

follow Him into fellowship with Himself they have reason to hope that they shall be like Him; and every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure.

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THE METHOD OF STUDYING THE PSALTER.

WITH SPECIAL APPLICATION TO SOME OF THE MESSIANIC
PSALMS.¹

IN the lectures which I have been invited to give on this subject, there is naturally much with regard to the Psalms, which I must suppose to be understood and taken for granted. I cannot, for instance, describe the varied contents of the Psalter, or dwell upon its high devotional value, or explain, so far as we know them, the stages by which it gradually reached its present form. I shall only, by way of introduction, place before you a few things which we must bear in mind when we endeavour to arrive at what I conceive I was intended to help you to understand—the original meaning and purport of a few representative Psalms. I hope that the examples I shall take may place some of those who hear me in the way of applying the same method in other cases.

i. The foundation of all fruitful study of the Psalms, as of every other part of the Old Testament, is an exact translation—resting, of course, if possible, upon a sound knowledge of the original language. But even without this independent knowledge of the original language—which all are not able to obtain—a clear and exact translation is alone often enough to teach us much: it removes many

¹ Expanded from lectures delivered at a meeting of clergy in Oxford in July, 1908, and repeated, with some additions, at a Summer School of Theology held at Oxford in September, 1909.

difficulties, and corrects many misunderstandings. The Prayer-book version of the Psalms, with which at least English Churchmen are most familiar, while incomparable in literary style—it was the work of Miles Coverdale, a gifted master of vigorous and idiomatic English—often, unhappily, sadly misses the sense; and there are few Psalms in which some point or other is not in consequence seriously obscured. When we remember the date at which this version was made (1539), the existence of such blemishes is at once intelligible. What translation of what author, made nearly 400 years ago, would be adequate to the needs of the present day? It is to be regretted that the Church of England should so long have allowed her sons to use a version of the Psalms which constantly obscures or conceals their true meaning; and it is matter of sincere congratulation that a motion brought forward last year in Convocation for a revision of the Prayer-book version was agreed to with great unanimity. We do not indeed want to change the *style* or *form* of our Psalter: but we do want to make it more *exact*; and a gentle and conservative revision of the Prayer-book Psalter, which, while leaving its general style untouched, and retaining its many master-strokes of idiomatic and felicitous paraphrase, would remove its more glaring errors, and bring it into reasonable conformity with the original, is loudly called for. Inimitable as the rhythm and style of the Prayer-book version are, those who compare it carefully either with the original or with an exact translation of it, cannot be long in discovering that, if we wish to arrive at the true meaning of a Psalm, its renderings must often be discarded altogether, and new ones substituted. In pp. xl.–xlii., xlv.–vi. of my *Parallel Psalter*, I have indicated the lines along which, as it seems to me, a revision of the P.B. version should be conducted. The translation in my *Parallel Psalter*

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is based upon the Prayer-book version, its words being preserved wherever possible. To preclude misunderstanding I should, however, say distinctly that it is not designed to be a revision to supersede it: the changes are greater than would be necessary or desirable for that purpose: it is intended to be read *beside* the Prayer-book version, and to explain it. And to turn for a few moments to the Revised Version of the Old Testament, those who use this version must recollect that they should never neglect the *margins*: they must remember that the margins have a double character; they are sometimes indeed inferior to the text, but sometimes they are greatly superior to it. As a rule, they are inferior to it, where they merely repeat the renderings of the Authorised Version; they are superior to it, where they differ from that version. To use the Revised Version properly, the reader should ascertain, with the help of a good commentary, which marginal renderings or readings are superior to those of the text, and which he may leave unnoticed. He should place a line against the former, and draw his pen or pencil through the latter.¹ It must, however, be admitted that the influence of the Authorised Version has sometimes prevented the renderings of the Revised Version from being as clear and exact as they might be; and especially it must not be forgotten that numerous readings from the Ancient Versions, undoubtedly correct, and often both illuminative and important, are not represented in the Revised Version at all. For examples, I may refer to Professor Cheyne's *Prophecies of Isaiah and Book of Psalms* (ed. 1, 1888), to my own *Book of Jeremiah in a Revised Translation* (ed. 2, 1908), with short explanatory notes, to the more recent volumes of the *Cambridge Bible*, and

¹ See more fully on this subject the Preface to my edition of *Job in the Revised Version* (Clarendon Press, 1906), pp. xxiv.-xxxiii.

to those of the *Century Bible*.¹ We must be prepared to accept emendations of the Massoretic text, not even excluding those based solely on conjecture. As Dr. Gray has shown recently in an interesting paper ("English Versions and the Text of the Old Testament," in the volume of essays dedicated to Dr. Fairbairn), the older English Versions, being more or less dependent on the Vulgate, have in many passages preserved readings superior to those of later versions translated directly from the Hebrew; and, the present Hebrew text being what it is, the alternative to refusing altogether to emend it is often conjectural translation of a very improbable kind.² But we must be on our guard against emending too freely or too readily: we must remember the dangers of violent or arbitrary emendation; and we must be especially cautious in seeking to force the text into conformity with a metrical or other standard which does not rest upon a perfectly sound foundation. I venture to think that the safest rule is to deviate from the Hebrew text only where the grounds are cogent, and the advantage gained is unmistakable and clear. It is true, a large number of emendations are embraced under these conditions, but by no means so many as are necessary if we make metre our guide.³

¹ The reader conversant with German may also consult with advantage the new and enlarged edition of Kautzsch's *Die Heilige Schrift des A.T.* (vol. i., containing Gen.-Kings, Is., Jer., Ez., just completed), with numerous exegetical as well as critical notes.

