

because his Father shews Him all things, but that the Father shews Him all because He is Son.¹ We have found in the Synoptics, as well as in St. John, the proof that the foundation of the life of Jesus was the consciousness of an unique exclusive relation to God anterior to his earthly existence. This is a psychological indication either of insanity or of the real presence in Christ of a *Divine subject*. But how are these contradictory data to be harmonized? How are we to conceive of a Divine subject being born into, and developing itself within, a truly human condition?

F. CODET.

*THE FIRST CHAPTER OF
THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.*

VERSES 8 AND 9.

JUST as there are planes of being on which the infinitely great and the infinitely little meet, so there are planes of relationship on which Jesus and God's angels touch one another and are kin. Do the angels minister to the Great Monarch of the universe? So does Jesus. Are they swift, ardent, devoted, and untiring in his service? So is Jesus. Do they fulfil behests for the benefit of men? So emphatically did Jesus. So does He still. He came to our earth, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister," even to the extent of "giving his life a ransom for multitudes." And now, when He is within the veil, he is ministrant still. He "ever liveth" to act as our great High Priest, making intercession for such as "come unto God by him."

¹ "Jahrb. für deutsche Theol.," t. vii. p. 656.

But while there are thus points of obvious contact between Jesus and angels, there are points of obvious contrast as well. There are ministries *and* ministries. There is scope in ministry, as for the infinitely great, in its appropriate sphere, so for the infinitely little, and for all the grades that rank between. And hence a distinctive difference between Jesus and angels. Of the angels it is said in Scripture,—

*Who maketh his angels winds,
And his ministers a flame of fire.*

They have received honourable employment, at the hand of the Universal Monarch, in some of the subordinate affairs of his government; and they heartily “do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.” But of the Son, as we read in verses 8 and 9 of the Chapter before us, it is said in a different kind of strain,—

‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever :’

and

*‘The sceptre of equity is thy kingdom’s sceptre ;
Thou lovedst righteousness, and hatedst lawlessness ;
Therefore, O God, thy God anointed thee
With oil of gladness above thy fellows.’*

It is thus higher things—“glorious things”—things allied to the infinitely great—that are spoken of the Son. According to his Father’s good pleasure, and in consequence of his own incomparable merit, his ministerial and mediatorial rank is transcendent and peerless.

The inspired writer introduces his disparted quotation by means of the expression *but unto the Son*

he saith, or, unto the Son on the other hand it is said. In the words of the citation, the Son is actually addressed, though not directly, by the Father. And hence the propriety of the English preposition *unto*, as well as of the Greek *πρός*; although, for lucidity's sake, it is legitimate, when translating the entire sentence into English, to avail oneself of the two-fold rendering *of* and *unto*, in the two contrastive clauses. So much more elastic is the Greek preposition than the English.

The passage cited is taken from the sixth and seventh verses of the forty-fifth Psalm,—one of those strangely fascinating odes of the Old Testament, which have an ineffaceable charm alike for the simple-hearted and unlettered child of faith and for the most scholarly and critical *littérateur*. It is a gem of a lyric, of the purest water. It is beautiful in diction, elevated in conception, bold in imagery, and singularly splendid in representation.

It has however become, more particularly in modern times, a battle-field of critics.

The Fathers of the Church,—led off by Justin Martyr among the Greeks, and Tertullian among the Latins—recognized, as it were unanimously, a Messianic element in the Psalm. It is the Messiah, according to them, who is the King, “fairer than the children of men, on whose lips grace is poured.” It is the Messiah, as the greatest of heroes and the unconquerable champion of right in its contest with might, whom the hymnist apostrophises thus:

3. *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Hero!
Thy glory, and thy majesty:*

4. *Yea thy majesty !
Go forth ;
Drive on in thy chariot ;
For the sake of truth, and the lowliness of
righteousness :
And thy right hand shall shew thee terrible
things.*
5. *Thy sharp arrows—
As the peoples fall under thee—
Are in the heart of the enemies of the King !*

It is the Messiah, consequently, who is addressed in the immediately succeeding stanzas, which contain the words of the Letter-writer's quotation. And then, when in the second part of the Psalm there is mention made of the Queen, the Bride, "all glorious" in her person and array, standing "within" in "gold of Ophir," the virgins—her bridal companions—accompanying her; and when, in addition, reference is made to other "kings' daughters," who were among the King's living treasures and "honourable women," the representations, though to us Europeans embarrassing with the riches and luxury of their imagery, were regarded by the Fathers as a brightly-coloured oriental vision of the Saviour's love to his people, considered partly in their unity, as the one Church of the living God, and partly in the plurality of the various communities or communions into which the one Church is territorially subdivided.

