
For the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies." A contemplation by the sons of Korah. A wedding song.

PSALM 45: 1 My heart overflows with a noble theme. I recite my verses for the king. My tongue is like the pen of a skilful writer.

The contents of this Psalm are generally summed up thus: The majesty and grace of Christ's kingdom; or an epithalamium of Jesus Christ and the Christian Church; the duty of this Church, and its privileges. The Psalm contains a magnificent description of the beauty, ornaments, valor, justice, and truth of the Divine Bridegroom; the beauty, magnificence, and riches of the bride, who was to become mother of a numerous and powerful posterity. The preamble is found in the title and Psa 45:1. The description and character of the Bridegroom, Psa 45:2-9. The address to the bride by her companions, Psa 45:10-15. A prediction of her numerous and glorious descendants, Psa 45:16, Psa 45:17.

The title is nearly the same with that of Psalm 69: and 80: "To the chief musician, or master of the band of those who played on the six-stringed instruments, giving instruction for the sons of Korah; a song of loves, or amatory ode; or a song of the beloved maids." The Vulgate and Septuagint have, For those who shall be changed, or brought into another state, which some have interpreted as relating to the resurrection of the just, but if I could persuade myself that the title came by Divine inspiration, I would say it more properly belonged to the calling and conversion of the Gentiles, and bringing them over from idolatry to the worship of the true God. By some the word שושנים shoshanim, is translated lilies; and a world of labor has been spent to prove that these lilies mean the saints, Jesus Christ himself, and the Divine light which is a banner to them that fear him. I cannot believe that any such meaning is intended, and, consequently, I cannot attempt to interpret the Psalm after this model. I believe it to be an epithalamium, or nuptial song, which primarily respected Solomon's marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh; and that it probably has a prophetic reference to the conversion of the Gentiles, and the final aggrandizement of the Christian Church.

Verse 1

My heart is inditing a good matter - שחש rachash, boileth or bubbleth up, as in the margin. It is a metaphor taken from a fountain that sends up its waters from the earth in this way. The Vulgate has eructavit, which is most literally translated by the old Psalter: Mi hert ryfted gude word. My heart belcheth - Anglo-Saxon.

I speak of the things which I have made touching the king - אמר אני מעשי למלך, literally, "I dedicate my work unto the king." Or, as the Psalter, I say my werkes til the kyng. This was the general custom of the Asiatic poets. They repeated their works before princes and honorable men; and especially those parts in which there was either a direct or constructive compliment to the great man. Virgil is reported to have a part of his Aeneid before Augustus, who was so pleased with it that he ordered ten sestertia to be given him for every line. And the famous Persian poet Ferdusi read a part of his Shah Nameh before Sultan Mahmoud, who promised him thirty thousand denars for the poem.

My tongue is the pen of a ready writer - I shall compose and speak as fluently the Divine matter which is now in my heart, as the most expert scribe can write from my recitation. My tung of maister swiftly wrytand. "That es, my tung is pen of the Haly Gast; and nout but als his instrument, wham he ledis als he wil. For I speke nocht bot that he settis on my tung; als the pen dos nocht withouten the writer. Swyftly wrytand, for the vertu of goddes inspiracioun is nocht for to thynk with mons study,

that he schewes til other of the purete of heven; that es some for to com that he wrytes." - Old Psalter.

PSALM 45: 2 You are the most excellent of the sons of men. Grace has anointed your lips, therefore God has blessed you forever.

Verse 2

Thou art fairer than the children of men - By whom are these words spoken? As this is a regular epithalamium, we are to consider that the bride and bridegroom have compliments paid them by those called the friends of the bridegroom, and the companions or maids of the bride. But it seems that the whole Psalm, except the first verse, was spoken by those who are called in the title יְדִידוֹת yedidoth, the beloved maids, or female companions, who begin with his perfections, and then describe hers. And afterwards there is a prophetic declaration concerning his issue. We may, therefore, consider that what is spoken here is spoken by companions of the bride, or what are called yedidoth in the title. It would be unauthenticated to say Solomon was the most beautiful man in the universe; but to the perfections of the Lord Jesus they may be safely applied.