² For a good example, see Job xxxiii. 10 A. V. and R. V.

³ The Hebrew student will find an invaluable collection of various readings, in numerous cases unquestionably original, derived partly from the Ancient Versions, partly from the conjectures of modern scholars, in Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*, 1905 (the *additions*, p. 1320 [Ed. 2, p. x.] ff., must not be neglected). The Hebrew text of this Bible is a careful reprint of that of Jacob ben Chayim in the great Rabbinical Bible published by Bomberg at Venice in 1524-5. The student should only be aware that it falls within the scope of this work to notice often various readings from the Versions, which, though in one way or another interesting, have no claim to represent the original text. The notes are in some places very

ii. In order to understand the Psalms, and realise their place in the history of Israelite religion, we must, as far as we can, discover the historical situation out of which they spring. (1) The Psalms are seldom as impersonal as a modern hymn. They often describe the writer's experience; they allude to, or even celebrate, historical events. They thus invite us, if we can, to determine the situation out of which they spring. Their dates we can only determine broadly. The criteria that we have are (a) the historical allusions, (b) the diction and literary style, (c) the relations to other writings whose dates are known, and (d) the character of the religious ideas expressed. And these rarely enable us to do more than refer a Psalm

numerous; and it is interrupting and disappointing, when the reader turns to the footnote to see what the various reading is, to find one which perhaps differs from the Massoretic text only orthographically, or one which has no claim to be the original reading. To facilitate the practical use of this edition of the Hebrew Bible, the following method is strongly recommended. Let the student, when he is reading a book carefully for the first time, whether with a good commentary or with a teacher, put a *red* mark against the references to those various readings which he decides are practically certain, and a *blue* mark against those which he thinks are more or less probable, but does not regard as certain as those which he has marked red: when he comes afterwards to read or refer to the book again, he will see at a glance which various readings he ought to refer to, and which, for his present purpose, he can afford to disregard. In the first instance, as Kittel himself points out in a note of four pages, called "Einige Winke über die Verwendung der Bibl. Heb. ed. Kittel im Hebräischen Unterricht" (to be obtained from the publisher, Hinrichs, Leipzig), the student would do well to confine himself to the various readings introduced by *l.* (lege, 'read').

It should be remembered that we have a measure of the corruptions that have been possible in Hebrew MSS. (1) in the Massoretic text itself, in the variations found between parallel passages (comp., e.g., Ps. xiv. with Ps. liii., Ps. xviii. with 2 Sam. xxii., Jer. lii. with 2 Kings xxiv. 18-xxv. 21, 27-30, and the margins of R.V. on Gen. xlvi. 10 ff., 1 Chron. vi. 16 ff., 34-68, xi. 27 ff., Ezr. ii. 2 ff., etc.); and (2) in the renderings of the ancient versions, especially the LXX, which presuppose texts often differing remarkably from the present Massoretic text. The Septuagint supplies cogent evidence of the strange mixture of readings, some unquestionably superior to those of the Massoretic text, others as undeniably inferior to it, found in the Hebrew MSS. from which the Greek translation was made.

to a tolerably wide period of the history—exilic, or early or late post-exilic, for instance. Yet even this is of use, if we are interested in the growth of religious ideas, or wish to study the thought and feeling of particular ages. I can here only state briefly the conclusions, for which reasons are given in my *Introduction*. The Psalter, it is clear, assumed its present form gradually, through the combination of different shorter collections by a compiler or compilers. Very few Psalms in it are earlier than the seventh century B.C., and the great majority are exilic or post-exilic. Even Book I. (Ps. i.-xli.) contains Psalms showing that it cannot have been compiled till after the exile. Of the 73 Psalms ascribed to David, internal evidence—the situation presupposed, or the ideas, or sometimes the lateness of the Hebrew—shows that certainly the greater number are of much later date.¹ The Psalter reflects the religious feelings and experiences of a long succession of pious men of Israel; and it is no doubt to this that it owes its extraordinary variety of mood, and style, and theme. (2) Though we can seldom or never fix the actual historical occasion of a Psalm, we can often do what is of great value, reconstruct—at least in Psalms of a personal character—from the allusions and terms used, the *kind* of situation in which the poet was, and out of which the Psalm sprang. It is essential to make an effort to do this. To understand any ancient poem with topical allusions we must throw ourselves back into the position and circumstances of the writer, see with his eyes, and strive

¹ It is not denied that there may be a nucleus of Davidic Psalms. For an endeavour to determine some Psalms which may be Davidic, see Burney, *Interpreter*, Oct. 1909, p. 58 ff. All positive external evidence for the existence of Davidic Psalms is virtually destroyed by the untrustworthiness of the titles: where so many are demonstrably incorrect, it is clear that these, at any rate, cannot rest upon a genuine tradition. This being the case, the value of the titles generally is impaired; and we cannot feel confident that in *any* case they rest upon a genuine tradition.

