

How the poet is surprised by this wish and this anticipation is shown also by the sudden transition thereto,—the more tranquil description which has been begun ver. 16, being broken off. The *tongue* in the first instance, ver. 10, the poet would see destroyed or split, namely the slanderous tongues of those who take evil counsel together; which, as is explained, ver. 11 *a*, is the more dangerous, because now to these internal sufferings of dissension and oppression the similar broils of the restless suburbans are added.

Were they good men, at least this external danger would warn them, but these are men who will take warning from nothing. The רגש, ver. 15, in the signification of “tumult,” would necessarily denote the mass of human beings thronging to the Temple; but the word manifestly corresponds here and lxiv. 3, to סוד; and we are to assume that the root signifies not merely *movement*, but also the running together and *assembling* (hence *mark*, feel), comp. *ragash*, Syr., and the LXX, Sym. on this passage. The reading ישי according to the Q'rî is certainly more suitable; *delusion* came over them, for the notion of coming lies in על, and the two yield the simple notion *surprise them*. The nearest construction of verbs of deceiving with ישי is in such cases designedly neglected. On ישי as voluntative, comp. above, on cxli. 5, 6. The expression ישימות must signify *desolations upon them!* which in this connexion where also after the conclusion of the following strophé, ver. 24, death must be spoken of, would be little suitable.—The words, ver. 11 *a*, are probably not to be understood of an actual siege, as in lix. 7, 15; such a circumstance would not be so cursorily mentioned; but of similar broils among the suburbans dwelling around the city (on its walls), whose dwelling place as outside the city is also distinguished in ver. 16, by hamlet, מִגֹּר, and ver. 12 as רחוב, *broad way* (Neh. viii. 16) from the interior of the city.\*

\* As מִגֹּרָה, Hab. ii. 19, or as more original, מִמִּגֹּרָה, Joel i. 17 denotes also the *store-house* (from מִגַּר = *gamar*, Arab., = גָּמַל, shut together, collect),



3. After the poet's soul has thus taken an outward flight, the beginning of the third strophé shows how intensely and zealously he would on the other hand turn to Jahvé, seeking strength in Him alone. He draws hope specially from two reasons: (1) because the enemy attacks him with superior power, proud in his numbers, whilst God pities the helpless, ver. 19 מִקֶּרֶב לִי (from a battle to me, *i.e.*, from a battle to which I am forced, as the following member explains); (2) because God never endures faithlessness so specially shameful as is that which the poet has experienced, so that he cannot avoid once more drawing the dreadful picture of it, almost forgetting the connexion of the song, vv. 20-22. But from this cause he tears himself from the sad picture with a pithy saying, and the more boldly resumes his hope,—although at last scarcely able to drive away the picture of the contrast, nevertheless trustful, vv. 23-24. The וַיִּשְׁמַע-פָּדָה, vv. 18, 19, is,—because of the great security with which the poet here suddenly contemplates beforehand the deliverance—expressed instead of וַיִּשְׁמַע-יִפְּדָה (§ 343 a): but on this very account these words are only as intermediate sentences, so that the regular strain recurs, ver. 20, in close connexion with ver. 18a. Expression and turn of thought are very similar in our poet, lxiv. 8-11. The words, *they were against me with many* (attacked me, solitary, with many), are of similar sound to B. Jer. iv. 3.—Ver. 20. יוֹשֵׁב with the LXX, read instead of וַיִּשֵׁב, which admits of no reference here, comp. above on vii. 10. הַלִּיפּוֹת, prop. *vicissitudines*, changes on both sides, reciprocities, can in this connexion be nothing else than reciprocal fidelity, sworn fidelity, or that of friendship, which

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it may also be supposed that it is intended here to signify the same as that which is presently termed the *inward* part, namely the spirit, as the council chamber of thoughts. The word denotes indeed only the great corn-granaries, not the small, closely-shut chests; and the language here rather returns at the close of the strophé to its beginning, vv. 10-12. Yet it thus suits the nearest sense so well that I prefer it in a poet who has used a similar figure, lvi. 19. It must, too, be always considered that the poet might then allude to the expression of a song much used at that time.



rests upon reciprocal obligation and performance, comp. *jaloſon*, Arab.; hence immediately, ver. 21, the profanation of the covenant is mentioned.—The  $\text{בָּרָךְ}$ , ver. 23, without doubt a substantive like  $\text{בָּרָךְ}$ , vv. 19, 22 (§ 153 a), must, it appears, according to the whole figure, denote “burden,” prop., that given, given to bear; since meanwhile it may be assumed that  $\text{בָּרָךְ} = \text{בָּרָךְ}$ , cxix. 131, the signification “longing” or “care” would still more readily follow, LXX *μέριμναν*, similarly *Targ.*, comp. xxii. 9; xxxvii. 5.

