

little, but he did not pay all he could, because he thought his kind father would not grudge the remainder.

And it came to pass that he married, and had many sons and daughters, but still he thought he required assistance from his father. He could not trust himself to work to provide enough. His ground was very hard, and he did not think that it could be tilled to yield sufficient to feed men and beasts; and as his father had sent him there, and had been so kind, he determined to plead still for some paternal bounty.

But, one day in spring, a letter came from his father, telling him that, after next autumn, he would give him no more—that he must look to his own farm for support—that he must plough the deeper to break up the hard soil. And at this the son was astonished and sore vexed. And he called his children around him, and told them of the calamity, and waited, expecting to hear wailings and sorrow. But instead, they all cried out: do not be sorry, father, we will all work the more; we did not require to do all that we were able, because you were helped, but now, we are strong, and we will work, and never fear. And they all worked; and when autumn came their barns were full, and they had plenty. And the young men and maidens rejoiced over their labor, and were growing in stature and in strength, and were happy.

And after a few years, Pillus, having prospered greatly, called his children around him, and said—children, I am now to tell you what I am to do to you. I shall give each of you adjoining farms, but when you go to settle on them, I shall then give each of you, for your support, no more than an axe, and some months' provisions, and afterwards you must get along by helping yourselves, and each other. When my father assisted me, our farm was not half chopped, and the land was hard; but when he told us that we must plough deeper, and support ourselves, then we prospered, and we have added farm to farm, and will add, yet, many more. Had my father done to me, *hard as it seems*, what I am to do to you, I would have been much richer long ago. My sons, learn to depend on yourselves: as the Psalmist says in the 128th Psalm, so say I unto you for your true prosperity—"Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee." Yes, my children, it is the Divine rule—"if any would not work, neither should he eat."

And the children, with the strong heart and the strong arm, heard all this, and were satisfied. And they joined hands in a covenant, that the older would aid the younger—that the strong would help the weak.

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MESSIANIC PSALMS.

Two very different modes of explaining the Book of Psalms have extensively prevailed in the Christian Church. The early fathers applied almost every passage, either directly or indirectly, to Christ, to his sufferings and glory, and to the perpetuity of his kingdom, though, in many cases, evidently opposed to its true meaning. They transferred their own religious consciousness to the external world, and then imagined that they saw Christ and him crucified in almost every object in nature, and in every event in providence—in the occasional form of the clouds, in the horns of the deer, and even in the standards of the Roman, among which they thought that an over-ruling providence had caused to be moulded into the form of a rude cross. In conformity with this leading principle, they viewed the entire Old Testament as a standing type of Christ. They maintained that Joshua, the son of Nun, was intended to be a type of the Saviour—that the scarlet thread which Rahab was commanded to suspend from her window, was an emblem of the blood of Christ; and that Leah and Rachel are types of the Jewish and Christian dispensations. In the words of a celebrated modern writer: "They knew nothing, thought of nothing, felt nothing, but Christ; is it then surprising that they meet him everywhere, even without seeking him? In the present high state of civilization, we are scarcely able to form a correct idea of the mind of those times, in which the great object of commentators was, to shew the connexion between the old and the new covenant, in the most satisfactory manner, and in the most vivid colors." This mode of interpretation was followed by many writers who lived immediately after the Reformation, and who derived their theology more from the writings of their fathers than from the depths of their religious

consciousness and from "the lively oracles of God." But when the principles of correct interpretation were more thoroughly understood, many of the supposed Messianic references in the Psalms were questioned. Then, there arose a class of verbal critics, possessed of great learning, yet destitute of the grace of God, whose minds could not reach beyond the mere facts of Jewish history, and who explained away the clearest references to Christ and his everlasting kingdom. They represented the march of scientific discovery, and the so-called perfectibility of the human race, as the great themes of revelation, while they either denied or explained away the divinity of Christ, his atonement, and the influences of the Holy Spirit, as necessary to renew and sanctify the human heart. "The truly pious Christian may say, with respect to them, 'They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him.' That there are, however, Messianic Psalms, is evident, from the circumstance that Christ, after his resurrection, reminded the disciples, that 'all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning' him. The Messianic Psalms teach,

1. *That Christ is the Supreme God.*—Paul, as an inspired and, therefore, infallible interpreter, identifies Jesus with the Messiah of the Old Testament, and describes him, in the language of the Psalms, as God, whose throne is for ever and ever, as the Lord who laid the foundations of the earth, and who shall ultimately fold them up as a garment; and he asserts that, with respect to him, the mandate has been issued in the heavenly temple, "Let all the angels of God worship him." Now, God claims the work of creation, and the right to divine worship exclusively for himself, and asserts that this is a glory which he will not give to another; and, consequently, when the names and attributes, the works and worship, due to the Most High, are ascribed to Christ, it is evident that he is "God over all." As an evidence of omnipotent power, as a proof that he sits on a co-eternal throne with his Father, and receives along with him the homage of a holy universe, the Psalmist represents the Lord, saying to his Lord, "sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The expression, "sit thou at my right hand," does not merely denote the bestowment of honor, but it always implies a participation of power and dominion, or, as our Lord explains it, the possession of all power in heaven and on earth. The phrase "is derived," says Michaelis, "from the seat of God in the most holy place over the ark of the covenant, in relation to which (symbol) only can a right and left hand be ascribed to him who filleth all things. No mortal dared to venture upon entering the most holy place, except the high priest alone, who, once in every year, not without apprehension of death, (for death would be the consequence of the slightest oversight in performing the ceremonies,) and with the blood of expiation, entered into this terrible and sacred darkness. To sit down at all in the most holy place, would have been a rashness and insult unheard of; but for a person to place his seat close to the cherubim, at the right hand of the invisible God who dwelt above them, would have been strictly equivalent to declaring himself God, and requiring to be adored as God: for every prayer of the Israelites was addressed, without any other visible object, to the most holy place, and indeed to the Deity who held (symbolically) his invisible throne at the western end of the sanctuary. When, therefore, Jehovah says to 'the Lord,' the King and Friend of the race of David, 'Sit thou at my right hand,' it is, in the highest sense, equivalent to saying, 'enjoy with me divine honor and adoration; be the object of all the religious service of my people.'" Thus, it is evident that Christ is not a conquering hero, but the mighty God—not the ideal good man of the heathens, struggling with misfortune and perfected through sufferings, but a spiritual Saviour, who came into the world to seek and to save that which is lost.

2. *The Psalmists predict Messiah's sufferings and death.* It has been the firm persuasion of all past ages, that sin is a moral pollution, and that it uniformly entails punishment on the transgressors. This feeling induced them to lead up their sacrifices to the altar, and even to offer their first-born for the sin of the soul, but a sense of guilt still remained. The heathen sages confessed that every sin inflicts a wound on

* Mohler's Patrologie, as quoted by Hagenbach.

* Michaelis' Remarks for the Unlearned, quoted in Fyfe Smith's four Discourses.