

The Psalms: *Their History, Teachings, and Use*

by
William Binnie, D.D.

Book II "The Theology of the Psalms"

Chapter III "The Christology of the Psalms"

Special Note: This chapter contains some statements from which I would differ. Dr. Binnie is a Presbyterian scholar and therefore sometimes refers to "the Church" where I would refer to ethnic, national Israel. I have inserted footnotes giving my view on two such occasions. However, there remains much good material in this chapter, so we have included it.

Till the Lord Jesus died and rose again, a certain veil obscured the meaning of those prophecies of the Old Testament which spoke of the sufferings of the Messiah, and the Glory that was to follow. The prophets were themselves sensible of this obscurity; for the Holy Spirit revealed to them that it was not properly to themselves, or to the men of their time, that they ministered the divine oracles regarding Christ and redemption, but rather to us who belong to the Christian dispensation.¹ So late as the eve of the crucifixion, we find the Lord saying to the disciples that they could not yet bear the full disclosure of the truth. Three days later, this incapacity was gone; the Lord had suffered and risen again; the crisis of the world's history was past.

Accordingly, the first discourses of the risen Saviour were devoted to the exposition of the things that were written concerning himself. The last chapter of Luke's Gospel contains accounts of two several discourses of this kind, with which the disciples were favoured on the very day of the resurrection. The first was spoken, on the road to Emmaus, to the two friends who were returning home from the Paschal solemnity. It must have been a long exposition; for the evangelist mentions that, after joining himself to their company and hearing them express the sorrowful perplexity into which they had been cast by the events of the past week, the Lord first of all showed them that the tragical death of their Master was just what it behoved the Messiah of the Scriptures to endure before entering into his glory; and thereafter went on to unfold in detail what we should now call the Christology of the Old Testament. "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."²

A second discourse, to the same purpose, was preached in the evening, at the meeting of the infant Church in Jerusalem. The two brethren to whom the risen Saviour had made himself

1 Comp. 1 Pet. 1:10-12.

2 Luke 24:27.

known at Emmaus had just come in, and, forgetting the fatigue of their double journey, were reporting what they had seen and heard, when the Lord himself stood in the midst and resumed the subject by which he had made their hearts burn within them by the way. The tenor of this second discourse is thus described by the evangelist:³ "He said unto the, These are the words which I spake unto you while I yet was with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." It is added, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written and thus it behoved (the) Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations."

The question has sometimes been asked, not without surprise and disappointment, Why did the Evangelists omit to give a full report of these great sermons of the risen Lord? They must have shed a flood of light on the most interesting passages of the ancient Scriptures. It is plain that the disciples hung upon the preacher's lips. Why, then, are the precious words not recorded? What Christian is there who would not be well content to endure, like those disciples, the Saviour's loving reproofs, and even to be called "fool, and slow of heart to believe," if so be he might with them hear Christ himself proving from the Scriptures that it was necessary he should suffer the very things he did suffer, and should rise from the dead the third day?

The desire is a natural one, and may be entertained without rebuke. Nevertheless, it is a mistake to suppose that the Saviour's expositions have perished, or that, in collecting *The Christology of the Psalms*, we must forego the assistance which would have been furnished by his authoritative declaration of "the things that were written in the Psalms concerning him." The eleven faithful apostles were among the auditors; the discourses were treasured in their memories, and they have been careful to embody the substance of them in their sermons and epistles. It may be difficult to explain why the teaching of Christ during the Forty Days from the Resurrection to the Ascension has, for the most part, been left to be gathered from the apostolical Scriptures, instead of having been set down in the gospel, like that which went before; but of the fact there can be no doubt. There are many passages in the sermons and epistles of Peter, which one cannot read without feeling that the apostle is availing himself of the expositions he had heard Christ deliver in the upper room at Jerusalem.

The discourse he preached on the day of Pentecost is largely made up of quotations from the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, and especially of the Psalter. He quotes first the **Sixteenth Psalm and then the Hundred and tenth**; in both instances opening up and vindicating the true interpretation. So largely is the same thing done in all the subsequent discourses and writings of the apostles who heard Christ at Jerusalem, and in those of the Apostle Paul, to whom Christ made similar communications afterwards,⁴ that it would be difficult to name one Messianic Psalm that is not cited or commented upon in one place or another. In these apostolical expositions of the psalms, what we hear is just the echo of the expositions that had been delivered by the risen Saviour himself.

