sitting upon the throne of Jehovah' (1 Chr. xxix. 23), and the Davidic family be said, in a predictive passage it is true, to be 'as God (*ēlohīm*), or the (or, an) angel of Jehovah' (Zech. xii. 8), much more may similar titles be applied to the Messiah. The last comparison would, indeed, be especially suitable to the Messiah, and it is a little strange that we do not find it." So far the tendency seems to be to lower the implication of the title,⁵⁹ but the lost ground is now recovered: "But we do find the Messiah, in a well-known Psalm, invited to sit at the right hand of Jehovah (Ps. cx. 1), and it is only a step further to give him the express title, 'God the Mighty One'. It is no doubt a very great title. The word selected for 'God' is not *ēlohīm*, which is applied to the judicial authority (Ex. xxi. 6, xxii. 8), to Moses (Ex. vii. 1), and to the apparition of Samuel (1 Saml. xxviii. 13); but *el* which, whenever it denotes (as it generally does; and in Isaiah always) Divinity, does so in an absolute sense;—it is never used hyperbolically or metaphorically."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ In his later work: *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah: A New English Translation*, 1898, p. 145, Cheyne actually lowers his view of the meaning of 'El Gibbōr.

⁶⁰ Cf. Hengstenberg, *Christology*, II, 85 on the meaning of 'El and the impossibility of rendering it (as Gesenius does) by "hero"; cf. also the citations given by J. D. Davis, in the *Princeton Biblical and Theological Studies*, 1912, p. 99.

The thing most insisted upon by Cheyne in these remarks is that *'El Gibbōr* can mean nothing but "Mighty God"; as Is. x. 21 shows. It illustrates the uncertainty of touch which characterizes the "Liberal" criticism of this type, that, in his later book on Isaiah, he simply deserts this ground and explains *'El Gibbōr* as describing the ideal king as indued from on high with might, and comments somewhat blindly: "x. 21, which shows that we are not to render *divine hero*; the king seems to Isaiah in his lofty enthusiasm, like one of those *angels* (as we moderns call them), who, in old time were said to mix with men, and even contend with them, and who, as superhuman beings, were called by the name of *'el* (Gen. xxxii. 2-32)." If Is. x. 21, where Cheyne himself renders *'El Gibbōr*, "the Mighty God" (p. 23), shows that this term cannot be rendered "divine hero," but at least, as he himself renders it, "Mighty Divinity",—which seems synonymous with "Mighty God"—it is difficult to see how Isaiah by its use designates the ideal king (not now the Messiah) an angel and not a God. By reducing the person spoken of from the Messiah to the king, and the dignity ascribed to him from the Divine to the angelic rank, Cheyne has, no doubt, effectually removed the passage from the category of Old Testament testimonies to the Deity of the Messiah. But he appears to have done so only at the cost not only of some violence, but also of some confusion.

It is to attain this end that the exegesis of the "Old Liberal school" is particularly directed, and that exegesis seems patient of nearly any conclusion which falls short of ascribing Deity to the Messiah.⁶¹ E. Kautzsch can lay it down dogmatically as a principle of exegesis, which must govern the rendering of *'El Gibbōr*, that "an absolute prediction of Godhead, even in the case of the Messiah, would be inconceivable in the Old Testament".⁶² He therefore denies that

⁶¹ The various senses which have been put upon the words *'El Gibbōr* have been collected and discussed by J. D. Davis, as cited, pp. 93-105.

⁶² Hastings' *B.D.*, extra volume, 1904, p. 895 b.

it is possible to take the term as "hero God", and insists on translating it "God of a hero", that is "Godlike hero". And George Adam Smith can actually permit himself to write such sentences as these:⁶³

In any case the application of these prophecies to Jesus Christ must be made with discrimination. They have been too hastily used as predictions of the Godhead of the Messiah. But not even do the names in Chapter ix. 6 b imply Deity, while all the functions attributed to the promised King are human. Isaiah's Messiah is an earthly monarch of the stock of David, and with offices that are political, both military and judicial. He is not the mediator of spiritual gifts to his people, forgiveness, a new knowledge of God and the like. It is only in this, that he saves the people of God from destruction and reigns over them with justice in the fear of God, that he can be regarded as a type of Jesus Christ.

We have only to place by the side of this an equally brief statement emanating from a newer school, for its marvellousness to strike the eye. Martin Brückner writes:⁶⁴

In any case "the old-prophetic Messiah-consciousness", for example, of Isaiah, would not be, on the assumption of the genuineness of his Christology, that of a "purely human King of David's line" but that of the Apocalyptic introducer of the blessed end-time. For a Messiah who reigns "without end" (ix. 6), who is called the God-Hero and the Eternal One, who is the personal concentration of the Spirit (xi. 2 ff.), and destroys the wicked with the breath of His mouth (xi. 4), is not "purely human" but superhuman, wholly apart from this—that the kingdom over which he reigns is the miraculous kingdom of peace and blessedness, the splendor of which is the light of the benighted peoples (ix. 1 ff.; xi. 7 ff.).

