

of the results of his gracious administration is stated to be, that princes would come out of Egypt, yielding homage to him as their Lord; and that the Ethiopians, or the negro tribes of Africa, would soon stretch out their hands unto God. The language—to stretch out the hands unto God—is obviously expressive of genuine conversion. All interpreters so regard it. It indicates imploring entreaty or fervent appeal. Those that are in bondage, and unable to free themselves, stretch out their hands to the passers by, and ask for pity and help. And has not fettered, wounded, and bleeding Africa been for centuries stretching out her manacled hands to God and to man, crying for sympathy and deliverance? And when the gospel shall reveal to Africa her spiritual thralldom, she shall lift her hands to God, imploring mercy and salvation. It is the language, too, of confiding trust and affection. The child in the arms of a stranger stretches out its hands to its mother, and calls for relief; and so, when the Psalmist would condense into one word all his faith and his piety, he says, ‘To thee, O Lord, do I stretch out my hands.’ It plainly imports that Africa will turn from all her fetishes, her jujus, and her ghastly idols,—from her impure, bloody, and degrading ‘customs,—and place her confidence and her hope for salvation in God alone. And it is language, further, which describes the liberality of a converted and grateful people. The preceding verse speaks of persons submitting themselves to Christ, and coming to him with pieces of silver as thank-offerings. It is with such presents, as marks of homage, of gratitude and of willing service, that in accordance with Eastern habits, the princes of Egypt, as deputies of the people are represented as coming. Now it is in this connection that the best expositors explain the words, ‘Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.’ As the Magi came to Christ, and gave him, as a part of their worship, ‘gold, frankincense, and myrrh;’ so the princes of Egypt shall come, and they shall be accompanied by the sable Ethiopians, who shall stretch out their hands—each one both hands filled with gifts. Oh yes, long neglected and contemned Ethiopia, visited with the mercy and the love of God, and enjoying the blessings of the Gospel, shall, in the abundance of her grateful liberality, excel all the nations. She shall come with both hands full, and pour her donations joyfully into the treasury of the Lord. Like the woman mentioned in the Gospel narrative that was a sinner, and that brought to Christ, as a token of her thankfulness, an alabaster box of ointment, Ethiopia shall come loaded with the gold, the spices, and the precious commodities of her fertile country. Oh, what hope do these words excite for Africa and for other nations! Ancient Ethiopia was a rich land, the centre of the lucrative trade of the old world—a region of treasures; and the inland countries of Africa, the land of the negroes, are full of the materials of a valuable and enriching commerce. When, therefore, the gospel shall open up these wide regions to the intercourse of other nations, and shall induce the warm-hearted and grateful converts to consecrate their wealth with both hands unto the Lord, we may get from Africa herself the means that shall enable the church to evangelize more fully the very nations that have long sought to rob and degrade her. This idea seems to be confirmed by what follows; for the next words in the psalm are, ‘Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord.’ It is as if the Psalmist had said, lift up your voices, O ye nations, and shout for joy; for when the people of Ethiopia shall come to God with both hands filled with gifts, the day of your salvation is near.

There is still another thing calling for remark in this wonderful prediction. It is the word soon. ‘Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God;’ or, as distinguished scholars render, it ‘shall cause to run, or hasten, to stretch out her hands,’ importing that it shall be done eagerly and speedily. Now, what does the word, so explained, indicate? It cannot refer to mere time; for it is nearly three thousand years since the prediction was uttered, and certainly there is nothing in the histories of Egypt and Ethiopia up to this day, in the past or present state of the Coptic and Abyssinian churches, that would warrant us in saying