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The messianic hope in the Old Testament

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S E N I O R T H E S I S

Boston University School of Theology

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THE MESSIANIC HOPE

as in

THE OLD TESTAMENT ~~THE OLD TESTAMENT~~

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William Talbott Jones

1918.

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Prof. Albert C. Knudson

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS.

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INTRODUCTION.

1. Meaning of Messianic Hope.

- (1) Personal Messiah
- (2) Messianic Age
- (3) Chief Elements in Messianic Hope
 - a. Thought of the Judgment
 - b. Thought of the New Age.
 - c. Idea of the Redemption of Israel
 - d. Personal Messiah

2. Origin of Messianic Hope.

- (1) Current View
- (2) Reaction against Current View
- (3) Question of foreign origin of Messianic Hope
 - a. Conclusion as to validity of this view
- (4) Derivation of the Term Messiah in O.T.

I. FIRST STAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MESSIANIC HOPE;
THE IDEAL KING.

1. Origin of this Conception

- (1) Conception of Ideal King based upon II Sam.
7:12-17.
- (2) Idea given dynamic by David's successful reign

2. Contribution of Writing Prophets to this Conception

(1) Day of Yahweh

(2) New Age

(3) Redemption of Israel

(4) Personal Messiah

a. Relation to Davidic Messiah

b. Origin and belief in Personal Messiah

c. Personal Messiah in Pre-Exilic Prophets

3. Summary statement of Writing Prophets Conception
of Ideal King relative to Messianic Hope.

II. SECOND STAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MESSIANIC
HOPE; THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF YAHWEH.

1. Meaning of the title Suffering Servant

2. Origin of the Idea

(1) Deutero-Isaiah

(2) Jeremiah

3. Striking contrast between the Servant Israel,
and Servant in Servant Passages.

(1) The question of Individual and collective
interpretation of Servant Passages

(2) Attempts to account for apparent contra-
dictory Passages

a. Prof. Sellin's View

b. Value of the theory

= = = = =

4. Importance of this conception of the Suffering
Servant

(1) Set Fourth in Prof. Knudson's Statemtn.

III. THIRD STAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MESSIANIC HOPE;
THE SON OF MAN.

1. Origin of the Idea

2. Meaning of the Idea

3. Difference of opinion among scholars as to
correct interpretation of the Prophecy.

(1) Question of Symbolical Usage

(2) Question of Personal Messianic Usage

4. The Question as to Pre-Existence of Messiah be-
fore His appearing.

(1) Rabbinic view

(2) Harnack's view

5. Distinction furnished by Dnl. 7:13-14 between
the human mediator of the Divine rule and God.

6. General Conclusion.

(1) Scriptural history reveals signs of Divine
Providence to all men

(2) A personal view of the field and material
considered.

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THE MESSIANIC HOPE

The most striking and characteristic feature of the religion of Israel was the Messianic Hope: the belief in the advent of a Messiah or Christ (the anointed of God), the overthrow or annihilation of the heathen, the punishment of the wicked, and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. The foundations of this doctrine were laid in the most ancient period of Hebrew history. This unique hope seems to have possessed almost from its earliest beginnings a two fold meaning. The first, is that of a Personal Messiah. The Hebrew nation in the midst of its much suffering and disappointments longed for the coming of a king, grand and glorious, who should be the pride of the nation and the envy of all the world. The second, took the form of a Messianic age. Sometime, not in the distant future the Israelitish nation would again be lifted from a humiliated position to that of the highest honor and glo-

ry. This latter sense is the one in which it is most generally used by scholars today. Synonymous with eschatology of the nation.