Grace is poured into thy lips - This probably refers to his speech, or the gracious words which he spoke. Solomon was renowned for wisdom, and especially the wisdom of his conversation. The queen of Sheba came from the uttermost parts of the land to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and so far did she find him exceeding all his fame, that she said one half had not been told her: but behold, a greater than Solomon is here. No man ever spoke like this man, his enemies themselves being judges.

God hath blessed thee for ever - This, I am afraid, could in no sense be ever spoken of Solomon; but of the man Christ Jesus it is strictly true.

PSALM 45: 3 Strap your sword on your thigh, mighty one: your splendour and your majesty.

Verse 3

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty - This clause should be translated, O hero, gird thy sword upon thy thigh! This, I think, cannot be spoken of Solomon. He was not a warlike prince: he never did any feats of arms. It has been said he would have been a warrior, if he had had enemies; it might have been so: but the words more properly apply to Christ, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords; whose sword with two edges, proceeding from his mouth, cuts all his adversaries to pieces.

With thy glory and thy majesty - Be as war-like as thou art glorious and majestic. Solomon's court was splendid, and his person was majestic. These words may be well said of him. But the majesty and glory of Christ are above all: he is higher than all the kings of the earth; and has a name above every name; and at it every knee shall bend, and every tongue confess.

PSALM 45: 4 In your majesty ride on victoriously on behalf of truth, humility, and righteousness. Let your right hand display awesome deeds.

Verse 4

In thy majesty ride prosperously - These words cannot be spoken of Solomon; they are true only of Christ. His riding is the prosperous progress of his Gospel over the earth. He uses no sword but the sword of the Spirit; and what religion, system of truth, pretended or real, ever made such progress as the religion of Christ has done, without one sword being ever drawn to propagate it from the first introduction of Christianity to the present time? His Gospel is Truth, proclaiming Humility, ענוה anvah, and Righteousness. This, indeed, is the sum of the Gospel; and an epitome of its operations in the hearts of men.

1. The Gospel is a revelation of eternal Truth, in opposition to all false systems of religion, and to all figurative and ceremonial representations of the true religion. It is truth concerning God, his Nature, and his Works. It is truth concerning Man, his Origin, his Intents, his Duties, and his End. It is truth in what it says concerning the natural, the moral, and the invisible world.

2. It teaches the doctrine of meekness or Humility; opposes pride and vain glory; strips man of his assumed merits; proclaims and enforces the necessity of humiliation or repentance because of sin, humiliation under the providential hand of God, and humility in imitation of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ throughout life.

3. The Gospel teaches Righteousness: shows the nature of sin, wrong, injustice, transgression, etc.; works righteousness in the heart; and directs and influences to the practice of it in all the actions of life. The Gospel leads him who is under its influences to give to all their due; to God, to his neighbor, to himself. And it is by the propagation of truth, humility, and righteousness, that the earth has become so far blessed, and the kingdom of Christ become extended among men.

And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things - The Chaldee is different: "And the Lord will teach thee to perform terrible things by thy right hand." The Arabic: "And with admiration shall thy right hand direct thee." The Septuagint: "And thy right hand shall lead thee wonderfully." To the same purpose are the Vulgate, Anglo-Saxon, and the old Psalter. The meaning is, Nothing shall be able to resist thee, and the judgments which thou shalt inflict on thine enemies shall be terrible.

PSALM 45: 5 Your arrows are sharp. The nations fall under you, with arrows in the heart of the king's enemies.

Verse 5

Thine arrows are sharp - The arrows here may mean the convictions produced in the hearts of men by the preaching of the Gospel. The King is God himself; his enemies are sinners of all sorts. The people, the Jews, thousands of whom were pricked in their hearts under the preaching of Peter and others. All fall before Christ; those who received the word rose again by repentance and faith; those who did not, fell down-all down!

PSALM 45: 6 Your throne, God, is forever and ever. A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of your kingdom.

Verse 6

Thy throne, O God, is for ever - ועד עולם ועד *kisacha Elohim olam vaed*. "O God, thy throne is for ever, and eternal!" The word Elohim here is the very first term or name by which the Supreme God has made himself known to the children of men. See Gen 1:1; and this very verse the apostle, Heb 1:8, has applied to Jesus Christ. On this I shall make a very short remark, but it shall be conclusive: If the apostle did not believe Jesus Christ to be the true and eternal God, he has utterly misapplied this Scripture.

