

Utilisation of written documents, while the oral tradition still exists, is very different from their utilisation after it has ceased. In the former case the written composition has no authority, as it is the business of the critic to get behind it, and test the basis whereon it rests ; for him the narratives still count as traditions remembered in certain areas and attributed to certain authorities ; their rearrangement is largely hypothetical. But when the written arrangement has ousted the oral tradition, criticism is apt to be silenced, because it cannot claim to go behind the material before it ; it can only harmonise or discredit, but cannot ascertain the point at which a discrepancy came in, or fix on the person responsible for a particular statement. We admire the modesty and self-sacrifice of those who, instead of flaunting their industry, allow a sentence to represent the work of a year ; yet a later age would often be grateful if they had not only published the result, but added something about the means by which it had been procured.

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.

THE METHOD OF STUDYING THE PSALTER.

III. PSALM CX.

THE Psalm, as is evident from the terms used, is written of some Israelite king. Like the other Psalms of the same type—the 2nd or the 72nd, for instance—it depicts, under a particular aspect, the ideal glory of the theocratic king. It represents him as marching out with his people against his foes, as victorious, with Yahweh's help, against them, and, what is especially remarkable, as not king only, but priest.

- 1 'Tis Yahweh's oracle to my lord :
 'Sit thou at my right hand,
 until I make thine enemies thy footstool.'

(*'Tis*) *Yahweh's oracle* (or *whisper*) is the expression used so constantly by the prophets: in the English versions rendered, 'saith the LORD,' and so not distinguished from the ordinary Hebrew for 'saith the LORD.' The root of *ne'um*, 'oracle,' means in Arabic *to utter a low sound*: hence the word in Hebrew probably denoted properly a *whispered utterance*, of a revelation heard quietly by the mental ear. The expression 'my lord' is one which recurs often in the books of Samuel and Kings (1 Sam. xxii. 12, 2 Sam. xiv. 20; more commonly followed by 'the king'); and it is the usual title by which the Israelite king is addressed by his courtiers. It is a prophet who here speaks; and he represents Jehovah as addressing the king, probably at his accession, with a solemn promise, conferring upon him the highest position of honour next himself ('on the right hand,' as 1 Kings ii. 19; Ps. xlv. 9; Matt. x. 21), and assuring him of his protection until his foes are effectually subjugated. The 'footstool' is a truly Oriental figure: we see the conqueror with his feet on his vanquished foes, and we remember how Joshua (Josh. x. 24) bids his captains, after his defeat of the five kings, place their feet upon their necks (cf. 1 Kings v. 3 'Till Yahweh put them under the soles of Solomon's feet'). We have two pictorial illustrations of the passage, one, from Assyria, of a king planting his foot on the necks of prostrate captives; the other, from Egypt, of a king whose footstool is supported by nine heads of crouching captives, in two rows, one above the other, of five and four respectively. 'Until' is naturally not exclusive of the period which follows: it is used to mark a turning-point with which a new epoch begins (cf. cxii. 8).

In what follows the poet expands this oracle, dwelling on the manner in which the promise will be fulfilled:—

2 Yahweh stretch out from Zion the sceptre of thy strength (, saving),
'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.'

His palace on Zion is the centre of his dominion ; and thence will Yahweh Himself stretch out His sceptre, the symbol of His authority, bidding him rule unopposed, while his enemies are submissive and passive about him.

The poet next describes his success, in an ideal battle-scene. He pictures him advancing to the combat, surrounded by his warriors, all equipped, and eager for the fray. We must discard here the now familiar rendering of the P.B. Version ('offer thee free-will offerings with an holy worship'); for it yields a completely false sense.

3 Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy host :
in holy adornments,¹ from the womb of the dawn,
thine is the dew of thy young men.

Professor Cheyne's beautiful paraphrase may be quoted :
'Martial Israelites stream to the royal banner (comp. Jud. v. 2, 9, where the Hebrew for 'offer themselves freely' is cognate). It is an early morning muster ; and suddenly (cf. 2 Sam. xvii. 11, 12) as the

dewdrops which the sun
Impearls on every leaf and flower

(Milton's figure for the angel-hosts), and not less past counting than these, there seems to start up on all sides a youthful army, brimming over with that freshness and vigour of which "dew" in the prophets (Hos. xiv. 5, Isa. xxvi. 19) is the symbol.' In the expression 'from the womb of the morning,' the morning is poetically thought of as the mother of the dew. The 'holy adornments,' if correct, allude probably to the warriors' gleaming weapons, called 'holy' because used in the service of Yahweh (comp. the common Hebrew expression, to 'consecrate' a war, or warriors, Joel iii. 9 ; Jer. xxii. 7 *al.*). But the plural (in the Hebrew) is strange : and very probably, with the

¹ Or, as Symm., Jer., with a very slight change ('הרר for 'הרר), upon the holy mountains.

smallest possible change in the Hebrew text (הררי for הררי), we should read, with Symmachus and Jerome, 'on the holy *mountains*' (viz. of Palestine).