I am very sensible that the attempt to exhibit the Christology of the psalms is an arduous one, and that complete success is not to be expected. The views of the truth respecting

³ Luke 24:44-47.

⁴ Comp. 1 Cor. 15:3.

Christ that pervade this part of the Scriptures are inexpressibly high and deep. The greatest of the Church-fathers mentions in his City of God, that although his friends were expecting him to undertake the task of opening up David's predictions regarding the Lord Jesus Christ and his Church, he felt himself constrained to decline it; "not because he had too little to say, but because he had too much."⁵

The design of the present chapter is the more humble one of setting forth such a General View of the subject as may indicate the extraordinary richness of the field, and afford both an impulse and guide to Bible readers in the further exploration of it. And I am sure we may hope to prosper in this design, if we (the writer and his readers together), while thankfully availing ourselves of the authoritative expositions Christ has delivered to us by the apostles, ask and receive that "opening of the understanding to understand the Scriptures" which He gave to the disciples at Jerusalem, and which it is the office of His Spirit to give to disciples still.

Respecting the PERSON of Christ, the testimony of the psalms is copious and sufficiently distinct. For one thing, it is everywhere assumed that He is the Kinsman of his people. The Christ of the Old Testament is one who is to be born of the *seed of Abraham* and *family of David*. The modern Rationalists, in common with the unbelieving Jews of all ages, refuse to go further. They will not recognise in him more than man, maintaining with great confidence that superhuman dignity is never attributed to the Messiah, either in the law, or the prophets, or the psalms. It would be strange indeed if the fact were so. The disciples were slow of heart to receive any truth that happened to lie out of the line of their prior expectations,--any truth of which the faithful who lived before the Incarnation had had no presentiment; yet we know that they readily accepted the truth that Jesus was more than man.

The Cross of Christ was long an offence to them. It was not without a long struggle that they were constrained to acknowledge the abrogation of the Mosaic law and the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles. But there is no trace of any similar struggle in regard to Christ's *superhuman dignity*. The moment Nathaniel recognised in Jesus of Nazareth the expected Redeemer, he cried out, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God";⁶ and, long before the close of the public ministry, Peter, in the name of all the rest, made the articulate profession of faith, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."⁷ They believed him to be the Son of God, in a sense in which it would have been blasphemy to affirm the same of any mere man. Instead, therefore, of deeming it a thing incredible, or highly improbable, that intimations of Christ's superhuman dignity should be found in the psalms, we think it every way likely that they will be discoverable on a diligent search. In truth, they are neither few nor recondite [obscure].

Take these three verses:--

"Thy throne, God, is for ever and ever :
A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom."⁸

"Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son;

5 Copia quam inopia magis impediatur. August. *de Civitate Dei*, Lib. xvii. c. 15.

6 John 1:49.

7 John 6:69; Matt. 16:16.

8 Psalm 45:6.

This day have I begotten thee."⁹

"Thus saith Jehovah to my Lord,
Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I lay thy foes, as a footstool, at thy feet."¹⁰

I do not forget the attempts that have been made to put a lower sense on each of these passages. I do not think they are successful. But suppose it were admitted to be just possible to put on each of them, separately, a meaning that should come short of the ascription of superhuman dignity to the Son of David, we should still be entitled to deduce an argument in favour of our interpretation from the fact that, in so many separate places, he is spoken of in terms which most naturally suggest the thought of a superhuman person. From the exclamation of Nathaniel it is evident that this thought did suggest itself to the Jews, before the veil of unbelief settled down upon their hearts in the reading of the Old Testament.