to understand how what he says is determined by the situation in which he is placed. There is great variety in the situations presupposed by the Psalms. In Psalm iii. the poet is surrounded by foes, who unite in declaring that there is no help for him in his God: but he appeals with confidence to Jehovah, who has defended him hitherto; and foretells the discomfiture of his assailants. In Psalm iv. the writer is surrounded by impatient and distrustful companions, who blame him for some misfortune which has befallen them: he bids them regain a right frame of mind, and trust; in the joy of faith he himself can lie down and rest securely. In Psalm xi. society is in disorder. In the confusion the lives of the righteous are imperilled. The poet's despondent friends urge him to seek safety in flight: it is hopeless to attempt to stem the tide of anarchy. He replies in tones of calm and unabated confidence in Jehovah, who dwells far above the clouds which envelop the earth, and who will give the righteous their due, and speedily destroy the ungodly. The writer of Psalm xii. lives in an age of duplicity, insincerity, and untrustworthiness. By smooth words the unscrupulous threaten to get the poor into their power. The Psalmist expresses his confidence that Jehovah will deliver them. In Psalm xli. we have a most odious character presented to us. The Psalmist is ill: one who had been his intimate friend comes to visit him; he professes sympathy, but in reality is eagerly looking out for signs that he will not recover; his confederates are waiting and whispering together outside, hoping for the worst; he goes out and conveys to them with satisfaction the good news that the Psalmist's end is near. In Psalm xlii.-xliii.—really one Psalm, which has become accidentally divided into two—the author is somewhere in the Hermon region [“concerning” in the Prayer-book version of xlii. 8 is a misrendering of the Latin *de*, “from,”

in Seb. Münster's Latin translation of the Old Testament, 1534-5],¹ and debarred from worshipping in the Temple; he is taunted by heathen foes with being deserted by his God. With great pathos he utters his yearnings for God, describes his dejection and distress, recalls the happiness of the past, and prays earnestly for restoration to the privileges of the sanctuary. Psalm xlv. is a national Psalm. Some great defeat has overtaken the nation; they are a scorn and derision to their neighbours. They have been true and faithful to God, and yet He has cast them off. They beseech Him to bestir Himself and save them. In Psalm lii. some wealthy and powerful noble is denounced for ruining innocent persons, and, probably, enriching himself at their expense, by malicious slanders or false evidence. His fall is confidently anticipated, while the Psalmist will be secure in the strength of his God. In Psalm lv. the poet is in great peril and mental distress. He lives among foes in a city whose walls they occupy with their patrols. He would gladly, if he could, escape to the desert. The treachery of a false friend is the bitterest ingredient in his cup of suffering. Nevertheless, in spite of the feelings of terror and indignation stirring within him, he closes with thoughts of hope and trust. Psalm lviii. is a denunciation of unjust judges. In Psalm lix. the Psalmist is in a city full of threatening and insolent foes, whose speedy fall he both prays for and expects. Psalm lx. is a prayer for victory after some great disaster. And so in other cases. We can reconstruct from the language of the Psalm the kind of situation in which its author was placed, though we cannot determine its actual writer, or the actual occasion on which it was written. It is worth bearing in mind that the characters and social conditions alluded to in the Psalms can often be illustrated from the prophets.

¹ See my *Parallel Psalter*, p. xxii.

iii. A Psalm—except two or three which are evidently composite [in the case of Psalm cviii. we can demonstrate this, for it is composed of Psalm lvii. 7–11 and Psalm lx. 5–12]—is a *unity*, and must be interpreted so that its unity is preserved. The Hebrew tenses are often in themselves ambiguous. They must be rendered so that the unity of the situation is maintained. Thus the future “shall” in the Prayer-book version of xviii. 5, 25–27, lxxviii. 10, cxvi. 4, makes the Psalm incoherent. The “is” in Psalm xxxii. 2, and the “will” in the following verse, do the same. The principle has to be borne in mind in interpretation. We must not interpret a verse in a sense inconsistent with its context. The old atomistic style of interpretation, which often did this, must be abandoned. The Psalms are in this respect like the prophecies and the Epistles. The Bible is not a collection of disconnected dogmatic statements, any one of which may be taken, and used, regardless of its context. It is a collection of writings, each having its historical place, and each having its own unity—the unity of an historical narrative, a poem, a prophetic discourse, an epistle, as the case may be.

iv. In interpreting the Psalms, as in interpreting the other poetical books of the Old Testament and the writings of the prophets, a distinction must be drawn between the original sense and the application. The words of a Psalm may be applied to many persons and situations which were entirely out of the mind of the original writer; and we must be careful not so to apply a Psalm as to confuse the application with the interpretation. This has a bearing on the use made of the Psalms in the New Testament, and also by the Church (to which I shall revert later); and to avoid confusion and mistake it is important to bear it in mind.

Let us then consider Psalm ii. and see whether it is possible to reconstruct the historical situation presupposed by it.

The Psalm is artistically constructed, and falls into four strophes of nearly equal length; it also displays great poetical vigour and dramatic power. Its central thought is the world-wide dominion of the King of Zion.¹

First strophe (*vv.* 1-3). The poet begins by describing a confederacy of subject nations, mustering for a revolt, and eager to cast off their allegiance to the theocratic king of Israel:—

- 1 Why do the nations throng tumultuously,²
and the peoples meditate³ emptiness?
- 2 The kings of the earth take their stand,
and the rulers sit in conclave⁴ together,
against Jehovah and against his anointed (, saying):
- 3 'Let us knap their thongs in sunder,
and fling away their cords from us.'

