

ARTICLE IX.

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES.

A POPULAR LECTURE ON THE ONE HUNDRED AND TENTH PSALM.

By B. B. Edwards, late Professor in Andover Theological Seminary.

To a ship's company, sailing by night, in a narrow channel, with rocks on either hand, nothing is so grateful as a light on shore. It is sometimes hidden by the motion of the ship, by the intervention of a high billow, or of a thick mist. How anxiously does the man on the watch strain his eyes till that blessed light reappears. What a thrill of joy is felt by all on board. It is a *little* object, hardly twinkling in the darkness. But the clouds have prevented for several days the taking of any observations, and the safety of hundreds may be

edition of Leander van Ess, published by Karl Tauchnitz, Leipzig, 1824. It is stated in the title *Juxta exemplar originale Vaticanum Romae editum 1587 quoad textum accuratissime et ad amissum recusum*; and it is true that to an incredible degree even the evident mistakes of the Vatican edition have been faithfully adhered to. This fact has been shown above by numerous passages, and it will be perfectly clear to any one who will compare with a copy of Ess the list of further corrections now given. There are also so many errors to which it may assert an exclusive claim, that in the matter of these it far surpasses the Roman edition. We subjoin a few instances from the earlier books: *κνηρων, ταυτη* for *ταυτη, εν της χωρας, οι* is omitted and elsewhere *η, ηδεν* is written without the *iota* subscript, *οως, νιψασθε* for *νιψασθαι, θυρας* for *θηρας, ηχμαλωτεισασ* without the *iota* subscript, *μετ' υμων, μεθ' αυτου, εκ κτησει, κρατιστης εστι, συναριβη, μισθωτος η, οτ* for *το, ειπεν, αυτων, ο αδελφος, οπιθις, εκατατον, Μουσης* often for *Μουσης, εσπιαγμα, ανθρωπον, ιδου, οι* for *αι, το μαιεν, διεφυγεν, κυρις, ημαρτητε* for *ημαρτετε, ποπου* for *τοπου, Ιδουμαιον, και αγαθη, ωδης, χιλιδας, των ανθρωπον, ουκ γαρ, μετ' υμων, τας σιδαιας, εζολοθρησει, γειραν, εν πεδαις χαλκειας, πολλακτις, την νιον, σπηρα* for *πωσηρα, εν σκουρις, του πολεως, παθη* for *βαθη, ενα* for *ανα, την* for *σην, τι* for *εις, και φοβου* for *μη φοβου, οι λοιπη, επιστρεψη, κατα* for *μετα, συνηχη* for *συνηχησαν, ερησατο, τα αμμα, τα αγασμα, δεσως* for *δισσως, τοις κοιλαις, οι δεσποτεια, γινουσαι, αι πονοι*, etc. The accents, moreover, in very many cases are wanting throughout the work; I have seen pages on which above twenty are missing. The *Editio Parisina* in Greek and Latin, for which we are indebted to the labors of J. N. Jager, is so slovenly a production, that in the *Göttingen Gelehrte Anzeigen* for 1840, L. p. 467, Lücke with good reason said that a person not wholly disqualified for critical studies could learn from this book as from no other, in what manner it ought not to be edited.

depending on that small bright speck, scarcely larger than a glow-worm.

The object dearest to the prisoner who has been long immured in a dungeon, is the single pane of glass, high up on the wall, which lets in an uncertain and flickering light. It seems to be the only object that connects him with the outward world. He can sometimes see the wing of the bird that casts a momentary shadow upon it, or the topmost branch of a tree swaying to and fro, reminding him of the freedom which all objects in nature enjoy except himself. By its feeble ray he can see to notch his name on the wall, and the wearisome nights and days of his captivity. It whispers to him, not only what he has lost, but what he may hope to regain. Possibly it is the only thing which keeps him from sinking into total despair. It is a very little object, but it has wondrous powers of consolation.