The chief elements in the Messianic Hope centered around four ideas. (1) The thought of the Judgment. The conception of the Judgment was somewhat vague and unsettled until the day of Amos. He lifted the idea to its lofty position in the religion of the Hebrew people. (2) The thought of the New Age. This idea was also very vague and it was gradually extended farther and farther into the future. Nevertheless a better day was destined to come. (3) The Redemption of Israel. The prophet Hosea added dynamic to this idea. It became a message of hope at the close of his time. Then came Isaiah, the great prophet of faith, with his doctrine of the Remnant. Then followed his Messianic prophecies to which were added the prophecies of the prophets that followed in their long descending line. (4) The thought of the Personal Messiah. This idea centered at first around the house of David but finally became separated from the Royal

line. However some scrolars today contend the two conceptions are so different that they must have had different origins. All four of these elements sustain a certain relation to one another. But the last is the most distinct conception. However sometimes no person is mentioned as in the case of Isa.53 and Dan.7:3.

The origin of the Messianic Hope has led to a great difference of opinion among scholars. In recent times there is a tendency to hold that it had a late development. It is contended that not until after the Exile did it have a distinct place in Old Testament religion. Ezekiel is claimed to be the father of the eschatological idea. It is further argued that the idea was a transient and subsidiary element in the religion of the Old Testament. It is, according to this school, an embarrassment to Christian thought. The ethical and social teaching is all that is essential to preserve. But there is a strong reaction against this view. This set in about the year 1895-6 when Gunkel pub-

lished his book on the subject. This idea was worked out in a more thorough going way by Gressmann about the same time. Silene had great influence in changing thought along eschatological lines. This school held that the Messianic Hope not only had a place in Pre-Exilic prophecy, but it goes back nearly to the beginning of Israel's history. The message of the prophet will have back of it a greater power, they urged, if we see back of them an Eschatological Hope. There is still another theory as to the origin of the Messianic Hope. It has been held by some scholars that the Hope is of foreign birth. Gressmann says, "the idea of a catastrophic end of things must have come from foreign soil." It has been argued of late that the Hope could not have originated in Palestine. Such views are strengthened by the discovery of certain parallels in Egypt. The first discovery is the Papyrus, by Golemischeff. It dates back to about 2000 B.C. It purports to come from 2930 B.C. It was written as a glorification of Amenemhe I, founder

of the 12th dynasty. There was a common idea in Egypt that the kings had divine origin. This Papyrus spoke of the king as the Son of God about to introduce the Messianic Age. The second Papyrus contrasts the reigning king with the ideal king. He is the shepherd of all men. There is no evil in his heart. There is no prophecy that he will come but there is the suggestion that it is hoped that he might come. There are striking similarities between this and the prophets of the Old Testament. The two most prominent are, the thought of Promises and the Perfect Ruler. On the other hand there are great differences to be found. Israel knows nothing of a Primeval Paradise King. The monarchy in Egypt went back to the beginning of human life. Gressmann says, "the idea could not have come from Israelites, since they were not accustomed to deify their kings." He thought that Melchisdec was the Messiah or the Messianic King of the Canaanites. "The Jews transferred to David the conceptions they found among the Canaanites." But it

is not necessary to account for the Messianic Hope in this way. The Hope arises in all peoples. It grows out of native discontent with existing conditions. It may also arise out of superstitions about idealizing what is distant either in space or time. It is not necessary to hold that the Hope sprung up in any one place. It may have sprung up in various places, as in Egypt, Bablyon or Israel, and the form it assumed in each place may have influenced the others. Still there are elements in Israel's Messianic Hope which have no parallel in any other land. Such ideas as the Divine world plan, Divine universal moral government, and the Coming of the Kingdom of God cannot be found among any other peoples.

Let us now turn our attention to the Messianic Hope in Israel alone. Tracing the idea back to its origin we find that the term Messiah is a transcription of *Μεσσίας*, *Messias*, the Greek representation of the Aramaic. *Messiah* is thus a modification of the Greek form of the word, according to the Hebrew.