The truth is, that, if a man reject the eternal Godhead of Christ, he must either lay the Psalms aside or sing them with bated breath. The Messiah whom they celebrate is fairer than the sons of men, one whom the peoples shall praise for ever and ever.¹¹ The ancient Jews understood the particular psalms now quoted to refer to the Messiah; and no one who heartily believes in the inspiration of the Psalter will be at a loss to discern in it more testimonies to the proper divinity of the Hope of Israel than could well have been discovered, before his incarnation and death lighted up so many dark places of the ancient Scriptures. It will be sufficient for our purpose to indicate a single example. The coming of Jehovah to establish a reign of righteousness in all the earth is exultingly announced in several lofty psalms. It may be doubted, indeed, whether the ancient Jews were able to link these to the person of the Messiah; but we are enabled to do it, and have good ground to know that it was of Him that the Spirit spoke in them from the first. The announcement is thus made in the **Ninety-sixth Psalm**:--

11. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
12. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein:
Then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy
13. Before Jehovah: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth:
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with his faithfulness.

We know whose advent this is. No christian can doubt that the proper response to the announcement is that furnished by the Book of the Revelation, "Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus."

It is undeniable that, in the recoil from Arian and Socinian error, Christ's people have sometimes failed to give due prominence in their thoughts to the truth of his *Humanity*. Not that they deny or altogether forget such a cardinal article of the faith; but they have too often been unwilling to accept all that it implies, and have failed to appreciate the store of

9 Psalm 2:7.

10 Psalm 110:1.

11 Psalm 45:2, 17.

consolation treasured up in it for the many brethren of whom he is the First-born. The Eternal word truly came in the flesh. The Son of God became a man, taking to himself at once a true body and a rational human soul, with all the sinless infirmities proper to such a soul. The great Protestant divines have not hesitated to hold and teach that the child Jesus was really a child; a child in the unfurnished immaturity of his sinless mind as well as in the imperfect stature of his body; that there was room for instruction and for advance in knowledge and wisdom, as well as for growth in bodily strength: nor have they hesitated to take in its natural and obvious sense his own declaration, that, even after his measureless baptism of the Holy Spirit, he remained ignorant of the day of final judgment.¹² From error he was always and absolutely exempt; but his human soul was not omniscient. And his soul was subject to other human infirmities. It was not impassible, but, on the contrary, shrank from pain and death with the reluctance of an unsophisticated human nature.

The Romish divines¹³ have been accustomed to charge the teaching of the Reformers on this subject with a tendency to Arianism, and have laboured hard to explain away the texts which attribute to our Lord nescience [lack of knowledge] and infirmity. But their error, although it might seem to be altogether on the safe side, has yielded fruits which show that there is no such thing as safety in error; least of all in error touching the Person of Christ. Explaining away the truth of Christ's Humanity, they have affrighted trembling souls from His presence, and driven them to resort to the Virgin and the saints, in the hope to find in them intercessors "who can be touched with the feeling of their infirmities, having been in all points tempted like as they are."¹⁴

I mention these things here, although they may seem to be a digression, because I think they go far to illustrate the wonderful wisdom of God in the Christology of the psalms. These divine songs never swerve from the just line of truth in their representations of the person of Christ. We have seen how copiously and loftily they celebrate his Superhuman Dignity, how unqualifiedly they crown him with the incommunicable name of God, how reverently they offer to him divine worship.

Let the reader now remark how copiously they celebrate the other aspect of the Saviour's person. It was from one of them¹⁵ that he took the title of Son of Man, which was so constantly on his lips when he was on the earth. What is of more importance, they bring him near to us. Without the slightest touch of that offensive familiarity which is apt to taint uninspired hymns when they celebrate the Incarnation and Humanity of the Lord, the psalms present to us the Man Christ Jesus with a boldness that has never been approached. In singing them we are permitted, like the doubting apostle, to satisfy ourselves, as by actual contact, that the Son of God has truly come in the flesh. We are permitted to handle the Holy One, to touch the print of the nails and the pierced side; we are even invited to feel the throbbings of the human heart within.

How wonderful, how inexpressibly wonderful, in this connection is the **Twenty-second psalm!** It is the voice of our Joseph, as with tears and sobs he makes himself known to his brethren! We learn from the gospel that, although the sentiment of Christ's heart from first to last was always the same-- "Lo, I come to do thy will, God"--although he never, even for a

¹² See, for example, Calvin's Notes on Mark 13:32 and Luke 2:40, 52.

¹³ Bellarmine *de Christi Anima*, chap. I.

¹⁴ Heb. 4:15.