This great song is among those here collocated, certainly in many points of view of peculiar character both in contents and in structure and expression; and moreover stands so close to the others that we can assign it to no other poet. Hence we may most correctly suppose it to be the earliest of those preserved to us, and that it fell in a period which was for the poet one somewhat different from that in which his next songs fall.

Ps. v. is with Ps. xxvi. the specimen of a Temple-song, such as at that time an individual possibly composed for himself; and shows, like Ps. xxvi., that even on the occasion of the visit to the Temple strong internal schisms were developed, whilst the few faithful stood over against the many vain ones who abstained from visiting the Temple, partly from indifference (for there was little external compulsion prevailing) and partly from an evil conscience. The poet, on the other hand, a diligent visitor of the Temple, begs in this morning-prayer (ver. 4), Divine strength on his difficult life-path, especially that he may not in the least exhibit a failing or a fall before those who lie in wait for him with evil intentions, and may give them no opportunity to rejoice in the overthrow of a fearer of Jahvé. To this main occasion of the prayer he does not come however until ver. 9; it is prepared and introduced by a general and urgent cry for a hearing, vv. 2-3, and more particularly by the observation,—how zealously and willingly the petitioner appears in the Temple under Divine grace,



relying upon Divine salvation and righteousness, whilst he who shuns the light,—the wicked man for ever cast away from God's presence,—must flee the spot whose sanctity destroys him, vv. 4-7. First, in this blessed certainty the poet now again prays,—since he is threatened round about by the cunning craft and lying-in-wait of the impious men who seek to take him with treacherous words,—for strength on his own behalf, and that of all faithful men, in the certain hope that God will ever deliver innocence, vv. 8-13. The distress of the faithful at that time, and the shameless spirit of persecution of the vain audacious adversaries, must already have been very great. In pressing fear of this he who here prays in the Temple cannot but beseech, at the beginning of the last strophé, ver. 11, with quite special insistence, the Divine protection against it, and its righteous Divine punishment, whilst he can only repose in the hope of the just redress of all present human confusions. Thus the inward unrest breaking forth with increasing violence is in turn lighted up by the sun of eternal hope; and his song is shaped, after the brief introduction, into three equal strophés, each of eight verse-members.

## 1.

- 2      Hear my words, Jahvé,  
           give heed to my meditation!  
 Bend to my loud complaint, my king and my God!  
           for to Thee I pray.

## 2.

Jahvé! early Thou hearest my voice,  
       early I wait on Thee and look out;  
 for not a God who loves wickedness art Thou,  
       the wicked man is not Thy guest;  
 fools shall never stand before Thine eyes,  
       Thou hatest all evil-doers,  
 destroyest the speakers of lies;  
       the friend of blood and deceit Jahvé abhors.



But I—through Thy great mercy enter Thy house,  
 doing homage at the holy Temple in Thy fear.  
 Jahvé! O lead me in Thy righteousness—because of  
 them that lie in wait for me,  
 O make smooth before me Thy way!  
 for there is nothing sincere in their mouth,  
 since their heart is corruption;  
 an open grave is their throat,  
 for they keep a smooth tongue.

## 4.

Let them repay, O God, fall from their places,  
 overthrow them in the multitude of their sins,  
 because they rose up against Thee;  
 that all who trust in Thee may rejoice,  
 for ever shout for joy, and Thou protectest them,  
 and the friends of Thy name are mirthful in Thee,  
 because Thou, O Jahvé, blessest the righteous man,  
 enduest him, as with the shield, with Thy favour.