The term was used in the Old Testament of priests and kings, who were consecrated to office by ceremony of anointing. It is applied to the priest only as an adjective, "the anointed priest." Lev. 4:3. While its substantive use is restricted to the king; he only is called the "Lord's anointed", Thus Saul is spoken of in I Sam. 24:6-10. David is mentioned in the same manner in II Sam. 19:21, Zedekiah in Lam. 4:20. In the Psalms the king is designated as "mine", "thine", "his anointed." Even Cyrus, in Isa. 45:1 is mentioned as being chosen and commissioned by Jehovah to carry out His purpose with Israel. Some think the singular "mine anointed" in Heb. 9:13 denotes the whole people, but the Hebrew text is somewhat obscure, and the reference may be to the king. The plural of the substantive is used by the Patriarchs, who are called "mine anointed ones," (Ps. 105:15; 16:22) as being Jehovah's chosen, consecrated servants, whose persons were inviolable. It is to be noted that "Messiah" as a special title is never applied in the

Old Testament to the unique king of the future except perhaps Dan. 9:25 f, a difficult passage the interpretation of which is very uncertain.. It was the later Jews of the post-prophetic period, who guided by a true instinct, first used the term in a technical sense.

Having briefly viewed the Messianic Hope, relative to its meaning, chief elements and origin in the light of recent investigation we shall now give attention to the three stages in the development of the Old Testament Idea of the Messiah.

I. In the first stage the Messiah was conceived as an Ideal King. This conception grew from the buoyancy and strength of a youthful nation. Through this Ideal King as head of the nation Jehovah could most readily work out His redemptive plans. But the Kingdom of Israel was a theocracy. In earlier times Moses, Joshua, and the Judges, who were raised up by Jehovah to guide His people at different crises in their history, did not claim to exercise authority apart from their

Divine commission. Nor was the relation of Jehovah to the nation as its real ruler in any way modified by the institution of the monarchy. It was by His Spirit that the king was qualified for the righteous government of the peoples, and by His power that he would become victorious over all enemies. The passage on which the idea of the Messianic king who would rule in righteousness and attain universal dominion was founded in Nathan's oracle to David in II Sam. 7 - 11ff. In contrast to Saul, from whom the kingdom had passed away, David would never want a descendant to sit on the throne of Israel. How strong an impression this promise of the perpetuity of his royal house had made on David is seen in his last words (II Sam. 23) ; and to this "everlasting covenant, and sure" the spiritual minded in Israel reverted in all after ages.

The fact that the many long and discouraging struggles, through which the Israelites had passed, finally culminated during the long reign of David called the attention of all Hebrews to the Royal House of David. His

brilliant victories led the people to look upon him as the great warrior of Yahweh. Peter's says , "Because Israelite dominion culminated in David, because Solomon ruled for Judah only, and with his son the kingdom was divided and its power diminished, never to be regained, therefore from this time onward, in combination with the doctrine of Israel's peculiar and indefeasible relation to Yahweh and of its covenant with Him, the kingdom of David and David himself play an important part in the Messianic belief."

Just how far this idea influenced the shaping of the Messianic Hope one may get some conception by a comparison with the Arthurian legend of the Britons, or the Charlemagne legend of the Germans. The return of a national hero was longed for, and even looked for. David was the great king, the anointed of God in the past, to whom the people looked back in times of distress and calamities. They did not so much look for the return of David as for the appearance of some national leader who should bring back the kingdom and glories

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of David. "To the people at large", says Peters, "this conception of a restored Davidic kingdom, the simplest and crudest form of the Messianic Hope, always remain the most intelligent and the most appealing form of that hope." As Yahweh had been from of old the king of Israel, so David, who had brought the Ark of the Covenant to Zion, endeavored to realize the ideal.

This is the form that the Messianic Hope had assumed when the writing prophets appeared. It was the firm conviction of the prophets that the royal house of David, had an indestructible support in God's settlement upon Zion and His covenant with David. Amos and Hosea discerned there the point of crystallization for the future kingdom of Yahweh. Amos, however, alludes in more general terms to the reestablishment of the tabernacle of David, whose rule is again to be established over the lands promised to him. Amos 9:11. Hosea speaks more individually of "the king David", of the future (3:5) under whose rule the whole people will unite (1:11) and around

