

it is suggested, might be interpreted typologically, to fit in with the main types already familiar. Always of course there is the general norm or guide for our interpretation, known as the Analogy of Faith, which requires us to accept no interpretation which is at variance with the truths of Faith. If such a line of study is pursued we need not of course expect to find any new doctrine. It is rather emphasis and new life which is being sought by those who favour this investigation: 'Thus illumined by the liturgy and patristic tradition, the reading of the Bible will in its turn revivify the smallest liturgical allusions with a great fund of Scriptural experience, pulsating with life', Bouyer, *art. cit.*

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QUESTION AND ANSWER

Why does verse 3 of Psalm 2 appear in inverted commas in the New Latin Psalter and in Fr C. Lattey's Westminster Version, as though the words were spoken by the rebels? It seems more obviously to be the decision of the psalmist to break the bonds and cast off the cords of those rulers and kings who resist God. And this is how St Augustine interprets the verse in his second sermon on the Ascension, as given in the second nocturn of the Sunday after that feast: 'Omnes enim quasi quibusdam compedibus nos premunt, et peccatorum nos retibus ligare contendunt; et ideo cum adiutorio Dei, secundum quod ait Psalmista: Dirumpamus vincula eorum . . .'

The present Holy Father reminds us of the importance of establishing the literal sense of Scripture first. In this Psalm, the nations are subject to Yahweh and his Anointed; but a rebellion is being fomented. The nations are mustering armies with the intention of breaking away from the rule of the Anointed which they regard as no better than bondage. The universal character of the rule here described seems to exclude the possibility that the Anointed might refer to a king of Israel, in particular, David, and there is no discernible reference to contemporary events. The Anointed mentioned in verse 2 is therefore Jesus Christ. As elsewhere in the Psalms, his rule is depicted in very material terms as though he were a temporal ruler. In verse 3 we might expect to read 'his bonds' i.e. imposed by the Anointed of Yahweh. But Israel is conceived as being with the Anointed and sharing with him his rule over the nations. Indeed the Jews of the post-exilic period took it for granted that Israel would dominate the nations in the Messianic age, and even the Apostles after the Resurrection seem to have shared this misconception, Acts i, 6.

Evidence of the Messianic sense is found in the NT. Thus in Acts iv, 25-8, Peter understands it thus; in Acts xiii, 33, St Paul quotes verse 7 of the Resurrection. Cf. also references to it in the epistle to the Hebrews; and in the Apocalypse, the language of this psalm is constantly used of the conflict between Christ and his enemies and the eventual triumph of his kingdom. The early Christians understood the 'nations and rulers' to be Herod, Pilate and the Romans.

The speaker in verse 3 cannot be the psalmist. There are no grounds for introducing him in person here as a participant, nor is there anything to suggest that *he* is in bonds imposed by the nations. It would indeed be against the context. Moreover there is a sequence in the speakers—rebels (v. 3), Yahweh (v. 6—not Vulgate) and his Anointed (v. 7)—a sequence which would be mutilated if one adopted the interpretation suggested in the question.

There are those who take this psalm to be literally fulfilled in the historic circumstances of the reign of David or another king of Israel. Such an interpretation would not of course exclude a Messianic interpretation. It would mean simply that the latter would be spiritual instead of literal.

There may well be more than one spiritual meaning in any given text. Whether we hold the Messianic interpretation to be literal or spiritual, we may in either case go on to discuss the possibility of other (spiritual) meanings using the ordinary rules of interpretation. But it is axiomatic that the spiritual sense be based on the literal, and whether you interpret the Anointed as the Messiah or as a king of Israel, the spiritual meaning proposed in the question would be at variance with the literal sense of the psalm. It is difficult to admit that St Augustine intends his use of the psalm in this context to be taken as the inspired meaning of Scripture. Besides bearing no clear relation to its literal meaning, his interpretation cannot be said to enjoy wide support among the Fathers. It seems more probable that St Augustine made use of the words as a simple accommodation of the sacred text to the lesson which he wished to convey.

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