הִתְיַצֵּב, ver 2, as xxxix. 4.—Ver. 4, הִתְיַצֵּב, equip, prepare, without further object, is to present oneself in readiness, appear, like *apparere*, comp. with *parare*; and *spy* what Thou commandest, how I in following Thee may be saved (lix. 10).—Vv. 5-7 explains why the poet appears so willingly and hopefully in the Temple; because he knows that the God, whose nearness is here felt, loves not unrighteousness, affords no harbour and refuge with Himself for the wicked. (On בור, see § 282 a). Rather does he destroy for ever the impious who might dare to despise Him.—If, on the other hand, the poet, with a good conscience, appears with serenity and joy in the sanctuary, and this because he can there ever refresh and recreate himself in the contemplation of the Supreme, experiencing as a Divine gift of grace that he can use the words of ver. 8 in all innocence with new fervour before God: he is now truly able to express his deepest prayer for Divine



strengthening with true faith, ver. 9 (with words quite similar to those in xxvii. 11). But here he feels himself irresistibly impelled further to explain, ver. 10, the interjected words, "because of those who lie in wait for me:" so little confidence is to be placed in their smooth words and false hearts, that a confiding spirit may readily fall into their dangerous snares as into open pits or graves—the like of which are frequently hewn out in rocks.—And the picture thus more nearly presented of these sins carries away the poet finally to such a degree that he prays the more energetically that they may be brought to naught, ver. 11, in order that all faithful ones, shielded by Jahvé, may rejoice in Him and in the manifested right, ver. 12. We must not overlook here as frequently elsewhere, the very usual passive after  $\text{יָ}$ , § 347 *a*. Tranquillity comes with eternal truth, ver. 13; in such unsafe times the attire of Divine grace which covers the righteous is regarded above all as one of protection, and so compared with the shield. But this hope too is placed in dependence on ver. 12, in accordance with a peculiarity of our poet, which is plainly exhibited in several of his songs, at their conclusion, liv. 8, 9; lvi. 13, 14; lxiii. 12.—Further, that the  $\text{חֶסֶד יְיָ}$ , ver. 8, can only signify the Divine grace, and does not correspond to the  $\text{יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$  *b*, is also confirmed by the favourite usage of our poet, comp. xxxvi. 6, 8, 11; lii. 3; lvii. 4, 11; lxi. 8. In this many poets follow him, but it is quite otherwise in the preceding, comp. especially cxli. 5.

To this Ps. lxiv. appears to be next related, where we see the poet still surrounded by similar circumstances. But this short song, which begins like a customary song of supplication, vv. 2-5, falls by a sudden turn into the prophetic vein, depicting the certain overthrow of the wicked and the final victory of the righteous, vv. 6-11. But the intermediate member, from the first to the second member, makes the contemplation that of the manner in which the wicked act, how







10 so do all men fear,  
     proclaim God's deed  
     and perceive His work.

Rejoicing in Jahvé, the righteous man will trust Him ;  
     all the upright in heart will boast.

In open war, according to ver. 5, the enemies do not live, but by slanders they would craftily overthrow the poet at a convenient time ; on יִרְהוּ § 350 *b.*—Vv. 6, 7. Striking description of the extremely cunning, cautious manner with which the wicked prepare their misdeed ; they first closely take counsel for the deed, thinking that no one (not even God) will observe them (לִמּוֹ, half indirectly spoken, § 338 *a*, comp. lix. 8), and thus fix in secret a firm resolve. Yet again they investigate the plan most closely before its execution, and now they have made the most thorough examination and found all safe. Now comes the solemn sacred moment of execution, for which all wicked men wait, strained in silent expectation and anxiety to the highest degree, as for the hour which shall at last reward so much foresight and trouble (just as the bird-catchers are silent in secret expectation when they have all ready—Wilkinson's *Manners of the Ancient Egyptians*, Vol. III., pp. 45 sq.) : but during the crisis there comes at the right time Divine punishment, striking the keener and more destructive a blow, because it comes unexpectedly in the moment when the wicked might believe they had now gained everything. The arrow which they secretly desire to cast against others, vv. 4, 5, strikes themselves. Because prophetic fancy foresees this issue as if accomplished, soon with תִּמְנִי, ver. 7, the *perf.* is introduced, and is continued until ver. 10 ; in ver. 11 the usual style returns. הִקְפֵּשׁ מִהִקְפֵּשׁ inquired inquiry, i.e., completed, therefore very close (as in Ex. xii. 9 ; Isa. xxviii. 16 ; Prov. xxx. 24 ; comp. § 313 *c*) as accusative of definition (comp. Jer. xxvii. 8) dependent on תִּמְנִי, which is not the first person plural, but as in Lam. iii. 22, arose from תִּמּוֹ ; at