The translation in the old Psalter, and the paraphrase will, on this controverted text, be considered of some importance: Thi settil God in werld of werlde: wande of ryghtyng wande of thi kyngedome. Here he loues [celebrates] God Crist - of dome. Thi settil of demyng and of kynges pouste. God es world of werld for al that he demes es noght chaunged and that byfalles the, for the wande that es ceptre and the governyng of thi kyngdom es wande of ryghtyng, that ryghtes croked men this es the wand of goddes evenes that ay es ryght and never croked that reules ryghtwis men ard smytes wiked men. The reader will observe a blank space between the word Crist and of dome: it is the same in the original. A word has been so carefully erased with the scalpel in the above place, that not a vestige of a letter is left. From the following words I should suspect it to have been kynge or lard. Here he praises God, Christ, king of judgment. However this may be, it is evident that this ancient commentator understood the word God to be applied to Christ. I have given the sentence as it is pointed in the original.

PSALM 45: 7 You have loved righteousness, and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows.

Verse 7

Oil of gladness - As an evidence that all causes of mourning, sorrow, and death, were at an end; as in the state of mourning the ancients did not anoint themselves.

I have mentioned above that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Heb 1:8, Heb 1:9, quotes Psa 45:6, Psa 45:7, of this Psalm. I shall subjoin the substance of what I have written on these verses in that place: - Heb 1:8

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever - If this be said of the Son of God, i.e., Jesus Christ, then Jesus Christ must be God; and indeed the design of the apostle is to prove this. The words here quoted are taken from Psa 45:6, Psa 45:7, which the ancient Chaldee parphrast, and the most intelligent rabbins, refer to the Messiah. On the third verse of this Psalm, 'Thou art fairer than the children of men,' the Targum says: 'Thy beauty, מלכא משיחא *malca Meshicha*, O King Messiah, is greater than the children of men.' Aben Ezra says: 'This Psalm speaks of David, or rather of his Son the Messiah, for this is his name, Eze 34:24 : And David my servant shall be a prince over them for ever.' Other rabbins confirm this opinion. "This verse is very properly considered a proof, and indeed a strong one, of the divinity of Christ; but some late versions of the New Testament have endeavored to avoid the evidence of this proof by translating the word thus: 'God is thy throne for

ever and ever;' and if this version be correct, it is certain that the text can be no proof of the doctrine. Mr. Wakefield vindicates this translation at large in his History of Opinions; and ὁ Θεος being the nominative case is supposed to be sufficient justification of this version. In answer to this it may be stated that the nominative case is often used for the vocative, particularly by the Attics, and the whole scope of the place requires it should be so used here; and with due deference to all of a contrary opinion, the original Hebrew cannot be consistently translated any other way; כִּסְאֵךְ אֱלֹהִים וְעַד עוֹלָם וָעֶד kisacha Elohim olam vaed, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and to eternity.' It is in both worlds, and extends over all time, and will exist through all endless duration. To this our Lord seems to refer, Mat 28:18 : 'All power is given unto me, both in Heaven and Earth.' My throne, i.e., my dominion, extends from the creation to the consummation of all things. These I have made, and these I uphold; and from the end of the world, throughout eternity, I shall have the same glory - sovereign unlimited power and authority, which I had with the Father before the world began; Joh 17:5. I may add that none of the ancient Versions has understood it in the way contended for by those who deny the Godhead of Christ, either in the Psalm from which it is taken, or in this place where it is quoted. Aquila translates אֱלֹהִים Elohim, by Θεε, O God, in the vocative case; and the Arabic adds the sign of the vocative ya, reading the place thus: korsee yallaho ila abadilabada, the same as in our Version. And even allowing that ὁ Θεος here is to be used as the nominative case, it will not make the sense contended for without adding εστι to it, a reading which is not countenanced by any Version, nor by any MS. yet discovered. Wiclif, Coverdale, and others, understood it as the nominative, and translated it so; and yet it is evident that this nominative has the power of the vocative: Forsothe to the sone God thi troone into the world of worlde: a gerde of equite the gerde of thi reume. I give this, pointing and all, as it stands in my old MS. Bible. Wiclif is nearly the same, but is evidently of a more modern cast: But to the sone he seith, God thy trone is unto the world of world, a gherd of equyte is the gherd of thi rewme. Coverdale translates it thus: 'But unto the sonne he sayeth: God, thi seate endureth for ever and ever: the cepter of thy kyngdome is a right cepter.' Tindal and others follow in the same way, all reading it in the nominative case, with the force of the vocative; for none of them has inserted the word εστι is, because not authorized by the original; a word which the opposers of the Divinity of our Lord are obliged to beg, in order to support their interpretation.

