

Echtheit, Hauptbegriff und Gedankengang der messianischen Weissagung Is. 9:1-6
Wilhelm Caspari

Gottes Angesicht

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The former of these two pieces is a careful investigation of the Messianic prophecy, Isa. 9:1-6, whose genuineness has been denied by Hackmann, Cheyne, Marti, a.o. Caspari suggests that through the work of Gressmann and Procksch, eschatology and Messianism have been restored to their legitimate place in the older texts of the Old Testament, and that conservative criticism may revoke the concession it had already begun to make of placing the rise of Messianic prophecy in the post-Davidic, prophetic, if not in the legalistic period. Gen. 49, Numb. 24 and 2 Sam. 7 may be set down as material Isaiah could have built upon, if he actually penned our passage. Thus the discussion about the genuineness has entered upon a new stage. It is further the author's opinion that by way of more penetrating exegesis something can and should be done to mediate between the two opposing views. By this is meant that the objections to the genuineness have a certain basis of justification in the fact that the conservative exegesis has unduly magnified or even deified the figure of the Messiah here depicted. While many excellent points are made and the discussion is very stimulating, we must confess that it leaves us unconvinced of the necessity or even possibility of such a conciliatory interpretation. Caspari endeavors to show that the Messiah is not conceived by the prophet as a king, but merely as a sort of administrator or vezir. This would, indeed, meet the critical objection derived from the polemic attitude of prophecy towards the idea of the kingdom. But in our view this critical contention has no basis in fact. And even if it had we could not see our way clear towards removing it after the manner proposed. Vs. 6 says in so many words that the promised one shall be upon the throne of David and over his kingdom. To put into this the sense that his rule, as something non-royal, shall take the place of the then superseded kingdom, seems a forced exegesis. Nor has the author successfully met the point that to describe the accession to office of a mere administrator or vezir the words "a child is born, a son is given" are unsuitable. The reference to a "birth" clearly indicates, that the Messiah inherits the dignity to which he is called. It is true that some of the expressions imply the subordination of the ruler, but they do this only with reference to God, so that royal sovereignty in other relations is not thereby excluded. We also hesitate to follow the author in his rendering of *El-Gibbor* as "God is a Hero", so that it ceases to characterize the Messiah, and makes him merely bear a name expressive of what God is. Caspari himself admits that this places it out of analogy with the other three names. To appeal to Jer. 23:6 (Jehovah Zidkenu) is useless, because here there are no accompanying names to raise the point of analogy. Interesting, but also short of carrying conviction, is the way in which the writer meets the critical objection that the prophecy, if Isaianic, ought to have left traces in subsequent prophetic literature. He finds such traces in the use of the word *Shalom* as characterizing the message of the false prophets in Jeremiah's time, on the view that their idea of *Shalom* was a misinterpretation and abuse of Is. 9:6. This occurrence of *Shalom* is, however, so natural under the circumstances that a derivation from some concrete passage is quite superfluous.

The second contribution of this "Heft" deals with the Old Testament phrase "the face of God". In regard to this a usage connected with the cultus, and an anthropomorphic usage are distinguished.

The combination of “the light of the face of Jehovah” is traced back to the conception of God’s Kabod, and the latter is said to be originally associated with the sun. In this is sought the explanation of the phrases “to lift up the face” and “to lower the face”, of which the former, as taken from the ascent of the sun, is used *in sensum bonum*, the latter, as taken from its decline, *in sensum malum*. Both the cultic and the anthropomorphic significance of “the face of God” have their roots in this mythological identification of the deity with the sun. In Ex. 33:12-23, the author finds the actual hypostatizing of “the face of God”, which in the last analysis this mythological origin of the phrase makes intelligible. In his view, however, the present form of this pericope, is too confused to be accepted as a unit. Hence an attempt at dissecting and rearranging it. The text is admittedly difficult but we do not think that the difficulties are exegetically insolvable and such extreme measures necessary. Nor do we believe that “face” has actually become a separate hypostasis. It is simply Jehovah in revelation. It ought to be added that the author does not ascribe to the Old Testament consciousness in its higher and later levels any remembrance of the primitive mythological association of the phrases in use. They had become in course of time wholly spiritualized.