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whom will gather those scattered and driven from the land by the judgment. In Hosea preparation is made for the portrayal of a Messiah in the sense of an ideal future king who will fully realize the sublime assurances of grace because he will be entirely worthy of them. Isaiah's expectations were founded upon the house of David, For this reason they revolve about a double center, Yahweh's seat in Zion and a particular king who endowed with all the gracious gifts of a ruler blessed by God, is to reestablish the throne of his father. This ruler appears vaguely to the prophet in Isa. XII; he will be born in the deepest humiliation of the royal house of David, for Immanuel is not some undetermined child who was then to be born, but the future possessor of the land. (8:8 cf 8:10 with 9:6) From this time the figure of the descendent of David becomes continually clearer and larger to the prophet. The super-human attributes which are heaped upon this king in 9:6,7 should not be taken as mere hyperbole, for nothing was farther from Isaiah's mind than excessive exaltation

of human greatness. The prophet would have sternly rejected any mixture of human and divine honors, such as was habitual with Assyrians, Babylonians and Egyptians. The sublime predicates applied to the scion of David can be understood only as meaning that he recognized in this future ruler a wonderful indwelling of God, and this affords the answer to the question as to how the texts regarding the heir to Davidic dignity can agree with the saying of the same prophet wherein there is no mention of this human king, but only of Yahweh's sublime self-manifestation in Zion. This rule of Yahweh is the essential and most intimate part of the divine plan for the future. The son of David is only a organ, though a pure and worthy organ, of the invisible ruler. Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah, also described the coming son of David as a mysterious, sublime figure, full of the Divine, ruling with infinite beatitude and peace. He, too, makes this ruler in his lofty majesty proceed from humble surroundings in David's ancestral home at Bethlehem. Mi-

cah, also, prophecies concerning Zion as God's seat, where Yahweh will reveal himself to all nations. In the prophecies of Isaiah regarding foreign nations there is again a remarkable confirmation of this universal rule of Yahweh from Zion as well as of the idealized human kingship there; Egypt as well as Tyre will do homage to the God of Israel, and the Moabites will seek protection and justice at the gracious throne of David.

At first appearance, the teaching of Amos seems almost anti-Messianic, but in fact they bear strong testimony to the existence of the Messianic expectation in his time. This is especially true in relation to the expectation of the great Day of Yahweh. In this day Yahweh will hold, assizes, judge and overthrow the nations of their enemies, and bring about in its completeness, the fulfilment of the Covenant and possession of the land of Canaan unmolested by all foes. This conception almost reversed the current view. The Jews expected a Day of light for themselves and darkness for their enemies. But Amos

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preached that Divine justice would be meted out to the Jews as well as to their enemies. This was like a bolt out of a clear sky to them. Whether this strange turn in events was to be carried out at the hand of Yahweh himself or at the hand of some earthly king is not quite so plain. The passage (IX: 2ff) in which Amos refers to the king of the Davidic line is now generally regarded as a later addition. At least it is not too much to say that Amos made an important contribution to the idea of the Messianic Hope by this new element in the Day of Yahweh.

It is to be noted, however, that this doom prophesied by Amos was only local. It had to do only with Israel. The most important step was left for Zephaniah to take. He presented an impending doom not only to Israel by means of foreign invasion but to the whole world, both Israelites and heathen, both men and birds, fish, etc., It was a universal catastrophe. Still, some hold that the thought of Universal Doom did not originate with either Amos or Zephaniah. Their

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arguments are based upon several considerations. It is held that the idea is not characteristic with Zephaniah as he showed no capacity for constructive thought in other ways. Besides it seems rather vague with him. He gives no reason for its universality. The idea is really implied in the 8th century prophets. From such reasoning it is concluded the universal conception did not begin with either of these prophets. Yet still others claim the idea of Doom did not originate with even the 8th century prophets. This view is based upon the incidental and indefinite way in which they refer to it. This implies the idea was already known before their day. Then we must conclude, from the information now at hand, that the idea is found in the pre-prophetic period. The idea in its simplest form was full of religious significance and Amos gave it a more distinctly ethical character. Yahweh was about to assert the moral basis of the universe.

