

Palestine, in which apparently many foreigners, especially Sidonians, had settled; hence called (Isa ix. 1 [viii. 23 Heb.]) "the District of the nations," and, more briefly, "the Galil," as here and xxi. 32; 1 Kings ix. 11 ("the land of the Galil"); 2 Kings xv. 29.

xxii. 11. *In the forefront of for over against.* The Hebrew preposition implies that the altar was on the same side of Jordan as the land of Canaan: <sup>1</sup> comp. viii. 33, where it is rendered *in front of* (*i.e.* on the slopes of), not on the mountain opposite, as "over against" seemed to suggest.

24. *Carefulness for fear.* The word denotes anxiety, concern; 1 Sam. ix. 5 ("take thought for,"—*not* "caring"); Ps. xxxviii. 11 ("sorry"); Ezek. iv. 16; xii. 18 f.

## ERRATUM.

In the notes on Exodus, p. 83, lines 4 and 5, the words *hawah* and *hayah* should exchange places.

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## MESSIANIC PSALMS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

LUKE i. 42-45, 46-55, 68-79; ii. 29-32.

WE could ask no more striking indication of the essential unity of the old and new dispensations, or of the Old and New Testaments, than is furnished by the fact that the line of division between the one pair is not coincident with that between the other. The New Testament begins before the old dispensation closes. The first pages of the Gospels are the concluding records of the old economy. The first verses of Mark are immediately consecutive to the last of Malachi. Matthew introduces the history of Jesus after exactly the same fashion in which Genesis introduces the

<sup>1</sup> See the note of W. Aldis Wright in the Cambridge *Journal of Philology*, xiii. pp. 117-120.

history of Abraham (Gen. xi. 10 *seq.*). The beginnings of Luke and of 1 Samuel are not only one in spirit, but also one in form. John opens his account of the new creation in words closely parallel with those in which Moses opens his account of the first creation. These connexions are not accidental. Taken separately, they are deeply significant of the characteristic features of each Gospel. Taken together, they vividly illustrate the unity of the two Testaments.

The resemblances of form extend even to details. The pious Elkanah and his devout but childless wife were the types of Zacharias and Elizabeth. The sanctuary, with its solemn worship, was the scene of both promises. The joy of both fulfilments blossomed forth with songs of praise to God. The declaration that "the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men" (1 Sam. ii. 26), finds its counterpart concerning John in Luke i. 80, and especially concerning Jesus, in the double statements of Luke ii. 40 and 52; proving to us that the human development of this child was just like that of John or of Samuel. But the likeness of spirit is even deeper. The reader of the earlier portions of the Gospels feels himself still on Old Testament ground; and it is among the characteristic scenes of Old Testament life, and specifically Old Testament circles of thought that he is asked to move. It required the three years of Christ's public ministry, culminating in His death and rising again, to sweep all this away for ever, and fix a great gulf between this new and that old, which all the centuries since Malachi had left essentially unaltered—proving to us that this teacher was not a native product of the soil in which he grew. Approaching them from this point of view, we are not surprised to find the canticles that are embedded in this portion of the narrative, redolent of the old economy. In form, manner, matter, spirit, they are indistinguishable from the "Praise-songs

of Israel" that constituted the hymn-book of the ancient Church; and it was a true instinct which led some scribes of the LXX. and the earliest printers to attach them to the Psalter.

That they exhibit all the characteristics of Hebrew poetry in their structure, lies on their face. The parallelism of members, the arrangement of strophes, the regular beat of the accent, are not only discoverable, but prominent. Even that one of them the character of which has been least insisted upon—the Salutation of Elizabeth (Luke i. 42–45)—is unmistakably verse, even elaborately and artistically verse. Beginning with short lines of three beats of the accent each, the first strophe closes with a longer line of four, while the second strophe continues with this longer line, to close, itself, with a still longer line of five tones. The song thus happily combines the art of the fine ode in Exodus xv.—where the four-toned lines culminate at the end of the strophe in one of five tones—and that of the twenty-third Psalm, much of the beauty of which is due to the gradual lengthening of the lines in each succeeding strophe, leaving on the reader's mind the sense of increasing satisfaction in Jehovah's goodness. The effect of this arrangement in our present case is to erect verse 43 into the climax of the first strophe, and verse 45 into the lingering climax of the whole song:—

“Blessed | art thou | among women!  
 And blessed | the fruit | of thy womb!  
 And whence to me | is this :—

That the mother | of my Lord | should come | unto me ?  
 For lo, as came | the voice | of thy greeting | into my ears,  
 Leaped | in rejoicing | the babe | in my womb :—  
 And happy | is she that believed | that fulfilment shall be |  
 to what was told her | from the Lord.”