least this most readily suits the connexion, comp. § 83 b. Otherwise we must recognize here an interjected speech of the people "we are ready" .... פְּתִיאִם, ver. 8, is, against the accents, to be taken with the second member. *Their tongue comes over them*, an additional proposition to the main verb, *he* or more indefinitely *they* (§ 319 a, comp. lxiii. 11) *are cast down so that* the sin of their own tongue (lying), wherewith they would destroy others, according to 4, 5,—comes upon them; comp. in words and sense similar and yet very dissimilar matter, cxl. 10, 11.

If the language in the previous songs often suddenly turned aside from the whole herd of the wicked to a single individual, as if the poet had such a ringleader of the others peculiarly in his eye, lv. 14, 21, 22, v. 9, lxiv. 9.—Ps. lii. contains nothing further than the bold, seriously threatening outburst of poetic indignation at the perversity of this individual who rules by slander and deceit, this proud man who has inherited riches for evil,—possibly a high placed potentate or servant of the state; for the purely prophetic commentary on this poetic lamentation is Isa. xxii. 16 sqq.; that the tyrant lived in Jerusalem is clear from the contrast, vv. 10, 11. The excited spirit of the poet dwells only on the contemplation and the castigation of this perversity; the tyrant speaks and acts as if the delivering grace of God had been lost in the world; and therefore the poet must now the more energetically appeal to Him that it may remain firm, so that the whole sense of the song already properly compresses itself into the first brief utterance of ver. 3. But then he more calmly explains the tyrant's perversities, and how in requital of them God on His side will severely chastise the fool for the destruction and warning of all, with which the language again gradually rises to a higher pitch, vv. 4-9 (4-6; 7-9); and finally adds, because he was certainly himself one of the many sacrifices of the folly of this tyrant, a few words of personal consolation and encouragement, vv. 10, 11,



The three strophés of this song also conform to the measure of eight verse-members; the last only is here more shortly broken off.

## 1.

- 3      Why boastest thou of evil, thou tyrant ?  
          the grace of God is abiding !—  
      Thy tongue meditates destruction ;  
          like to a wetted knife, thou intriguer !  
 5      lovest evil more than good,  
          lying more than to speak rightly,  
      lovest all pernicious words,  
          Thou deceitful tongue !

## 2.

- So may God for ever root thee out,  
      seize thee and carry thee away from the tent ;  
      root thee out of the living land ;  
      that beholding this, righteous men may be afraid,  
      but laugh at him :  
 “ Behold the man who makes not God his protection,  
      and trusted in the fulness of his riches,  
      was proud in his blind greed !”

## 3.

- 10     But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God,  
          I trust in God's grace, ever, aye !  
      will praise Thee for ever, that Thou didst work,  
          and wait on Thy name, because it is dear,  
          before the face of Thy saints !

That the ancient word גִּבּוֹר, *hero*, ver. 2, sank down just as גִּבּוֹר, *man*, from its early high and noble signification,—gradually sank in these later times through the guilt of potentates, to the half scornful, half evil signification, in which also among us our ancient *hero* is sometimes used,—I have already observed on Prov. xxx. 1 ; Isa. xxii. 17.—The figure of the