With Ezekiel we also enter the field of Eschatology. His views are somewhat more

fully developed than his predecessors. The Day of Yahweh develops into the picture of the armies of Gog, a summing up of the hosts of evil, which are overwhelmed by the might of Yahweh. After this comes the reestablishment of the idealized kingdom. But Ezekiel cannot conceive of the kingdom without a king, and this kingship is not entirely unrelated to the Ideal King who shall rule under the care of Yahweh. After Ezekiel's time during the remaining years of the exile, the hope of a pre-eminent king of David's house naturally disappears. But it is resuscitated at the restoration. It seemed almost impossible for the people to think of the restored kingdom apart from the Davidic line of kings. The immediate occasion of its revival was furnished by Haggai in the person of Zerubbabel, a prince of the house of David is made by Jehovah, His signet-ring, inseparable from Himself and the symbol of His authority. In the new theocracy, however, Zachariah places the Messianic ruler in the background and brings forward the priest as the sign of

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the Coming Branch(Zach. 3:8) . Still we have the unigue prophecy of the author of Zach 9;9 who pictures the Messiah as coming not on a splendid charger like a warrior king, but upon the foal of an ass, righteous and victorious, yet lowly and peaceful, strong by the power of God to help and save. There is no mention of the Messianic King in Joel or Malachi; but there are references in both the earlier and later Psalms relative to events in the lives of the kings or the history which prove that the promise made to David was not forgotten, and they point to one who would fulfill all expectations of an Ideal King in the grandest style.

The thought of the Personal Messiah should be considered at this point. The conception of a personal Messiah is very closely related to the Davidic Messiah or the Ideal King. There is quite a difference of opinion as to the origin. Some think the Messianic prophecy was uttered during the reign of Ahab 734 B. C. Others are sure that it did not arise until after Israel did not have an exile

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king. But quite naturally it was thought that David would return immediately. The idea must have originated shortly after David's death instead of two or three centuries later. It is sometimes argued that the idea would have been impossible before the time of Saul and David. But this presupposes ignorance of the outside world with their kings. The idea of the Personal Messiah was held by Pre-Exilic Prophets. Amos and Hosea refer to it in the later part of their periods. The idea is quite prominent with Isaiah. He would come soon and establish the righteous will of God. Isa. 11:5, Jer. 23:6, Mic. 5:1-4.

Up to this time it is clear that in the vision of the prophets, as well as in the belief of the common people, the Messianic kingdom was a kingdom of the not remote future, a glorified Davidic kingdom, or a glorified theocratic kingdom or republic. It is with Jeremiah that we find this kingdom pushed into the more remote future. Yet he is as clear as the former prophets in his belief in the fulfilment of the Davidic ideal,

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the restoration of David's kingdom glorified, ruled by a king of David's line. So we find a general belief in the restoration of the Ideal kingdom or a sort of theocratic republic with either Yahweh himself as ruler, or else a human representative commissioned or anointed by Him who shall gather up not only the glories of the past history of Israel but shall extend into the future a reign of renowned glory and justice.

II. The Suffering Servant of Yahweh. The Messianic Hope did not receive its highest expression in the Messiah, but in the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. He was the agent through whom divine salvation was to be brought into the world. It is a question as to whether the Messianic Hope was connected with this idea or not. But this is not so important as the question that it was the way that the Kingdom was to be introduced. The Suffering Servant was the agent through whom God's Kingdom was to be realized.

The most striking contribution of the writer or writers of Deutero-Isaiah to

the Messianic Hope is the conception of the perfect servant, the ideal Israel, atoning for the sins of Israel by his sufferings. This representation runs through the earlier chapters and culminates in chapter 53. Submission to the will of God is with him so complete and so thoroughly unselfish in contradistinction to the obstinacy of the people, that he endures without resistance the extreme of humiliation, the bitterest suffering, and death, although he has in no wise deserved it. Precisely through such patient endurance of the unbearable does he fulfill his all-embracing mission and move onward to his exaltation. We have here the same conception which the other prophets have set forth, of the need of a purging away of sin, a reformation so complete as to constitute a break with the sinful past. And we have also the same conception of a purified remnant which appears in Isaiah. But the combination of conceptions produces something entirely new. The servant (that is, ideal Israel) represents also in his attitude the conception set forth

by Jeremiah. He does not strive nor cry out, but waits in patient obedience, submitting to the violence of external foes and the evil-doing of the sinful within the nation. It is quite clear that Jeremiah's personality as well as his teaching made a profound impression upon this writer, and had much to do with the development of the servant idea which he sets forth.