The scene in *vv.* 1, 2 is presented with dramatic vividness; we see the actors all in movement before us (the Hebrew student will notice the imperfect tenses in *vv.* 1*b*, 2*a*). The 'thongs' are the thongs of the yoke, which, in the case of a literal yoke, bound it round the animal's neck (see *Jer.* v. 5; xxvii. 2). Before *v.* 3 we must, as often in Hebrew poetry, supply in thought, '(saying)': instead of describing what the kings and rulers do, the poet, more graphically and dramatically, represents them as declaring defiantly what they intend. In English, in such cases, to make the meaning clear, we should use naturally inverted commas.

¹ The notes are not intended to be exhaustive, but merely to explain or illustrate points of interest.

² The root is rare in Heb. (only the subst. *throng* twice besides, *Ps.* lv. 14, lxiv. 2 [see R.V.m.]; but the meaning is clear from Aramaic; see *Dan.* vi. 6, 11, 15 (R.V.m.). In the Targums the verb is often used for the Heb. *הִתְקַבְּצוּ* (e.g. *Ps.* xlvi. 6*a*). (Where the Hebrew and English verse-numbers differ, as they often do in the Psalms,—the titles, if long, being counted as *v.* 1 in the Heb.),—the references here and in the sequel are always to the *English*.)

³ Properly, *murmur* or *mutter*. So always.

⁴ Or, changing one letter, *assemble themselves*. See the note.

In *v.* 2 'sit in conclave' is in Heb. נִסְדַּר—in this sense only Ps. xxxi. 13 [Heb. 14] besides. Elsewhere the verb always means to *found* (Ps. xxiv. 2). Perhaps the primary idea of the root was to *fix firm* or *close*, usually taken in the sense of to *found*, but also having in Nifal, in the reflexive sense of the conjugation, the meaning *fix* or *seat themselves close together*, i.e. "sit in conclave." But Lagarde's נִסְדַּר, *meet by appointment, assemble themselves* (Ps. xlvi. 4 [5]; and esp. Neh. vi. 2), is a very probable emendation. As Dr. Gray has recently pointed out (in the paper cited above, p. 23), to adopt a conjectural *emendation* of the Hebrew text—provided it be not a violent one—is not more arbitrary or venturesome than to assign a conjectural *meaning* to a Hebrew word. To treat נִסְדַּר here as a denom. from נִסַּד, or as a parallel form of נִסַּד, and to render *confer* or *consult together* (Duhm, Bâthgen, *al.*), is precarious. It is true, נִסַּד, like *s-wöd* in Syriac, means properly *intimate* or *friendly converse* (see my note on Am. iii. 7 in the *Cambridge Bible*); but no verb נִסַּד is found in the Old Testament, its first and, seemingly, its only occurrence being Ecclus. vii. 14 (Heb.); in Syriac the form regularly used is the reflexive ܢܫܘܕܢܐ (so ܢܫܘܕܢܐ or ܢܫܘܕܢܐ in the Aramaising Hebrew of Ecclus. viii. 17; ix. 3, 14; xlii. 12). Where there is so little evidence that נִסַּד was a genuine Hebrew verb, it is hazardous to assume, on the strength of Ges.-K. §§ 77c, 78b, a parallel form to it, נִסַּר.

Second strophe (*vv.* 4–6). Jehovah mocks from heaven their puny efforts; His king is firmly established upon Zion.

- 4 He that sitteth in heaven laugheth :
the Lord mocketh at them.
- 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his anger,
and dismay them in his hot displeasure :
- 6 'But I have installed¹ my king
upon Zion, my holy mountain.'

¹ Elsewhere in this sense only Prov. viii. 23. The Heb. verb *nāsakh* in all other passages means to *pour out* a libation (Ps. xvi. 4, etc.), or, of molten metal, to *cast* (Is. xl. 19; cf. the derivative *massēkhāh*, a molten image); hence, in default of any better explanation, it is used generally to be supposed either that to *pour out* in these passages meant to *anoint*, or, as cast metal becomes afterwards solid and firm, that the verb had acquired the secondary sense of *fix* or *set firm*. Neither of these explanations was, however, satisfactory. It is now known (Delitzsch, *Ass. H. W. B.*, p. 472) that there is an Assyrian verb *nasāku*, used of *setting up*, or *installing*, a king, with a deriv. *nasīku*, *prince*, corresponding to the Heb. נִסַּד, *prince* (Ps. lxxxiii. 11 *al.*). It can hardly be doubted that the Hebrew verb, as used in Ps. ii. 6 and Prov. viii. 23, is to be explained from this

He that sitteth (viz. enthroned, which is often the implication of the word: see e.g. xxix. 10, lv. 19) *in heaven* is a title in finely-conceived contrast to the inhabitants of earth, vainly plotting to thwart His purpose. For the anthropomorphism *mocketh*, cf. Psalm lix. 8. Before v. 6 we must again supply in thought, '(saying).'

Third strophe (vv. 7-9). The king is here suddenly introduced speaking, and reciting the Divine decree of sonship which gives him authority over the nations of the earth. This assures him of his position, and gives him confidence.

7 I will tell concerning the decree :

Jehovah said unto me, 'Thou art my son ;

'I have this day begotten thee :

8 'Ask of me, and I will give the nations for thine inheritance,
'and the ends of the earth for thy possession :

9 'Thou shalt break them with a mace¹ of iron ;

'thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'

In v. 7 ('I will tell') the speaker is the king; there are in Hebrew poetry many similar cases, in which the speaker has to be inferred from the context. The 'decree' is the promise given by Nathan to David (2 Sam. vii. 12-14):
¹² 'When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.
¹³ He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. ¹⁴ *I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son* : if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men (i.e. as human fathers are wont to correct their children,—as far as may be necessary, yet

Assyrian word. There must have been in Hebrew—as analogously in many other cases—two distinct roots, *nāsakh*,—one, occurring frequently, meaning to *pour out*, and the other, preserved only in two places, meaning to *set up, install*, with the derivative ׀׀׀, *prince*, properly one *installed* into some dignity.