The several representatives of the "Old Liberal School" differ very much among themselves, of course, in details of interpretation. The thing which they are agreed upon is that the Messiah is called *'El Gibbōr*—whatever that may be made to mean—not because he is himself Divine, but because he is the representative of Jehovah on earth. It is allowed that the description given of him scales all the

⁶³ *Modern Criticism and the Teaching of the Old Testament*, 1901, p. 161; cf. Hastings' *B.D.*, II, 491.

⁶⁴ *Die Entstehung der paulinischen Christologie*, 1903, p. 97, note.

heights permissible to such a representative. "In the brilliant picture of chapter ix.", writes G. S. Goodspeed,⁶⁵ "the child who occupies the throne of David is to overthrow the enemy and to rule for ever and ever. The names which are given him describe a personage more glorious than any prophet has hitherto mentioned, except perhaps the writer of Psalm xlv." But, however glorious, they fall short of declaring him divine. "These divine titles", writes James Critchton,⁶⁶ "do not necessarily"—what is the function of this "necessarily" here?—"imply that in the mind of the prophet the Messianic king is God in the metaphysical sense—the essence of the divine nature is not a dogmatic conception in the Old Testament"—surely a blind remark!—"but only that Jehovah is present in Him in perfect wisdom and power, so that He exercises over His people for ever a fatherly and peaceful rule". Perhaps, however, Eduard Riehm may still stand as the typical representative of this system of interpretation. The Messiah, says he,⁶⁷ is represented in Old Testament prophecy

as a human king, an offspring of the stem of David, whose eminence is far above the position of all other men, and whose personality has about it something wonderful and mysterious. Although it is nowhere indicated that he is to enter the world in an extraordinary and wonderful manner,⁶⁸ he yet, as the earthly representative of the Divine King, and his instrument in establishing the kingdom, and exercising His government, stands in an absolutely unique and intimate relationship to God, Whose Spirit rests upon him as upon no other, and Whose almighty power, wisdom, righteousness and helpful grace work through him in such full measure that in and through his government God's great name, that is, His revealed glory is made known. In other words, God makes him the organ of His self-revelation, just as elsewhere He uses the "angel of Jehovah". Hence, even the divine designation *'El Gibbōr* (God-hero) is one of the names ascribed to him; and hence also, even in a more general announcement applied to the house of David, there occurs the expression:

⁶⁵ *Israel's Messianic Hope*, 1900, p. 120.

⁶⁶ Orr's, *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, 1913, p. 2040.

⁶⁷ *Messianic Prophecy*, 1884, E. T., 1891, p. 280; cf. p. 182.

⁶⁸ This means, of course that Riehm does not regard Is. vii. 14, Mic. v. 1 as involving this for the Messiah.

"it shall be as *God* and the *angel of Jehovah* before" the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Both in the kingdom of God and in humanity, the Messiah assumes thus a central position, not only as their "head" but also as the mediating organ whence proceed the judicial and saving operations and the self-revelation of the Divine King.

It is no more than this that A. F. Kirkpatrick says when he expounds the Isaian declaration as follows:⁶⁹

The fourfold name of this prince declares his marvellous nature and proclaims him to be, in an extraordinary way, the representative of Jehovah. The title, *Wonderful Counsellor* conveys the idea of his endowment with supernatural wisdom in that counsel which was peculiarly the function of a king. *Mighty God* expresses his divine greatness and power, as the unique representative of Jehovah, who is Himself the *Mighty God* (x. 21). *Eternal Father* describes his paternal fondness and unending care for his people. *Prince of Peace* denotes the character and end of his government. His advent is still future but it is assured. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.

To the exposition of the term "the Mighty God" Kirkpatrick attaches a footnote, which without comment adduces the following words from C. Orelli: "In such passages the Old Testament revelation falls into a self-contradiction, from which only a miracle has been able to deliver us, the Incarnation of the Son of God." Thus, and thus only, does he intimate that he is aware that the treatment of the epithet "Mighty God" as a suitable one for a merely human representative of Jehovah, however unique, does violence to all linguistic propriety.

Orelli, from whom the quotation is taken, it is needless to say, did not write the words taken over from him on any such hypothesis. In his opinion the prophet has in view a truly superhuman figure and one gets the impression, as he reads Orelli's exposition of the passage, that, so far as he fails to give its full meaning, the failure is due to a defect in his Christological thought, rather than to unwillingness to take the prophet at the height of his meaning. He writes:⁷⁰

⁶⁹ *The Doctrine of the Prophets*² 1897, p. 193.

⁷⁰ *Old Testament Prophecy*, E. T., p. 274 f.

