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only the shadow of that more perfect blessedness which comes to the Christian Church through the work of her Heavenly High Priest: for in Him she has sin pardoned; she is loosed from sin; grace and peace are multiplied to her, as she enters upon and pursues her heavenward path, —“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. i. 2). That sprinkling seals for her an everlasting covenant. That festival season of highest and purest joy for which she has waited is come. The prophecy is fulfilled, that she shall keep her Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. xiv. 16); and, offering the firstfruits of all her increase, her oil and her wine as well as her corn, she leads a free, joyous, independent life, breathing that invigorating and quickening air, which though it be the air of the desert, is yet also the air of her journey home.

W. MILLIGAN.

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## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

### IV. THE GREAT SALVATION, WHEREIN IT CONSISTS, AND HOW IT HAS BEEN OBTAINED (CHAP. II. 5-18).

THIS section is one of the most important in the whole Epistle. It is full of great thoughts, and also of exegetical difficulties, through which it will be my endeavour to steer my way as judiciously as possible, setting forth the views which commend themselves to my mind, without too anxiously enumerating or controverting the views which I reject.

Two things above all are taught in this section: (1) Wherein the “great salvation” mentioned in ver. 3 consists, and (2) how it has been obtained for men. The sum of the

doctrine set forth on these two topics is: that the great salvation signifies lordship in the world to be, and that Christ became man and suffered in the flesh, because that lordship being destined for men it was fitting and needful that He should descend into their present state, in order to make them partakers of the coming glory. He who was to open the kingdom of heaven to men subject to death by reason of sin, must Himself become man, and as man die, and by His death conquer and destroy Death. These thoughts concerning the nature and the way of salvation are introduced in verses 5-9. In verses 10-18 the doctrine on the second of the two related topics, the way or method of salvation, is defended and further developed and illustrated. What is there written must be reserved for future papers; in the present our attention shall be confined to verses 5-9.

On first thoughts one may be inclined to wonder why the writer does not speak of the great salvation in terms used by "the Lord," who, as he states, was its first preacher. The burden of Christ's gospel was, "the kingdom of God is come." The conception of the *summum bonum* implied in our text is lordship in the new world. Obviously it is the same thing in different terms; our Lord's idea modified. But why are the terms changed? what need for the modification?

Here, as so often throughout the epistle, the explanation is to be found in the apologetic aim of the writer. The conception of the *summum bonum* latent in this passage is not his exclusive, or even his favourite, view of the subject. It is one of many, making its appearance in a series of tableaux, then giving place to others. As indicated in the introductory chapter, nearness to God, unrestricted fellowship with God, is the conception most akin to his own mind; to which, had he been making a purely dogmatic or positive theological statement, he might have adhered

throughout. But his apologetic aim requires him constantly to keep in view what will help his readers. Therefore at this point he uses this mode of presentation, which fits well into his argument at its present stage, and enables him to meet one of the most urgent spiritual needs of the Hebrew Christians. To explain: He has, with ample Scripture authority, set Christ above angels; intrinsically, always, but especially in heaven. But beyond doubt He was lower too, on earth; not absolutely, but in certain respects constituting together the state of humiliation. That fact must be reckoned with and reconciled to his doctrine. The two he clearly sees to be perfectly compatible, but their compatibility is not apparent to his readers, and it now becomes his urgent task to make it plain to their apprehension. With this purpose in view he avails himself, with characteristic skill, of a passage from the Psalter. The value of the citation for him lies in the fact that in it the ideas of humiliation and exaltation are combined. The use of it determines the form under which the state of exaltation—salvation—must be presented, for in the Psalm it is made to consist in lordship over all.