¹ The 'spiked iron mace used in war' (Cheyne). Or, *sceptre* (fig. for *rule*), as Ps. xlvi. 6.

not so far as to cast them off); ¹⁵ but my kindness shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before thee. ¹⁶ And thine house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me (so LXX); thy throne shall be established for ever' (compare the poetical amplification of the passage in Psalm lxxxix. 26-37). In the original promise, it will be noticed, the words refer either to Solomon, or, as the word 'seed' in *v.* 13 and the context generally suggest, the Davidic dynasty in general (in which case *v.* 13 will be a later gloss ¹); in either case the possibility of the ruler spoken of *sinning* is expressly contemplated (*v.* 14*b*). In Psalm ii., however, the poet takes the promise of *v.* 14*a* absolutely, and leaves this possibility out of the question. 'Thou art my son' was perhaps (Gunkel)² a formula of adoption: hitherto the king has had only a human father; now he is to have a Divine father. 'I have this day begotten thee' expands and enforces 'Thou art my son'; the 'day' is the one on which the king had been anointed, and formally installed into his kingly rights. This august title had been conferred upon him then.

It ought to be remembered that the figures applied here to the king are used elsewhere of the *nation*. Thus Israel was figuratively Jehovah's 'son,' his 'firstborn' (Exod. iv. 22; Hos. xi. 1)—the relation being conceived, not, as was often the case among heathen nations, as a physical one, but as a *moral* one, implying on the one side fatherly affection and care, and on the other filial devotion and obedience.³ Even the same word 'begotten' is used of the nation, Deut. xxxii. 18: 'Of the Rock that *begat* thee thou wast unmindful, and forgattest God that

¹ See Kennedy's note on the passage in the *Century Bible*.

² *Ausgewählte Psalmen übersetzt und erklärt* (1904), p. 12.

³ Cf. Isa. i. 2 (of individual Israelites), and see more fully my *Deuteronomy*, pp. 156 (on xiv. 1), and 352 (on xxxii. 5).

was in travail with thee.' There, however, the word is used as a figure for the origin of the nation ; here it is a figure for the king's installation into the rights of sonship.

Vv. 8-9. Inheritance is the natural right of sonship ; and as Jehovah's adopted son, the king here spoken of has but to ask his Father, and He will give him the whole earth as his possession ; if any of his subjects presume to revolt, he will bring upon them complete and irreparable destruction.

For *break them*, the LXX, pronouncing תִּרְעֵם for תִּרְעָם has 'thou shalt *shepherd* them' (*ποιμανεῖς αὐτοῦς*—fig. for *rule*, as 2 Sam. v. 2 ; Ps. lxxviii. 72 *al.* [R.V. *feed*]), and this is the source of to 'shepherd the nations with a rod of iron' in Revelation ii. 27, xii. 5, xix. 15 ; but the parallel *dash to pieces* supports the Massoretic vocalisation 'shalt *break* them.'

Strophe 4 (vv. 10-12). The poet speaks, drawing the practical lesson from Jehovah's words. Let the nations yield willing submission to Jehovah's son, instead of resisting to their own destruction.

- 10 Now, therefore, O ye kings, be wise ;
 be admonished, ye judges of the earth.
 11 Serve Jehovah with fear,
 and rejoice with trembling.
 12 Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish as regards the
 way ;
 for his anger burneth quickly :
 happy are all they that take refuge in him.

V. 10. *Be admonished* ; properly, *Let yourselves be admonished* (the *Nifal tolerativum*, Ges.-K. § 51c). Cf. the same word, addressed to Jerusalem, in Jer. vi. 8. Notice that in P.B.V. *be learned* is a euphemism for *be taught*, according to an old usage of 'learn' (so lxxxii. 5 'They will not be *learned*,' i.e. be *taught* ; xxv. 4 'Lead me forth in thy truth and *learn* me), still current among the poorer classes, and dialectically.

V. 11. It is possible that for גילו, *rejoice*, we should read חילו, 'Be in awe' (see Ps. xcvi. 9, cxiv. 7 [R.V. *tremble*]). It is true, of course, that in the attitude of a religious man towards his God joy and fear are no incompatible emotions: but regard must be had to the context; and it seems more likely that insurgent rebels would be exhorted to be in awe than to rejoice. *Reverence* (P.B.V.) in the next line is incorrect: רעה denotes never religious fear, but always *alarm* or *trembling*: see Ps. xlvi. 6, xxxiii. 14, Job iv. 14; רע Ps. lv. 5, Exod. xv. 15; and the verb in Ps. civ. 32.

V. 12. *Kiss the son*, the 'son' spoken of above, the Israelitish king: pay him the homage that is his due, lest He (i.e. Jehovah) be angry with you for resisting the king who is His 'son,' and His wrath kindle against you with destructive force. The kiss is a figure for homage and regard (1 Sam. x. 1; 1 Kings xix. 18; Hosea xiii. 2; Job xxxi. 2—in the last three passages, paid to a deity). The Aramaic *bar* (elsewhere in Hebrew only three times in the late passage, Prov. xxxi. 2) is strange, especially as we have the Hebrew *ben* in v. 7; but it would be accounted for if the Psalm were late; and it is difficult to find a more satisfactory rendering; nor are the emendations that have been proposed convincing. We must admit the uncertainty of the passage, but happily it does not affect the general sense of the Psalm: as the sequel shows, there must have stood here, however it may have been expressed, some admonition to submit to either Jehovah or His king.