The Fathers of the Church were in this, the Messianic interpretation of the Psalm, in full accord with the Fathers of the Synagogue. The Chaldee Targumist paraphrases the second verse thus:—"Thy

beauty, O King Messiah, is superior to that of the children of men: the spirit of prophecy has been imparted to thy lips: wherefore Jehovah has blessed thee for ever." Kimchi follows in the wake of the Targumist, unhesitatingly. So did Aben-Ezra, when his words are correctly interpreted (see *Schöttgen's Messias*, p. 432). And not they alone, by any means. "Innumerable others of more recent date," as Calmet expresses it, "interpret the Psalm of the Messiah."

Still greater numbers of Christian expositors, from the mediæval ages down, have recognized a Messianic element and aim in the Psalm;¹ the great majority supposing that the second or bridal section is throughout parabolic or allegorical, while a minority conceive that it is historical and typical.

Of the former class we have a conspicuous example and representative in F. Adolph Lampe, whose massive Monograph on the Psalm—characterized alike by remarkable learning, ingenuity, and elaboration—has achieved for it what Vitringa's great Commentary achieved for Isaiah. With him agree Cajetan, Amyraut, Geier, Owen, Döderlein (1779), Hengstenberg, Tholuck.

Of the latter class, Calvin, Grotius, Limborch, Bleek, are prominent representatives. Calvin says—in the fine old English version of Arthur Golding—"Like as it is certain that this Psalm was made upon Solomon, so is it uncertain who is the author of it. It seemeth likely unto me that some one of the

¹ "Es ist fast ein Unisono der besten Exegeten aller Jahrhunderte für die Messianität vorhanden."—Böhl, *Zwölf Messianische Psalmen* p. 267.

prophets or godly teachers—whether it was after Solomon's death or while he was yet alive—took this ground to entreat of, to teach folk, that whatsoever had been seen in Solomon had a deeper respect." "Therefore, although the prophet began his treatise upon the son of David, yet he mounted up higher in spirit, and comprehended the kingdom of the true and everlasting Messias." Grotius says: "This poem was sung by virgins in honour of Solomon as a bridegroom, and of his bride, the daughter of the King of Egypt." "But even the Chaldee paraphrast acknowledges that it refers mystically to the Messias." Limborch says: "This Psalm was composed in honour of Solomon when he married the daughter either of the King of Egypt or of the King of Tyre. Whence it is evident that the contents of the Psalm, in their first and literal sense, refer to Solomon; but they are so august and glorious that we are shut up to the conclusion that a greater than Solomon is here."

There is a large third class of expositors, preponderant in these modern times, at once from their numbers and their scholarship, who object entirely to the Messianic interpretation. They maintain that there is not the least evidence, in the ode itself, that the author had any other object in view than the eulogistic celebration of the nuptials of his sovereign. Krahmer regards the application of the bridal section to the Messias as not only arbitrary, unnatural, and strained, but as positively "scandalous." It is admitted, however, that sooner or later, after the ode had got into circulation among the pious, it so insinuated itself into their mystical

longings and aspirations, that at length there grew upon it, and as it were into it, a Messianic interpretation, just as if such a conception had been a part of the poet's original intention.

How, then, shall we regard the Psalm?