When in the first name a miraculous, divine character is ascribed to the ruler in his capacity of counselor, planning for his people's good, this is saying more than that his wisdom exceeds that usual among rulers; it is affirmed that his wisdom is related to the human as divine. Just so, the second predicate attributes to him energy in action. He is called *strong God*, not merely a divine hero: a *God of a hero*, for פָּבוֹר is an adjective, and the phrase cannot be understood differently than in x. 21, where it is used of the Lord Himself. In this second name, also, doubtless, a definite expression of his dignity, one side of his working, is taken into view, namely, his divine energy in action, as in the first the superhuman grandeur of his counsel; but his person itself is thereby raised to divine greatness. He is called *strong God* in a way which would be inapplicable to a man, unless the one God who rightly bears the name *strong God* were perfectly set forth in this His Anointed One. In such passages, the Old Testament revelation falls into a self-contradiction, from which only a miracle has been able to deliver us, the Incarnation of the Son of God. Elsewhere it draws the sharpest limit between the holy God and the sinful children of man, and its superiority to heathen religions depends in great part on this limit. Prophecy gradually lets this limit drop, in proof that the aim of God's action is to transcend it and to unite Himself most closely with humanity. In such oracles we Christians find no deification of the human such as is the order of the day on heathen soil. Otherwise prophecy would be a retrogression from the teaching of the law into heathenism and heathen idealism. But in such oracles we find a clear proof that even in the time of the old covenant the Spirit of God was consciously striving after the good that we see reached in the new.

"Divine wisdom", he continues after a page or two,⁷¹ "divine strength, paternal love faithful as God's, divine righteousness and peace are ascribed to him, in such a way, indeed, that his person also appears divine: he perfectly exhibits God in the world; consequently his dominion is really God's dominion on earth. Every Judaising and rationalizing attempt to adapt the insignia conferred on the Messiah here to a man of our nature, degrades them, and with them the Spirit who forms them." After this there is nothing left to say except what V. H. Stanton says with the simplicity of truth:⁷² "Language is used" in this passage "to

⁷¹ P. 277.

⁷² *Jewish and Christian Messiah*, p. 104.

which only the person of a truly Divine Messiah could adequately correspond." This appears to be recognized, after his own fashion, even by G. B. Gray, when he comments:⁷³

Some of the names singly and even more in combination, are, as applied to men, unparalleled in the Old Testament, and on this account are regarded by Gressmann (p. 280ff.) as mythological and traditional; cf. also Rosenmüller, *Scholion* The Child is to be more than mighty . . . more than a mighty man. . . more than a mighty king; he is to be a mighty $\text{לֵא} \text{, God}$. This attribution of divinity, implying that the Messiah is to be a kind of demi-God, is without clear analogy in the Old Testament, for Ps. xlv. 7 (6) is ambiguous.

The language in which this comment is couched, as well as the direct reference to him, recalls us to the effect on the interpretation of the passage of the new point of view introduced by Gressmann and his fellow-workers in the field of the history of religion.⁷⁴ The essence of this new point of view lies in the contention that the religious development and the religious language of Israel are to be explained after the analogy of the religious development and the religious language of the neighboring peoples; and on the assumption of a common body of old-oriental mythical ideas underlying them all alike. How this applies to the Messianic conceptions of Israel Gunkel briefly explains to us. He says:⁷⁵

The figure of the Messiah, too, belongs to this originally mythological material. It is true that the new David or sprout of David whom the prophets expect, is only a man, though endowed with divine powers, and the hope that such a king should arise and bless Israel is primarily a purely natural one. But there are traits in this figure of a king, nevertheless, which intimate to us that this expected king was originally a God-king. Already in Isaiah he receives names which literally belong to no man: God-hero, Father of Eternity; he is the king of the Golden Age when sheep and wolf lie down together; particularly striking is it that his birth is celebrated repeatedly with mysterious statements, and

⁷³ *Isaiah* (International Critical Commentary), 1912, p. 123.

⁷⁴ Cf. for example Julius Boehmer, "Reichgottesspuren in der Völkerwelt" in Schlatter and Lütgert's *Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie*, 1906, x-i, p. 87.

⁷⁵ *Zum religionsgeschichtliche Verständnis*, p. 24 f.

that the salvation of Israel is hoped for from it: for a fresh-born human child cannot help his people, though no doubt a divine child could. We notice also that other prophets and many psalmists speak of a God who is to be King of the whole world; that is, Jahveh whose enthronement and ascension in the last times the Psalmists particularly sing. The whole material falls most beautifully into order if we assume that the Israelitish hope of a king was preceded by an alien mythical one, according to which a new God ascends as King the throne of the world. And it therefore does not surprise us when we meet in the later Apocalypses with a heavenly figure who is to come from heaven and establish a blessed kingdom on earth. This figure of a divine king is, therefore, no new creation of Apocalyptic Judaism: but it is the same figure which already lies at the foundation of the prophetic hopes."

