

gift of the Holy Spirit to give it spirit and to give it life. Now, the Holy Spirit is not concerned solely with the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. He is concerned with Jesus Himself, His person, and all His work. But the resurrection from the dead is the crown of Jesus' work, and the seal that is set on His person.

He is concerned with Jesus Himself, His person, and all His work. He has no other concern than that. 'He shall glorify Me,' said Christ. 'He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.' Jesus Himself came to glorify the Father, and to finish the work that the Father gave Him to do. And when He has finished that work fully, when all the redeemed for whom He gave His life a ransom are gathered in, then shall the Son be made subject to the Father, that God may be all in all. So also is it with the Spirit. 'I have glorified Thee'—'He shall glorify Me.' The Spirit has no other work to do than this, to glorify the Son, to finish the work that the Son has given Him to do. And when He has finished it, He also shall be

made subject to the Father and to the Son, that God may be all in all.

Therefore the work of the Spirit is this: to commend the work that Christ has done for us, to commend it and make it ours. We include the whole of Christ's work for us under the one great name of Salvation. And we call Salvation a double substitution. It is the substitution of Christ on the cross for our justification, and it is substitution of Christ in the heart for our sanctification. Jesus Christ has done it all, and the Father seals it all with His acceptance in the resurrection from the dead. But it is outside of me; a sublime spectacle, it touches me with admiration but not with love; it moves, but it benefits me not; till the Holy Spirit completes the circuit, and the current flows free, a current of knowledge and of faith, of influence and of exercise, and behold, both Himself and the resurrection from the dead are fertilising Certainties within me.

The Theology of the Psalms.

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V. THE FUTURE.

IN our last paper it was said that the hope of a future life formed no part of the psalmists' working creed. But this statement must be strictly limited to the prospect of personal life beyond the grave. Hope of a glorious future, so far from being absent from the Psalms, is the very light of life in many of them, and forms a fringe of beauty, or undertone of music, in nearly all of them. But it is a hope for the community rather than the individual, and is to be realised upon the visible earth, not in an intangible and inconceivable heaven. Only, as sometimes at sunset the horizon which forms the meeting-line of earth and sky is doubly indistinct by reason of the glory which illumines both, so it is often hard, in the writings of psalmists and prophets, to say under what conditions the splendid ideal which they picture is to

be realised, and the very attempt to define the hopes of the seer in modern speech and in terms of modern ideas is misleading.

The use of the term 'Messianic psalms' is apt to be misunderstood. Just as the Lord Jesus Christ avoided the use of the word Messiah because it was associated in the minds of His contemporaries with certain fixed ideas, of which He would fain disabuse it, so we are apt to bring with us to the study of certain psalms called Messianic, ideas of our own which we read into the text when we cannot actually find them there. The so-called 'Psalms of Solomon,' really Psalms of the Pharisees, written about a century before Christ, are—many of them, at least—Messianic in the customary use of the term. They have much to say of a personal Messiah, an Anointed of the Lord, a true

King, Son of David, who shall 'destroy the Gentiles by the word of His mouth,' and 'gather together the holy people, and distribute them in their tribes over the land, and the sojourner and the foreigner shall not dwell among them any more.' Again, 'There shall be no injustice in the midst of them in those days of His, because they shall be all holy, and their King is the Anointed of the Lord.' This conventional Messiah, however, does not appear in the Psalter. Neither the name nor the attributes of such a potentate are to be found in the canonical psalms, though there is much in them which formed the foundation for the Messianic hopes of later days. If we take the Psalms as they stand, we may miss some Messianic references which it has been usual to find in their phraseology, but we shall find instead large and rich and various hopes of a glorious future, which may be described as the Victory of God's chosen people, and the triumphant establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

The psalms which are usually styled Messianic are such as these: ii., viii., xvi., xxii., xlv., lxxii., cx. But it is a somewhat arbitrary line of distinction which turns to these only for a description of the psalmists' hopes, and ignores others, like lxxviii., lxxxvii., lxxxix., xcvi.-xcviii., cii., cxxxii., and scattered references in many psalms not directly occupied with the subject of national hopes. The *person* of a coming Ruler is only one element, though undoubtedly an important one, in the general prophetic forecast. There is a whole circle of ideas, of which that of a personal king is only the centre, presented to us in the prophetic writings generally; and as 'in the poetry of the Psalms we do but hear a hundred-voiced and yet harmonious lyrical echo of the acts and words of divine revelation,' so we find in the psalmists' rapturous anticipations only an echo of prophetic announcements made to Israel through the centuries. This circle of ideas includes—(1) A coming manifestation of divine power and glory, which might be described as a theophany or divine advent to the earth. (2) The purification of God's own people in a sense never hitherto realised. (3) A victory over the nations of the whole earth, either as (a) punished with overthrow and destruction, or (b) subdued under the yoke of Israel, or (c) converted to the worship of Jehovah, and brought within the pale of the favoured nation. (4) The form of the kingdom

varies, but for the most part a personage is described who shall more than fulfil the ideal of the hero-king of Israel, who shall rule in righteousness and peace, and include the whole earth under his beneficent sway. (5) Sometimes the function of suffering, pain, loss, shame, and degradation is recognised as an element in the picture; but this is rare, and in the Psalms suffering finds but slight recognition in connexion with the hopes of the future.