The new section setting forth the nature and way of salvation opens thus: "For not to angels did He subject the world to come of which we are speaking." The reference to angels has misled some into the notion that from this point onwards to the end of the chapter we have a continuation of the discussion of the relative positions of Christ and the angels. It is a mistake carefully to be avoided, as exercising an unhappy bias on the exposition. The angels are not the theme of what follows; rather are they here respectfully bowed out, that they may give place to more important actors, in appearance less than angels in so far as human and subject to death, but destined to rise to higher heights, if doomed for a little while to descend to lower depths. Henceforth what we have to think of is

the great salvation, and the great Saviour; the sublime career of suffering through which He passed to glory, and prepared the way by which a host of redeemed men might follow Him. The contrast between Christ and angels exercises a certain influence on the form of the thought, but the thought itself is not a further contribution to the argument about angels.

The "for" with which the new section begins shows that the writer has in his mind what he has just been saying in his first admonition to his readers; but there is room for doubt as to what precisely is uppermost in his thoughts. Is it the *great* salvation, or is it the *human* agency by which it has been proclaimed? Probably both. He means to justify the use of the epithet "great" in reference to the gospel, and he means to emphasise the importance of man in connexion with the gospel salvation, both as recipient of its benefits and as the agent in its proclamation. The former end is served by identifying salvation with lordship in the "world to come"; the latter by laying stress on the fact that not to angels does that world pertain, whether as inheritance or as theatre of activity. "Not to angels, but to men," he means to say, but the antithesis is supplied not in this sentence but in the following quotation. *Not to angels, but to men.* Some think the intended antithesis is between the world to come—the new world of redemption—and the old world that is destined to pass away; and the thought: the *new* world is not subject to angelic sway as the *old* one has been. The construction is not justified by the order of the words in the sentence, in which "angels," not the "world to come," occupies the emphatic place. We have no right to find in this text a recognition of the dogma that in the old world angels exercised dominion; not even acquaintance with it, far less acceptance of it. What we ought to find rather is this sage counsel to Hebrews hankering after the past:

Give your minds and hearts to the new world ushered in by Christ, for in it lies man's highest hope—the great salvation, his ideal position of lordship realised. This new world belongs to man, not to beings of angelic nature. Humanity determines its whole nature, characteristics, and manner of coming into being.<sup>1</sup>

We come now to the citation which forms the basis of this implicit admonition and instruction. "But one hath somewhere testified saying": thus vaguely and indefinitely is the quotation from the Psalter introduced; the vagueness proceeding not from ignorance, but from the oratorical style which disdains accuracy in minutiae as pedantic and undignified.

The words quoted, as they stand in the 8th Psalm, have reference to mankind in general. This Psalm, like the 104th, is a hymn of creation, and after celebrating the glory of God as manifested in the visible world, and especially in the heavens as seen by night, it goes on to speak of the signal grace shown to man (who appears so insignificant physically in comparison with the celestial bodies) in constituting him creation's lord. In describing the honours conferred by God on the sons of Adam, the Psalmist appears to have in view what is written in the Book of Genesis concerning man when he was brought into existence. The first clause in the description of God's gracious visitation, "Thou hast made him little less than God," or as it is in the Septuagint and here, "than the angels," reminds us of the words spoken by the Creator when He contemplated the creation of the human race,

<sup>1</sup> Hofmann, who holds the view advocated in the text, that we are not here to find a new argument to prove the superiority of Christ over angels, adverts to the fact that ἀγγέλους wants the article and renders: "God hath subjected the world to come to beings who are no angels, no mere spirits." The γὰρ connecting with what goes before he thus explains: The writer had spoken of a σωτηρία, but the bare idea of a salvation implies that the subjects of it are not angels, and what is implied he here commences a new paragraph by expressing. Vide *Die Heilige Schrift*. Band. v., p. 104.

“Let us make man in our image after our likeness,” and the other clauses seem to be a free poetic version of the charter by which the Maker of all conferred lordship over all other creatures on the being whom He had made in His own image. The reference to Genesis has indeed been questioned, but the resemblance between the Psalm and the history is so close that it is difficult to escape the inference that either the Psalmist drew inspiration from the historian, or the historian from the Psalmist. Which of the two alternatives is to be adopted depends on the critical question of priority in authorship. That the writer of our epistle found in the Psalm reminiscences of the book of origins I can hardly doubt, and for this reason, that all his representations of salvation in the early chapters rest on the accounts of man’s primary history contained in Genesis. Salvation is represented successively as lordship; as destruction of him that had the power of death, and consequent deliverance of man from the fear of death; and as a rest or Sabbatism; with obvious allusion to man’s original position in the creation, to the curse which overtook him after the Fall, and to God’s rest on the seventh day after He had finished His creative work.