We cannot, in the first place, accept the theory—assumed by the Fathers, advocated by Lampe, espoused by Cajetan, Amyraut, Geier, Owen, endorsed by Kohlbrügge in his Monograph, and lately defended with great ability by Reinke in his *Messianische Psalmen*—that the reference is entirely unhistorical and mystical. The bridal section of the Psalm is throughout too realistic to be accounted for, without violent straining, on such a hypothesis. In particular, there is difficulty in relation to the polygamous element. And even were that difficulty to yield, there is further difficulty in distinguishing between the individuality of the mystical queen and the distinct individuality of each of the other royal daughters who are among the bridegroom's 'honourable' or 'beloved' women. And there is, besides, yet another difficulty in relation to the declaration, "*instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*" It seems so natural to interpret such a good wish as a veiled realistic expression, appropriate to a bridal occasion. It is difficult, therefore, to accept the hypothesis of an entirely unhistorical Messianic reference.

But it seems to be still more difficult to accede to the hypothesis of Sykes, Knapp, De Wette, Krahnmer, Ewald, Hupfeld, Maier, that the Psalm is non-Messianic altogether, at least in original intention.

and was merely a secular and eulogistic *epithalamium*, or *wedding-song* (Ewald), uttered from the ordinary plane of loyal congratulation. The following are among the indications that something higher is aimed at.

(1) There are significant references to the infinite in time:—"Therefore God hath blessed thee *for ever*;" "Therefore shall peoples praise thee *for ever and ever*," &c.

(2) A dominion of world-wide extent is assumed: "Thou shalt make thy children princes *in all the earth*." If the translation be correct, a Messianic reference seems to be unquestionable; and that it is correct seems, at least, to be highly probable, and is admitted by De Wette. Consider the expression in the succeeding verse, "Therefore shall *peoples* praise thee." The other rendering, *in all the land*, adopted by Knapp, Krahmer, Ewald, Hupfeld, dwarfs the gratulation into comparative insignificance, while the adjective *all* puffs out the insignificance into prominence.

(3) Then, when the poet addresses the king with profound reverence, and says, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, *O mighty One!*" (ver. 3) and again, "Thy throne, *O God*, is for ever and ever" (ver. 6), the language, though capable of application to other potentates than the Supreme, in consequence of the generic import of the words rendered *mighty One* and *God* (see EXPOSITOR, vol. i. pp. 361-365), is yet peculiarly appropriate to the King of kings. And the likelihood is that Isaiah alluded to it, and drew from it, when, in his indubitable Messianic oracle contained in Chapter ix. 2-7, he introduced as in-

tegrant items in the complex name of the Royal Child that was to be born, these two, *God, the mighty One*.

(4) We know that the Saviour alluded to Himself as a Bridegroom (Matt. ix. 15 ; xxii. 2 ; xxv. 1), and was alluded to by John the Baptist under the same representation (John iii. 29). And we know besides that St. Paul speaks of the 'mystery' of the relation "between Christ and the Church" as shadowed forth in the relation that unites husband and wife (Eph. v. 22-33) ; and that St. John in like manner speaks of "the marriage-supper of the Lamb," and of the bride "who makes herself ready" in her "fine linen, clean and white" (Rev. xix. 7-9). It is not a creepingly prosaic, but a soaringly poetic representation, that must no doubt have been originally a glowing picture, painted in a moment of rapture, within some poet's 'chamber of imagery.' Only thence could it have descended, as 'a thing of beauty' and 'a joy for ever,' into current use on the plane of common life, so as to become a household ideal. *The likelihood is, that the original picture is found in this forty-fifth Psalm, which, as a work of surpassing poetic genius, spoke at once and for ever to the hearts of the people.* It is likewise probable that the parallel representation of the gracious relation of Jehovah to Israel, under the Old Testament economy, was, so far at least as its developed form is concerned, derived by the prophets, greater and smaller, from the same source. And thus, if some of the boldest and most fascinating Messianic representations, that occur both in the Old Testament Scriptures and in the New, flow from the fountain

of our Psalm, it is surely not improbable, to say the least of it, that its bridal scene should have in it, intentionally and indelibly, something of the spiritual and the Messianic.

