The late Prof. Robertson Smith devoted a long article in the Expositor (1876, pp. 341-372) to the consideration of the sixteenth Psalm; it may not be inappropriate to offer the readers of the same magazine an attempt to remove the difficulties of the seventeenth. These difficulties have attracted less attention than those of the sixteenth Psalm; yet they are by no means slight, and the current explanations are not perhaps as satisfactory as could be wished. Following Prof. Robertson Smith's example, I will present my own solutions in the form of an exegetical study of the whole Psalm, and if the views of textual criticism which I presuppose are more "advanced" than those implied by Prof. Smith's article, I am saved from discouragement by the reflection that my own present textual criticism is the legitimate development of views which, as put forth in the translation of the Psalms now twenty-three years old, long ago obtained the approval of this loyal friend and admirable scholar.

The seventeenth Psalm, if I am not mistaken, is written in what may for convenience sake be called tetrameters, i.e. each line (or verse) in the Hebrew has four beats. It is a prayer of pious Israel, the Israel within Israel—the congregation of the pious "poor," which, according to some, is meant by that enigmatical phrase in the Second Isaiah—the "Servant of the Lord" (E.V.), or rather "Servant of Yahwè." The speaker bases his sure confidence that his prayer will be answered on his proved fidelity to Yahwè. An elaborate self-justification precedes his appeal for pro-
tection as the client of Yahwe, domiciled in His sanctuary. He is nevertheless not so much absorbed in the sense of mystic union with his God as not to perceive the imminent danger in which, humanly speaking, he stands, and being of sensitive nature (for Israel must be represented in colours borrowed from the Israelites), he breaks out into a vehement demand for a terrible retribution to his enemies. That his prayer will be granted he cannot doubt, for the Messianic age is at hand, when Israel will be admitted to a nearer and an altogether satisfying vision (see end of article) of the Divine countenance in the sanctuary, and this cannot be unless the land of Israel is relieved from the blighting presence of Israel’s deadly foes. Who these foes are the traditional text does not tell us. But there is some probability that in the true text of verse 11 they are called the Geshurites. At any rate the parallelism between this Psalm and Psalms v., vii., x., xi., xvi., xviii., xxii., especially the four latter, leaves no doubt than the North Arabian tribes, who by their implacable hostility at and after the fall of Jerusalem earned such bitter hatred from Israel, are intended. We must not omit to add that Psalm xvi. and Psalm xvii. are also closely connected by their parallel ending, and that both are akin to the large group of Psalms expressing love of the temple, and especially to Psalms xxvii. and lxi., Psalms on which not a little fresh light may perhaps in the future be hoped for.

The Psalmist has often been accused of abruptness in his transitions. But this supposed abruptness is due to textual corruption. Criticism can, with high probability, remove this corruption; at the same time it reveals a want of literary originality in the Psalm. Some of the ideas and forms of expression which are most characteristically post-exilic are to be found here. The points of contact with the nine Psalms mentioned above are specially remarkable. In this connexion it may be noticed that the reading
"the snares of Deathland," in line 19, points to a date long enough after that of Psalm xviii, for the text of that Psalm (v. 5a) to have become corrupt. The interval between the two Psalms must not however be exaggerated; textual corruption evidently began very early. It is strange that Duhm—certainly the boldest of critics—should represent Psalm xvii. as the work of a Pharisee, as if assertions of legal righteousness began with the party called Pharisees, and should even emend the difficult word יְדֵל (A.V. the destroyer) in v. 4 into שֵׁדֶר or פַּרְשֵׁה, "Pharisee"; "den Pfad der Strengen hielt fest mein Schritt" is his rendering. None of the Psalms, so far as I can find from the text-critical evidence, can safely be brought down to the age of the Pharisees, nor indeed is it judicious to regard any number of the group of Psalms to which Psalm xvii. belongs as the utterance of an individual.

We now proceed to the translation of a revised text; each stanza, it will be seen, consists of two lines or verses.