The words quoted from the 8th Psalm have the same reference here as in their original place. The glorious things written there are quoted here as describing favours conferred by God on *men*. This many have failed to see. Because the passage is ultimately applied to Christ, it is assumed that it applies only to Him, and in consequence it has been maintained that the words as they stand, even in the Psalm itself, are purely and exclusively Messianic in import. This view misses the meaning of the writer, involves his argument in confusion, and is quite gratuitous. We are not precluded by the application made eventually to Christ, from applying the oracle in the first place to men in general. The two references are perfectly compatible,

and, indeed, the one involves the other. Whatever is true of man as man must be emphatically true of Him who loved to call Himself "the Son of man." Whatever is predicable of the first Adam, as God made him, is in a still more eminent sense predicable of the Second Adam. And, since the first man stood not in his integrity, whatever favour God continues to confer on men is conferred on them for the Second Man's sake; so that while we read the 8th Psalm as really referring to the children of men, sin notwithstanding, we must think of them as included in and represented by the seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head, remove the curse, and restore paradise lost to mankind.

It is just in this way that the writer of our epistle views this Psalm. He regards the words, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet," as applicable to the sons of men, but not to them apart from Christ. He attaches great importance to this comprehensive reference, because the very doctrine he means to teach is, that in speaking of the great salvation he was really speaking of that lordship whereof the Hebrew prophet sang; in other words, that nothing less than that inheritance is the glorious hope and prospect of Christians. As surely as he believes that the great salvation concerns man, does he believe that the prophetic oracle he quotes refers to man. But while this is so, he is not conscious of any inconsistency in proceeding to speak of Jesus, as if he were THE Person of whom it is said in the Psalm, that God had made Him a little lower than the angels, and at the same time lord of all. For the other great doctrine he means to teach is that the lordship spoken of in the Psalm comes to men through the Man Jesus Christ, and must therefore belong to Him personally and pre-eminently.

But now, these things being admitted, a question arises here. By what right does our author take occasion from



the passage quoted from Psalm 8th to represent the sphere of lordship as "a world to come"? The Psalmist seems to have in view this material visible present world, for he speaks of such substantial, tangible things as sheep and oxen, beasts of the field, fowl of the air, fishes of the sea, as the subjects of man's dominion. To this question the writer does not furnish a direct answer, but he supplies us with materials out of which we can construct an answer for ourselves. First, like Paul in 1 Cor. xv., he lays the stress on the word "all" (ver. 8), and insists that it be taken in earnest; that is, that the dominion assigned to man be understood to be absolute and complete. Then he brings under the notice of the reader the actual state of matters which is patent to observation. Now, at this present, we do not in fact see all things put under man. Some, blinded by their pet theory of angelic dominion in the old world, think the reference here is to angels; as if the author meant to say: the dominion is not yet complete, the angels being yet unsubjected. But the supposed exception is not particularly open to observation. Neither is the alleged angelic reluctance to come under man's sway a very great grievance. If all were right in man's estate but that, there would be little to complain of. And surely it is not necessary to have recourse to this imaginary angelic obstinacy to prove that man's present state is not one of perfect lordship! It can hardly be said, "all would be right, the ideal of lordship would be realised, if only the angels would fall in." Alas! there are plenty of things to show that man is to a great extent not a lord, but a slave; a slave oftentimes in virtue of his seeming lordship, a slave at other times in spite of the limited lordship he does possess, at best a lord with a very insecure tenure, his inheritance being liable to be taken from him by time and chance, and sure to be taken away at last rudely by death. The Hebrews were conscious of being under something more

grievous than the yoke of angels—the grim iron yoke of Rome.