An unexpected trait is next introduced:—

4 Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent ;
'Thou art a priest for ever
after the manner of Melchizedek.'

The ruler addressed is not to be only king : he is to be solemnly inaugurated as priest, after the manner—the word does not mean 'order,' as we speak of an 'order' of priesthood¹—after the manner, not of the Levitical or Aaronic priests, familiar at the time, but of *Melchizedek*, who, in the old primitive fashion, combined the offices of king and priest in his own person. Melchizedek, it seems, is referred to as a type of priest-king, consecrated by old tradition (Gen. xiv.), to which the ideal Israelite king, ruling at the same spot, must conform : Melchizedek united the two offices, and the ideal king must do the same. The name, suggesting 'King of righteousness,' might also be taken as prefiguring the character which the ideal king would bear. 'For ever,' we must remember, need not mean more than for the king's lifetime ; comp. 'a slave for ever' (Deut. xv. 17 ; Job xl. 28), or 'shall serve him for ever' (Exod. xxi. 6).

Vv. 5-7 continue the strain begun in vv. 2-3, and describe the victory which the poet pictures the king as gaining over his foes.

5 The Lord upon thy right hand
shattereth kings in the day of his anger.

¹ דְּבָרָה—a rare word, properly a *statement*, and so *plea, case* (Job v. 8),—acquires also meanings similar to those of דָּבָר, properly *word*, then *thing, reason, case*, etc. So, as עַל דָּבָר means often 'on account of' (cf. 'for the sake of,' where 'sake' is the Germ. *Sache, thing, matter, case*, etc.), עַל דְּבָרָה means 'on account of,' Eccles. iii. 18, viii. 2, and 'for the reason that,' vii. 14 ; and as דָּבָר means *case, reason, manner* (Deut. xv. 2, xix. 4 ; Jos. v. 4 ; 1 Kings ix. 15, xi. 27 ; Esth. i. 13), so דְּבָרָה here has the force of *manner*.

6 He judgeth among the nations ;
 he filleth (the places) with dead bodies ;
 he shattereth the heads in pieces over a wide country.

Jehovah, standing at the king's right hand in his chariot, to assist and support him, will shatter kings in the day of His anger—His ' anger ' against His foes (ii. 5, 12, xxi. 9), or heathen nations, often announced by the prophets : he will ' judge among the nations, fill (the places) with dead bodies, and shatter the heads in pieces over a wide country ' ; we see the enemy in flight, like the Canaanites before Barak, and the plains, far and near, are covered with the heads and corpses of the slain. The Psalm closes with a scene from the pursuit—

7 He drinketh of the wādy¹ by the way :
 therefore doth he lift up the head.

The king, exhausted in his course, like Jonathan, when he tasted the honey (1 Sam. xiv. 27, where ' his eyes were enlightened ' means that they brightened after faintness, i.e. he revived), is seen refreshing himself at a wādy flowing by ; revived and invigorated by the draught, with head erect, he will continue the pursuit till his triumph is complete.

The Psalm thus depicts a king, assured of the high favour and support of Yahweh, going forth to battle, surrounded by his warriors, and scattering his foes. The picture, it is plain, is an *ideal* one, based upon the experiences of the Israelite kings. We are reminded of David in his conflicts with Syrians or Edomites, Jehoshaphat victorious against the Moabites, or Uzziah subduing Philistines and Arabians. The date of the Psalm it is hardly possible to fix, except within relatively broad limits. But it will scarcely be an early one : it presupposes a time when the position and

¹ Heb. *nahal*, corresponding to the Arabic *wādy*, often met with in books of travel in Palestine. We have no suitable English equivalent : ' brook ' expresses too little ; ' torrent ' too much ; ' stream ' is too colourless ; ' river ' is incorrect.

character of the king had been long reflected on, and had given occasion to ideal delineations. The word rendered *manner* occurs besides only in Job (v. 8) and the very late book, Ecclesiastes (iii. 18, vii. 14, viii. 2). The position of the Psalm in the Psalter, also, does not suggest an early date. It is in the Fifth Book, and it is preceded and followed by Psalms certainly not earlier than the exile, and to all appearance later: cvii., cviii. (a composite Psalm), cix., cxi. ff. If pre-exilic, it will have been spoken of one of the later kings.