1 Hear my wail, O Yahwe! | attend unto my prayer; 1
Hearken unto one that prays | with lips that are truthful.
Let my sentence proceed | from thy presence [in] 2
righteousness;
Let thine eyes view [the pious] with exactness.
If thou triest my heart, | if thou provest my reins, 3
No deceit wilt thou find, | in my heart is no wrong.
From the tracks of traitors, | from the ways of rebels—
I have kept myself, O Lord! | from the paths of liars.
My steps follow close | in thy tracks; 5
My feet waver not | [in thy paths].
O Lord! I call upon thee, | thou wilt answer, O 6
[my] God!
Bend down to me thine ear, | hear my speech.
Separate thy loyal one | in thy sanctuary, 7
And keep him close | in thy habitation;
THE SEVENTEENTH PSALM.

Preserve me, O Lord! in the courts of thy house, With the shadow of thy wings | cover thou me.
From the (angry) face of the wicked | deliver thou me,
To the greed of mine enemies | [abandon me not].
The snares of Deathland | encompass me,
The floods of ocean | affright me;
[For] there surround me | a troop of Geshurites (?),
With pointed horns | they mangle me.
They attack me as a lion | which longs for prey,
[They encompass me] as a young lion | which lurks in coverts.
Arise, O Yahwe! and make him bow down;
Rescue my soul | from the teeth of the young lions.
Do thou, O Yahwe! rain | hot coals upon them;
With a horrible blast | do thou fill their belly.
As for me, by [thy] righteousness | I shall behold thy face;
I shall be satisfied with thy lovingkindness | in thy habitation.

The exegetical notes which follow are limited to the most necessary ones. First of all, in line 2 we may observe the stress laid by the speaker on truthfulness. Truthfulness is a primary note of righteousness in the early Judaism—truthfulness towards men (v. 9, xv. 2, lxi. 3; Isa. liii. 9, lixiv. 4) and also towards God (lxvi. 18). If Psalm xvii. were the prayer of an individual, we might be disposed to accuse the speaker of self-righteousness and pride. But it is the utterance of the pious community, and the Israel within Israel, with all its defects, is conscious of its high ideals, and that, through the indwelling Spirit (li. 11, Isa. xlii. 1, lxiii. 11), it is a polished shaft in God's quiver (Isa. xlix. 2). In line 5 the reader will notice that the revised text is without that troublesome word הָבֵית, "by night," which led Duhm to suppose that Psalm xvii. was meant to be an evening Psalm; also, in lines 7 and 8, that we have got rid of the unseemly phrase "the word of thy lips." יִהְיָה, in line 8, is
an interesting and much misunderstood word. It also occurs in Jeremiah vii. 11, Ezekiel xviii. 10, Daniel xi. 14, but not in the true text of Ezekiel vii. 22 (read לְרֵינִים with Cornill) and Isaiah xxxv. 9 (read הָרִאשְׁנִים). It means, not "violent," or "a violent one" (= robber), but "lying" or "a liar" = בֹּקֶר and (partly) בָּנָר. The noun פְּרִי occurs probably in Nahum iii. 1 (the usual reading פָּרַן is unsuitable) and in Jeremiah vi. 6 (read פָּרַן, cf. LXX.). The root is פָּרַךְ, "to lie" = Assyrian parāšu (so Ruben for פְּרִי in Nahum l.c.). פָּרָה, "to act violently," is thought to occur in Hosea iv. 2, but the true reading is בּוּרָה as in LXX.; so Ruben. "In thy habitation," lines 14 and 30, means "in thy temple." God is chiefly present in His temple, and therefore to be His guest or housemate is the pledge of security; cf. xxvii. 5. Line 15, as here given, deprives us of a parallelism with Deuteronomy xxxii. 10 f., Zechariah ii. 8. Certainly the received text (v. 8a) is plausible; Tylor has shown that the pupil of the eye is connected elsewhere in folklore with the soul (Primitive Culture, i. 389). But parallelism is opposed to the common text. Lines 19-28 (v. 10-14) are apparently, as subsequent notes will make clear, imitations of striking passages in Psalms xi., xviii., xxii., but the reader should be warned that in this remark I assume the correctness of my own revised text of the passages referred to. By "Geshurites" are meant the North Arabian oppressors of the Jews; there was a southern as well as a northern Geshur; see the article "Geshur" in the Encyclopaedia Biblica, vol. ii. The rest of the present essay will be devoted to the explanation of various new readings which (as few will deny) add considerably—if correct—to the interest of the Psalm. I avoid controversy with those who stand where it was perfectly natural to stand at an earlier point of progress. When the scales have fallen from their eyes they will at once judge differently of the possibility and
probability of many of the corrections to which they are now unable, but not, I am sure, unwilling to do justice. The general position which I myself take up has been already set forth in the Expositor in a study on the text of Psalm xxxix.