When read thus in accordance with its structure, this beautiful canticle is seen to be a celebration of Mary's

faith, in believing that "there should be fulfilment to what was spoken to her from the Lord;" and, as leading up to this, every part of it takes its proper subordinate place. This faith, astounding in itself, the most supreme example probably of perfect trust in God and absolute self-devotion to Him and His will that human flesh has ever given, was all the more striking to Elizabeth on account of its contrast with the unbelief of her own husband under a far less severe trial. No wonder that when Mary appeared before her Spirit-illuminated eyes (ver. 41) she seemed the embodiment of Faith—that modest Virgin with clasped hands, whom Hermas saw in vision, through whom the elect of God are saved, and from whom spring all the Christian graces as fair daughters of a fair mother. Mary is, thus, in Elizabeth's eyes the most blessed of women, because the most faithful; and it suits well that the first Psalm of the New Testament should take the form of a praise of the fundamental evangelical virtue.

The excitement which the commentators see in this Psalm, we find it somewhat difficult to recognise. It was a glad shout (ver. 42), but its joyful cry is more like a pæan over a victory already accomplished than the excited and exciting call to an onset. Rapid in its movement it no doubt is, and full of the rush and life of a stream in the mountains. In this, Mary's answering song is in strong contrast with it. This is the same stream flowing with deep and tranquil waters through the rich lowlands. Dr. Godet thinks that this greater calmness is the mirror of greater happiness; certainly it is the reflection of deeper spiritual life, born of experience both of sorrow and of God's strength for consolation. All through Israel's history such songs had been sung; and had we met with the *Magnificat* in the midst of the Psalter—say somewhere about the thirtieth, or ninety-eighth, or one hundred and third, or one hundred and eleventh Psalm—it would have occasioned no

surprise and seemed in no sense out of place. But such songs were never sung in Israel save in the night season—a night season for the nation and a night season for the singer. The ploughmen must plough the back and make long their furrows (Psalm cxxix. 3) before so richly golden a harvest can mature—before the assured conviction can grow so stout in the heart, that Jehovah is righteous, and will cut asunder the cords of the wicked, and put to shame all the enemies of Zion. When Mary uttered those words of such sweet and humble sublimity—"Behold the bond-maid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word"—she at once received the rankling sword-thrust into her soul, and steeped her soul in a balm that healed and more than healed all possible sword-thrusts. Here we see the rich fruitage of her faith. Yet how little there is of the personal in her Psalm! If it were not for the feminine form of the word "servant" in verse 48, it might have been written for all that appears on the surface by any Korahite at any time since the opening of the Psalter. It is Elizabeth who sings the praise of Mary's faith; Mary answers by a praise of God—His grace, might, mercy, justice, and faithfulness. The difference is significant—perhaps characteristic.

In poetical structure the *Magnificat* is framed quite after the model of the older *T'hilloth*. There are four strophes of four lines each (verses 46-48, 49-50, 51-53, 54-55), and the movement of the thought advances regularly through them, gradually increasing in animation until the climax is reached in the third, and "the song drops down to its nest again in the fourth, which is as it were, the Amen of the canticle." The tone of the whole is happy though solemn—such as befitted one so highly honoured and yet so unconscious of self. When we are asked to observe the royal character impressed upon it, we can see it only through a mist darkly. It needed no descendant of kings to magnify the Lord for overturning the proud and elevating the lowly

in fulfilment of His promise to Abraham. The absence of all mention of David, and the turning of hope rather to the promise to Abraham, is noticeable on the contrary part; and almost strange after the angelic words (ver. 32)—“The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David.” Elizabeth (ver. 43) and Zacharias (ver. 69) thought more of the royalty of the Coming One than Mary; her heart was occupied with God’s mercy in sending Him. This, too, is probably characteristic.

On the other hand, the prevailing priestly character of Zacharias’ hymn is somewhat strongly marked. It would have been natural to no one but a priest to cast his Messianic hopes so prevalingly in the moulds of the sanctuary. Just as the *Magnificat* takes up the theme with which Elizabeth ended, and recounts the great things that Mary believes will flow from what God has spoken to her, so the *Benedictus* begins where Mary ends—with the faithfulness of God to His promises; and it is only after praising Him through three rich strophes, conceived and expressed quite in Old Testament form, for His fulfilment of them, that he can turn to add two more for the outpouring of his joy over the part given his own son in the saving work. Even then, the so-long-expected son is mentioned only briefly and as it were by the way, to give rise to a renewed burst of praise to God for His mercy to Israel. Here, too, the personal is sunk in the national and religious; or say, rather, the lower personal in the higher personal. Zacharias’ mind is full of God’s glory; of his son, only as the promise of coming brightness, the faint gleam preceding the Day-spring from on high. Even the swan-song of Symeon is of essential Old Testament type, and only supplies us with a *T'hillah* to set over against our three *T'hilloth*. When we open Luke’s Gospel, therefore, and read these stirring lyrics, we feel no break with Israel’s whole past. Only, as in the times of Moses, and of David, and of Jehoshaphat, and of Nehemiah,

so now again, when the Lord once more visits His people, their response breaks forth anew, and the harps which had been so long hanging upon the willows are tuned afresh to celebrate the new deliverance.