The chief other renderings are (1) LXX δπαλασθε *paulelas* 'Lay hold of instruction'; hence Jerome in the Vulg. *apprehendite disciplinam*; Targ. קבילו אילפנא, 'receive the teaching.' The origin of this rendering is uncertain; it *may* imply a different reading (מוסר—cognate with the verb rendered 'be admonished' in v. 7—for בר, מו having dropped out after the קו of ושלקו, and מו having become corrupted into בר); it *may* depend on a Midrashic explanation of בר, as signifying the 'law.'¹ The meaning *lay hold of* for

¹ Some of the Rabbis interpreted *bar*, 'corn,' in Prov. xi. 26, as a figure for the *law* (*Sanh. 92a*: in Wünsche's transl., *Der Bab. Talm. in seinen Haggadischen Bestandtheilen übersetzt*, II. iii., 1889, p. 154 f.); and they understood Ps. ii. 11 in the same sense, 'Kiss the corn of the law!'

שָׂרָה is also very uncertain. (a) The corresponding word in Arabic, *nasaka*, means to *arrange together in order*, as pearls on a string, or a discourse (cf. *sermo* from *serere*); (b) in Hebrew it occurs three times with some such idea as *handling a bow* (Ps. lxxviii. 9; 1 Chron. xii. 2), or a bow and shield (2 Chron. xvii. 17); but exactly *what* idea it denotes in this connexion can only be conjectured; (c) then, further, the cognate *nēshek* denotes a *weapon*, or, collectively, *armour* (Job xx. 24, Ezek. xxxix. 9; 1 Kings x. 25, 2 Kings x. 12); but again, what the etymological meaning of the word is, is quite uncertain. Thus the rendering *lay hold of* rests upon a very insecure philological foundation; it would no doubt suit (b) if this stood by itself, but it is difficult to connect with (a) and (c).

(2) Hitzig rendered *Lay hold of* (or *Embrace*) *obedience* (cf. Kirkpatrick, in the *Cambridge Bible*, p. 12, 'or, perhaps, *obedience*'), deriving *bar* from the Arab. *barra*, to be *pious* towards God, *dutiful* towards parents, *kind* towards others, whence *bār*, *piety*, *dutifulness*, and *kindness*, and especially *obedience* towards God (Lane, *Arab. Lex.*, pp. 175, 176c). But apart from the doubtful rendering *Lay hold of*, the strong Arabism is not probable.

(3) Aquila rendered καταφιλήσατε ἐκλεκτῶς (cf. Cant. vi. 9), and Symmachus προσκυνήσατε καθαρῶς (cf. Job xi. 4), whence Jerome, in his own translation from the Hebrew, *adore pure*—all taking בר as an adv. (cf. כָּר יִכְיִין, Isa. xxxiii. 7); so Dr. Briggs, only vocalising בר, and construing as an adv. accusative, 'kiss in purity'—let your homage be unswayed by any secret blemish (Job xxxi. 27 f.). This construction is quite grammatical (cf. אֲהַבְּםָם נִרְבָּה, Hos. xiv. 4 [5], Ges.-K. § 118q); but both *bar*, *clean* or *pure*, and *bōr*, *cleanness*, *purity*, are rare (Job xi. 4, and of the heart Ps. xix. 8, xxiv. 4, lxxiii. 1; of the hands Ps. xviii. 20, 24, Job xxii. 30); and one rather wonders whether either is a likely word to have been used here. Still, the rendering is certainly more probable than either (1) or (2). It is remarkable that none of the Ancient Versions, except the Syriac, should have given what seems to be the most natural rendering of the Hebrew, *Kiss the son*, not even Aq., Symm. and Jerome, though they plainly had before them the same consonantal text which we have, and though, too, the explanation of a Hebrew word from the Aramaic is anything but uncommon in the versions, especially in the LXX. Jerome mentions the rendering *Kiss the son*, but seems to think it scarcely worth considering: his words are 'Pro eo quod in Graeco dicitur δράξαθε παιδῆς, in Hebraeo legitur NESCU BAR, quod interpretari potest, *adore filium*.'

(*ibid.*; Midrash *Tehillin*, on Ps. ii. 11, in Wünsche's transl., p. 30; Midrash *Mishlé* on xi. 26), and even Prov. xxxi. 2 (Midrash *Bemidbar Rabba*, on Num. vi. 2; in Wünsche's tr., p. 214).

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(4) Lagarde (*Novæ Psalterii graeci editionis specimen*, 1887, p. 24 f.), assuming that the LXX really read מוֹקֵר, argues in favour of adopting these consonants, but vocalising them differently, and adding a suffix, would read מוֹקֵרוּ [or, better, מוֹקֵרוֹ], i.e., 'Lay hold of his thongs' (so Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter*, p. 351, 'Put on (again) his bonds¹'): נִשֶׁק, 'lay hold of,' in v. 12 would then, he points out, form an effective alliterative antithesis to נִפֵּק, 'knap in sunder' in v. 3. But 'lay hold of,' even if (see above) it were certainly the meaning of נִשֶׁק, does not seem to be quite the idea that we should expect in connexion with 'thongs.'