Man is not yet to all intents and purposes a lord. What then? Is God's purpose towards men to be fulfilled? If it is, the fulfilment must be a thing in the future, the present state of things being such as we see. And the fulfilment when it comes will be the world-to-come of our epistle. For the world-to-come does not mean something entirely distinct from, and having no relation to the present world. It rather means this world, where much is out of gear, put right, delivered from the curse, restored to a normal condition, death abolished, man made fit to be lord by temperance and sanctity and godliness, and no longer kept out of his inheritance by envious barriers, but actually exercising dominion, the meek inheriting the earth, and delighting themselves in the abundance of peace. Therefore it is not wholly future and transcendent, but in part present and immanent. "The hour cometh, yea, now is," said Jesus. In like manner here and throughout the epistle our author says in effect: "The new world of redemption is to come, and it is here. It is to come, for the ideal is not yet realised; it is here, for the work of realisation has commenced."

Such being the relation between the world to come and the present world, it is evident that the mention of the former in connexion with the quotation from the Psalter is not to be justified on the ground that it is a *part* of the "all," which is declared subject to man. "The world-to-come" is not a part of the all, it *is* the all. When the all shall really, fully, permanently, and inalienably, have become subject to man, then the world-to-come will be the present world. The justification of the reference to a world-to-come is simply that from the Scriptures it appears to be God's purpose that man should inherit all things, and that the fulfilment of that purpose is a thing we see not

yet. The author infers a world to come from the purpose of God and the present state of the world, just as further on we find him inferring a rest standing over for the people of God. His argument there is : the ideal of rest has never yet been realised ; it cannot remain a mere ideal ; therefore the perfect rest must come. Similarly here. The argument is valid if the assumption be conceded that all Scripture ideals must be realised. This assumption naturalism refuses to admit. To it Bible ideals are simply poetic dreams ; beautiful as poetry, but never destined to pass from cloud-land into the realms of fact.

One remark more I make on this prophetic oracle as used in this place before passing to speak of its application to Christ. There is latent in it obviously Christian universalism. The lordship belongs to *men*, not merely to Hebrews, though it is among the people of redemption that the consciousness of man's high destination finds its expression.

Having adverted to the state of things in the world at large as bearing on man's lordship, our author proceeds in ver. 9 to speak of what may be seen in Christ in reference to the same subject—in Christ the bright spot in a dark world. "Looking around us, we see not yet all things put under *man* ; looking unto Jesus, what see we there?" To this implied question the answer given is virtually this : "We see at once that which confirms the statement that man has not yet fully entered into his inheritance, and that which lays a sure foundation for the hope of the eventual fulfilment of the promise." "But Him who hath been made a little lower than angels, even Jesus, we do see, with reference to the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God He might taste death for every one."

Two things strike one at the outset in this remarkable sentence, by which transition is made from mankind in

general to the man Christ Jesus. First, Jesus is spoken of as if He were the one man who had been made a little lower than angels. He stands out in the history of mankind as *the man made lower than angels*. That is as much a distinctive name for Him as the Son of man, or the Second Adam. Then, secondly, very noteworthy is the introduction of a reference to death in this application of the Hebrew oracle to Jesus. There is not a word about death in the Psalm. The thought of mortality or weakness may be latent in the question, what is man? and in the name *enosh*, but on the surface all is sunny, bright, cheerful. The one fact would seem to imply that for Jesus alone was the being made lower than angels in any emphatic sense a humiliation; the other may throw light on the nature of the humiliation.