Whatever may be the difference between the appearance of this generally rejected and despised "servant of Yahweh" and the glorious king whose picture has been drawn Isaiah 9 and ii, and Micah IV, there exists an intimate relationship between them. De-litzsch, therefore, is quite right in calling this servant, "the mediator of salvation as prophet, priest, and king in the same person." It is also true that there is no lack of testimony in favor of the external lowliness of the God-chosen prince in the earlier Messianic utterances. In Isa. XI, and elsewhere, the Messiah grows up in the lowliest surroundings. If Zach.XII - XIV, was composed before the

exile, not only was the synthesis between the royal and the prophetic vocation already completed, but the chastisement and the death of the trusted companion of God, of the true shepherd of his people, had also been predicted. It is the bitter sorrow over his death which brings the saving change of heart among the people. It will be observed that the idea of the ineffaceable relation of kinship, of eternal love between Yahweh and Israel, as a result of which Yahweh cannot cast off nor desert His people, is prominent in the Deutero-Isaianic conception; but this writer represents a return of that love and affection by a holy kernel in Israel itself. After the Babylonian exile Messianic prophecy revives both in a narrower and a broader sense. Haggai and Zachariah at first had in view the rebuilding of the temple as the place where Yahweh would reveal himself more sublimely than ever before. But this future revelation of the invisible God cannot be separated from the elevation of the house of David, nor from the appearance of the "sprout"

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of this race, which, springing from such small beginnings, is to complete the divine structure on Zion and unite the royal with the priestly dignity for the blessing of his people. Malachi, with alluding to this personality, speaks of the coming "angel of Yahweh" who will sit in judgment on his people; and, as regards human instruments, he thinks only of an "Elias", who will prepare the way for him.

The representation of the Servant Israel differs very strikingly from that of the Servant found in the so-called Servant passages, Isa. 42:1-7: 49:1-9a: 50:4-9:52:13 to 53:12; and possibly 61:1-3. These prophecies are the most important and also the most difficult in the book of Isaiah. Great diversity of opinion prevails with reference to their origin and interpretation. Cornill expresses his appreciation of these passages in a rather unique manner. "I should like", he says, "to see the man whose head would not spin around like a top from surveying these opinions which run through all possibly per-

mutations, and contradict one another at all conceivable points." There are two main questions around which the controversy centers: were these passages written by Deutero-Isaiah or not? and is the Servant referred to here to be understood as an individual or interpreted collectively? Some scholars hold that the arguments in favor of assigning these passages to another hand are not very strong. "Those based on rhythm and style" says Knudson, "have no independent force; and those based on content do not take adequate account of the points of contact between the Servant-passages and the rest of the book." Viewing the book of Deutero-Isaiah as a whole these prophecies seem necessary to complete his teaching. It seems natural that there should be a human agent through whom Israel's inward or moral renewal should be effected, since Cyrus is the human instrument of her external redemption. And this is provided in the Suffering Servant. As these passages contain the richest religious thought of the whole book and throw new light upon all the other prophecies,

leading scholars agree with Budde in saying, "to eliminate them would be to gouge out the eyes of the book".

The question as to whether the Servant is to be interpreted collectively or as an individual is a more difficult one. At first sight the Servant is pictured as if he were an individual. This view is based upon those passages which seem to distinguish him clearly from Israel. In them we find that he is to be "a covenant of the people" (42:6; 49:6); he is "to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel (49:6; and has been cut off because of the transgression of 'my people'" (53:8). But over against this view, there is one very important passage (49:3) that directly identifies him with Israel. This is the view favored by the context as a whole. And as there is no statement to the contrary, it seems most natural to interpret the Servant-passages in the same light.