Several recent commentators¹ have thought one of the Maccabaeen princes to be referred to. Jonathan, brother of Judas, who was chosen 'prince and leader' of the patriotic party after Judas' death in 161 B.C. (1 Macc. ix. 30 f.), was made by Alexander Balas, son of Antiochus Epiphanes, the 'King's Friend,' appointed by him high priest, and authorised to wear a purple robe and a crown of gold, the insignia of royalty (1 Macc. x. 18-20); he assumed the high-priestly vestments at the Feast of Booths, B.C. 153 (*ib.* v. 21). And Simon, Jonathan's brother, after Jonathan's death (B.C. 143), was made by a decree of the people 'leader and high priest for ever, till there should arise a faithful prophet' (1 Macc. xiv. 41; cf. xiii. 42), capable of deciding doubtful points, like Elijah; he was also to be 'captain,' with supreme charge of all affairs of state (1 Macc. xiv. 42), and was authorised to wear purple and a buckle of gold (*ib.* v. 44). During his seven years' rule (B.C. 143-136) Simon gained many successes, restored the defences of his country, freed it from the yoke of the Syrian (1 Macc. xiii. 41, xiv. 26), and in particular, in 142, drove out of the Akra at Jerusalem the Syrian garrison which had occupied

¹ See Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter* (1891), pp. 22-29; and cf. Edghill, *Evidential Value of Prophecy*, p. 350 f.; Burney, *Interpreter*, Oct. 1909, p. 60; T. Witton Davies in the *Century Bible*, on Ps. cx., p. 223.

it for twenty-six years (1 Macc. xiii. 51; see i. 33 f.), and entered it 'with praise and palm-branches, and with harps, and cymbals, and viols, and with hymns and songs.' Simon's rule of peace and prosperity is depicted by the author of 1 Maccabees in Messianic colours (1 Macc. xiv. 4-15): the people 'tilled their land in peace, and the land gave her increase, and the trees of the plains their fruit: the old men sat in the streets, they talked all of them together of the good things, and the young men put on glorious and warlike apparel. . . . They sat each man under his vine and his fig-tree, and there was none to make them afraid. . . . And he strengthened all those of his people that were brought low: the law he searched out, and every lawless and wicked person he took away.' The poet of Psalm cx. might well have interpreted the decree of the people making Simon high-priest as embodying the purpose of Jehovah; and Simon's many military successes might well have suggested to him the picture of a victorious campaign.

As Balthgen says, the view is attractive: but it is not free from objection. In the Psalm one who is already a king is promised a priesthood; but the Maccabees were themselves (1 Macc. ii. 1) of priestly descent, of the family of Joarib (1 Chron. xxiv. 7), though not of the high-priestly line; Jonathan and Simon only became princes or kings on account of the prestige gained by their victories. They would thus have usurped the place of the legitimate high-priest. One wonders whether, under these circumstances, either Jonathan or Simon would have been addressed by a poet-prophet quite in the terms here used. It is also an objection to the same view that the Psalmist, to judge from the words, 'Tis Yahweh's whisper' (see above), speaks as a *prophet*, whereas in 1 Macc. the absence of a prophet is more than once deplored.¹ It is Balthgen's

¹ iv. 46 and ix. 27, as well as xiv. 41.

view that the Psalm is a late one, and apparently that it is a Maccabaeian one ; but he supposes it to relate not to an actual king, but to the Messiah as he was pictured by the later Jews on the basis of the representations of the earlier prophets. The use of ' my lord,' which seems to suggest an actual king rather than one only pictured as present by the imagination, is some objection to this view, but not perhaps a fatal one ; we may remember how vividly the author of Zechariah ix. 9 (probably c. 300 B.C.) pictures the Messianic king victoriously entering his capital. How the Jews thought of the Messiah in the late post-exilic age may be seen from an extract from Ps. xvii. of the so-called ' Psalms of Solomon,'¹ written probably shortly after Pompey's capture of Jerusalem in B.C. 70—

- 23 Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king,
the son of David, in the time which *thou* knowest, O God,
that he may reign over Israel, thy servant.
- 24 And gird him with strength,
that he may break in pieces unjust rulers.
- 25 Cleanse Jerusalem from the heathen that trample her down to
destroy her,
with wisdom, (and) with righteousness ;
- 26 To thrust out sinners from the inheritance,
to utterly destroy the haughtiness of sinners,
and as a potter's vessels with a sceptre of iron to break in pieces
all their substance ;
- 27 To destroy ungodly nations with the word of his mouth,
that at his rebuke nations may flee before him,
and to convict sinners for the word of their heart.
- 28 And he shall gather together a holy people, whom he shall
lead in righteousness,
and he shall judge the tribes of the people that hath been sancti-
fied by the Lord his God.
- 29 And he shall not suffer injustice to lodge in their midst ;
and none that knoweth wickedness shall dwell with them.

The poetry is obviously inferior to that of the Book of

¹ See Ryle and James, *Psalms of the Pharisees, commonly called the Psalms of Solomon*, 1891, p. 137 ff.