Now as to the former of these two points. It is really the case that in the Psalm the being lower than God or angels is not mentioned as a humiliating feature in man's estate. It rather forms an element in his state of exaltation. Man's privilege and glory consists in this, that he has been made little lower than God, or Divine angelic beings—the Elohim—and appointed lord and head of creation. He is less than Divine, but the point emphasised is not that he is less than God, but that he is so little less, a kind of God on earth, as Jehovah is God in heaven. The inferiority to God does not stand in antithesis to the lordship; the two attributes are not incompatible or mutually exclusive, but harmonious and contemporaneous elements in one and the same condition. The question is whether our author, in quoting the Psalm, so understands the matter, or whether he does not rather regard the inferiority as detracting from the lordship, and therefore as an element that must be removed before the state of lordship can come to pass. The latter view has been very often assumed as a matter of course to be the truth. A recent writer thus puts the case. "The author, in the usual manner of rabbinical interpretation, fixes on an apparent paradox

in the old Testament text, and makes the solution thereof the key to the teaching of the Psalm. This paradox lies in the antithesis between the two statements, 'Thou hast made him for a little time lower than the angels'; and, 'Thou hast put all things under his feet.' The last statement it is urged (ver. 8) must be taken absolutely, including the angels as well as lower beings. We have therefore the doctrine of a temporary subordination of man to the angels, followed by his permanent elevation over them—a solution of the paradox which the writer seems to have facilitated by taking *βραχύ τι* of the Septuagint in the temporal sense—'lower for a little time.'"<sup>1</sup> On which I remark first, that my respect for the author of our epistle makes me very reluctant to consent to this degradation of him to the level of a rabbinical commentator; second, that he does not draw the proof of the present incompleteness of man's lordship from any supposed paradox in an old Testament text, but from observation of facts in the state of the world patent to all: "we, you and I, do not yet see," etc.; and thirdly, that it is an ungrounded and needless assumption that he understands the words *βραχύ τι* in a temporal sense = "for a little while." The phrase throughout may be taken as an adverb of degree; not of course to the exclusion of the temporal sense, for the two senses are not necessarily incompatible. Why should not the meaning of the oracle, both in its original place in the Psalm, and as quoted here, be, Thou hast made man only a little lower in nature than God or angelic beings?

If this be indeed the sense, then we can understand how the writer of our epistle should regard Jesus as the only man to whom the predicate of inferiority to angels can be applied with emphasis as a predicate of humiliation. For while Jesus as man was lower than angels, just like other men, there was for Him in that fact, apart from all other

<sup>1</sup> Dr. W. Robertson Smith, in *THE EXPOSITOR*, vol. i., 2nd Series, p. 138.

circumstances of His earthly experience, humiliation enough. Other men were never anything else or higher, and so far from its being a signal humiliation to them that they are lower than angels, it is rather their glory to be little less than angels. But for the Son of God it was a descent to be made even *a* little lower than angels, by becoming man. In the case of ordinary men we wonder to what all but angelic heights of thought and worship those can arrive who began their being as "babes and sucklings," flesh born of flesh. In the case of the man Jesus we are astonished to hear of the Son of God being born, wrapt in swaddling clothes, laid in a manger, a helpless, speechless infant. Yet while astonished, we believe, and gratefully acknowledge that out of the mouth of this babe and suckling God hath perfected His own praise, and by means of this Holy Child Jesus hath stilled the enemy and the avenger.

The assumption of human nature being what constitutes the humiliating inferiority to angels for Jesus, the phrase "made a little lower than angels" applied to Him becomes a synonym for the incarnation. But to complete our view of its meaning we must take into account the reference to the suffering of death. If the incarnation alone constituted the humiliation, then permanent inferiority would be the consequence, and the exaltation of Christ would involve the laying aside of His humanity. We must conceive of the humiliation as consisting in the assumption of humanity subject to suffering in various forms, death the supreme suffering included. Thereby the "little" of degree becomes a "little" of time. The patristic commentators were right in thought, though wrong in grammar, when they connected the clause "made lower than angels" with the clause, "for the suffering of death." The true construction of the sentence is to regard *Ἰησοῦν* as closing up the subject—and all that follows as the predicate—reading "Him who was made lower than angels, *viz.* Jesus, we see so and so situated."

But while the suffering of death belongs to the predicate it influences the writer's thought of the subject, and should also influence our interpretation of it. Death enters into his conception of Christ's humiliation, though he characteristically avoids introducing it into the definition thereof, because his aim is to set Christ's passion in a new light—even surrounded with a halo of glory.