There have been some few attempts to account for these apparently contradictory passages. Professor Sellin has presented an

interesting and ingenious scheme to this end. According to his theory the Servant-passages were written by Deutero-Isaiah about 560 B.C. and they and they referred originally to Jehoiachim, who after thirty years of confinement was released on that year, and elevated to a position above that of the kings of Babylon. Jehoiachim, being of the Davidic line, on his release, awakened the hope that the Messianic expectations of the nation would be realized in him. And when Deutero-Isaiah consequently idealized his life and interpreted his long sufferings and death as an atonement for the sins of the people, it gave a new and higher meaning to the Messianic idea. But this new awakened hope was crushed by the death of Jehoiachim and the later appearance of Cyrus. Through Cyrus the delivery of Israel seemed near, so the prophet simply transferred to the people the Messianic ideal. And in so doing he put his old prophecies in a context which made them refer to the nation instead of an individual.

This theory, if it has no other value,

emphasizes the Messianic character of the Suffering Servant. To those who deny that the Servant was in any proper sense a Messianic figure, it is to be replied that such a view is very superficial and mechanical. The essential nature of the Messiah was the ideal personage through whom the kingdom of God was to be ushered into the world. The Suffering Servant is as truly Messianic as any royal character in the Old Testament. It may be properly concluded that Isaiah 53 is as truly a reference to the life of Christ as is to be found in any other Old Testament passage, for the Suffering Servant was in any case an ideal figure, no matter to whom the idea was originally attached.

This conception of the Suffering Servant is of very great importance. It furnishes the loftiest religious ideal of the Old Testament. The significance of such a conception of the Suffering Servant for the Messianic Hope is clearly and forcibly stated in the following paragraph by Professor Knudson, "Not only did he have the high and almost u-

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nique mission of being a light to the Gentiles (49:6), not only was he tender and sympathetic in nature (42:3), not only was he persistent in the face of discouragement (42:4; 49:4; 50:4b), not only was he patient in tribulation (50:6; 53:7); his life was a sacrifice for the sins of others, and a sacrifice voluntarily borne. Men estimated him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But it was for their transgressions that he was wounded, for their iniquities that he was bruised. The chastisement of their peace was upon him, and with his stripes they were healed. Jehovah laid on him the iniquity of them all (53:4-6). This was the divinely chosen method of redeeming Israel and of redeeming the world. Through the suffering and final exaltation of the innocent Servant the divine justice and love were to be so exhibited that men would acknowledge their guilt and turn in penitence to God. In this conception we have the high-water mark of Old Testament spirituality. And there is nothing superior to it in the New Testament. The only difference is

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that what remained a pure ideal in the Old Testament became an actuality in the New."

III. The third stage in the development of the Messianic Hope is expressed in the title, the "Son of Man." This new form of the Messianic Hope appears in the book of Daniel, which was written to encourage the Jewish people to steadfastness during ~~during~~ the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Here the apocalyptic idea of the Messiah appears for the first time in Jewish literature. The coming ruler is represented, not as a descendent of the house of David, but as a person in human form and of super-human character, through whom God is to establish His sovereignty upon the earth. In the prophet's vision (Dan.7:13f) one like unto a son of man comes with the clouds of heaven, and is brought before the ancient of days, and receives an imperishable kingdom, that all peoples should serve him. His power is an everlasting power that shall not be taken away, and his kingdom shall not be destroyed. "The person who appears here

as son of man is interpreted by non-catholics as representing the Messianic kingdom, but par excellence the Messianic King" says C. Ah-erne.

This view points to the fact that scholars are by no means agreed in their interpretation of the prophecy. In support of the view that the "one like unto a son of man" is a symbol for the Ideal Israel, appeal is made to the interpretation given of the vision in vs. 18, 22, 27, according to which dominion is given to the "saints of the Most High." Further, as the four heathen kingdoms are represented by the brute creation, it would be natural for the higher power, which is to take their place, to be symbolized by the human form.