In v. 1 the Septuagint presupposes 'זדך י', i.e. "O Yahwe, who art (the source of) my righteousness." However plausible this may be, it is wrong. The whole verse is in disorder and needs rearrangement with due regard to the division into tetrameters. 'זדך is quite right, but it belongs to v. 2 (=line 3), where it is the necessary parallel to 'ג"ו Fermat מרשימה; see ix. 9, xcvi. 9. Next, we find 'ג"ו מ"א כ"ו attached to 'ג"ו כ"ו, as if it were "a shortened relative clause" (Duhm). But evidently we have here a confusion of the scribe. 'ג"ו כ"ו is doubly significant. (1) It is parallel to רנוי (lxii. 1); (2) it represents an omitted מ"א. We should therefore read the two first tetrameters thus:

In line 3 'זדך should be restored from v. 1; cf. Jeremiah xi. 20, "that judgest [in] righteousness (שָׁמְש יָדָק), that triest the reins and the heart" (see l. 6). Both metre and sense suggest the insertion of וסרי, which would easily fall out after ויהו In line 5, for כ"ד ובנה and כ"ד והנה we should read כ"ד ובנה and כ"ד והנה; confusions like those here supposed are among the easiest; the imperfect is more natural than the perfect. כ"ד is an expansion of כ"ד; suffixes appear to have been often inserted by the later editors of the text. כ"ד is a variant to כ"ד, and is more correct. Cf. Job vii. 18, where we should undoubtedly read כ"ד instead of כ"ד. We have already referred to the inconvenient word כ"ד. This is not the only occasion on which has arisen by textual corruption (see xvi. 7, Job. xxxv. 10).
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But this is not enough; read בְּלוֹיוֹתִי (Grätz). This was originally written בְּלוֹיוֹתִי, with the mark of abbreviation. In line 6 (end of v. 3) the much disputed מַתִּיר וַאֲמַרָּה is obviously wrong. Probably there have been both transposition and corruption of letters. Read רַבְּרָה; מ and נ are regularly confounded. So too מִלִּיְעֵבָר פ is impossible. עב, “to transgress,” is not Biblical (see Origin of the Psalter, p. 466). The whole phrase must be corrupt. י will be accounted for presently. For מִלִּיְעֵבָר read נלְבַנַּו. After נְלַבַּנַּו supply רוֹאִי, which very easily dropped out. רוֹאִי and מִרְבָּה are naturally parallel; see xxxvi. 4.