¹⁵ Psalm 8:4.

moment, refused to do or suffer any part of the Father's will, but kept his commandment, there was yet the shrinking of human infirmity from the agony and the death that were appointed to him. When the hour of his agony approached, he sought the company and sympathy of the disciples, earnestly pressing them to watch with him. When the great eclipse shrouded his soul in darkness on the cross, he expostulated with the Father on account of the hiding of his face. We learn from the gospel, moreover, that, in the midst of his sufferings, the mind of Christ was much occupied with thoughts about the joy that was set before him in the salvation of souls, and that the sure hope of that joy lent him support under his heavy cross. A day or two before He died, he was heard to exclaim, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."¹⁶

These things, I say, are all related by the evangelists. But it is in the Twenty-second Psalm that Christ brings us the nearest to him, and, withdrawing the vail from his heart, shews us the conflicting emotions of fear and hope, of human shrinking under present grief and of superhuman resolution to finish the work that was given him to do. It is a sight not to be contemplated without tears, nor without adoring admiration of the love which made him who was in the form of God willing to take on him the form of a bondman and to become obedient to this death.

1. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
(Why art thou) far from helping me, (from) the words of my roaring?
2. My God, I cry in the daytime, and thou answerest not;
And in the night season, and have no silence.
3. But thou art holy,
Inhabiting the praises of Israel.
4. In thee did our fathers trust;
They trusted and thou didst set them free.
5. Unto thee they cried and were rescued:
In thee they trusted and were not ashamed.
6. But as for me, I am a worm and not a man,
A reproach of men, and despised of the people.
7. All they that see me laugh me to scorn:
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, (saying),
8. "He cast himself upon Jehovah, let him set him free;
Let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."

Where shall we find another such picture of the Man of Sorrows? Where shall we find such a vivid expression of the conflicting emotions which agitated his soul during the closing days of the week on which he was offered up? It is common to say that the psalm sets forth Christ on the Cross; but a comparison with the narrative of the evangelists will shew that its scope is more extensive--that it expresses also the varying exercises of his soul during the days which preceded the crucifixion. It exhibits traits which are either omitted or more faintly given in the gospel; as when the Divine Sufferer calms his agitated soul by looking up and adoring the Holiness of the Father who was putting him to grief, and by calling to remembrance how the Old Testament saints, when they cried to God in trouble, were delivered, and found reason to encompass the throne of the Lord with the incense of their praises. If I

¹⁶ John 13:27,32.

do not greatly err, this affords us a deeper insight into the truth of our Lord's human nature than anything that the evangelists themselves have recorded, and more feelingly persuades us that we have an High Priest who is able to sympathise with our human infirmities, having been tried just as we are, except that he had no sin.

If the first part of this great Psalm delineates with incomparable vividness the Sufferings of Christ, the latter part brings before us with a vividness not much inferior his stedfast anticipation of the Glories that were to follow.

22. I will declare thy name unto my brethren,
In the midst of the Congregation will I praise thee, (saying),
23. "Ye that fear Jehovah, praise him;
All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him;
And stand in awe of him, all ye the seed of Israel.
24. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted,
Neither hath he hid his face from him:
And when he cried unto him, he heard."
25. From thee shall be my praise in the great Congregation:
My vows will I pay before them that fear him.
26. The meek ones shall eat and shall be satisfied,
They shall praise Jehovah that seek him;
Let your heart live for ever.
27. All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto Jehovah:
All the families of the nations shall bow themselves down before thee.
28. For the kingdom is Jehovah's;
And he is the Governor among the nations.
29. All the fat ones of the earth shall eat and shall bow themselves down;
All they that go down to the dust shall bend the knee before him,
And he that cannot keep alive his soul.
30. A seed shall serve him;
It shall be told concerning the Lord to the generations (to come).
31. They shall come, they shall declare his righteousness,
To a people that shall be born, that he hath performed (it).

Passing from the Person of Christ to his WORK, we find that respecting this also the Psalms minister abundant aliment to faith. The Mediatorial Office is not, indeed, mentioned in express terms; the psalms are poetical compositions, and formal definitions of doctrine would be out of place in them; but it is in the character of Mediator, the Father's righteous Servant, that Christ is everywhere set forth. The correspondence, in this respect also, between the Christ in the Psalter and the Christ of the Gospel, is perfect. In the gospel of John a saying is preserved, in which the Lord gives compendious expression to a sentiment that runs through all his sayings and discourses: "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me; and this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."¹⁷

Christ's advent was in virtue of his being sent of God; his death also was in virtue of the Father's commandment that he should lay down his life, and so bring home the children of

¹⁷ John 6:38,39.