This ingenious construction has been worked out into greater detail by Gressmann and set forth by him in perhaps as attractive a form as it is capable of receiving.⁷⁶ The difficulty with it is that it requires too many assumptions, and that these assumptions receive no support from the facts. As we have already seen, the ancient orient knows nothing of an eschatological king.⁷⁷ Israel knows as little of a deified King.⁷⁸ The whole mythological framework of the edifice thus breaks down. E. Sellin has solidly shown, moreover, that the entire development which it is here sought to explain on the basis of an alien mythology taken over by Israel from its neighbors, is purely native to Israel and has its roots set in the revelation-act at Sinai.⁷⁹

The promulgation of this new view, however, has focussed attention on the prophetic language to which it seeks to assign a mythological significance,—with the effect of rendering the current attempts to explain that language away absurd. It has become quite clear in the course

⁷⁶ *Der Ursprung*, pp. 250-301. Arthur Drews, of course, makes the most of it, in his fashion: *Christusmythe*¹, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁷ See above, p. 386, 7.

⁷⁸ Gressmann writes, *op. cit.*, p. 285: "The general religious presupposition under which alone a figure like that of the God-King could be formed, is the king-deification, which, to be sure cannot be proved for Israel, but certainly may be for its neighboring nations."

⁷⁹ *Der alttestament. Prophetismus*, p. 183: "The specifically Israelitish

of the discussion that the prophets do attribute a divine nature and do ascribe divine functions to the Messiah. Indeed, the entire body of "results" of the "Old Liberal" criticism concerning the development of the Messianic hope—which it tended to relegate more and more completely to post-exilic times—has been hopelessly broken up.⁸⁰ It has again been made plain that the Messianic hope was aboriginal in Israel, and formed, indeed, in all ages the heart of Israelitish religion. In sequence to this, much of the disintegrating criticism of the documents which had been indulged in for the purpose of giving a semblance of versimilitude to the hypothesis of the late origin of the Messianic development, has become antiquated; the integrity and early date of sections and passages hitherto removed to a late period have been restored; and the unity of the Messianic hope in Israel, throughout all ages, has been vindicated,—so that, from the beginning down through the Apocalypses of the later Judaism and the songs of the earlier chapters of the Gospel of Luke, we see exhibited essentially a single unitary hope. In a passage written with great restraint, Herman Bavinck describes the effect produced by the introduction of the new view, thus.⁸¹

In place of the feverish efforts which were more and more ruling in the dominant school of literary criticism to remove all Messianic prediction to post-exilic times; it is now acknowledged that the pre-exilic prophets, not only themselves cherished such Messianic expectations, but also presuppose them among the people; nor have they themselves excogitated them and proclaimed them as novelties to the people; but they have received them from the past and are building on expectations which have

character and the original grounding of its kernel is certain. And its roots are set not in mythology but in the religion of Israel, in Israel's belief in the God of Sinai, to whom in the end the world must belong." So, p. 182: "The real root of the expectation of a Savior lies also here in the revelation act of Sinai. Here and here only could a foundation be laid for viewing the whole history under the point of sight of waiting for the appearance of the world-God, who is to fill the universe with His glory."

⁸⁰ Cf. what Sellin says, *Der alttestament. Prophetismus*, pp. 167-8.

⁸¹ *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*³, 1910, p. 249.

existed from ancient times and have been current in Israel. Accordingly this new tendency among Old Testament scholars, as good as altogether discards the earlier interpolation hypothesis and recognizes a high antiquity for all eschatological ideas concerning the day of the Lord, the destruction of enemies, the deliverance of the people, the appearance of the Messiah, the consummation of the kingdom of God, and the like, and in the figure of the Messiah, as presented in the Old Testament, permits to come again fully to their rights even the supernatural traits, such as the miraculous birth (Is. vii. 14; Mic. v. 1), the divine names (Is. ix. 5) and so forth. Numerous texts and pericopes, which were considered post-exilic by the earlier critics, now again rank as genuine, and the so-called Christology of the Old Testament finds itself thus once more restored more or less fully to its rights and its value.

Perhaps there is no passage which more immediately suggests itself, when we ask after Old Testament testimonies to the transcendence of the Messiah than Daniel's account of his great vision of one like unto a Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven (vii. 13, 14). So far as appears no doubt was felt as to the Messianic reference of this vision until modern times.⁸² Even the Rationalists, as Hengstenberg points out,⁸³ though with strong temptations to reject it, yet for the most part recognized its Messianic character. And even up to the present day, when it has become the "Liberal" tradition⁸⁴ that, by the "one like unto a son of man", not the Messiah but the Israelitish people is intended, not only does the original Messianic interpretation still hold its own, but can be spoken of still by S. R. Driver, for example, as "the current interpretation".⁸⁵ Perhaps Hermann Schultz and Eduard Riehm may be taken as fair

⁸² The solitary exceptions of Ephrem Syrus among the Church Fathers and of Abenezra among the Jews may be left out of account.

⁸³ *Christology*, iii, p. 83. He mentions De Wette, Bertholdt, Gesenius van Lengerke, Maurer.