A scepter of righteousness - The scepter, which was a sort of staff or instrument of various forms, was the ensign of government, and is here used for government itself. This the ancient Jewish writers understand also of the Messiah. Heb 1:9

Thou hast loved righteousness - This is the characteristic of a just governor; he abhors and suppresses iniquity; he countenances and supports righteousness and truth.

Therefore God, even thy God - The original, δια τουτου εχρισε δε, ὁ Θεος, ὁ Θεος σου, may be thus translated: 'Therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee.' The form of speech is nearly the same with that in the preceding verse; but the sense is sufficiently clear if we read: 'Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee,' etc.

With the oil of gladness - We have often had occasion to remark that anciently kings, priests, and prophets, were consecrated to their several offices by anointing, and that this signified the gifts and influences of the Divine Spirit. Christ, ὁ χριστος, signifies The anointed One, the same as the Hebrew Messiah; and he is here said to be 'anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.' None was ever constituted prophet, priest, and king, but himself: some were kings only, prophets only, and priests only; others were kings and priests, or priests and prophets, or kings and prophets; but none had ever the three offices in his own person but Jesus Christ; and none but himself can be a King over the universe, a Prophet to all intelligent beings, and a Priest to the whole human race. Thus he

is infinitely exalted beyond his fellows - all that had ever borne the regal, prophetic, or sacerdotal offices. "Some think that the word μετοχους, fellows, refers to believers who are made partakers of the same Spirit, but cannot have its infinite plenitude. The first sense seems the best. Gladness is used to express the festivities which took place on the inauguration of kings," etc.

PSALM 45: 8 All your garments smell like myrrh, aloes, and cassia. Out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made you glad.

Verse 8

All thy garments smell of myrrh - The Asiatics are very partial to perfumes; every thing with them is perfumed, and especially their garments. And the ivory palaces mentioned are the wardrobes inlaid with ivory, in which their numerous changes of raiment were deposited. Myrrh and aloes are well known; cassia is probably the bark or wood of the cinnamon tree. These with frankincense, galbanum and other odoriferous drugs, were and are frequently used in the perfumes of the Asiatic nations.

Whereby they have made thee glad - Referring to the effect of strong perfumes refreshing and exhilarating the spirits.

PSALM 45: 9 Kings' daughters are among your honourable women. At your right hand the queen stands in gold of Ophir.

Verse 9

Kings' daughters were among - Applied to Solomon, these words have no difficulty. We know he had seven hundred wives, princesses; and the mention of those here may be intended only to show how highly respected he was among the neighboring sovereigns, when they cheerfully gave him their daughters to constitute his harem. If we apply it to Solomon's marriage with the daughter of the king of Egypt, it may signify no more than the princesses and ladies of honor who accompanied her to the Israelitish court. Applied to Christ, it may signify that the Gospel, though preached particularly to the poor, became also the means of salvation to many of the kings, queens, and nobles, of the earth. The Chaldee interprets the queen standing at his right hand, by the law; and the honorable women, by the different regions and countries coming to receive that law from his right hand. Perhaps by kings' daughters may be meant different regions and countries, which are represented as constituting the families of potentates. Whole nations shall be converted to the Christian faith; and the queen - the Christian Church, shall be most elegantly adorned with all the graces and good works which at once constitute and adorn the Christian character.

PSALM 45: 10 Listen, daughter, consider, and turn your ear. Forget your own people, and also your father's house.