God that were scattered abroad. Such is the tenor of Christ's language in the gospel. Let his language in the **Fortieth Psalm** be compared with it.

6. Sacrifice and meat-offering thou didst not desire;
Mine ears hast thou opened;
Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.
7. Then said I, "Lo, I come;
In the roll of the Book it is written of me,
8. To do thy pleasure, my God, I have desired,
Yea thy law is within my reins."

This, without doubt, is the voice of the Beloved. Here, just as in the gospel, he represents himself as coming, not to offer the sacrifices which could never take away sins, but to do the Will of God, to fulfil the commandment he has received of the Father. The words might indeed have been used, in a certain sense, by David and the other godly kings. There were things written for them in the roll of the Book of the Lord--commandments which it behoved them to obey. But they apply far more perfectly to Christ. His whole mediation, culminating in his death, was a course of obedience to the will of the Father and of compliance with the prophecies of the Scripture. "I lay down my life," he said; "this commandment have I received of my Father."¹⁸ And we have already remarked that, after his resurrection, He was accustomed to say, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved (the) Christ to suffer."¹⁹ The general conception of Christ's work, therefore, is identical in the New Testament and in the Psalms.

Even in regard to the details, the correspondence is remarkable. It would not be easy to name a single function of our Lord's office to which the harp of David is a stranger. From the earliest ages of the Christian Church, it has been customary for divines to distribute Christ's work into the three categories of Priesthood, Royalty, and Prophecy. It will be profitable to take notice how copiously all the three have been celebrated in the psalms.

The **PRIESTHOOD** of Christ, as it is here set forth, claims special attention. The great oracular announcement in the **Hundred and tenth psalm**, attributes this office to him more expressly than any other part of Scripture written prior to the crucifixion. The Messiah of the psalms is "a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." As a Priest he must, of course, have somewhat to offer. Of what, then, is his sacrifice to consist? Do the psalms give any help in answering that question?

The verses quoted a little ago, from the **Fortieth**, furnish a partial answer. They teach that the sacrifice to be offered by him was to be of a different order from those the smoke of which went up, year by year, continually, from the altar of burnt-offering on Zion. And this inference from one psalm is corroborated by those others which intimate that he was to be the Son of David, and was therefore to spring out of Judah, "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."²⁰ His sacrifice was to consist in obedience to the Father's commandment, as it was prescribed in the roll of the Book.

The doctrine of the Priesthood and Sacrifice of Christ, since it plainly includes the idea of a

¹⁸ John 10:17,18.

¹⁹ Luke 24:46.

²⁰ Heb. 7:14.

Suffering Saviour, is more vehemently denied than anything else included in the Christology of the Psalms. The Cross of Christ is still what it was at first, "to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness." A Messiah who shall conquer and reign, the Jews have always been ready to welcome; a Messiah who is a priest and a propitiation for sins, they will not hear of. This rooted prejudice of the Jews has been borrowed from them by the modern Rationalists. They are ready enough to go a certain length in the way of acknowledging the existence of psalms which express hopes regarding Christ as the King of Israel; but the existence of Psalms predictive of his sufferings, they will by no means allow. This denial of predictive announcements of Christ's sacrifice is, I believe, quite universal on the part of the modern Jews and Rationalists.

On the other hand, it is remarkable that the existence of such announcements is constantly affirmed both by the apostles and by Christ himself. The gospel which the apostles preached declared not merely the fact that Christ died for our sins, but that he did so "according to the Scriptures."²¹ They maintained that in preaching the cross they were "saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that (the) Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead."²² The reader will remember that this authoritative exposition of the drift of Old Testament prophecy, was formerly shewn to be capable of the most thorough vindication on the ordinary principles of exegesis. The **Hundred and tenth psalm** is demonstrably inapplicable to any but Christ, and it declares, in so many words, that he is a Priest; a royal Priest after the order of Melchizedek. From that one text, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is able to establish the whole substance of the Christian doctrine of our Lord's vicarious death.