⁸⁴ It is this that Sellin means when he says that the figure is "according to the dominant exposition simply a representation of the people of God" (*Heilandserwartung*, p. 70.)

⁸⁵ *The Book of Daniel* ("The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges") 1900, p. 102; cf. list of supporters of the two views on p. 108 note 4.

examples of how those "Liberals" who still cling to the interpretation of the vision of an individual, wish it to be understood. Schultz, who decides for this personal application only as probable, supposes⁸⁶ that Daniel conceived of the Messiah as a being dwelling with God in the heavens, like one of the angel-princes of whom he also speaks as like sons of men.⁸⁷ Riehm⁸⁸ will not allow even so much. He will not agree that there is in the vision any hint that the "one like unto a son of man" is of Divine or of angelic, or even in any sense of heavenly (as in Beyschlag's "heavenly man") nature. The prophet, he insists, gives no intimation of the origin of this Being, beyond the constant presupposition that he belongs with "the saints of the Most High". He is represented as being in heaven and coming thence "*only because* he is the representative and organ of the God of heaven", and a "superhuman character and a divine position and dignity" are thus "lent, as it were, to Him". That is to say we can learn from this passage only that this Being comes from God, in the sense that he is sent by God to do God's work in the world.

The element of truth in this reasoning lies in its refusal to separate the "one like unto a son of man" completely from humanity, as if he were presented as a purely heavenly Being, and thus dissevered wholly from the entire course of Messianic expectation heretofore, in which the Messiah uniformly appears in close connection with Israel from whom He springs. It is the more important to point out the inconsequence of the total transcendentalizing of the Messiah on the basis of this vision, that the novelty of the

⁸⁶ *Alttestamentliche Theologie*⁶, 1896, pp. 635 f.

⁸⁷ This is probably the ruling view among those "Liberals" who allow the personal interpretation. For example, A. Schweitzer, writes (*The Expositor*, Nov. 1913, p. 444): "In the Book of Daniel the view is taken that there is no longer a ruling Davidic family from which a ruler could be raised up to be Messiah. The author, therefore, expects that God will confer the supreme power in the coming world-age on an angelic Being who possesses human form and has the appearance of a 'son of man' (Dan. vii. 13-14)."

⁸⁸ *Messianic Prophecy*, p. 196.

vision in the history of the Messianic expectation lies precisely in its throwing up the transcendental element of the Messianic figure into such a strong light as apparently to neglect, if not quite to obscure, its human side. "Now", writes Sellin,⁸⁹ "the expectation here presented to us is new in so far as this Future Ruler appears in Daniel absolutely as a heavenly Being, borne on clouds, standing before the heavenly throne of God; that there is complete silence as to His human derivation; that He, although He also has human traits, is a heavenly Being; that, on the other hand, all actual earthly traits such as are always attributed by the prophets to the Savior, because He is born into this world, are stripped off. In this expectation of Daniel's all and every earthly human being is transcended; the Savior comes no longer from this world, no matter how miraculously given by God, but wholly and exclusively from the transcendental world". This side of the matter may be capable thus of exaggeration, but it is clearly hopeless to represent a figure in any measure so presented to us, as wholly human, as Riehm would fain do. If it must be held that room is left for human traits not here insisted upon, the traits which are insisted upon are obviously distinctly superhuman, or, we should rather say, distinctly divine. This is already apparent from his representation as coming with (or on) the clouds. It is always the Lord, as Hengstenberg already pointed out,⁹⁰ who appears with, or on, the clouds of heaven; none but the Lord of nature can ride on the clouds of heaven; and the clouds, as Michaelis says, "are characteristic of divine majesty". Julius Grill is quite right when he throws into emphasis⁹¹ that "majesty" is the one characteristic which is insisted upon in the "one like unto a son of man". He is not represented as coming

⁸⁹ *Heilandserwartung*, p. 72 f.

⁹⁰ *Christology*, III, 83; so also Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*², 1868, p. 85 f. Cf. Driver, *in loc.*: "with the clouds of heaven: in superhuman majesty and state."

⁹¹ *Untersuchungen über die Entstehung des vierten Evangeliums*, I, 1902, p. 52.

from heaven to earth (Holsten, Appel), or as going from earth to heaven, or as coming out of obscurity into manifestation (H. Holtzmann). What he is represented as doing is simply drawing nigh to the throne. "What is emphasized in Daniel vii. 13 is the immediate vicinity of God into which the 'one like unto a son of man' is brought", says Grill, and compares Ps. cx. 1, and Jer. xxx. 21. "It is", he says again,⁹² "a veritable coronation act which the author has seen and wishes to describe".