(5) Then again, the Psalm was addressed, if not by the author himself, yet at all events by the collector, to *the Music-Master*, doubtless for the very purpose of being introduced into the service of song within the sanctuary (see Stähelin, *Zur Einleitung in die Psalmen*, § 1). But such a destination of the Psalm would be utterly incredible, if it were merely *a secular epithalamium*.

(6) And, indeed, the very fact that it has a place in the Psalter affords presumptive evidence that it is, and was intended to be, of sacred import. The five books of the Psalter are not mere bundles and jumbles of all sorts of ballads and poems—a Hebrew *olla podrida*. They were selected by the different editorial collectors with the view of furnishing for the people, as it were a *hymn-book*, or miscellany of sacred song for adoration, edification, and praise.

What then? Shall we fall back on the theory of an intentional 'double reference'? Shall we suppose that the poet had in his eye both a typical and anti-typical bridal? and that he so modulated his music, that melody rose beyond melody, all along the terraces of his song, till the several strains and grades combined in one sublime symphony? Or shall we, on the other hand, suppose that while, so far as his own consciousness was concerned, the poet intended only to speak of things seen, temporal, and historical, his words were secretly so

overruled by the Spirit, that breathed upon him from above, that they were made capable, in the Divine intention, of a complementary reference to things unseen and ideal ?

To either of these theories there are formidable objections.

(1) To the former :—For if we shall assume that the entire details of representation were intended to be applicable,—though on different planes, and in different degrees of adaptability,—to the personages and events of two distinct scenes, one present and the other future, then the question arises,—What ground in reason is there, *intrinsic to the Psalm itself*, to vindicate such duality of reference ? But if it shall be assumed that the dual reference, instead of comprehending and covering all the details, is merely occasional and partial, then how is the devotional reader, or even the literary critic, to disintegrate the typical from the antitypical ? Is not the Psalm turned into an enigma ?

(2) There are likewise serious objections to the second theory ; for it seems, in its very essence, to remove the antitypical element from the sphere of human observation. If the Psalmist had no thought of it, while he wrote, on what principle are we to have thought of it, while we read ?

There must surely be some *via media*, though it should be but as an indeterminate bridle-path, between these two theories.—How may we find it ?

We are not likely ever to find it, unless we are on our guard against transferring our highly developed and largely ramified distinctions in logical thought

to products of a more indefinite and rudimentary era in literature. There is but little reason for supposing that the inspired Psalmists wrought out for themselves, or got wrought out in them, or for them, any elaborated scheme of Messianic typology. Not unlikely they never expressly formulated to themselves the ideas of *type* and *foreshadow*, as distinguished from *prophecy*, *anticipation*, *expectation*, *hope*, *history*. Their very idea of *prophecy* differed from that which is current in these modern times, and was far more generic. Their idea of *history* too was different. Indeed, they had no word for *history proper*, in our modern acceptance of the term. They did not distinguish it from a *practical miscellany of moral biographical sketches*. And since they did not, it is cruel injustice to subject the ancient biblical narratives and representations to criticisms that derive all their apparent validity from a state and stage of literature belonging to a totally different epoch of development.

It should never be forgotten that there is a ceaseless growth in human language, so long as it lives, and that one of the difficulties which the honest investigator has to encounter, in his effort to reproduce the conceptions of past ages, arises from the fact that the terms in which thought is carried, and carried on, represent at different stages, and in different ages,—so far as the inseparable subjective element is concerned,—variable quantities and qualities.

There is growth in thought too. Even after minds reach the stage when, so far as mere power is concerned, an absolute maximum has been

attained, there are still other dimensions, distinct from that of power, which are elastic, and within which growth goes on. Collective mind grows. National mind grows. Mind, ecumenically, grows. The human mind of Jesus grew (Luke ii. 40, 52). It would not have been human if it had leaped at a bound into the maturity and fulness of manhood. The minds consequently of all the inspired writers grew,—even after the crisis of their inspiration, and under it, and indeed very specially in consequence of it. They could not see everything in a minimum of time. They could not understand everything at a glance. We shall never comprehend a hundred niceties and peculiarities in the epistles of St. Paul, if we leave out of view the element of growth, consequent on his conversion and inspiration,—an element that interpenetrated the whole period of his literary activity. In St. Peter too there was the same growth and progression. Even after his ultimate commission as an apostle, he found room, or at all events room was in him, for growth in manifold ways, theologically as well as otherwise. Consider, for instance, his view of the relation of the gospel to the Gentiles, before and after his vision in Joppa and his visit to Cornelius.