How far the Old Testament saints were able to penetrate the meaning of such psalms as the Hundred and tenth, it is hard to say. It was after the crucifixion that the disciples first began to understand these Scriptures perfectly. But care must be taken not to make too much of the imperfect conceptions of the ancient Jews on this vital subject. The amount of truth revealed in the Psalter is not to be measured by the amount of truth which readers were able to gather from it before Christ died. We must hold rather by the principle stated by the Apostle Peter, that it was to us, rather than to their contemporaries, that the holy men who wrote the ancient Scriptures ministered the truths there revealed. There are many things in the Psalter that the Psalmists themselves found it difficult to understand; many things, especially, respecting Christ, which were set forth, not so much for the use of the Hebrew Church, as for that of the Church universal. On this principle, we do not hesitate to connect the Twenty-second psalm with the Hundred and tenth.²³ From the former we learn that it behoved the Son of David to suffer the hiding of the Father's face, the scorn of foes, and the ignominy of the cross; and that the fruit of his sufferings was to be the conversion to God of the ends of the earth,--the providing of a feast for all nations, for the opulent of the earth and the neediest of those who descend to the dust.

Let that prediction be well weighed, and it will furnish a key to the oracle in the Hundred and tenth psalm, regarding the Priesthood. Let the two psalms be taken together, and they

21 1 Cor. 15:3.

22 Acts 26:22,23; comp. Luke 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:11.

23 It may be true that, as some affirm, the ancient Jews failed to perceive the connection of the sufferings of Christ, spoken of in the former, with the Priesthood attributed to him in the latter. What of that? It would certainly be to our shame if we failed to understand those ancient predictions better than the saints who lived prior to their fulfilment. Both psalms delineate the same Saviour, and we are now in a position to combine them into one picture.

will yield the whole substance of the great cardinal doctrine of Christ's Priesthood and Sacrifice. Every time we sing them, we are to call to remembrance "how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," and to animate one another to a cordial faith in the atonement thus accomplished.

Add the **Sixteenth psalm** to those two, and there will be a commemoration of the other great article of our faith regarding Christ-- "that lie rose from the dead the third day, according to the Scriptures." It is a psalm of David, and expresses the faith which possessed his soul in the prospect of death; but he looks beyond himself when he sings,--

8. I have set Jehovah always before me;
Because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved.
9. Therefore hath my heart rejoiced and my glory exulted;
Yea, my flesh shall dwell confidently.
10. For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades (the unseen world);
Neither wilt thou suffer thy Favoured One to see the pit.
11. Thou wilt make me to know the path of life,
Fulness of joy in thy presence,
Pleasures at thy right hand for evermore.

The Apostle Peter, it will be remembered, quoted this psalm on the day of Pentecost, as an undoubted testimony to the resurrection of Christ.²⁴ We may place by the side of it that verse of the **Hundred and eighteenth** to which the same apostle referred in his speech before the Sanhedrim, a few days later. "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head stone of the corner."²⁵ In the beginning of the Passover week the daughter of Zion saw her king coming to her, in meek state, riding upon an ass. He thus made a solemn offer of Himself to Israel. But the builders rejected Him. Thereupon God, raising Him from the dead, made Him the head of the corner; and the day on which He rose, the first day of the week, was thenceforward consecrated to be the *Lord Christ's day*,²⁶ the weekly memorial of his finished work. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

The KINGLY office of Christ is celebrated in very many psalms. The harp of David was oftener occupied with it than with either the priestly or prophetic office. It will not be necessary, however, to say much on this head. Christ's proper kingdom is the Church; and most of the particulars relating to the kingly office will demand consideration when we proceed to elucidate the Doctrine of the Church as it is set forth in the Psalter.²⁷ The following points claim notice here:--

In the first place, the psalms enable us to perceive that *the Kingdom of Christ is founded on His Sacrifice*. He must die before he can gather into one the children of God that are scattered abroad. The Cross comes first, then the Crown. For the suffering of death He is

²⁴ Acts 2:25-31.

²⁵ Psalm 118:22; comp. Acts 4:11.

²⁶ Rev. 1:10.