The investigation of the passage by Grill has apparently become the starting-point for a new movement of "Liberal" authors towards recognizing its reference to an individual figure. This does not appear to be due to any peculiar strength or special novelty in Grill's manner of prosecuting the discussion; the reasons which he presents for understanding the passage thus, are very much the same that have been repeatedly urged before. But he approaches the question from a new angle and his readers have been prepared to follow his suggestion by their participation in his general presuppositions. Grill himself thinks of a purely heavenly being as presented to us here, an angel, perhaps Michael, perhaps a higher Being still, "a most exalted personal intermediary between God and the world; and", he somewhat unexpectedly adds, "a transcendent prototype of the God-pleasing humanity ultimately to be realized in the people of the Most High". Nathaniel Schmidt had already⁹³ expressed a similar view, interpreting the man-like Being as an angel and more particularly as Michael, the guardian angel of Israel; and his view had attracted to itself Frank C. Porter.⁹⁴ In a later article⁹⁵ Schmidt restates his view, citing Grill in support of it in general, but declining to accept the somewhat incongruous addition by which Grill attempts to combine the two main interpretations of the passage—that the man-like Being is an exalted

⁹² P. 54.

⁹³ *Journal of Biblical Literature*, xix, 1900.

⁹⁴ Hastings' *B.D.*, IV, p. 260.

⁹⁵ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, 1903, p. 470 f.

heavenly personage and that he is the type of the saints of God. "Whether Michael or any other angel was ever thought of as the ideal Israelite", he declares to be doubtful. T. K. Cheyne⁹⁶ follows in Schmidt's steps, and, as was his wont, seeks to improve on him. Schmidt strongly repels the idea that Daniel's figure is the Messiah; to him this figure is distinctively a heavenly being,—angelic or more probably super-angelic, Michael or one higher still than Michael. To Cheyne,⁹⁷ he is both the Messiah, and "an angel, presumably Michael, the great prince-angel who defends the interests of the people of Israel,"—or rather Michael, the somewhat obscured representative of Marduk who was no angel but a God; in a word "a degraded (but an honorably degraded) deity", a "great superhuman (and originally divine) personage", "the heavenly Messiah" who, having played a great rôle in the creation of the world and the deliverance from Egypt (as the Angel of Jehovah) is in the last days to "redeem the world and mankind". In sharp contrast with Cheyne, Paul Volz,⁹⁸ while following Grill in rejecting the symbolical interpretation and seeing in the one "like unto a son of man" an individual being, is clear that Michael is not meant, nor any angelic being, but a simple man, the Lord-Messiah, the Lord of the new world, to whom is to be given the dominion of the world, and all the peoples and all the times. "He is certainly not the symbolical representative of the Kingdom of God, but the prince of this Kingdom. He is the representative (*Stellvertreter*) of God, to whom the power and honor and dominion belong; he stands, however, also in direct relation to the people of the seer, to the people Israel, his dominion is their dominion"—in short, he is the Messiah. Though he thus belongs to the category of man, he is not, however, forthwith to be assigned to the earthly sphere. He comes from heaven. The old myth of a primitive man comes into

⁹⁶ *Bible Problems*, 1904, pp. 213 ff.

⁹⁷ Pp. 73, 214, 222.

⁹⁸ *Jüdische Eschatologie*, 1903, pp. 101 f., 214 ff.

view here: a primitive man created as the opponent of the primitive beasts, the demonic monsters, who is to deliver the cosmos from them and secure the heavenly beings from their assaults. "This primitive Savior was brought forward, now, by the Apocalyptists for their eschatological purposes: Daniel recalls that man of whom the myth speaks and sees him in the vision; the Savior of the primitive age becomes the Savior of the last age, and the one as the other has to do with the beasts; the Apocalypse of Daniel, nevertheless, pays no further attention to the primitive existence of this man." According to Volz, then, Daniel's "one like unto a son of man" is, indeed, a transcendent being, but yet only a man, though a heavenly man: conceived on the lines of the primitive man and so far a reproduction of him; but not precisely that primitive man and therefore not necessarily preëxistent.

All this, now, Gressmann turns right as its head.⁹⁹ All investigators are agreed, says he with fine neglect of his colleagues, that in the text as it lies before us, the Man stands as a symbol of Israel, as the beasts do of the heathen kingdoms. But this is only a use to which Daniel has put a borrowed figure: "the originality of the reworker consists only in this—that he has reinterpreted the Man of Israel". Whatever else there is in the passage, we may safely employ for the reconstruction of the old myth, and adventuring on this path we find in the Man a parallel figure to the Messiah, who, according to the old Israelitish conception, was to stand at the beginning of the new age and all the peoples be subject to Him. He is, no doubt, an angel, but no common angel, the highest angel rather, the Being who is the greatest of all, next after only the Ancient of Days; hence He is not Gabriel or Michael—they are not high enough. We cannot give Him a name; we must be modest and say merely that this angel means that eschatological figure, whom everybody knows as the eschatological man which in the end of the days is to be made the Lord of the

⁹⁹ *Der Ursprung*, usw. p. 340.

world. In the heathen form of this myth, which lies behind the Jewish one, He was, of course, a God; and this God has only been degraded into an angel in consequence of Jewish monotheism. It was as an angel therefore that He came to Daniel; and Daniel turned Him into a symbol of Israel. The development thus proceeded in directly the opposite direction from what is commonly thought. Israel is not here represented as one like unto a son of man; but the man is represented as Israel.