But strong reasons, may be urged on the other hand, for the personal Messianic interpretation of the passage. A distinction seems to be made between "one like unto a son of man," and the saints of the Most High in verse 21, the saints being there represented as the object of persecution from the lit-

tolerated, in the Rabbinic schools, we must conclude that any pre-existence of the Messiah before his manifestation to men which they thought of, was only such as was consistent with a previous human birth.

Harnack asserts that, as a way of representing to themselves the Divine foreknowledge, the Jews were in the habit of supposing that every important person or thing which has successively appeared or is to appear on earth has first existed in heaven, and that such a heavenly pre-existence was assumed in the case of the Messiah in accordance with this mode of thought. But G. Dalman, the chief expert in Jewish literature among recent writers, emphatically denies that this was a Jewish, or at all events a Palestinian, principle. He argues that the familiar instances of the heavenly prototypes of the holy city and the temple establish it. "It would be rash for us", he says, "to imagine it in the case of persons and objects with which it was not plainly associated." The older Rabbinism at least

seems to have contented itself with the idea of the pre-existence of the name of Messiah. (Ps. 72:17)

The distinction between the human mediator of the divine rule and God, the Most High, is brought out more strongly in Dan.7:13-14 than in Chapter II. "I beheld in visions of the night, and behold, one came like a Son of Man with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and was brought before him. And authority was given him, and glory and kingship, and all peoples and nations and tongues shall serve him. His authority is an everlasting authority, which passes not away, and his kingship one that is not destroyed." After God who has always determined the fate of nations and men, has held the final judgment on the powers, in which they lose all their dominion, which is of perishable nature, the true ruler approaches, for whom the kingdom is designed. In opposition to the beasts (not to the angels, of Ezek. 1:26; Dan. 10:16, 18), he appears in human form, human in as-

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pect. This implies his spiritual and ethical elevation above those world monarchs. Whereas the world-power is animal, i.e. governed by savage, sensuous, impure and sinful impulses and passions, the future belongs to a power not threatened in aspect, like the world-powers grim with horns and teeth, but uniting true dignity and greatness with superior spiritual energy, a ruler who, as true Son of man, throughly and truly fulfils man's proper and highest destiny of ruling in God's name on earth as God's image. Here at the end prophecy acquires the vast range it had at the beginning. The Messiah, the God, chosen ruler, will not only be true David, exhibiting the God-anointed One in His consummation, not merely the true Israel (Isa. 40-66), realizing fully and finally the vocation of this people, but the true Son of Man, verifying in full both the high vocation of humanity and the position assigned it by God.

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In conclusion it is not too much to say, whatever view is taken of the Messian-

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ic prophecy, that the history which we have been tracing is full of the signs of Divine Providence. The whole religious history of Israel down to the time of Him whom Christians believe in as the Christ; and in a special manner the teachings of the prophets, formed a most remarkable preparation for His coming. It remains as true as ever, and criticism and historical investigation only confirm it, that the Scriptures were in reality full of Him, and that, in proportion as men had entered into their spirit, they must have been able to receive him. (Jer. 5:38,39) It is still legitimate as ever to regard types and ideals which were first fully realized in Him as divinely intended to foreshadow Him. And if the method in which Israel was trained in its great hope, even while in many respects unique, was more analogous to that in which truth has ordinarily been unfolded to mankind, permitting a larger amount of illusion and error on their part than has sometimes been supposed, it may for this very reason be

the more instructive.

Personally , I believe that the Messianic Hope of the Old Testament is a necessary and vital element. It is not a mere "fringe" of Old Testament teaching. "It is an integral part." The lofty ethical Idealism of the Prophets would have been impossible apart from this idea. We may go farther still to say that the Idealism of Jesus was founded upon this conception. Thus it becomes very evident that the modern conception of eternal life is closely and vitally related to the Messianic Hope of the Old Testament.

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