And if this is true of their outer, no less is it true of their innermost characteristics; in the Messianic hopes which they express, they belong as thoroughly to the old dispensation as they do in their structure and general tone. There is deeply stamped upon them the impress of the period in which the hope of redemption was national, and salvation belonged especially to Israel. They are oblivious also of the whole space of time that was to intervene between the coming of the Messiah and the consummation of His kingdom. This markedly Old Testament standpoint would have been impossible after our Lord had begun His public work, much more after His death and resurrection. The joyful expectation of Elizabeth is damped by no anticipated sorrow. Mary sings of the impending establishment of the reign of righteousness with perfect frankness and no misgivings. Zacharias celebrates the re-erected theocracy and the universal peace as if already at hand. Only Symeon has a wider outlook beyond the nation, and a deeper hint of a ministry of suffering, but goes in neither matter beyond Old Testament warrant, or indeed beyond Old Testament words. In this we have a valuable witness to the genuineness of the canticles—which otherwise would be an incredible *post eventum contra eventum*. In only one respect do they sharply separate themselves from their companions in the Psalter: they represent the time of God's promised intervention as already come, and the agents in introducing the kingdom as actually present. It is just because Mary is the mother of the promised one that Elizabeth pronounces her blessed: Elizabeth's babe, though yet unborn, has already begun his life-work of pointing to the Messiah—already gives his witness that He that cometh after him is greater

than he. The ground of Mary's praise to God is, that in spite of her low estate, He has selected her as the vessel of His election for bringing the seed of Abraham into the world, and this is the mighty, holy, just and faithful thing that He has done which commands her song. It is the momentous fact that the predicted forerunner who should prepare the way before Jehovah's face, is before his eyes, that inspires Zacharias to sing the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His oath of redemption. And Symeon's watch is over only because the Salvation of God lies in his aged arms. This is the outstanding development from the end of the Old Testament to the beginning of the New—a development that hangs upon the unnoted passage of time, and the gradual unfolding of God's purpose of redemption in act.

Whether there be along with this, any corresponding advance in the clearness with which Messiah's person and work are revealed, needs close scrutiny to discover. It was God's way to precede every development of His plan in history, with a preparatory revelation; and it is because a new step in history is to be now taken that the inspiring Spirit once more appears in Israel. But will this justify us in too confidently expecting advance in revelation beyond the great advance in the definition of the time as already arrived—the announcement that the fulness of time has come? The careful student will at all events soon observe that, this eliminated, not a word remains in any of the four songs which might not have been spoken equally well before the close of the Old Testament canon—the counterpart of which does not occur in the Old Testament records.

The discovery of this fact, however, does not quite determine the question before us. The very same words may be fraught with very different meanings at widely different times. And this is of the essence especially of prophecy, and is a necessary quality of any revelation intended as a message to more than a single generation. Just as the



sacred writers so write of physical fact—as for instance in the opening chapter of Genesis—as to be seen so soon as the knowledge of scientific truth has grown among men, to presuppose a deeper knowledge than any of their readers possessed for some thousands of years, and yet so speak as to convey their special moral message to the men of their own time without clogging their understanding by teaching them science before the time of science; so, the sacred prophecies are so framed as to presuppose much more than is apparent to men of the generation of their delivery, but which becomes progressively plainer from age to age with advancing knowledge of the things prophesied, and thus carry in their bosom a message for all time in ever-growing definiteness and richness. This is mere fact; and so far from opposing the strictly scientific exposition of the prophecies, is the inevitable fruit of it. They cannot be made by a severe grammatical exegesis to bear another character.

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(*To be concluded.*)

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It has often been said of the celebrated Frenchman, on whose life and writings the following remarks are made, that he was more praised than read. There is certainly great truth in the remark, owing probably to the comparatively limited amount of his literary efforts, and the early period at which his career terminated. He was, however, a transcendent genius, one of the most sublime spirits of the world, as Bayle in his Dictionary says of him, and it is impossible to study his character without admiration and profit. It presented a combination of qualities seldom found together, as well as some striking con-

<sup>1</sup> The substance of this paper was originally delivered as a Lecture in Edinburgh.