²⁷ **KM Note:** I do not agree with this statement. As a Presbyterian, Dr. Binney is likely amillennial. I believe that when Jesus returns, he will regather all of ethnic Israel back to the land (Isaiah 11:10-12; Ezekiel 37:15-28; Micah 2:12-13; Zech. 8:1-8; 10:8-12) and rule the world from Jerusalem on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:3-8; 30:8-9; 33:14-16; Hosea 3:4-5; Amos 9:11-12).

crowned with glory and honour.²⁸ This is implied in the relation which the latter half of the Twenty-second psalm sustains to the former half. The preaching of repentance and the remission of sins among all nations in the name of Jesus, which is so glowingly predicted in the one, is consequent upon the sufferings described in the other. The same connection is intimated even in the Hundred and tenth psalm; for the people of the throned Priest in Zion are described as crowding to him "in the beauties of holiness." They follow him to the field in sacred priestly attire, even the righteousness of saints. Their king is a priest, and they are a kingdom of priests, whom he has redeemed to God by his blood.

It is equally evident, from the psalms, that Christ's kingdom must always reckon on encountering violent opposition. The decree is, "*Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*" Never yet did Christ find men his friends. Inexperienced persons, who have newly come to know the grace of Christ, the excellence of his salvation, the pleasantness of his ways, have always been ready to indulge the generous anticipation that, when the gospel is plainly set before men, they will at once welcome it to their hearts. The picture of the advancement of Christ's kingdom which Christian poets have commonly drawn, represents it as a peaceful Progress along a way strewn with flowers--the holiday march of a royal train. Church history has a very different tale to unfold. Its pages are crowded with the record of a warfare that has never slept since the Church was launched on the waters. And it will not do to blame the historians for this, as if they had mistaken the accessories for the essential facts. The pencil of the Holy Spirit in the Apocalypse, in painting the fortunes of the Church during the Christian centuries, discloses, in like manner, to our sight a series of conflicts, fierce, often bloody, always trying to faith and patience.²⁹

And when we go back to the Psalms, we find that they are pervaded with the same view of things. They are the songs of a Militant Church. The prescient Spirit of inspiration has framed them so as to harmonise with the predestined fortunes of the kingdom of Christ. Thus the Second psalm describes the nations and their rulers as taking counsel against God and his Christ, scornfully refusing to be bound by his law, and bringing down on themselves in consequence his iron rod. Even the Forty-fifth psalm, although it is a Nuptial Song and, for the most part, redolent of peace, contains a prayer to the King to gird his sword on his thigh and ride forth to conquer his enemies.

It needs hardly be added that the psalms, nevertheless, hold forth Christ as the *Prince of Peace*. His sword wounds that it may the more surely heal. If he rides forth like David, his right hand teaching him terrible things, it is that, like Solomon, he may rule in peace over a willing people. His arrows are sharp in the heart of his enemies, in order that he may reconcile them to God. The strifes and revolutions which follow the entrance of the gospel into a community, and which attend every notable advance it may subsequently make, have for their object the overturning of throned iniquities, and the gradual introduction of a reign of justice, in order that at length "the mountains may bring forth peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness."³⁰

The PROPHEITICAL office of Christ is not overlooked in the Psalter. Thus, in the **Fortieth**

28 See John 11:52; Heb. 2:9.

29 **KM Note:** Here is another statement with which I disagree. Dr. Binnie describes a view of the Book of Revelation (or the Apocalypse) called the *historicist view*. The *futurist view*, which I hold, takes chapter 4 and following as a description of the period immediately preceding and following the second advent of Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah).

30 Psalm 72:3.

psalm, speaking by the mouth of David, he himself declares:--

9. I have published (the glad tidings of) righteousness in the great Congregation;
Lo, my lips I do not refrain:
O Jehovah, thou knowest it.
10. Thy righteousness have I not hid within my heart;
Thy faithfulness and thy salvation have I declared.
I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth,
From the great Congregation.

These remarkable words of the great Prophet received a partial accomplishment in such sermons as the one which filled with astonishment the townspeople of Nazareth, amongst whom he had grown up; but their proper and full accomplishment is that which they are receiving year by year. In the gospel of Christ "the righteousness of God is revealed to faith."³¹ Wherever that righteousness is faithfully declared, it matters not who the preacher may be, the message is Christ's, and it is to be received as his. In this connection, also, I may cite the classical text from the **Twenty-second psalm** (ver. 22):--

I will declare thy Name unto my brethren,
In the midst of the Congregation will I praise thee.