Nevertheless, the prophetic element in the Psalter is not one to be slighted or explained away as the mere ornamentation of poetic dreams. The bards of Israel who sang of battle and victory, of king and kingdom, of the towers and bulwarks of a Zion such as earth had never yet seen, and a people inhabiting Jerusalem such as had never yet been found treading her streets, were no mere visionaries. Their minds were guided by the Divine Spirit to cherish hopes and foretell glories which differed from the anticipations of ordinary patriotic poets, as Israel's religion differed from the religions of the nations around. And, while freely conceding that the form of the vaticinations is determined by the time and circumstances of the inspired psalmist, and while avoiding the delusive interpretations based upon a 'double sense' of words which have, as words properly can have, but one meaning, it is by no means difficult to show that as the Hebrew prophet was often a poet, so the Hebrew psalmist was in a very true and deep sense a prophet. It is no picture of Utopia or Oceana, or the lost Atlantis, that we find depicted in the Psalms, but an inspired foreshadowing of the person, the work, and the kingdom of 'the true Messiah, Jesus Christ, the psalmists' Lord and ours.

The ideals which prevail in these prophetic psalms are various. The 2nd Psalm gives us a picture of the King, as Son of God, vanquishing rebellious nations, and ruling in benign majesty. The 8th Psalm describes man as God intended him to be, but as he never has actually been, except in the person of the Son of Man. The 22nd Psalm depicts the righteous sufferer, apparently forsaken and desolate, but in reality so owned and honoured by God that the ends of the earth turn unto Jehovah, and all kindreds of the nations worship before Him. The 45th Psalm describes a royal marriage, such as never was in king's courts, a 'bridal of the earth and sky,' which causes a Christian reader reverently to say, 'This mystery is great; but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church.' The 72nd

Psalms portray a perfect kingdom of righteousness, peace, and holy joy. Pss. xcvi., xcvii., and cxviii. proclaim not only that Jehovah now reigns, but that in His own good time He is coming to earth, coming in judgment, though not in wrath; coming in 'righteousness,' in 'truth,' in 'equity'; and for that coming still the nations wait.

These psalms and their prevailing ideas are familiar to all. Are they truly prophecies? If a prophecy means an anticipation of blessings to come such as man could not without divine aid have conceived, which he announces upon divine authority, and confidently expects as the fulfilment of divine promise, then surely these are prophecies. They are, however, prophecies at second hand; echoes, not original voices. The Psalmist does not profess to have received a direct divine commission such as was given to the prophet, and his strains often show by their very language that he is relying upon the sure word of prophecy already uttered by a Nathan, an Isaiah, or a Zechariah. But in the following three respects we may claim a prophetic character for many of the psalmists' utterances:—(1) They pass beyond the present conditions from which they usually start. If Ps. xlv. is only a highly-wrought epithalamium, describing some earthly king and queen with more than the usual Oriental hyperbole, it is no prophecy. But a close study of this and some other psalms shows that the Psalmist in the course of his description is veritably carried beyond himself and his immediate environment. (2) They forecast a state of things which uninspired men would not have conceived or been able to picture. The burning desire for righteousness which characterises the anticipations of the psalmists is only one feature amongst several which would make good this statement. (3) The correspondence between the picture of the ideal future found in the Psalms and the kingdom of Christ, is such as could not have been produced by any natural foresight or any accidental coincidence. To prove this, we should not point to isolated texts like Ps. xlv. 6, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,' as prefiguring the Divinity of Christ; but would rather take the whole conception of the future of Israel, which was certainly never realised as the psalmists (in all probability) expected, but which has been realised in a remarkable, though purely spiritual way, in the kingdom of the Son of God and Son of Man. When that kingdom has

fully come upon the earth, the correspondence will be seen to be yet more striking and complete.