sword, of the sharp knife, ver. 4, and similar ones in poets of this time frequently describe the sharp hurtful speech of slanderers, cxi. 4, lxiv. 4, lvii. 5, lviii. 5, lix. 8; on ver. 6 *b* comp. cxx. 3. כִּנְיָ, ver. 7, frequently is thus used for what is reciprocal, for what is done or is to be done in compensation on *the other hand*, Am. iv. 6; Job vii. 11. Now apparently the tyrant lives in abiding prosperity, deeply rooted and blooming like the soundest tree (Job v. 3); but God will wrench him forth with higher power, though he were like the firmest tree, so that he can remain nowhere in a tent, nowhere among the living upon earth, comp. Isa. xxii. 17 sqq. But *the* tent which the poet has here is his eye according to old poetic phraseology (xxvii. 5, 6) is the Temple itself.—חָתַתָּהּ, or more strongly expressed, חָתַתָּהּ, is seize, lay violent hands upon. The nearer does the comparison of the faithful man with the ever-green olive tree lie, ver. 10. Thus does he look green and shines, but not so greatly for and by himself, as in the congregation and the Temple, prospering by God's blessing, and ever waiting upon Him, xcii. 13, 14. But unquestionably such olive trees and others stood near the old Temple, and were there most carefully tended.—The phrase *workest*, ver. 11, actively, that is for man's good, becomes gradually more frequent in this period in individual poets in this sharp, short acceptance, comp. xxii. 32; xxxvii. 5. But the second member of ver. 11 recurs almost identically, liv. 8, comp. also lxiii. 4, lxix. 17, is then further developed, Jer. xxxiii. 11, and thence frequently in the latest songs. Comp. below on cxviii. 1; cvi. 1; cvii. 1, and finally again, somewhat transformed, cxlvii. 1.

But that the same poet who with such crushing force, like a prophet, rises in opposition to others, can in other moments collect himself in the most tranquil contemplation and most blessed experience, is shown by Ps. xxxvi.—a softer and more inward song, with grand eternal thoughts. By his outburst the poet manifestly seeks as an individual to console himself



under the prevailing corruption and danger, becoming the more intensely conscious of all the consolatory eternal truths. The progress of the song is hence here reversed. First the calm contemplation and description—yet concealing no truth—of completed wickedness, which might readily excite horror in the mind of the godly, vv. 2-5. Yet against their power and quest of pleasure there is the protection of Jahvé's infinite grace, unassailable and indestructible by the wicked. To this the poet, like all the faithful, flees, vv. 6-12; finally, the mind of the poet having become greatly elevated and cheered by this outburst, the brief and certain foresight of the fall of the ungodly, ver. 13.—According to ver. 9, the Temple was still standing, and the poet, according to ver. 12, did not yet live in exile, but he fears this as something readily possible, whilst he at present still recreates himself at the Temple, vv. 8, 9.

We have here again in our poet quite the same measure of the three strophés; and the last, here too as in the preceding song, tends to a more abrupt form; but a verse, as it were superfluous, is thrown from the powerful ebullition to which the language, at first tranquil, imperceptibly rises, and forms a kind of echoing outcry at the end, ver. 13.

## 1.

- 2     The saying of sin is in the deep heart of the wicked,  
       fear of God is never before his eyes :  
       but it flatters him in his eyes  
       to find his misdeed, to hate ;  
       his mouth's words are mischief and deceit,  
       he has ceased to have understanding, virtue ;  
 5     only mischief does he meditate upon his bed,  
       sets himself in ways which are not good, not con-  
               temning wickedness !

## 2.

Jahvé ! to the heaven reaches Thy grace,  
       to the bright clouds Thy truth !



Thy righteousness is as the mountains of God,  
Thy judgments like the great sea :  
men and beasts Thou helpest, Jahvé !  
Yet how precious is Thy grace, O God !  
and sons of men—they flee to the shadow of Thy  
wings,  
refresh themselves at the fulness of Thy house,  
and Thou waterest them with the stream of Thy  
delights.

## 3.

For with Thee is the spring of life ;  
in Thy light we see light !  
Preserve Thy grace for them that know Thee,  
Thy righteousness for the upright in heart ;  
let not the foot of pride touch me,  
nor the hand of wicked men persecute me !  
There are fallen evil-doers,  
cast down, unable to rise !