Not wholly dissimilar, we may suppose, was the experience of the ancient pious patriarchs and prophets. Not altogether unanalogous were their feelings as they looked down the tract of ages and saw the star that was to arise in Jacob. It seemed like a little speck far off over the billows of time. Sometimes it wholly disappeared; often it was very dim. The waves of doubt and unbelief interposed dark objects between it and the beholder. Faith was often lost in sense; and the world was a gloomy prison into which no ray of hope was cast from a distant futurity. Most men saw nothing but a dim outline of clouds and sky gathering into a deeper darkness. But the bright object was there fixed as on an immovable shore. When the vision was clear and a celestial illumination was imparted to the soul, there was not, indeed, the full assurance of faith, but there was the reality. It was not a phantom that moved before the eye of Abraham and David. They *saw* the day of Christ and were glad. Moses was not bewildered with a false light. A surrounding world of polytheists, countrymen prone to every other worship but that of God, an outward dispensation with its numberless ceremonials and symbols, and intervening ages long and dark could not hide the form of that greater prophet that would lead his people to the true Canaan. There was dimness, yet certainty, hope not absolute and perfect, yet real and consolatory.

These Messianic anticipations, as entertained by the pious Hebrews, may not be an unprofitable theme for a few moments' consideration. They are denounced by many professing Christians at the present day as wholly destitute of foundation. By others they are secretly rejected. Those who are accustomed to regard them as mat-

ters of undoubted belief, may still not find it useless to review the grounds on which they rest.

I. My first remark is, that we should be cautious lest we transfer our own views and feelings, sitting as we do in heavenly places in Christ, to those who lived in the twilight or early dawn. No rule of interpretation is more important and none is more frequently violated, than this. Would we gain satisfaction from the study of the Old Testament, we must put ourselves as far as possible, in the circumstances, in the exact position of the men whose language and views we would understand. We have no right to affix an interpretation upon their words, which it was not possible for them to entertain. Now if there be any fact which is obvious on the whole face of the Scriptures, it is that they are a *series* of revelations—the morning light increasing into perfect day, the germ small and delicate, imperceptibly unfolding into the flower and the ripened fruit. We cannot make out from the *Gospels* that *complete* system of doctrines that we can from the Epistles. The disciples were not able to bear the higher truths unfolded by Paul. We cannot deduce the Messianic prophecy from the Pentateuch as we can from Isaiah. We must carefully consider the peculiarities of each age—the degree of light vouchsafed to the successive generations. As far as practicable, we must divest ourselves of our mature belief and enlarged experience, and carefully study each age and generation by itself, and gather up all that is peculiar to each, and thus obtain a correct and precise idea of the spiritual light enjoyed at every successive period. In no other way can we ascertain the mind of the inspiring Spirit. In every other method we shall be in danger of adding to the words a *sense* which they cannot have. A body of laws, thousands of years old, must be interpreted as they were understood *by the* men to whom they were addressed, not by the stronger light or more exact science of a distant future. One of the principal difficulties in explaining the book of Job arises from the uncertainty of the age in which it was written. On the settlement of this, the exact meaning of some important passages is suspended.

II. My second remark is, that we should expect, reasoning *presumptively*, that there would be traces of the Messiah in the Old Testament. To this conclusion, we should be led by the works of creation and Providence. Light does not break upon us in the morning full-orbed. The lofty palm is wrapped up in the little seed. Gradual growth, decay marked by *separate stages*, is the law of nature. Great discoveries in science do not commonly open upon the world

in their perfect form. It is first a guess, or a fortunate surmise. Several different minds have glimpses of it; then it appears to recede and is almost lost, till finally by toil and patient investigation, it is admitted into the number of established and useful truths. In like manner, the course of Divine Providence in a Christian land, the laws which we all recognize as marking his dispensations, are partially developed, or have analogies more or less direct in a pagan country. Some of the rewards of virtue, some of the punishments of vice, were fully recognised thousands of years ago, by a few who were not favored with a written revelation. The spiritual truths which were fully taught by the later prophets, were not unknown to Joshua and Samuel. The great system of legal sacrifices ordained by Moses, had its manifest germs and beginnings in the patriarchal ages. The book of Genesis contains, as it were, the seeds of thoughts, the germinating principles of the Divine government, certain suggestive intimations or preparatory hints, more and more fully unfolded in the lapse of ages. So the doctrines of the Christian system, not formally propounded in the Gospels, are still implied and may be inferred.