Before proceeding to that great theme, I may make a passing remark on the terms employed to describe Christ's state of humiliation: "made a little lower than angels." It is not the way in which we would naturally speak of it. The description rather appears to our view artificial, and fitted to obscure rather than reveal the moral grandeur of the thoughts in verses 5-18. We are apt to feel that it were better for us to forget the angels, and translate the phrases which refer to them into their modern equivalents, throwing away the antiquated shell that we may get at the eternal kernel. Those who are so inclined are quite at liberty to do so. Only let us not forget that the shell was important to the Hebrews, and let us admire the sympathy and tact displayed by the writer in adapting himself to their modes of thought, in speaking of the great Christian verities—the nature of salvation, and the career of humiliation and suffering through which it was brought into existence—in terms which took them up at the point where they were and led them on to a more perfect insight into the genius of the Christian religion.

We come now to the *crowning of Jesus with glory and honour*. There is a crux for interpreters here, lying in the thought rather than in the grammar. The plain meaning of the text seems to be that Jesus was crowned with glory and honour with reference to the suffering of death, in order that by the grace or favour of God He might taste death for men. This rendering makes the crowning antecedent to death, a fact occurring in the earthly life of Jesus, an

exaltation in the humiliation, a higher even in the lower, a glory consummated in heaven but begun even on earth. But commentators almost with one consent regard such a view as utterly inadmissible. Till lately it does not seem to have entered into the mind of any of them as a possibility, and since one or two writers ventured modestly to propound it, it has been treated by the learned as out of the question. Referring to my advocacy of it in *The Humiliation of Christ*, Professor Davidson slyly pokes fun at me in a footnote, by remarking that my view contains "a fine modern idea, but one to which Scripture has hardly yet advanced,"—the fine modern idea being that "while it is a humiliation to die, it is glorious to taste death for others."<sup>1</sup> Such a verdict from such a quarter is enough to intimidate a modest man into the abandonment of the idea, and it has certainly led me very carefully to reconsider the text in the light of all that has been recently written upon it. I observe that the most recent writer on the epistle feels the fascination of the view advocated by Hofmann and myself, and I am happy to add by another theologian, for whose genius I entertain a very high esteem,<sup>2</sup> and admits that it has a Biblical foundation, and cannot be set aside as a merely modern idea.<sup>3</sup> The unmistakable, though somewhat timid sympathy of Dr. Edwards, gives me the needful boldness to restate and defend a view of this notable passage, which, after Hofmann, I advocated many years ago with youthful fervour and enthusiasm.

The ordinary view that the crowning refers to the exaltation in heaven, Christ's reward for suffering death, is beset with great difficulties, especially with this one, that it is not easy in accordance therewith to assign a natural

<sup>1</sup> *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 57, in Handbooks for Bible Classes Series.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Matheson, in an article on Christ's Exaltation in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the *Monthly Interpreter* for November, 1884.

<sup>3</sup> *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, by T. C. Edwards, D.D. Hodder & Stoughton: London, 1888.



sense to the words in the last clause of the verse. What meaning can one attach to the statement that Christ was exalted to heaven in order that He might taste death for every one? It is pathetic to observe the expedients to which interpreters have recourse to get over the difficulty rather than entertain the thought that the crowning was antecedent to death. The most plausible solution proposed is to assign to the verb *γεύσθαι* a retrospective reference, and find in the last clause the doctrine that Christ's exaltation gave to His death going before redeeming efficacy—an indubitable Scripture doctrine, certainly, whether taught here or not. Some of those who adopt this expedient admit that the manner of expression lacks logical precision, and that the more correct way of putting it would have been, "in order that the death which He tasted might be for the good of all."<sup>1</sup> Bleek, our greatest authority, regards the retrospective sense assigned to the verb as inadmissible, and gets out of the difficulty by supplying after τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου the words ὁ ἔπαθεν, and rendering: "crowned for the suffering of death, *which He endured* in order that He might by the grace of God taste death for every man."