Verse 10

Hearken. O daughter, and consider - This is the beginning of the address by the companions of the bride to their mistress; after having, in the preceding verses, addressed the bridegroom; or, rather, given a description of his person, qualities, and magnificence. Suppose the daughter of Pharaoh to be intended, the words import: Thou art now become the spouse of the most magnificent monarch in the universe. To thee he must be all in all. Forget therefore thy own people - the Egyptians, and take the Israelites in their place. Forget also thy father's house; thou art now united to a new family. So shall the king - Solomon, greatly desire thy beauty - thou wilt be, in all respects, pleasing to him. And it is right thou shouldst act so; for he is now become thy lord - thy supreme governor. And worship thou him - submit thyself reverently and affectionately to all his commands.

Taken in reference to Christ and the Gospel, this is an address to the Gentiles to forsake their idolatrous customs and connexions, to embrace Christ and his Gospel in the spirit of reverence and obedience, with the promise that, if beautified with the graces of his Spirit, Christ will delight in them, and take them for his peculiar people; which has been done.

PSALM 45: 11 So the king will desire your beauty, honour him, for he is your lord.

PSALM 45: 12 The daughter of Tyre comes with a gift. The rich among the people entreat your favour.

Verse 12

The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift - The Tyrians shall pay tribute to thy spouse, and assist him in all his grand and magnificent operations.

As, at this time, Tyre was the greatest maritime and commercial city in the world, it may be here taken as representing those places which lay on the coasts of the sea, and carried on much traffic such as parts of Syria, Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, France, the British Isles, etc., which first received the Gospel of Christ and were the instruments of sending it to all the other nations of the earth.

Rich among the people - The most powerful and opulent empires, kingdoms, and states, shall embrace Christianity, and entreat the favor of its Author.

PSALM 45: 13 The princess inside is all glorious. Her clothing is interwoven with gold.

Verse 13

The king's daughter is all glorious within - This, in some sense, may be spoken of Solomon's bride, the daughter of the king of Egypt; and then the expression may refer either to the cultivation of her mind, or the ornaments and splendor of her palace. The Asiatic queens, sultanas, and begums, scarcely ever appear in public. They abide in the harem in the greatest luxury and splendor; and to this, as its literal meaning, the text may possibly refer.

Her clothing is of wrought gold - Of the most costly embroidery: her palace, and her person, are decorated in the very highest state of elegance and magnificence.

Spiritually the king's daughter may mean the Christian Church filled with the mind that was in Christ, and adorned with the graces of the Holy Spirit; while the whole of its outward conduct is pure and holy, ornamented with the works of faith and love, and always bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit.

PSALM 45: 14 She shall be led to the king in embroidered work. The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to you.

Verse 14

She shall be brought unto the king - When an Asiatic princess is brought to her spouse, she is inclosed in a palakee, and no part of her person is visible. She is attended by her principal friends and companions, who follow the palakee, and the ceremony is accompanied with great rejoicing; and thus they enter into the palace of the king.

This part of this parabolical Psalm may refer to the glories of a future state. The Christian Church shall be brought to the King eternal in the great day, adorned with the graces of the Divine Spirit; and thus shall all the redeemed of the Lord enter Into the king's palace - into the everlasting joy of their Lord.

PSALM 45: 15 With gladness and rejoicing they shall be led. They shall enter into the king's palace.

PSALM 45: 16 Your sons will take the place of your fathers. You shall make them princes in all the earth.

Verse 16

Instead of thy fathers shalt be thy children - This is the third part, or prophetic declaration relative to the numerous and powerful issue of this marriage. Instead of the kindred, which thou hast left behind in Egypt, thou shalt have numerous children. This cannot refer either to Solomon, or to the daughter of Pharaoh; for there is no evidence that he ever had a child by Pharaoh's daughter; and it is very certain that Rehoboam, Solomon's successor, was not son to the daughter of Pharaoh; nor did any princes of that line ever occupy a foreign throne; nor by successive generations ever continue the remembrance of Solomon and his Egyptian queen. The children mentioned here are generally supposed to mean the apostles and their successors in the Christian ministry; founding Churches all over the world, by whom the Christian name becomes a memorial through all the earth.

PSALM 45: 17 I will make your name to be remembered in all generations. Therefore the peoples shall give you thanks forever and ever.

Verse 17

Therefore shall the people praise thee - They shall magnify the heavenly Bridegroom, and sing the wonderful displays of his love to the

Church, his spouse. And the constant use of this Psalm in the Christian Church is a literal fulfillment of the prophecy.