Is it to be wondered at that this principle of growth should require to be applied to prophets and psalmists, individually, and in the mass? and indeed to prophecy and psalms in general? What if we should come to the conclusion, that at the time when the forty-fifth Psalm was written, there was but a rudimentary conception of the Bridegroom-relationship of the Messiah? What if ample scope and

verge remained for the future growth and development of the conception? What if the actual nuptials of an actual historical king afforded the first occasion for the beautiful idea? Must not the King of kings have a fitting Object for the full enjoyment, and the full reciprocation, of his love?

The entire Old Testament, like the New, is a growth. During the currency of the Dispensations through which it extended, there was progression from stage to stage. The close of the Old Testament Book is far in advance of the commencement. Isaiah saw farther and more clearly, in things Messianic, than Moses. Not because he had a more commanding intellect or a more penetrative eye; these he had not: but because it was inevitable that, after the journeyings of the children of Israel, and their successive advances, for many re-repetitions of forty years, he could get, and he got, to the summit of a higher Pisgah than it was possible for Moses to climb. Still earlier patriarchs than Moses, such as Noah and Enoch, would have still more primitive and indeterminate conceptions. To them legislation and administration were not disintegrated. Not even were kingship, priesthood, and prophethood disintegrated. And thus they had not the materials for comprehending the work of the Messiah under the manifold phases and forms of thought that became familiar to later thinkers and seers.

A far higher stage was reached in the Psalm-epoch of the Hebrew people. Still there must have been, even then, comparative dimness of vision and immaturity of conception. It was yet but the early spring, not the full-blown summer. It was the

dusky 'gloaming' time, not the sparkling day-spring, nor the noonday brightness, nor the deep mellow radiance of the evening.

The writer, then, of the forty-fifth Psalm must not be lifted out of his own age and stage, and set down in ours. He did not see with our eyes, or from our standpoints. Even when we step back nearly two millenniums, we do not find his familiar points of view. He did not, and he could not, occupy those intellectual pinnacles on which stood Peter, Paul, Apollos, John. Some things he saw as clearly as ever apostles did. His vision certainly was as vigorous. The imagery amid which it revelled was as splendid as theirs, or more so. He was a poet of the highest order, though soaring in an atmosphere still loaded and darkened with intransparent vapours. What wonder, therefore, if he did not see clearly that a greater than any of the earlier or later Davidic kings was needed to realize the Divine promises, establish the Divine reign, and extend the sweets of Divine peace over the whole distracted world? What wonder that it was only the 'primer' lesson of the great bridal 'mystery' that he was able to spell?

He was emphatically a child of faith. He might, as such, have appropriately obtained a niche in the eleventh Chapter of this Epistle. His name, though unrecorded, was really, and is really, on the divinely illumined roll. His faith, too, was the "substance," or the substrate,—the 'standing-under' and the 'understanding,'—of "things hoped for,"—"the evidence of things not seen." But it was at best, as was no doubt even St. Paul's in an after age, partial, incom-

plete, indeterminate, though sufficient. His eye was searching for the longed-for Object, and caught glimpses of the grand Reality; yet it saw only "dimly," and as in a still more meagre and less glassy mirror, than that of which the greatest and clearest of the apostles complained.

While we cannot doubt that the great poet was gazing on an actual royal bridegroom, starry with the highest endowments of manly grace, beauty, and power; and was also looking with ravished eye upon, or toward, the splendour of an actual royal bride; yet we can as little doubt that when his spirit, in his ecstasy, poured forth his sublime gratulations, it was reading between the lines of his own utterances, and contemplating the ideal in the real, the spiritual in the material, the invisible in the visible, the future in the present, the Divine in the human.