The root-idea out of which all the rest spring is not difficult to discern. The fundamental thought in the psalmists' theology was that their God was a God of righteousness, and must be seen to be such in Israel and throughout the whole earth. What was actually seen in the psalmists' days, ranging especially from 650 to 350 B.C., was very different from this. God's own people were not all righteous by any means; those who were righteous were often not so well off as those who were wicked: the nation, which in comparison with other nations, was righteous, was yet more or less in subjection to the powers of this world; Jehovah was far from being recognised as God of the whole earth, and the time came when He was little acknowledged outside the bounds of a single city. That this state of things could always continue, the Psalmist refused to believe. He looked forward to the time when what he held to be the spiritual reality should be manifested in concrete, visible, and tangible form. Hence he passes in his songs of worship sometimes from Jerusalem to the true city of God; sometimes from the king engaged in warfare, or about to marry, or about to receive solemn coronation, to the ideal King, who was never very far from his thoughts. Sometimes he sees a picture of a Priest not after the order of Aaron, but the order of Melchizedek. And sometimes nothing will satisfy his upward aspiration and striving, unless God Himself descend to the earth to purify and bless His people, to 'dwell in them, and walk in them,' so that they should be His people, and He should be their God.

But how all this was to be accomplished, the psalmists were unable to conceive. Doubtless they, as well as the prophets, 'searched what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ that was in them did point unto'; and doubtless to them it was revealed that not unto themselves, but to a later generation did they minister those good things which they desired, but were not permitted to see. But, however much an individual psalmist may have known when under the influence of the Spirit of God, no single man could guess how all the very various anticipations which find a place in psalms of all kinds, extending over several centuries, could be reconciled and find their accomplishment in one series of events. Yet that this actually came to pass may be shown. The

passion-music of the 22nd Psalm blends harmoniously with the triumphal march of the 72nd, when they are read in the light of Christ's sufferings and the glory that has followed. But we may not on that account strain the interpretation of any psalm in order to prove its 'Messianic' character, nor find underneath words that are perfectly intelligible as they stand, some subtle, 'mystical' meaning, the introduction of which makes havoc with all laws of sound and sober exegesis. The testimony of the Psalms to Christ will be found to be most complete and most impressive when we read them as they were written, and as they were read and sung by the psalmists' contemporaries. Afterwards it will be seen how the Psalmist of whom it was true that, like the builder, 'himself from God he could not free,' has 'builded better than he knew.' God's meaning in nature and in grace, in history and in Scripture, is both deeper and better than that which we, through mistaken desire of honouring Him, seek to read into His word and His works.

This consummation of history, so devoutly to be wished, has its darker and sterner side. The prophets have more to say concerning it than the psalmists, but no faithful servant of God can blind his eyes to existing rebellion against divine authority, or desire anything but that it should be utterly overcome. If this can be accomplished by the gaining of the rebels to the right side, well; if not, judgment in all its severity becomes inevitable. The resistance to divine authority which is contemplated in the Psalms is sometimes within the pale of Israel, sometimes outside it. The 'ungodly,' the 'evil-doers,' the 'sinners,' of whom we read so much in the Psalter, are often those who are sinning against light, and who, whilst in the community of Jehovah-worshippers, are not of it. Sometimes, however, these same words have a wider application, and often the 'nations,' the 'heathen,' are specifically mentioned as hostile, and threatened with condign punishment. The evil-doers in the 1st and 37th Psalms as certainly belong to the community of God's people as the oppressors complained of in the 9th and 10th Psalms are outside and hostile to it. The passage, Ps. ix. 17-20, may stand as representative of the attitude of the godly Israelite to the godless and cruel oppressors who so often made his life a burden to him: 'Arise, Jehovah, let not man prevail; let the nations be judged in Thy sight.

Put them in fear, O Jehovah; let the nations know themselves to be but men.' In the 119th Psalm, however, those who are stigmatised as forgetting God, and setting at nought His statutes, the 'proud,' the 'wicked,' the 'treacherous,' they 'that are of double mind,' they 'that observe not Thy law,' belong for the most part to Israel. It is in the later psalms that the contrast between the inner and outer circle of Israelites, those who observe the name and those who do not, is emphasized; whilst in the earlier psalms the distinction between righteous and wicked is mainly national. 'Why do the nations rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing?' is the language of the earlier psalmists. Sometimes there may be traitors in the camp, when 'mine own familiar friend' (xli. 9), 'a man mine equal, my guide and mine acquaintance' (lv. 13), proves unfaithful. But in all the national psalms, and in a large proportion of the personal psalms, the line of distinction between righteous and wicked corresponds to that between Israel and the nations at large.