The description, vv. 2-5, pierces very deeply into the nature of finished villany. In virtue of the law of sequence in the spiritual life, the feeling and impulse which ever anew leads the faithful man to the Divine, becoming for him ever a fresh oracle and unceasing counsellor to goodness, becomes perverted for the impious man into the opposite, into an impulse and oracle of sin. It is ever suggesting to him evil thoughts, pictures, plans, words. (Unquestionably לְבֹי is instead of לִבִּי the reading). No fear of God is before him, but *it seems* (לְעֵינָי opposite to בְּעֵינָי, ver. 2, comp. § 217 f.) *flattering*, he thinks it fine, it gives him self-complacency and conceit, *to find*, to invent and think out his own misdeed, so that he can be consequential in his sins,—whenever he deliberates and finds sin to carry out as the favourite material for him,—*to hate* instead of to love, to entertain universal hatred as the first and greatest sin,—an explanation of the preceding infinitive. The



two deeds, ver. 3 *b*, thus form a climax, as in ver. 4. But the further explanation comes in vv. 4, 5—as he can only think, speak, commit sin, because *he does not despise* evil in his heart, because his most secret feeling finds joy in evil, and no longer feels any horror of it. But again the second strophé is very fine and full of feeling, ever rising in strength, vv. 6-12. Infinite as the heaven, as unassailable and indestructible by men, is the Divine grace,—exalted, infinite, inexhaustible as the highest (God's) mountains and the ocean, His righteousness and His judgments, and special punishments, lxviii. 16, Am. vii. 4. That which passages like lii. 10, lxxxiv. 2 sqq., express of the delight of the enjoyment of God at the sanctuary, rises here, vv. 8, 9, to the purest illustration. Therefore in His presence, in fellowship with Him, is genuine, imperishable strengthening and refreshment, true life, pure light, as is very beautifully expressed in vv. 8-10.—But the poet still feels that the pure feeling of this pleasure, if it is to be quite safe and clear, must be yet more deeply founded; so that he expresses at the beginning of the third strophé, ver. 10, the truth concerning all human relations to God,—even without regard to a particular holy spot,—in the most general and eternal way. And thereby he first receives the right disposition to pray for that which is now his nearest want, vv. 11, 12. It is clear from the word *house*, ver. 9, *i.e.*, Temple, that this was not yet at that time destroyed. The sacred modes of speech remain, it is true, frequently in their inner sense, and the congregation never entirely ceased; but from ver. 12 it follows anew that the poet still lived in Kanáan. That the *foot*, ver. 12, of the conqueror or tyrant treading upon the vanquished may not pursue the poet, violently separate him from the community: thus does he most intensely pray. And as if he felt in the same moment that he was heard, he cannot refrain, after a short pause in the language, from further suddenly appending the joyous picture of this answer to prayer, ver. 13, which presses with overwhelming force upon his spirit. The *perf.*, ver. 13, as in our



poet above, lxiv. 7-10, and in all similar passages of prophetic vision, Ps. lxxxii. 14.

In Ps. liv. we further see the poet for the first time threatened by strangers, and condensing his feelings in a short song. After he has prayed for help from the strange persecutors, vv. 3-5, he becomes, after short reflection, again more collected and calm, full of secure hope in Jahvé; yea, he already promises for the deliverance joyously contemplated in his spirit, thanksgiving, vv. 6-9 (6-7, 8-9). The expressions are on the whole too general to enable us to ascertain the particular relations of the poet. But the danger of being violently carried away among strangers was already expressed clearly by the poet at the end of the two preceding songs.

There are here only two of the strophés of the proportion usual with our poet; and the first is too short by one member, probably because one has fallen away after ver. 4.

## 1.

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| O God, by Thy name, save me        | 3 |
| by Thy power directing me ;        |   |
| O God, hear my prayer,             |   |
| observe the words of my mouth ;    |   |
| for strangers stand against me,    | 5 |
| tyrants seek my soul,              |   |
| not having God before their eyes ! | * |

## 2.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Lo, God is my helper,                                 |  |
| the Lord is a preserver of my life ;                  |  |
| He will recompense evil to those that lie in wait for |  |
| me ;  |  |
| through Thy faithfulness destroy them !               |  |
| With free impulse will I sacrifice to Thee,           |  |
| will praise Thy name, Jahvé, how dear it is,          |  |
| how it freed me from all trouble,                     |  |
| mine eye was refreshed at the sight of my foes !      |  |



From ver. 5 peculiarly it is plain that the foes are rude strangers who rage the more fearfully against a weak Israelite the less they know and fear the God of Israel. The poet, in his review of the ancient great deliverance of Jahvé, wishes, on the other hand, merely that Jahvé's name, or His strength—extolled, as being revealed from ancient times onwards,—and what is connected therewith, His promised faithfulness, may now work for deliverance, and he may be able to praise it. The *perf.*, ver. 9, is plainly, as always in such cases, like the *fut. exact.* Very similarly lvi. 13, 14 (lxi. 6); *it*, Thy name and glory, Thy majesty.