The poet was in fact contemplating—in his own peculiar way—Him who was the Hope of Israel, the true Hero of mankind, the impersonated Sum and Substance of those promises which had animated the hearts of the patriarchs, and to which, as their only refuge from social despair, their believing descendants were tenaciously clinging. The eye of the body was beholding an actual Israelitish monarch,—most probably, as Calvin contends, and as Böhl admits, Solomon in all his glory,—while the eye of his spirit was beholding the absolutely peerless One, the King of kings. There was thus the phenomenon of 'double vision.' There was 'second sight,' the privilege and peculiarity of the spiritual seer.

Had the rapt seer descended from his pinnacle of ecstasy, to the level of a mere prosaic spectator and well-wisher, he might have contented himself with saying, in appropriately eloquent terms,—*What a noble man this monarch is! How graceful! How gracious! How princely! How grand! Is there not something divine in him? God grant that his reign may inaugurate, for the whole world, the golden age of goodness and glory. Blessed may he be in the Queen, his Bride! Blessed may she be in him! May there now be universal peace, universal prosperity, universal righteousness, universal love.*

But it is not with prosaic longings and good wishes, any more than it is with mere theological dogmatic typology, that we have here to do. Psalm xlv. flashes aloft and athwart, like a meteor. And as it passes, it projects across the path, and into the future, of the magnificent Israelitish potentate, the grand ideal of the seer.

The prophets, we are informed (1 Pet. i. 11), had often to “search diligently” in reference to the time and “the manner of time,” when their predictions would be fulfilled. They had likewise, we may rest assured, to search at times, with equal diligence, in reference to the persons, and the manner of persons, in whom their prophecies, and the promises that were from of old, would find their highest verification. So might it be with our psalmist. So, we doubt not, it was.

As to the bridal element in the poem, we, in this age of the world, and in the midst of the light of this advanced stage of biblical revelation, should

have no difficulty in separating accidents of form from substance of essence. We have only to allow to a true seed-thought the air and light and heat which are the conditions of its vital growth. Let it grow. Let us watch its growth. Let us pass along from spring-time to summer, from summer to autumn. See how the seed is distending. When we come again by-and-by, we find that it has distended farther still. It has burst some of the fibres of the husk that enveloped it, and these fibres shrivel. Yet no injury is done to the seed. Nor is the seed-thought supplanted by an absolutely 'new creation.' Look again. Only the sere wrappings have 'waxed old' and are ready to 'vanish away.' The thought itself lives, thrives, grows, blooms, and ripens, till it is grander, in its 'palingenesy,' than even Solomon in all his glory, or his queen in gold of Ophir.

We turn now to the departed quotation which the Letter-writer makes from this remarkable Messianic Psalm.

While of the angels it is said,—

Who maketh his angels winds,

And his ministers a flame of fire,

to the Son it is said,—

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.

It is not simply the phrase *O God*, on which the writer hangs the weight of his illustrative reasoning. Angels too might be called *gods*. And even men in the position of potentates or High Powers might be so designated. The word did not start from its highest application, and come down. It ascended

from below by gradual steps, until at length it took wing and alighted on the Infinite One. Then it settled there, as having reached its natural consummation,—leaving traces, however, here and there, of its gradual ascent, and consequently of its earlier and inferior applications. It is fully as much in consequence of the accompaniments of the august appellation, as in virtue of the appellation itself, that the citation verifies itself as thoroughly apposite to the writer's purpose. The Divine Son has a *throne*. He is *a King*, not a mere *messenger* or *minister*. And his throne is *for ever and ever*. Unlike the thrones of other monarchs, it will never be vacated. His reign is to last 'while the sun and moon endure.' The King's kingdom, like his kingdom, is to run on into eternity.

Such is the first part of the disparted citation. The second is ushered in by the copulative *and*, which has no place either in the original Hebrew or in the Septuagint Version. Nor is it found in our English Authorized Version, for it is wanting in the 'Received Text' and the Vulgate, as in both the Syriac Versions. It must, therefore, have been wanting in very early manuscripts. Yet it is found in MS. A. B. D. E. M., 17; and as it is hard to believe that it could have been intruded wilfully by transcribers, it must no doubt have stood in the texts from which they copied, and is likely therefore to be genuine. It had apparently been employed by the Letter-writer to make two citations instead of one. The passage really contains a double illustrative proof of his important theological position.