The opening of v. 4 cannot be right. “The word of thy lips” is not adequately defended by cxix. 13; indeed the whole clause is corrupt. In correcting it we must be guided by the parallel line. מִלְּדוּרַבֶּר would easily come out of מַרְרִי דוֹרָבֶּר and are not unfrequently confounded (see e.g. xxxix. 2). For שְפַתֵּיךְ, “thy lips,” we want a plural noun such as פְּשַׁנֵיכֶם; after מ and ש had been transposed, it was not difficult to misread the following letters. For the impossible פְּשַׁנֵיכֶם Duhm proposes פּוֹשַׁנְתֵיכֶם, “deinem Thun schweige ich.” If a verb were wanted, we should rather expect a phrase like פְּרָאִתי רְבֵּיל (cxix. 101, Prov. i. 15). But how could the present text have arisen out of such an original? The corruption is deeply seated. But remembering how often בּוֹדֵר is miswritten in our text, and that in lxxxii. 7 it has become corrupted into אֲדֹם פֶּשֶׁנִי and פֶּשֶׁנִי פֶּשֶׁנִי, we shall do best to restore the word here. מְלַעֲזֵנַה very possibly comes from מְלַעֲזֵנַה; the second מ became מ; the first is represented by מ at the end of v. 3. מ is dittographic. Passing on, מַנְּאָדֵי is an imperfectly written מַנְּאָדֵי. It has produced the omission of מ in מַנְּאָדֵי מַאֲרָרֵית (Baethgen, Grätz, and Wellhausen after the Syriac). מַאֲרָרֵית may remain in the
sense of "liar(s)"; see above. In lines 9 and 10 the
descriptive infinitive is not in place; read הָלַבְּבָה (cf. xxxv.
16). Insert בְּרֵכְךָ (metre and parallelism), with Bickell.

In line 11 the changes אֲנֵלִי and אֶלָּלִי are too simple to
need defence. But in line 13 we have to use our methods
boldly if we would not unduly disparage the capacities of the
Psalmist. מִי בַּדְּ-הָלוֹכָה So the old translator Street, whose clever work (now a
hundred years old) is far too little known. The Septuagint
has τοὺς εὐπρόντας εἰπε σε (similarly the Syriac). These
are petty expedients. A perfect cure can only be effected
by a remedy based on a wide experience of textual error.
For מִי might conceivably come from מִי חָסֵם.
Obviously בְּרֵכְךָ should be בְּרֵכְךָ. In line 14 "from those that rise up by thy right
hand" cannot be right; no exegetical ingenuity can justify
it. Parallelism requires a verb. The passage must be
taken together with xvi. 11 (see below, on l. 30).

In line 15 is too short, and is
not favoured by parallelism. עַיִלּ comes from עַיִלּ, and
belongs to the first half of the line; בַּדְּ- הָלוֹכָה is a distortion
of בֶּרֶךְ יִבְּרוֹחַ. In line 17 we can hardly tolerate בֹּקֶרֶךְ יָרְכִית
Aramaisms are not as a rule probable, but here
at once suggests itself. The next line should perhaps be
בְּרֵכְךָ אֵלִי בָּלַבְּבָה. Cf. xxvii. 12.

In line 19 we have to combine material from the end of
v. 9 and the beginning of v. 10. Robertson Smith (Rel.
Sem., 2nd edition, p. 379) thought that a particular part of
the viscera was meant (the Arabic хілб, "midriff"). But it
is not probable that בְּרֵכְךָ in this sense would have been
used side by side with בְּרֵכְךָ ("liver") as the seat of the
feelings. Duhm (after Dyserinck) would read בְּרֵכְךָ אֵלִי בָּלַבְּבָה,
"their heart is become fat," continuing בָּלַבְּבָה מִי לְכָרִית;
not satisfactory. בָּלַבְּבָה should certainly be בָּלַבְּבָה;
see xviii. 6, on which our passage is dependent. As line 20
we should certainly read, to match line 19, יִמְס עָשָׂר וְיִשְׂרָאֵל;
cf. xviii. 5, lxix. 3. The correction is justified by
sound method. דֹּרֶם probably comes from a dittographed
fragment of יִמְס עָשָׂר. יִמְס means “ocean,” as in xxiv. 2.