Thus it will be seen that God does not, in any of the departments of his works, communicate truth suddenly and in masses. The mind will not bear, any more than the eye, an instantaneous effulgence of light. The Divine Economist consults the constitution and wants of his creatures. Hence we should be led to infer that in the great central truth of Revelation, the mission and sacrifice of our Lord, he would not deviate from his accustomed; method that he would not reserve this truth, which in fact binds together the system, to be revealed at once in the fulness of time. It would be presupposed that a doctrine, on which the salvation of the race depended, would not be wrapped up in entire mystery 4000 years. Some rays would transpire the thick gloom to be the guide and comfort of the few who were waiting for the Consolation of Israel.

III. My third remark is, that no solid objection can be urged against these Messianic predictions from the fact that the great mass of the children of Israel were so prone to idolatry and worldly-mindedness — had so little aptitude for spiritual truths, and entertained such gross conceptions, that we can hardly suppose that a doctrine so holy, so far removed from the senses as that of a reigning and atoning Redeemer, would be revealed. If saved at all, they would be saved, it is urged, by a virtue which they could not recognize, by a provision of which they were necessarily ignorant. Even the disciples, taught

by Christ himself, were unable to perceive the need of any Messianic interposition.

In this objection, it may be replied, there is little validity, even when viewed on merely common, earthly grounds. The character of the mass of the people does not involve that of the favored few. The *multitude* may be gross idolaters or immersed in sensuality; Moses, Caleb, Joshua, Samuel may be exceptions. Their light may shine the brighter because of the surrounding darkness. They are the mountain tops on which the sun shines, while the intervening valleys are filled with fogs and mists. Plutarch, Plato and Cicero are not the representatives of the Greeks and Romans. They dwell apart and aloft. Their minds were familiar with truths, which never glanced upon those of their contemporaries. Moral and religious subjects were familiar to Bacon, Baxter and Howe, which were utterly unknown or incomprehensible to the throngs of their countrymen. There are always, in every nation, *elect* spirits, who have an aptitude or fitness for the truths which are invisible and eternal.

But in addition to this natural superiority over the mass of their countrymen, men like Moses, Samuel, David and Isaiah were privileged with an extraordinary illumination. Their intelligence, and elevation of character marked them out as the depositaries, in a certain sense, of the Divine communications. As sinners, they might feel, in the depths of their consciousness, their need of some better sacrifice for sin, than the thousands which were smoking on their altars. Still, their eyes would never have been directed to the reigning or atoning Messiah, alain from the foundation of the world, unless the veil had been lifted up by an *unseen* hand. In dreams, in visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, they looked far down the floods of time and saw the star that was to come out of Judah, its little rim of light just gleaming on the bosom of those floods. The vision was supernaturally illuminated; the message was a special revelation.

IV. My fourth remark is, that it is no objection to these Messianic Prophecies, that they are often inserted in the midst of other topics; that the transitions *to* them and *from* them are exceedingly abrupt; that they are separated only by an invisible thread from events which occurred hundreds of years before, or were to happen ages after. This is the *manner* of the inspiring Spirit, with whom a thousand years are as one day. This is the method of his inspired servants, the general prophetic law, as it is preëminently in accordance with the genius of Hebrew poetry. The writer is not careful to forewarn

us when he is about to take his daring flight. Without profuse, preliminary explanation, possibly without any connecting thought, he passes in a moment over long tracts of history, glancing only on the lofty eminences, entirely overlooking events which we call mighty, individuals who, we think, affected the destinies of the world, and alighting on some great era in the annals of the church, or some catastrophe that was to introduce a new dispensation. In the midst of an historical narrative or a didactic discussion, the prophet, taking the reader altogether by surprise, leaps over space and time, and sketches with a few bold strokes the scenes of the day of Pentecost, or the last acts in this world's drama. Utterly foreign from him are the forms of logic, the conventional proprieties of speech, or the tardy and measured movement of prose. His soul is on fire; his imagination divinely strengthened is satisfied only with the distant, the indefinite, the illimitable; his heart exults in rapturous anticipation of the glories of the coming Messiah; no expressions are too abrupt and daring; every object, nature herself, the heavens, the universe must witness and sympathize. In the first three verses of the last chapter of the book of Daniel, the prophet seems to pass, with scarcely a note of warning, from the destruction of the Syrians, in the time of the Maccabees, to the final resurrection of the dead and the rewards of eternity. That unknown future seems to be in the closest proximity with events several hundred years anterior to the coming of Christ. He who objects to a Messianic prediction on this ground, does not understand the nature of prophecy or of Hebrew poetry; has not found one of the most important keys which unlocks the mysteries of revelation.