Considering the forced, unnatural character of both these solutions, I am constrained to ask interpreters, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you" that the crowning referred to may be prior, not posterior, to death—an exaltation latent in the humiliation? If I am met with the sceptical question, With what glory and honour can the man Jesus be said to have been crowned on earth? I reply, With just such glory and honour as are spoken of in the third and fifth chapters of this same epistle: with the glory of a Moses and the honour of an Aaron; the glory of being the leader of the people out of Egypt into the promised land, that is, of being the "Captain of Salvation"; the honour of being the High Priest of men, procuring for

<sup>1</sup> So Ebrard.

them, through the sacrifice of Himself, life and blessedness. The glory and honour spoken of as conferred by Jesus may thus quite well be those connected with His appointment to the honourable and glorious office of Apostle and High Priest of our profession.

This, accordingly, is the thought I find in this text: Jesus, "crowned for death," to use the phrase of Dr. Matheson, by being appointed to an office whereby His death, instead of being a mere personal experience of the common lot, became a death for others, and a humiliation, was transmuted into a signal mark of Divine favour. This crowning had a twofold aspect and relation; a subjective and an objective side, a relation to the will of Christ and a relation to the will of God. It would not have been complete unless there had been both an act of self-devotion on the part of Christ and an act of sovereign appointment on the part of God. The subjective aspect is in abeyance here, though it is not forgotten in the epistle; it receives full recognition in those places where it is taught that Christ's priestly offering was *Himself*. Here it is the objective Godward aspect that is emphasised, as appears from the remarkable expression, "by the grace of God," and from the line of thought contained in the following verse, to be hereafter considered. There was a subjective grace in Christ which made Him willing to sacrifice His individual life for the good of the whole, but there was also conferred on Him by His Father the signal favour that His life, freely given in self-sacrifice, had universal significance and value.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is to the subjective aspect that Dr. Matheson gives prominence in the article previously referred to. Dr. Edwards' main objection to our interpretation of the crowning is based on an exclusive regard to the subjective aspect. "If," he argues, "the Apostle means that voluntary humiliation for the sake of others is the glory, some men besides Jesus Christ might have been mentioned in whom the words of the Psalm find their accomplishment. The difference between Jesus and other good men would only be a difference of degree."

By the expression *χάριτι θεοῦ*, "by the grace of God," grace or favour to us has very commonly been supposed to be meant. And some commentators, such as Ebrard, feeling such a reference to God's favour to men in Christ to be insipid and out of place, instead of bethinking themselves of the interpretation of the text here advocated, have rather sought refuge in the ancient reading, *χωρὶς θεοῦ*, "apart from God." The fact that so intelligent and independent a theologian adopts this desperate course serves to show what need there is for insisting on the thought that Jesus by the grace of God to Him tasted death for men: that His death, by being a death for others, was transmuted from a humiliation into a glory. One would think, from the common consent of interpreters to shun this view, that it was indeed only a "fine modern idea to which Scripture has hardly yet advanced." How far this is from being the fact I think it worth while, at the risk of being tedious, to show.

Kindred, then, to this famous text, understood as explained, is Christ's beatitude pronouncing the persecuted for righteousness happy;<sup>1</sup> Paul's statement to the Philippian Church, "Unto you it is given as a favour (*ἐχαρίσθη*) in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake";<sup>2</sup> and Peter's declaration to the strangers scattered abroad, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you."<sup>3</sup> Kindred also in import are all the texts in which Christ speaks of His approaching passion as His glorification, a mode of viewing the Passion very common in the Johannine report of our Lord's sayings. I only add to these citations a mere reference to the voices from heaven pronouncing Jesus God's beloved Son when He manifested at the Jordan and on the Mount of Transfiguration His willingness to endure suffering in connexion with

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 20.<sup>2</sup> Phil. i. 29.<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 14.