In line 21 occurs one of the greatest textual problems of
the Psalm. What can לָשׁוֹר עָשָׂר בְּבְבֵלִין mean? “At each
of our steps’’? But surely this is superfluous, nor does it
suit בְּבֵלִין. If however we grant that the enemies referred
to in the neighbouring Psalms are the North Arabian
peoples, and that a name for one of these peoples was לָשׁוֹר,
which is often miswritten as לָשׁוֹר אָשָׂר, we shall at once see
that לָשׁוֹר אָשָׂר is probably a corruption of לָשׁוֹר אָשָׂר. The LXX. has
ἐκβαλλοντες or ἐκβαλλοντες, i.e. perhaps לָשׁוֹר אָשָׂר.
In line 22, as represented in, the traditional text, there
are more corruptions which Duhm has tried to heal, but
by a false theory (Pharisees). Grätz, Nestle, and Wildeboer
have also made imperfect emendations (see Stade’s Zeit­schrift,
1896, p. 323; 1897, p. 180). Probably there is
another to Psalm xxii. (revised text), where the North
Arabian oppressors are variously described (vv. 13, 17) as
“lions,” and as “wild oxen with pointed horns.” Read
בֵּקְרוֹן יִשָּׂרָאֵל. For בֵּקְרוֹן see the next note. Line 23
presents us with the extraordinary word הָאָרֶץ, on which
see the dictionaries. The LXX. has ἀντέλαβον με, i.e.
ホームページ. Clearly we should read יִדוֹר (cf. xviii. 6, 19); see below.
is represented by the γ in יִדוֹר (see on line 22); לָשׁוֹר אָשָׂר is
a fragment of לָשׁוֹר אָשָׂר, “as a lion,” written too soon. In line 24
for יָכֵח read כָּבֵשׁ, with Bickell, Grätz and Budde (on Job
xiv. 15). כָּבֵשׁ should be לָשׁוֹר (Grätz). Insert כָּבֵשׁ,
which easily fell out before לָשׁוֹר. It was however re­
placed in the margin, and now appears in the text of v. 13,
corrupt and mutilated, as פִּנֵי; כָּרְמָה, which precedes, represents ḫָרְמָא וְגוֹ ’ (a corruption of ḥָרְמָא יִבְּיוֹל). In line 25 read מְרֵשָׁה קְרֵבָּה; in line 27 for the impossible כְּפָרִים read probably מְשִׁאֵי כְּפָרִים. A word very liable to corruption; in xxii. 21 כְּפָרִים has become כְּפָרָה.

Now we meet with one of the greatest “Biblical difficulties.” מַמְחֵי must be corrupt. But only a weak critic would add “hopelessly.” יִדְרָא, like יִדְרָא in lxxvii. 3, most probably comes from יִדְרָא. Then comes the digram ידו וְגוֹ ’ and the extraordinary combination of words, מְלוֹלַד חָלֵּק בְּרֵי. The key to the latter exists in Job (see xx. 23). The true text runs, חָלֵּק יֶלְדוֹת נָחֲלָה; in Job l.c. בְּרֵי should certainly be בָּרֵי. Errors frequently arise both through the transposition of letters and through the substitution of similar or kindred letters. Thus בָּרְיָה יֶלְדוֹת, and מְלוֹלַד, לעיזָה, and מְלוֹלַד. Still stranger but only a little less certain examples of this follow. בּוֹרָא יֹפְּטֶנְךָ (qof) should most probably be בּוֹרָא פְּקִיצָה (xi. 6, where פְּקִיצָה needs correction). Thus we get a parallel for בּוֹרָא יֹפְּטֶנְךָ which is right (see Job xx. 23). יִבְשָׁע is superfluous both for sense and for metre. Most probably it comes from יִבְשָׁע, which was written too soon, through the scribe’s eye glancing at what is here reckoned as line 30.