V. It may be remarked, in the fifth place, that if there be no Messianic predictions in the Old Testament, if the supposed references to a coming great Deliverer, had an earthly and temporary application only, then it is not easy to account for the general belief on this subject in the *pagan* world. The contemporary heathen nations certainly enjoyed *some* straggling rays of the light which shone from the hill of Zion. God did not leave himself without witness in the surrounding tribes. Fragments of truth, greatly distorted and corrupted it may be, found their way far and near. Jewish exclusiveness could not build a wall high enough to exclude them. Pagan darkness was not so deep as wholly to cover them.

Among these scattered and half connected truths was an apprehension, dim yet real, that an extraordinary personage was to appear in Judaea, that a new order of time would there begin, that at his advent

the golden age would again bless the earth, and Heaven once more open wide her gates. The glowing language of the rapt Isaiah had its feeble counterparts, its obscure outlines in the pages of pagan moralists and poets who lived far away. Now the most reasonable explanation of these facts is, that they originated in Judaea, that they may be traced to the pages of the Hebrew Prophets, that they find their solution in Him who was in a certain sense the *Desire* of ALL nations. It may be said, that the expectation of a golden age and of a great Deliverer, is *natural* to fallen and wretched man. But how natural? How came such to be the expectation? The *natural* feeling would be remorse, dread of punishment, despair. If *hope* visits the soul, its origin must be in Heaven; from some hint or rumor at least that a supernatural interposition might be expected.

VI. I remark, in the sixth place, that the New Testament positively asserts the existence of Messianic expectations and prophecies in the Old. Its declarations on this point are explicit and incontrovertible, and they apply to every part of the Old Testament. "Beginning at *Moses* and *all* the prophets, he expounded unto them in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. Had ye believed *Moses*, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad. These things said *Esaias* when he saw his glory and spake of him. And Philip began at the same Scripture and preached unto him *Jesus*. Now I say that *Jesus Christ* was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow."

Most of these declarations, it will be perceived, do not refer to single passages of the Old Testament. Their meaning is not exhausted by this or that detached prophecy. They affirm that *Moses* wrote of Christ, that *all* the prophets followed his example, that the testimony for the Messiah is contained in all the Scriptures, and that he fulfilled the promises made to the *fathers* as a body.

If, therefore, the New Testament, any part of it (for these declarations are made in almost every book), is inspired, then the Messianic predictions rest upon an unshaken basis. *One* is no more cer-

tain than the *other*. We have the explicit assertions of our Lord, who cannot lie, who would not accommodate his instructions to Jewish prejudices, that *every* part of the Old Testament contains references which centred and were fulfilled in himself. Whoever, therefore, rejects these, rejects Christ or makes him a deceiver or impostor; or what amounts to the same thing, whoever acknowledges in general the existence of these Messianic predictions, and yet sets himself at work to deny and explain them away in detail, does virtually reject the entire Scriptures and puts himself on the ground of simple deism. Multitudes at the present day are thus believers in general, but skeptics in regard to every particular passage. Others, who profess to believe in the Divine mission of Christ and the authority of his precepts, utterly discard the more ancient records. But if they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither can they believe any other messenger, whom the Almighty may send.

I am now prepared to state the general principles or rules by which we can decide when a passage is Messianic, or what portions of the Old Testament really contain predictions of a coming Messiah. They may be comprehended in two.