The sceptre of equity is thy kingdom's sceptre. Such is the reading that is approved of by both Tischendorf and Tregelles, as also by Lachmann in his minor edition. It has the support of the manuscripts SABM, 17; and is all the more likely to be genuine, that it is at variance with the reading of the Septuagint. Transcribers might deliberately, and with very innocent intention, change the reading of a New Testament citation, to bring it into absolute harmony with its Old Testament original. But it is not probable that they would wilfully vary the citation from the ancient text, especially when the variation involves a rather unusual phase of presentation. That is the case in the expression before us. It is really—so far as substance of thought is concerned—indifferent whether we say, *The sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness*; or, *The sceptre of righteousness is thy kingdom's sceptre*. But the latter form of presentation is comparatively rare. The subject and predicate of the proposition *are supposed to be 'logically' convertible*.

But the two phraseological possibilities for expressing the interchangeable relationship afford two distinct handles for laying hold of the thought. The thought, as exhibited in the adopted reading, is, that the character of the royal rule of the Messiah is ascertained, when we learn what a perfect royal rule really is. If the sceptre of an ideally perfect king be the sceptre of absolute equity, then just that very sceptre is the Messiah's.

Thou lovedst righteousness and hatedst lawlessness, or iniquity. The former word (*ἀνομιαν*) is the read-

ing of BDEKLM, the latter (*ἀδικίαν*) of NA. The tenses of the verbs are noticeable, *lovedst, hatedst*; not, *hast loved, and hast hated*. The sum total of the past part of the royal rule is broken off in thought, and separated from the present, as being amply sufficient to afford a basis for reward on the part of the Divine Father. The bard is wishing to account for the peculiar bliss that had at length come down upon his Hero. He finds the reason in the Father's approbation of the incorruptible integrity and equity with which the Son has wielded his delegated sceptre.

Therefore, O God! So doubtless should we translate,—re-introducing the vocative of the preceding verse. Symmetry demands it. And quite a preponderance of the best translators and expositors, both ancient and modern, either contend for it or acquiesce in it. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, in his Monograph on Heb. i. 8, 9, decides for it. And so does even Paulus. Abresch too, and Valkenaer, and Böhme. So also Klee, Ebrard, Reinke, Lünemann, Böhl, Bisping, Kurtz, Riehm. A peculiar idea is entertained by Bleek, de Wette, Maier, that the expression is vocative in the Septuagint Version and the Epistle to the Hebrews, but not in the Hebrew original. It is an idea resting on mere conjecture, intrinsically unlikely.

Thy God anointed thee. We have seen that the word *God*—especially in Hebrew—is not always absolute. It is not so even here, though here it rises to the pinnacle of its applicability. The Father is our God, and the Messiah's too (John xx. 17),

just as He is our Father, and the Messiah's too (John xx. 17). In another aspect, equally true, the Messiah's sonship is transcendent and supreme; and so is his divinity, which is in truth identical with that of the Father.

Anointed thee,—with an unction of gratulation,—an unction manifesting honour on the one hand, and conveying gratification on the other. Compare, but as from afar, our Lord's unction by Mary (Matt. xxvi. 7, &c.).

With oil of gladness beyond thy fellows. The joy showered upon the Messiah, as King of kings, is far beyond the joys of which other monarchs are susceptible. The dignity is inestimably greater. The Divine favour is inestimably greater. The Divine complacency is correspondingly greater. And hence the sweetness and fragrance of his gladness is inconceivably greater.

The entire citation is singularly apt as illustrative evidence that the Messiah's position in the moral universe is very different from that occupied by angels, and much more exalted. While they are the messengers of royalty, the Messiah is Himself royal in the highest degree. His sceptre is absolutely immaculate. His throne is for perpetuity. His bliss and joy—the reflection of the Father's complacency—are as far above the bliss and joy of other potentates, as heaven is higher than the earth.

J. MORISON.