In Ps. lxi. the poet prays,—from a far distant land, in deep exhaustion and danger—for strength and help, vv. 2, 3; but he immediately collects himself again in hearty confidence in the might of *that* God,—already experienced at an earlier time,—in whose Temple he would ever sojourn, that Temple where he hopes once more to be able to render the thanksgiving for deliverance here celebrated, vv. 4-6. In conclusion, good wishes for the king, to whom probably a great part of the true Israel is attached, vv. 7-9.—The song has manifestly again the fundamental form of most songs of this poet; in the middle of the three strophés, however, there is wanting after ver. 5, as is plainly recognizable, a whole line. The first remains a mere preface.

Historically, the wish on behalf of the king is noteworthy. It is repeated in the following song, in like manner at the end, lxiii. 12, but there more briefly: and in this we have a sign of the later date of that song. Who this king of Israel is, to whom the poet, in the midst of a foreign land, adheres, with such glowing reverence, is indeed difficult to say: but King Josiah is here very readily suggested.

## 1.

O hear, O God, my entreaty,  
observe my prayer!



from the end of the earth I cry unto Thee,  
 in my heart's weakness :  
 to a rock, for me too high, Thou wilt lead me !

## 2.

Thou wert indeed a refuge for me,  
 a mighty tower from foes ;  
 would that I might take shelter in Thy tent for ever,  
 flee to the protection of Thy wings ! \*  
 [*might praise Thee in the Temple*]  
 because Thou, O God, didst hear my vows,  
 didst give me the heritage of the fearers of Thy  
 name !

## 3.

Thou will add to the king's days new ones,  
 make his years like everlasting times ;  
 let him reign for ever before God,  
 appoint mercy and truth to protect him !  
 So will I make music to Thy name for ever,  
 that daily I may pay my vow !

Ver. 3. The difficulty which he cannot overcome presents itself to him like a rock too high for him, which must nevertheless be surmounted.—Between vv. 5 and 6 a verse appears to have fallen out, possibly of this sense : and there in the Temple would that I might sing praise to Thee and thank Thee *because Thou*, listening to my vow, didst give me (liv. 8, 9) the inheritance of those fearing Thy name, *i.e.*, the dwelling in the holy land, which indeed is the privilege, the portion of the faithful, and which is intended under another name in cxxv. 3.—Ver. 8 *Before God*, in the upper world, lvi. 14, especially in the neighbourhood of the sanctuary ; so that God ever looks graciously upon him, and suffers him to live. So, ver. 9, in this hope, the poet will continually praise God as the deliverer, in order, as he wishes, that he may pay



the vows he has often made, by untiring praise after his deliverance. Comp. lxiii. 3, 5.

Ps. lxiii. A fresh and more woful, in part a sharper outburst of this longing in new life-dangers. The song is formed (I., p. 152) evidently like an elegy, with strophés of decreasing length; but as the poet would bring to mind less complaints than Divine hope, and would strengthen himself in it,—pure longing rises, intense and strong, but measured and gentle, seeking *the* God whose glory the poet had ever beheld in the Temple, in sublimity not to be forgotten, the memory of whom had ever given him the most blessed moments, vv. 2-7. Then, since his heart thus again most boldly revels in Divine thoughts and pictures, he expresses more freely and serenely his eternal hope, unable to suppress a glance at his wicked persecutors, who are deserving of the greatest punishment, vv. 8-11. And yet his song becomes at last more gentle, at least in a further word of love and of glowing wish on the king's behalf, whom the same ungodly men strive to slander or to destroy, ver. 12.

## 1.

2 O God ! my God art Thou, I seek Thee :

for Thee my soul thirsts,

for Thee my body longs

in the land dry and parched, without water.