I. Those passages are Messianic which are affirmed to be such in the New Testament. Here we have an infallible rule, an index which cannot be mistaken. Some of these we should not have suspected or inferred to have been of this character, were it not for the declaration of Christ or his apostles. Some of them as they stand in the Old Testament might be interpreted of God the Father. But the Gospels and Epistles determine otherwise. The only difficulty which we shall experience in the application of the rule, will be to distinguish between those passages which have really the character of predictions and those which are employed merely in accommodation or illustration and also those passages which are to be regarded as typical. The language of the Old Testament was familiarly known to the writers of the New. The phraseology of the Mosaic code was on the lips of the priests every day. These old records were the great store-house of language, sentiment, imagery, illustration; the law-book of the people, their confession of faith, their hymn-book, their manual of devotion and the sacred repository of a part of their national literature. In such circumstances, nothing could be more natural than to quote and in every possible way refer to these treasured and consecrated words. To the Jewish hearers of the apostles, these quotations would impart to anything which they might say, dignity, point and authority. They would equally serve for doctrine

or illustration, and would show that the apostles in establishing a new economy, would still cherish a reverence for the language of the old, and show that the one grew out of, and was built on the other. Nothing could be more spontaneous than such references and quotations. The apostles were Hebrews in soul. They were not *imbued* merely with the old literature, it was incorporated in the very texture of their minds. The Divine Spirit in his inspiration did not destroy or derange anything in their education or feelings that was natural or proper. When Isaiah says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that publisheth salvation," he refers to the messengers who are sent beforehand from Assyria to Judaea to announce the coming deliverer. The watchmen on the ruinous walls of Jerusalem repeat, as with one voice, the glad news; all is ecstasy at the joyful event. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans adopts this beautiful language to describe the feelings with which the first preachers of the Gospel would be welcomed, as they went from mountain to mountain with the joyful tidings. This is not a prediction; it is only an accommodated illustration. But when Peter declares that the scene at the day of Pentecost was that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel, it is a prediction in the highest sense of the term. When the Evangelist affirms in relation to Christ, I have called my son out of Egypt, he uses, by way of accommodation, the terms which an ancient prophet had applied literally and historically to the children of Israel. But when the writer to the Hebrews inquires, "For unto which of the angels, said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" there is a direct prophecy of the exaltation of the Redeemer. When it is prediction on the one hand, or mere accommodation or illustration on the other, must be determined by the passage itself, by its context, or by its original position. By the exercise of a sound judgment and of an enlightened piety we shall generally arrive at satisfactory results.

Here it should be remarked, that to constitute a passage as Messianic, it is not necessary that the precise language of the Old Testament should be quoted. The writers of the New Testament often adopt the phraseology of the Septuagint version, or they transfer only the substance of the sentiment, not the exact terms, nor even all the ideas embraced in the original.

No one can have been a very attentive reader of the Scriptures without perceiving that they do not lay much stress on minutiae, on mere verbal differences. The Scriptures are written in a popular manner and their interpretation requires hardly anything more than sound sense

and truly liberal views. The narratives in the four Evangelists show how many variations are consistent with truth, or rather how the credibility of the history may be in part depending on those very variations.

II. Those passages in the Old Testament refer to the Messiah, which cannot be otherwise interpreted, without doing violence to their spirit or language, or without explaining away or diluting their full force and significancy. There may be no allusions to these passages in the New Testament, or quotations from them, still they are Messianic, if the natural, simple interpretation requires it. We have no right to resort to forced conjectures, doubtful hypotheses, or far-fetched analogies, in order to get rid of this application. Rather we should recollect that the declarations of our Lord and his apostles would lead us to expect numerous references to his coming in the ancient prophets, and that by referring them to some earthly hero or king, we are guilty of misinterpreting his word. It is true there has been an extraordinary propensity in many ages and churches, to find these Messianic references in almost every chapter of the Old Testament, in history as well as in poetry, at the expense of all just principles of criticism, as well as of sober views and chastened piety. Here it is true, as in many other cases, that one or two passages, which, when fairly interpreted, leaving no reasonable doubt that they are true Messianic predictions, are more satisfactory to the feelings and afford a firmer support to the faith than twenty passages which cannot be thus referred without putting upon them a violent construction. At the same time, it should be remembered, that there *has* been, and is *now*, a decided tendency to rob the Old Testament of all its Messianic glories, to reduce it to the level of an ordinary history, to close the eyes of its holy seers to any visions save those which were temporary and evanescent, and to make the whole Jewish economy a cumbrous machinery to end with itself, without one reference to the great accomplisher and antitype. Far be it from us to fall into either extreme. We believe fully that life and immortality were brought to light in the Gospel, that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than patriarchs and prophets, and that the whole old dispensation was a shadow to pass away, a veil to be rent in the fulness of time. But we also believe that the shadow *pointed* to a substance, that the lamb slain on the altar did have reference to the innocent victim hung on the cross, that the rising sun is preceded by the dawn, and that the animating and binding principle of much, especially in the later prophets, is the incarnate Son of God, the dim and distant vision of whom filled them with holy joy.