Sellin¹⁰⁰ makes it his primary task to draw the teeth of Gressmann's mythology. He takes his start frankly from Gressmann's findings. It is true enough, he says, that the Messianic conception is wider than that of the Son of David; wider and older. We may see proofs of this all through the prophets. Witness what we are told in them of the birth of Immanuel from the Almah who was with child, of the travail of the Yoledhah, of the seven shepherds and eight princes of the fifth chapter of Micah, of the "Mighty God" and other great names of the ninth chapter of Isaiah, above all of the eating of milk and honey, the picture of the King of Paradise riding on the ass, and the like.¹⁰¹ But why represent these things as borrowed goods? Why, above all, think of Daniel's Man, who certainly was not invented by Daniel, but was already known to his readers, as a recent importation from heathendom? Rather, Daniel throws himself back on the prophets before him where we may find these things fragmentarily alluded to; as, for example, in Isaiah, and everywhere in the Old

¹⁰⁰ In Sellin's view, Dan. vii. 13, in the original Biography of Daniel, "referred to the proclamation of the Saviour as the Second Adam, as a heavenly man, free from all that is earthly, and to His kingdom"; but the later author of the Apocalypse of Daniel—that is, our Daniel—has transferred this to the whole people of God. So he explains in *Prophetismus*, p. 97, note 1. In the discussion in *Heilandserwartung*, pp. 70 ff., he deals with Daniel's presentation of "one like unto a son of man" as an individual figure without raising question of the composition of the passage.

¹⁰¹ *Die alttestamentliche Religion im Rahme der anderen altorientalischen*, 1908, p. 45.

Israelitish expectations of a Being coming out of the Divine sphere. What we have in Daniel is not something new to Israel, but the primæval Jewish expectation of a Savior newborn, stripped of this-world traits, and transformed into the sphere of the transcendental world.¹⁰²

So, the discussion goes on. But it does not remain without results. And the main result of it is, that assurance is rendered doubly sure that in the "one like unto a son of man" of Dan. vii. 13, we have a superhuman figure, a figure to whose superhuman character justice is not done until it is recognized as expressly divine. It was understood to be a superhuman figure by everyone who appealed to it and built his Messianic hopes upon its basis throughout the whole subsequent development of the Jewish Church.¹⁰³ Wherever, in the Apocalyptic literature we meet with the figure of the Son of Man, it is transcendently conceived.¹⁰⁴ When our Lord Himself derived from it His favorite self-designation of Son of Man,¹⁰⁵ He too took it over in a transcendental sense; and meant by applying it to Himself to present Himself as a heavenly Being who had come forth from heaven and descended to earth on a mission of mercy to lost men. On every occasion on which our Lord called Himself the Son of Man thus, He bears His witness to the transcendental character of the figure presented to Daniel. There is no reason apparent today why His judgment of the seer's meaning

¹⁰² *Heilandserwartung*, pp. 70 ff.

¹⁰³ Cf. A. Dillmann, *Alttest. Theologie*, p. 538: "Finally the whole exegetical tradition from the Book of Enoch (which is directly dependent on Daniel) on, has ever understood by this title the king of the kingdom. I cannot help holding that this interpretation is right. In this case we have not only the beginning of the development of the earthly kingdom of God into a βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν here, but also its head is designated as like an angelic being (for these are elsewhere in Daniel also designated אֱנִשׁ כְּבָר אֱנִשׁ), a preëxistent Being present already in heaven who in the fulness of the times will come and establish the eternal kingdom of heaven."

¹⁰⁴ Cf. W. Bousset, *Religion des Judentums*^s, p. 24 ff. (In ed. 2, pp. 301 f. the more relevant part of this statement is eliminated).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. H. J. Holtzmann, *Neutestament. Theologie*^s, I, p. 247: "The

should be revised. If by his "one like to a son of man" Daniel meant to bring before us the figure of an individual being, and that seems to us to be beyond question,—it is very certain that the individual the figure of whom he brings before us is superhuman, or rather Divine.