His Messianic vocation, and in connexion therewith to the reflection occurring in the Second Epistle of Peter relating to the latter event, "He received from God the Father *honour and glory*, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."<sup>1</sup> With these Divine voices stand in contrast the voices from hell uttered by Satan in the temptation. The God-sent voices say in effect, "Thou art My beloved Son because Thou devotest Thyself to the arduous career of a Saviour, and I show My favour unto Thee by solemnly setting Thee apart to Thy high and holy office." The Satanic voices say, "Thou art the Son of God, it seems; use Thy privilege, then, for Thine own advantage." God shows His grace unto His Son by appointing Him to an office in which He will have an opportunity of doing a signal service to men at a great cost of suffering to Himself. Satan cannot conceive of Jesus being the Son of God at all unless sonship carry along with it exemption from all arduous tasks and irksome hardships, privations and pains. God puts a stamp of Divinity on self-sacrifice, Satan associates Divinity with selfishness.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that the crowning, as I conceive it, is an idea familiar to the New Testament writers. The only question that may legitimately be asked is, whether the thought I find in the text is relevant to the connexion of thought in the passage, and serviceable to the purpose of the epistle, that of instructing in Christian truth readers who needed to be again taught the merest elements of the Christian faith. To this question I can have little hesitation in giving an affirmative answer. Was it not desirable to show to men who stumbled at the humiliating circumstances of Christ's earthly lot, that there was not merely a glory coming after the humiliation, compensating for it, but a glory in the humiliation itself? This ethical

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. i, 17.

instruction was much more urgently needed than a merely theological instruction as to the purpose and effect of Christ's exaltation to heaven, *viz.* that it made His death already endured have universal significance and value. The exaltation needed no apology, it spoke for itself; what was needed was to remove the stigma from the state of humiliation, and such, I cannot but think, is one of the leading aims of the epistle. The blinded Jew said, "How dishonourable and shameful that death of Jesus; how hard to believe that He who endured it could be Messiah and God's well-beloved Son!" The writer replies, "Not disgrace, but grace, favour, honour, and glory do I see there; this career of suffering is one which it was honourable for Christ to pass through, and to which it well became the sovereign Lord to subject His Son. For while to taste death in itself was a humiliation to the Son of God, to taste it for others was indeed most glorious."

It is a recommendation of the interpretation here advocated, that under it the crowning is not subsequent to the being made lower than angels, but, as in the Psalm, contemporaneous with it. It scarcely requires to be added that the glory *in* the humiliation is not exclusive of the glory *after* it. The full thesis of the epistle on this theme is: "First lower, then higher; nay, a higher in the lower." Most commentators find in its teaching only the former member of the thesis; I find in it both. The two truths, indeed, are complementary of one another. There could not be an exaltation subsequent to the humiliation unless there were an exaltation immanent in it. "Exalted because" implies "exalted in." No man who does not appreciate the latter truth can understand the former. The posthumous exaltation must be seen to be but the public recognition of the perennial fact, otherwise belief in it possesses no spiritual value. That is why in this apologetic effort to unfold the true nature of Christianity the writer

insists on the glory inherent in Christ's vocation. And in doing so he is in harmony with himself in his whole manner of presenting truth. In his view of the glory of Christ there is the same duality we found in his view of the Christian era. The world-to-come is future, and it is here; even so the exaltation of Christ is in heaven, and yet also on earth.

A. B. BRUCE.

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STUDIES IN PRACTICAL EXEGESIS.

I.

PSALM XXXII.

THIS 32nd psalm was the favourite of two great men, who, different as they were, agreed in their deep sense of sin and their exaltation of grace—St. Augustine and Martin Luther. It was their favourite, because it was one of the penitential psalms, and both of them had learned the sweetness and the bliss of repentance, which, in its purest and truest form, is “the eager and enthusiastic struggle of the soul to reach and fasten itself to God.”<sup>1</sup> Both of them have, not only blistered this psalm with their tears, but tried to sing it to the bright allegro music which they overheard from the angels' harps. How could they sing the penitential psalms to doleful chants when they had caught sweet fragments of the angelic melodies? For “*there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*”

But St. Augustine and Luther are not the only noted persons who have loved this psalm. God's word is like the sword at the garden of Eden; it turns every way, and

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Phillips Brooks,