In the closing couplet (= v. 15) read בַּזְדָרָא, “in thy righteousness”; צ נ easily fell out after פ. Not so easily corrected is the final phrase בֹּזַקְיִי מְתוֹהֲנָה. Conservatively minded readers will pardon me if, after a long and wide experience of critical methods, I presume to say that the textual reading is due to the unrestrained, uncritical subjectivity of an ancient editor. Various attempts have been made to explain it, and the present writer has taken his fair share of the trouble. Passing over earlier theories (for which reference may be made to the commentaries), I will only here refer to Beer (Individual- und Gemeindepsalmen, p. 18) and Wellhausen, who regard יִזְזָא as the subject of
The "awaking of God's form" is thus taken to mean the revelation of the Divine glory at the judgment. Unfortunately no parallel can be adduced for such a phrase, and if this view of the construction were correct, it would be necessary to emend אַבָּאָב into אַבָּאָב, or rather (see the writer's *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, p. 241) אַבָּאָב. This however is not favoured by the parallelism. Some (e.g. Smend in Stade's *Zt.*, 1888, p. 95) would render, "... with thy form at (thine) awaking," i.e. at thine intervention in my behalf, while others (cf. *Origin of the Psalter*, p. 430) think that אַבָּאָב is used technically of God's raising the dead. But let us put aside the current exaggerated belief in the Massoretic text, and apply a stricter critical method. Evidently אַבָּאָב is not a proper parallel to בְּרֵית, neither is אַבָּאָב a proper object to אַבָּאָב. One might be inclined to transfer נַעֲמָה בְּרֵית from xvi. 11 (where it is metrically superfluous) to xvii. 15, supposing the scribe to have made an error (*lapsus oculi*). But the expression is too unnatural ("pleasant things in thy right hand") to be correct. It is perfectly true that the theory of *lapsus oculi* will most easily account for the existence of these words (גּוֹן בָּאָב) at the end of xvi. 11, but the further problem remains to discover the word, or the words, out of which the improbable phrase referred to may have arisen. A practised eye will at once see that בְּרֵית, which already exists in the text of xvii. 15, is a parallel false reading to בְּרֵית, so that we have to find a word, or words, out of which both בְּרֵית and בְּרֵית can have developed. There is only one possible solution—בְּרֵית. Parallel cases abound in the Psalter. The decisive proof however is that בְּרֵית is the only word out of which the troublesome נַעֲמָה at the end of xvi. 11 can have arisen.

What then is the satisfying vision of God's countenance
to which the speaker of this Psalm looks forward? If we adhere to the traditional text, and take Psalm xvii. in connexion with Psalm xvi., and still more in connexion with Psalms xlix. and lxxiii. (according to the revised text), we are justified in supposing that the Psalmist expressed himself in such a way as to edify those who in the late Persian or early Greek period (?) accepted the new delightful hope of personal immortality. Prof. Charles is willing to abandon Psalms xvi. and xvii., if he may but retain the older view of Psalms xlix. and lxxiii. I do not think that a strict textual criticism will justify this position. It is only the remnant of a conservative prejudice which prevents us from seeing that in all these Psalms the speaker is pious Israel (i.e. the Israel within Israel, the true "servant of Yahwe"), and that the hope which animates him is, not (as the rationalists thought) deliverance from some one of the dangers which from time to time beset the community of Israel, but the crowning deliverance from a combined attack of Israel's foes, which will be immediately followed by the great golden age of "Messianic" felicity. Thus the truth, in this as in so many other problems, lies neither on this side nor on that, but apart from and yet near to both sides in the old controversy. It is pious Israel which, on moral grounds, so confidently hopes for lasting continuance, and out of this hope at a later time will develop the elevating and ennobling hope of personal immortality, the Divine covenant being seen to be not merely with Israel, but with each pious and devoted Israelite. If a few readers may be led by this to suspect that "advanced criticism" is only another name for "thorough criticism," and that sympathy with the religion of the Psalmists is not confined to scholars who from youth to age stand on the same spot and use the same critical instruments, the first of the objects which the writer of the present article has had before him will have been attained.

T. K. Cheyne.