(5) It has often been remarked (cf. the note above) that 'rejoice' in v. 11 agrees indifferently with 'trembling': and Professor Bertholet, of Bâle, has made recently (*Z. für alttest. Wiss.*, 1908, p. 58 f.) an ingenious suggestion for removing at one stroke both this incongruity and the troublesome *bar*. He suggests viz. that two words have been accidentally transposed: the original text being

וּנְשָׁקוּ בְרִנְלוֹ בְרַעְרָה²

a scribe, he supposes, accidentally omitted the second to the seventh letters from the right, which he added afterwards at the end, thus producing

וּנְלוֹ בְרַעְרָה נְשָׁקוּ בָר

we should then get for the original form of the verse—

11. Serve Jehovah with fear,
and *kiss his feet* with trembling;
12. Lest he be angry, and ye perish, etc.

And he points out that to 'kiss the feet' is a common expression in Assyrian, used both of submission to a conqueror, and also in particular of homage to a deity.³ Bertholet afterwards found that he had been partly anticipated in his conjecture, both by Sievers (*ibid.* p. 193), and by the learned Dominican scholar, Père Lagrange (*Revue Bibl.*, 1905, p. 40, cited *ibid.* p. 234). It is an objection to Bertholet's suggestion, not met by the parallels cited by him (נִנְתַּן,

¹ Discarded in *Psalms*, ed. 2 (1904), in favour of a different conjecture.

² In the autographs, and early copies, of the Old Testament writings, the divisions between words must have been often imperfectly marked, even if they were marked at all (they are often not marked in inscriptions): the renderings of the LXX often presuppose a division of words different from that in the present Massoretic text; and in the Massoretic text itself there are undoubted instances of words incorrectly divided (in Gen. xlix. 19-20, for instance, we must certainly read עֲקַבְם אִשְׁרַע for עֲקַבְם אִשְׁרַע, in 2 Sam. xxi. 1 וְאֵל בֵּיתָה רַמִּים for וְאֵל בֵּיתָה רַמִּים, and in Hos. vi. 5 וּמִשְׁפַּטֵּי אֹרֹר for וּמִשְׁפַּטֵּי אֹרֹר). See further examples in my *Notes on Samuel*, p. xxxi f.

³ Bertholet cites, for examples, Jastrow, *Die Relig. Bab. u. Ass.* i. 514, ii. 103, and Delitzsch, *H.W.B.* p. 486b.

רָבַק, אָמַן, construed with ב), that נִשֵּׁק is construed often with ל (as well as with an accus.), but never with ב. Still it is possible that ברַגְלוֹ itself, in the MS. which was copied incorrectly, might be an error for an earlier לְרַגְלוֹ. Even so, however, to ‘kiss the feet’ is an expression not elsewhere found in Hebrew; and though the feet of Marduk or a goddess might be kissed by a worshipper in Assyria, it may be doubted whether such an anthropomorphism would be used by a worshipper of Yahweh in Israel. There seems also to be no apparent reason, such as an *δμοιοτέλετον*, to explain the scribe’s supposed error. The case is one in which, while the traditional text, and generally accepted rendering, are not above suspicion, the alternative renderings or readings proposed are not free from objection.

The Psalmist ends by congratulating those who place themselves under Jehovah’s protection, by accepting the rule of His king. The rendering of P.B.V., A.V. and R.V. ‘put their trust in him’ obliterates the suggestive figure of the original, which is that of *taking refuge* or *shelter*. The same figure is often obliterated elsewhere: see the passages cited in the Glossary to my *Parallel Psalter*, under *refuge*, p. 454. The expression, when referred to Jehovah, always implies trustful confidence; but the sense of the figure is often consciously felt, and it is a loss to confuse the word with the ordinary word for *trust*. Comp. Jud. ix. 15, where the bramble says to the other trees, ‘Come and *take refuge* in my shadow,’ Isa. xxx. 2, 3 ‘to *take refuge* in the shadow of Egypt,’ Ruth ii. 12 ‘under whose wings thou art come—not to “trust” but—to *take refuge*’ (so here R.V.). In Psalms xxxvi. 7, lvii. 1, lxi. 4, xci. 4 (in all with ‘wings’) R.V. also has rightly *take refuge*. Comp. the cognate subst. מִחְסָה, regularly rendered *refuge*—in Isa. iv. 6 from a storm, and often figuratively of Jehovah (Ps. xiv. 6, xlvi. 1, etc., and expressly from a storm, Isa. xxv. 4).

Is it possible to determine the occasion of the Psalm? Insurrections in the reigns of David or Solomon have