Some other rules or methods for determining the Messianic character of passages in the Hebrew prophets might be mentioned, but they seem to be subordinate, or to be included in those which have been already stated. Thus the proposition that those portions of the Old Testament are Messianic, which have been so regarded by the traditions of the Jews and the current authorities in the Christian church, must derive its principal force either from the internal evidence, or the declarations of the New Testament. The same remark is applicable to the statement that the pieces are Messianic which accord in spirit and language with those which are *confessedly* of that character. In other words, the study and comparison of different texts must decide their interpretation. Here, however, it is assumed that the passage which is selected as the standard, has the characteristic Messianic features which have been indicated.

The principles which have been delineated may now be briefly applied to the one hundred and tenth Psalm.

“Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” This is Jehovah’s oracle addressed unto my Lord, sit on my right hand, the place of honor, as an associate in my kingdom, a partner in my authority, until I have utterly subdued thine enemies.

“The sceptre of thy strength Jehovah shall send out of Zion. Rule in the midst of thine enemies.” The poet addressing the associate king, declares that Jehovah shall commit to him a powerful, royal sceptre, that is, exalt him as a prince on the throne, so that he will restrain and subdue all his foes.

“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in holy array; from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth.” Thy people, thy warlike people, or soldiers, shall be willing, shall be most prompt, in the day when thou dost marshal thy powers. Thy young warriors shall spontaneously come around thy standard in consecrated vestments, numerous as the drops of dew which spring out of the bosom of the morning.

“Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent. Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek.” Jehovah will not repent of his promise. He has sworn that thou shalt have an eternal priesthood, according to the order of Melchisedek. Like him, and not like the sons of Aaron, thou shalt unite the regal and priestly dignities in thine own person.

“The Lord on thy right hand shall dash in pieces kings in the day of his wrath.” He shall rule over the nations, filled with dead bodies.

He shall break in pieces the heads over many lands, that is, he shall make a great slaughter of his enemies in the broad fields or lands where he shall encounter them. Of the brook in the way he shall drink, therefore shall he lift up the head. When thirsty he shall drink and be refreshed, and with new strength proceed on his victorious march.

In this brief and very condensed language is described the exaltation of Christ at God's right hand, the zeal with which his numerous converts would hasten to do his bidding, the setting apart of the Messiah to his twofold office as king and priest, and his going forth conquering and to conquer, till all enemies were subdued under his feet. The language, the imagery, the dramatic form are peculiarly oriental. It represents in the most compressed manner, yet glowing with life, a mighty king assuming his sceptre, marshalling his hosts of youthful warriors, who eagerly flock around his standard, numerous and fresh as the morning dew-drops. At their head he marches to victory, filling the wide battle-fields with the slain, renewing his strength and lifting up his head in triumph.

The spiritual and fearful victories which the Prince of peace effects in the world, are depicted under this bold and stirring imagery. Christ is represented as reigning, not suffering, extending his spiritual dominions till all enemies have submitted to his sway.

That this is the true interpretation of the Psalm, we have the most decisive proof. The language itself will not admit of any other exposition. Jehovah would summon no earthly king to sit at his right hand. No Jewish monarch united the regal and sacerdotal offices, after the manner of Melchisedek. "This predicted personage, would not be an ordinary priest, such as Aaron or any of his descendants, but a priest of a singular and higher, yea of a royal rank." His dominions, too, would not be limited to Palestine, or those lands over which David swayed his sceptre, but far beyond. The heathen would be his inheritance and the ends of the earth his possession. If the song be referred to any earthly sovereign, as Solomon, it is impossible to imagine what could excite the poet to celebrate this king, as he does, in a manner so solemn and emphatic. In short, every other interpretation but the Messianic, is tame and unsatisfactory, neither answering to the spirit or exhausting the language.