Psalms, and the entire description (which is continued to *v.* 51, and resumed in xviii. 6-10) is formed largely of phrases adapted from Psalm lxxii. and other passages of the Old Testament; ¹ but the representation of the Messiah as a conqueror dispersing his foes is common to both this 'Psalm of Solomon' and our Psalm ii. and cx. In the interpretation of Psalm cx., however, it does not make any real difference whether it portrays an actual king delineated with ideal features, or an ideal king delineated on the model of the actual king. But if the latter view be correct, and the Psalm refers primarily to the Messianic king, it cannot be an early one; for it presupposes the development of the figure of the Messiah effected on the basis of the representations of the prophets.

In either case, however, the Psalm resembles in principle the Psalms which we have already considered. It depicts a king, transcending the historical reality, invested with an ideal dignity, and ideal powers. The king depicted receives a twofold solemn promise, of an exalted and secure position beside Yahweh, ensuring him success against his foes, and of a perpetual priesthood. David and Solomon, and perhaps other kings, though not regular priests, exercised priestly functions in offering sacrifice and blessing the people (2 Sam. vi. 17; 1 Kings iii. 5, viii. 14); Melchizedek, the ancient king of Salem, was said to have been both king and priest: and the same privilege is here solemnly bestowed on the ideal king. Jeremiah (xxx. 21) also speaks of the future ideal ruler as enjoying the right of priestly access to God: 'and its [the people's] noble shall be from itself, and its ruler shall proceed from its midst [i.e. their ruler will be a native prince, not a foreigner]; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me [i.e. he will have the right of access to the altar, and enjoy

¹ See for particulars Ryle and James pp. lii.-lviii.

priestly privileges; comp. the same two words in Num. xvi. 5; Lev. xxi. 21, 23; Ezek. xlv. 13], saith Yahweh.'

Our Lord, however, speaks of the Psalm as written by David (Matt. xxii. 43=Mark xii. 36=Luke xx. 42). We must, however, remember that our Lord was not pronouncing a judgement on a point of literary criticism, but arguing against the Pharisees. The question of the authorship of the Psalm was not one with which He was dealing. Nor can we expect our Lord to pronounce judgement upon matters which lay outside the scope of His ministry, and opened questions which His hearers would not comprehend, or be ready to consider. Our Lord takes His opponents upon their own ground, and does not complicate the question by raising an issue irrelevant to His main contention. The real issue was not, Who wrote the Psalm? but, What does the Psalm say? The figure depicted by the Psalmist is invested by him with such august attributes that the Jews recognised in it the Messiah: must they not, therefore, look for a Messiah who was more than a mere human descendant of David, especially at a time when David's family was stripped of its dignity and reduced to insignificance? and ought they, therefore, to stumble at His claims? ¹

In the Israelite monarchy was foreshadowed the sovereignty to be exercised in the future by David's son. Elevated, extended, and spiritualised, the aims and objects of the monarchy of David are the aims and objects of the Kingdom of Christ. Like other prophecies, the prophecy of this Psalm starts from the present and looks out into the future. We see an earthly monarch, engaging in a struggle of flesh and blood, and fighting bloody battles with his enemies: 'He filleth (the places) with dead bodies; he shattereth the heads in pieces over a wide country.'

¹ See further on this subject Kirkpatrick's note in the *Cambridge Bible*, p. 662 f.; Edghill, *Evidential Value of Prophecy*, pp. 421 ff., 498 f.

Here is the starting-point in the Psalmist's own present. We see again traits which pass beyond the literal reality, and lend themselves to an ideal picture: 'Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool'; 'Thou art a priest for ever after the manner of Melchizedek.' It is in virtue of such traits as these that the Psalm is Messianic, prefiguring one in whom they are truly realised. The language of *v. 1a* became in early Christian thought the natural expression for the exaltation of our Lord after His Ascension; it is so applied on several occasions by the Apostles,¹ it was incorporated at an early date in the Christian Creed, where it is familiar to us still. Not, indeed, that in reciting the words, 'And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty,' we mean to affirm that either the right hand or the left can be predicated of a spiritual Being; but we adopt the language originally applied to the ideal Israelite king as an apt *symbolical* expression for the unique dignity reserved for his Divine Son.² And in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is shown how the promise of a priesthood, superior to that of Aaron, solemnly inaugurated, and unchangeably constituted, pointed to the abrogation of the Levitical priesthood, and received its fulfilment in the person and office of Christ.

S. R. DRIVER.

¹ Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; Heb. i. 3, viii. 1, x. 12, xii. 2; 1 Pet. iii. 22; Rev. iii. 21. Cf. also the use of the phraseology of Ps. cx. 1b ('Until I make,' etc.), in 1 Cor. xv. 25, Heb. x. 13; and the quotations of the entire verse in Acts ii. 34, 35, Heb. i. 13.

² Cf. Edghill, p. 556 f.