When this underlying assumption is once fully granted, that the Psalmist's enemies are God's enemies, the strong language of the imprecatory psalms becomes in great measure justified. Room is still left for the intrusion of unworthy personal rancour, and in some exceptional instances it may be held that traces of such feeling are to be found even side by side with truly devout outpourings of the soul to God. But what is most resented by modern readers is the assumption that those whom the Psalmist hates 'with perfect hatred,' and counts his enemies, are enemies to God, and hated only as such. Yet this characteristic has marked nearly all those fiery, zealous souls who, in the course of history, have accomplished great religious reforms. It was the spirit which actuated Dante and Savonarola, Knox and Cromwell, the Camisards and the Covenanters. We excuse it in the oppressed or those fighting against long odds, but we detest it in the oppressor. Philip II. and Alva thought they 'were doing God service,' as well as many another bloodthirsty tyrant from the times of the apostles onwards. The purity of the psalmists' zeal is, however, attested to us by the very words which stand recorded against them. The hunted and downtrodden psalmist of the 109th Psalm, who (apparently) pours out such bitter words against his adversaries, is one who requited enmity with love, and who prayed for

them who despitefully used him, and persecuted him (vers. 2-5). The triumph which he anticipates is that men may know on which side God is (ver. 27), that his adversaries should be clothed with shame, and the poor and needy be delivered. If vers. 6-20 be not, as there is some ground for supposing, the words of the implacable adversary quoted against himself, they can hardly be taken to represent the prevalent feeling of the Psalmist, which the opening and closing parts of the psalm show to have been very different. At the same time, no candid reader of the Psalms can ignore the existence of passages which he would fain have expunged, which exhibit a spirit not only below the Christian standard, but below the highest Old Testament standard of religious feeling, and below the highest mark of the Psalter itself. The prospect of victory over our cruel and vindictive enemies is only too apt to beget an inexcusably vindictive spirit in return. The work of punishment is not one that can safely be entrusted to the selfish and passionate heart of man; and in proportion as the power to retaliate is given to any man, the temptation to abuse such power grows too strong to be resisted. Over some few passages of the Psalms may well be written the words which, it should be remembered, are found in the Old Testament as well as in the New: 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.'

It is not often that the prospect of a peaceful incorporation of idolatrous and hostile elements into the very constitution of the holy people is contemplated as a possibility. The 'nations' are for the most part either to be destroyed or subjugated. In the 87th Psalm, however, a bright picture is drawn, which finds its counterpart in some of the pages of the prophets, depicting a delightful ending to the hereditary hostility of Egypt and Assyria, Tyre and Philistia—

I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon

Among them that know me:

Behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia;

This man was born there.

Yea, of Zion it shall be said,

This one and that one was born in her;

And the Most High Himself shall establish her.

The census-roll of Zion, written by the divine hand, shall show the names of strange citizens in its sacred register. As Isaiah puts it, 'Israel shall be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth. For that the Lord of hosts hath blessed them, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt

my people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.'

The Psalmist had much the same difficulty in conceiving this mode of the coming of the kingdom of God in the earth, that Christians have concerning the salvation of Chinese and Hindus, or in accepting any form of universalism. The facts of human life seem too dark and evil for a righteous man to anticipate a judgment of the world without stern and very terrible elements. 'Jehovah reigns, let the earth rejoice;' but also 'Jehovah reigns, let the peoples tremble.' The reign of King Messiah, even when He is the Warrior-Priest, surrounded by youth in holy festive apparel, implies a 'striking through kings in the day of His wrath.' The Christian seer, in the height of His contemplation of victory and accomplished salvation, trembles before the sight of 'the wrath of the Lamb.' The Psalmist in the main—allowing for the difference of dispensation and the slightness of his knowledge concerning a future life—looked forward to a similar consummation to that which is portrayed in the New Testament. He expected on earth what the Christian for the most part postpones to a future state of existence. Judgment, vindication of the righteous, punishment of the wicked, a harmonious blending of all the higher and purer elements of human life, and a destruction only of that which must be banished from a kingdom of righteousness and peace,—such was the prospect the Psalmist anticipated in that day 'when He cometh to judge the earth.' Such also, with due modifications, is the consummation which the Christian expects in God's own good time and way. And as the guarantee for the Psalmist that such an end, such a 'far-off, divine event,' should one day be reached lay in the character of Jehovah, the God in whom he trusted, so the assurance of the Christian lies in the fact that he has learned to believe that all earthly things lie in the hollow of One Hand, that of the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. The hope of the Psalmist and of the Christian are one: their pathway on earth is guided by the same counsel, and they shall be together received to the same glory at last.¹

¹ For some topics belonging to the theology of the Psalms either slightly treated, or not treated at all, in the foregoing papers, the writer may perhaps be permitted to refer to the chapters on the subject in his *Praises of Israel*. Those who happen to have read the little book in question will understand that some repetition of ideas has been inevitable in the attempt a second time to cover so much of the same ground.