In attempting to illustrate the testimony of the Old Testament to the deity of the Messiah we have laid particular stress on the great declarations in Ps. xlv. 6, Is. ix. 6 and Dan. vii. 13. These are, as we have said, high lights shining out brightly on the surface of a pervasive implication. They are not the only points which shine out on its surface with special brilliancy. We might just as well have chosen to dwell, instead, on Ps. ii. or Ps. cx. or Mic. v. 2, or Jer. xxiii. 6 or Zech. xiii. 7 or Mal. iii. 1, and the like.¹⁰⁶ A selection, however, had to be made and we have endeavored to select those particular points on which the light seemed to shine with the purest illumination. We should be sorry to leave the impression, however, that the testimony of the Old Testament to the Deity of the Messiah is dependent upon these particular passages, and their fellows. The salient fact regarding it is that it is an essential element in the eschatological system of the Old Testament and is inseparably imbedded in the hope of the coming of God to His kingdom which formed the heart of Israelitish religion from its origin. We have only to free ourselves from the notion that the Messianic hope was the product of the monarchy and to realize that, however closely it becomes attached to the Davidic dynasty in one of its modes of ex-
reference of the term back to Dan. vii. 13 (already essayed by expositors of the Reformation period like Chemnitz and recommended by Ewald and Hitzig) is to-day the, at all events, most recognized and most assured result of the discussions of the 'Son of Man', vexed in so many points."

¹⁰⁶ E. König, *Offenbarungsbegriff*, II, p. 398, illustrating how the light of salvation breaks now and again through the veil of Old Testament conceptions, by which it is covered in the Old Testament announcements, observes (among other things) that "the superhumanness of the mediator grows ever clearer (Is. ix. 6 ff., xi. 1 ff.; Mat. v. 1)." Cf. Ottley, *Hastings' B. D.*, III, p. 459 f.

pression, it was an aboriginal element in the religion of Israel, to understand how little it can be summed up in the expectation of the coming of an earthly king. It is one of the chief merits of the new school of research that it is making this ever more and more clear.

Meanwhile, it is an unhappy fact that we may search in vain through many of the current treatises on the Messianic hope for intimations that it included the promise of a Divine Redeemer. It is much, indeed, if we find a hearty recognition that a Messianic figure occupied an essential place in it; at least during the larger space of the history of Israelitish religion. Even devout-minded students have been sometimes tempted to represent Messianic prophecy as fulfilled "not so much in the personality and work of Christ as in the religion of Christ".¹⁰⁷ When the person of the Messiah is given its rights, however, as the center of Messianic prophecy, it is still often insisted that He was conceived purely as a human being,—as Trypho, Justin Martyr's collocutor in the famous dialogue, contended in the second century. At the best, we get such a concession as A. Dillmann's. "We have then," says he,¹⁰⁸ "in this whole series of Messianic prophesies certainly the portrait of a sovereign of the kingdom, endowed with Divine attributes and powers, but nowhere a God or God-man; on the other hand, however, the Book of Daniel advances to a still higher, metaphysical or mystical view of His nature . . . an already existing being preëxisting in the heavens, who in the fulness of the times comes and establishes the kingdom of the saints."¹⁰⁹ On this A.B. Davidson makes less than no advance, when he declares¹¹⁰—shall we not say, evidently not without some misgivings?—"In Is. ix. xi. it is not taught that Messiah is God, but that Jehovah is fully present

¹⁰⁷ Cf. F. H. Woods, *The Hope of Israel*, 1896.

¹⁰⁸ *Alttestament. Theologie*, pp. 538-9.

¹⁰⁹ The schematization of the Messianic hope worked out from this point of view is very clearly presented by C. F. Kent, *The Sermons, etc., of Israel's Prophets*, 1910, pp. 45-47.

¹¹⁰ Hastings' *B.D.*, IV, p. 124 f.; similarly, *Old Testament Prophecy*, 1903, pp. 367-8.

in Him. The general eschatological idea was that the presence of Jehovah in person among men would be their salvation. The prophet gives a particular turn to that general idea, representing that Jehovah shall be present in the Davidic king. The two are not identified but Jehovah is fully manifested in the Messiah." The sufficient answer to such comments is that they are obviously minifying in intention; they are endeavors not to concede too much where concession is seen to be nevertheless necessary. We do not wonder that Davidson feels constrained to add: "The passage goes very far". Pity it is that he could not see his way to go the whole length that it goes.

Happily, however, there have always been some who, standing less under the blight of the current critical theories, have been able to see more clearly. Thus, for example, F. Godet has seen his way to declare¹¹¹ that "the idea of the Divinity of the Messiah" is "the soul of the entire Old Testament"; and, after adducing Isaiah's designation of Him as "Wonderful", "Mighty God", and Micah's discrimination of His historical birth at Bethlehem from His prehistoric birth "from everlasting", and Malachi's calling Him "Adhonai coming to His temple", to sum up in these sentences: "There was in the whole of the Old Testament from the patriarchal theophanies down to the latest prophetic visions, a constant current towards the incarnation as the goal of all these revelations. The appearance of the Messiah presents itself more and more clearly to the view of the prophets as the perfect theophany, the final coming of Jehovah." It is upon this thread of Old Testament teaching, he goes on to remark—broken off in the Rabbinical development—that Jesus laid hold in His assertion of the dignity of His person as Messiah. These words might well have been written today; they express admirably the new insight which we have obtained unto the nature and development of Old Testament eschatology.

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¹¹¹ *Commentary on Luke*, E. T., II, p. 251.