been suggested: but though these kings had their foes, there is no mention or probability of a revolt of subject-nations from either of them, such as is here depicted. We might think better of a later king, when some of Israel's neighbours—Edom, Moab, or Ammon—subdued by David (2 Sam. viii.) may have assailed Judah; and this may have been painted by the poet as a revolt of subject-nations generally, the actual occasion being magnified and made the basis of an ideal description of the triumph of Jehovah and His king. It is very possible, however, that Bâthgen is right in regarding the whole representation as ideal: the prophets had spoken of the assaults of nations upon Israel, and of their defeat—sometimes of actual assaults, as of the Assyrians, Isaiah xvii. 12–14, sometimes of imaginary ones, like that of Magog, whom Ezekiel (ch. xxxviii., xxxix.) represents as advancing against the restored Israel only to be annihilated by Divine intervention (xxxviii. 21 f.); they had proclaimed Israel's supremacy over other nations; they had also drawn the picture of Israel's ideal king, and of his victories over his foes. On the basis of these representations there had grown up the idea, current in apocalyptic writings, of the advent of an age when the heathen who held Israel enthralled would be subdued, and when Israel would rule in freedom and glory over the world. The Psalmist does not give the reins to his imagination as these writers do; but he is moving on the same lines. 'He lived in an age when Israel was surrounded by powerful foes; but he was also inspired by strong religious and national feeling' (Bâthgen). On the basis of older prophecies of the rule of the ideal king, combined with reminiscences of the rule of David and Solomon, and the promise of Nathan in 2 Samuel vii. 14, the poet constructs an imaginative picture of his rule established over all the earth, of the nations and their kings revolting,

of their failure, and of the re-establishment by Jehovah of the rule of His ideal king (so Bâthgen). This view is attractive: whether it is correct, is more than we can say. If it is, the Psalm will contain a poetical representation of world-wide empire conferred by Jehovah upon the ideal ruler of the future, and solemnly confirmed to him by Him. If *bar* in *v.* 12 is correct, and means 'son,' the Psalm is almost certainly post-exilic; the Aram. רגש in *v.* 1 points in the same direction: and it is to the post-exilic age—perhaps early in the Greek period, when Syrians and Egyptians were contending for the possession of Coele-Syria and Palestine—that, if the Psalm is rightly interpreted in the last-mentioned sense, it will most naturally be assigned.

The Psalm is thus, if the 'king' spoken of in it is an actual king of Israel, 'typically' Messianic, i.e. it invests the actual king, and his rule, with such ideal features as to make him typical of a future *ideal* king: if the 'king,' in accordance with the last suggestion, is the future ideal ruler of Israel, it will be directly Messianic. 'Messiah'—properly מלכא משיחא, 'the anointed king,' *κατ' ἐξοχήν*—was the name given by the later Jews to the ideal ruler, whose figure they constructed on the basis of representations in the Old Testament, and who they believed would one day appear to deliver them from the tyranny of the nations, and assume the rule of the world¹: stripped of its worldly features, and spiritualised, the ideal was appropriated and realised by Jesus. In either case, the Psalm is 'Messianic' not by being a direct prediction, but through its describing an

¹ Comp. e.g. in the so-called 'Psalms of Solomon' (written probably c. 70 B.C.), where there is a prayer to God that He will 'raise up to them their king, the son of David,' who will 'destroy the ungodly nations with the word of his mouth,' and 'gather together a holy people' round himself in Jerusalem, whom he will 'lead in righteousness,' while he will 'possess the nations of the heathen to serve him beneath his yoke' (xvii. 23, 27, 28, 32). See in Ryle and James' edition, p. 137 ff.

ideal rule which, in a larger and more spiritual sense than the Psalmist's words actually suggest, was fulfilled by Christ. And so the Psalm is quoted, more than once, in the New Testament, with reference to Christ. Verses 1 and 2 are quoted by St. Peter in Acts iv. 20 f.—not indeed as a *prediction*, for there was then no rebellion of subject-nations against a king, such as the Psalm depicts (notice *v.* 3), but—as describing a hostility, *exemplified* then, in a signal manner, by the Jews and Gentiles confederate against Him. In Acts xiii. 33, *v.* 7 ('Thou art my son,' etc.) is quoted as testifying to the truth of Christ's resurrection: again, not as a prediction, because, as has been shown, the words relate in reality to something entirely different, but because the resurrection of Jesus was a signal testimony to His being in the fullest sense of the word (and not only as the Psalmist took it) the 'son' of God, and the true 'Messiah.' Psalm ii. is accordingly read appropriately in the Anglican Church on Easter-day. And in Hebrews i. 5, the same verse, together with 2 Samuel vii. 14a,¹ is quoted as showing Christ's superiority to the angels: no angel had ever been addressed in terms such as those used in these two passages. But again it must be recognised that the apostle understands the words in a higher and larger sense than that which they actually bear in the Old Testament itself: in the case of the Psalm this follows from what has been said above in the note on the verse; and it is, if possible, even clearer in the case of 2 Samuel vii. 14a; for there, as the context shows (*v.* 14b; see p. 32), the term 'father' cannot be used in a loftier sense than that in which it might be used in relation to a 'son,' the possibility of whose sinning is expressly contemplated by the writer.²

¹ Compare Rom. i. 4 '*marked out as the son of God with power . . . by the resurrection of the dead*' (meaning His resurrection; see Sanday and Headlam on the sense of the Greek expression used).

² Comp. Westcott, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 19: 'The whole passage

As we proceed we shall meet with other illustrations of the varied use made of Old Testament passages in the New Testament. But our method of dealing with them must in all cases be the same : as in all exegesis, our first duty must be to discover, as accurately as we can, the exact picture, or idea, which the Old Testament writer means his reader to form ; when we have done this, we shall be in a position to appreciate rightly the manner in which it is applied in the New Testament.

S. R. DRIVER.

(2 Sam. vii. 14), with its reference to "iniquity" and chastening, can only refer to an earthly king ; and still experience showed that no earthly king could satisfy its terms. The kingdom passed away from the line of David.' It was necessary, therefore, to look for another 'seed,' of whom its terms should be true without reservation (v. 14b) or restriction.