The other test is equally decisive. Christ himself declares, as recorded in three evangelists, that David composed this Psalm in the Holy Spirit, by immediate Divine inspiration, and that in it is recog-

nized the superhuman dignity of the Messiah, both David's Lord and David's son.

Peter, also, on the day of Pentecost, declares that David is not ascended into the heavens, to be an assessor with the Almighty, but he saith himself, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool." This passage, also, is the basis of the argument in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the priesthood of Christ is *compared* with the unchangeable priesthood of Melchisedek, and *contrasted* with that of the sons of Levi, which was assumed without an oath, was constantly changing, imperfect, and at length vanished away. All those passages, moreover, where Christ is represented as sitting on the right hand of God, may be traced back to the declaration of this Psalm. It is the germ or seed, from which the combined priestly and royal character of our Lord is unfolded in the New Testament — the *compassionate* high-priest, sitting forever at the right hand of the Majesty on high, touched with a feeling of our infirmities,

In this subject we may see the ground of the unity of the worshippers of God under all dispensations.

We are accustomed to speak of Abraham and Moses and David as pious Israelites, holy men, yet not standing in an intimate relation with the Saviour, not as being Christians, but as good men, who served the one true God and led a blameless life. But there is a vital sense in which they *are one* with all the New Testament believers. They were redeemed by Him whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are *past*; the sacrifice of Christ, the pardoning mercy of God extends to sins committed under the former dispensation; the death of Christ accomplishing the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, his blood has a retroactive as well as a present and prospective influence. In addition to this, some of the pious Israelites at least were favored with gleams of light from this great luminary, little foretastes of the blessings of redeeming grace. They counted him faithful who had promised, *Indistinctly* they beheld his coming. *Many* prophets and kings *desired to see what was withheld from their vision*. But this desire, this eager search, this patient waiting for the Consolation of Israel, proved them to be one in spirit with their more favored posterity who departed in peace, because their eyes had *seen* this salvation. They are now singing the song of Moses *and* the Lamb, with an experience and feelings, we may well suppose, somewhat different from those

who trusted in a Saviour incarnate or glorified. These *elder* participants in glory have a history to retrace which it is not possible for others fully to conceive. They pursued a long and weary journey, beset with misgivings and perplexities, favored only with a few rays of light, occasionally stealing in as through an opening in a dark forest. Now, it is possible, that they have an intensity of interest, a degree of holy admiration, which others cannot fully share. We wonder not that when two of them who appeared in glory and talked with the Redeemer, should speak of the *decease* that he was to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Another obvious reflection relates to the extent of the privileges which Christians at the present day, and especially in this country, are permitted to enjoy. They are so common and so abundant, that perhaps they never command our serious attention. Like the air which we breathe, and the light which we see, we regard them as a matter of course, not as privileges but as rights, not as a free gift, but an inheritance to which we have an absolute claim; not recollecting that they are conferred on the guilty, that they were purchased with agonies unknown, for ages the theme of prophecy, and the object of intense desire and of most eager curiosity by men on earth and angels in heaven.

What separates this Christian land from the darkest realm of paganism? What diffuses social blessings so profusely around us; ascertains and guards the rights of conscience; cherishes those finer sentiments which add a charm to the character of individuals; gives an invisible power to public justice; prompts and encourages every deed of benevolence; breathes hope into the dying and takes the sting from death? What in short is regenerating society and accomplishing what the wisdom of ages could not effect?

Blessed are *your* eyes for they see, and *your* ears for they hear.

Had we any adequate idea of the value of the Gospel, of the position in which it places us, of the glorious hopes which it proffers, we should not only not be ashamed of it, but esteem all the troubles of this present life—all our daily trials and cares as of no account. Our anxiety would be to enjoy this inestimable treasure to the utmost possible extent and to spread it to the ends of the earth. Like the Being from whom it comes, it comprehends all *other* good, and leaves the soul which has nothing else, immeasurably rich.