Our Lord had these words in his heart when he said in the guest chamber, "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it."³² They are a compendious summary of all he taught the disciples, and of all that he will continue by them to teach all generations. The drift of Christ's teaching is evermore *to declare to men God's name*; in other words, to set forth what they are to believe concerning God. But the peculiar glory of the psalmist's intimation of Christ's prophetic office lies in the golden words, "*My brethren.*" Christ teaches, in the midst of the Church, not with the dazzling majesty of the Godhead, but in the milder radiance of the first-born of the many brethren. The words of the psalmist suggest, by contrast, the manner in which God's name was declared from Horeb, in the audience of the mighty congregation that filled the plain below. It was with thunder-peals, out of the thick darkness. The people found the weight of the glory insupportable, and entreated that Moses, their brother, might be constituted an internuntius to bear to them the word of the Lord. It was in allusion to that entreaty that, when Moses afterwards delivered the prediction respecting Christ, in which, for the first time, mention is made of his prophetic office, it ran in these terms: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me;"³³ of thy brethren, so that his voice will not affright thee, any more than mine has done. In the Psalm, the prophet thus announced takes up the promise, and repeats it in his own person: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren."

One who would thoroughly enter into the fulness of these words must look beyond the formal teaching of the Lord Jesus--beyond those manifestations of the Father which took place by means of his sayings and discourses. No doubt, the grace of Christ's personal teaching is very precious. Listening to it, we appreciate the glowing description in the epistle to the Hebrews, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a

³¹ Romans 1:17.

³² John 17:26.

³³ Deut. 18:15.

trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. . . . But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. . . . And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant."³⁴

Still, it was not by verbal declarations only, nor by them principally, that Christ manifested the Father. Rather, it was by shewing Himself. He is the Incarnate Son of the invisible God; and, wherever He went, they who had eyes to see saw in Him the glory of the only begotten of the Father, and, in that glory, the glory of the Father Himself. All effective, all saving knowledge of God is derived from the declaration of Him which has been made in the Person of Christ,--in his incarnation, and life, and sufferings, as well as in his spoken words. One who would know God's name must fix his eye on Christ. Christ on Olivet, weeping over Jerusalem, is a more perfect declaration of the mind and heart of God in regard to lost men, than could possibly have been made in words. He affirms of himself, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."³⁵ With such a fulness of meaning could he say, by the mouth of David, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren."

The Psalter, which sets forth so much truth respecting the Person and Work of Christ--truth more precious than gold, and sweeter than the honey-comb--is not silent respecting the bond subsisting between him and his people, THE MYSTICAL UNION BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. When a prince sets his affections on a woman of lowly rank and takes her home to be his wife, the two are so united that her debts become his, his wealth and honors become hers. Now, that there is formed between Christ and the Church,--between Christ and every soul that will consent to receive him,--a connection, of which this most intimate of all natural relations is the analogue and type, we have already found to be not only taught in the Psalms, but to be implied in the very structure of many of them. He takes his people's sins upon him, and they receive the right to become the sons of God; the One Spirit of God wherewith he was baptized without measure, dwells in them according to the measure of the grace that is given them. I will only add further, that this union, besides being implied in so many places, is expressly set forth in one most glorious psalm--the Nuptial Song of Christ and the Church--which has for its peculiar theme the home-bringing of Christ's Elect, that they may be joined to him in a union that shall survive the everlasting hills.

10. Hearken, daughter, and behold, and incline thine ear;
Forget also thine own people and thy father's house.

11. So shall the King desire thy beauty:
For he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.

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13. All glorious is the King's daughter within the palace:
Her clothing is of wrought gold.

14. In needlework of diverse colours shall she be led unto the King;
In her train the virgins, her companions, shall be brought unto thee.

15. "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be led,
They shall enter into the King's Palace.

34 Hebrews 12:18, 19, 22, 24.

35 John 14:9.

"The Imprecations" in William Binnie, *The Psalms: Their History, Teachings, and Use* (T. Nelson and Sons, 1870). Note: The text has not been modified, except that long paragraphs have been divided.