So have I beheld Thee in the sanctuary,

viewing Thy might and glory ;

for " better is Thy favour than life "

was the praise of my lips to Thee.

5 So I bless Thee as long as I live,

lift in Thy name my hands ;

like as on fat and fulness my soul is refreshed,

and my mouth with joyous lips sings praise,

when I remember Thee on my couch,

in night-watches think of Thee !



## 2.

Thou wert verily a help to me,  
and in the shadow of Thy wings I rejoice;  
my soul clave to Thee:

Thy right hand holds me fast.—

But they—for destruction seek my soul: 10

let them go into the depths of the earth!

let them be given over to the hands of the sword,

be they the portion of jackals!—

## 3.

But let the king rejoice in God!

let every one who swears by him boast

that the mouth of the liars is stopped!

The first and longest strophé is not merely very gentle and beautiful, but also closely knit together. The fundamental thought that Jahvé is his God, of whom the poet will rightly assure himself, seeking Him and longing after Him, ver. 2, is confirmed in two ways. *Thus*, that is, as his God, the poet has earlier beheld him in the splendour of the Temple, and in holy devotion has recognized and praised His majesty and grace, vv. 3, 4; and even *thus*, as his God, he blesses Him ever and feels in lonely serious recollection of Him the highest joy, vv. 5-7, לֵךְ, as lxi. 9, only here somewhat differently applied. The לֵךְ, ver. 3, is thus explanatory, *to see*, *i.e.*, so that I saw, seeing, as also elsewhere at times this לֵךְ with the *inf.* introduces an explanatory subordinate action; and ver. 4 must briefly interject the words of the high joy at that time experienced, יִשְׂבַּחֲהוּנָה, as *imperf. praet.* The mention of the dry land, ver. 2, belongs merely to the whole image, by which the poet in distress and forsakenness is presented as one thirsting in the desert: far more in detail the danger is quite otherwise described, vv. 10 sqq.—In God therefore the poet feels himself as earlier, so now always completely secure, as in vv. 8, 9 finely appears from his clear



consciousness. But his bloodthirsty foes are of other mind than God; and the poet can only leave them to the Divine vengeance and punishment, in the recollection of how often before tyrants in like manner, overtaken by sudden punishment, came to a shameful end, vv. 10, 11. The powerful picture of the *deepest earth*, ver. 10 b, is substantially the same as that expressed by our poet, lv. 16, in a yet more ebullient style; yet there follow immediately, ver. 12, only pictures of the battle-field. *The portion of jackals*, becoming the prey of jackals, like fallen warriors on the battle-field. But *the king*, ver. 12, against whom these rude foes have evil will, as against the poet and all Israel, will abide; and every one who is faithful to this king, and therefore swears by him (Gen. xlii. 15, 16) who now must patiently listen to calumny against his beloved person, may boast that the liars must at length be silent! In what these lying speeches about the king consisted, it is now difficult for us to say. Probably the light-minded said the king would not long be able to hold out against his severe Assyrian, Chaldee, or Egyptian foes, and desired that he might not; and in the foreign land where the poet now was, such language might the more freely be heard.

As the two preceding songs are closely connected together, and probably fall in the time of the departure into exile,—so again, Pss. lvi. and lvii., where we see the poet in the midst of the heathen, as is specially clear from lvi. 8 (where “peoples” are for that reason mentioned) lvii. 6, 12 (where a judgment upon the whole earth is therefore desired), and lvii. 5, 10; comp. lix. 8. He lived in the midst of exile among still greater dangers,—which his very loyalty to Jahvé or his confidence, prophetically certain and loudly expressed, of deliverance through Jahvé increased—among suspicious and bloodthirsty foes, who misunderstand and disturb the agency of the prophet. For already in struggle with the heathen world the prophetic vein has been in full life within him, and now throbs



in stronger pulses. The greater the irritation and menace the more nobly and powerfully does Divine confidence in the struggle proceed from his bosom. Yea, the hidden deep glow of the pure Messianic hope breaks forth in the outburst of his words, often with absolute unrestraint, in a blazing fire (lvi. 9 ; lvii. 6, 12 ; comp. lviii. 10-12). These two songs are among the finest in the whole Psalter.

In Ps. lvi. the poet, long threatened by severe dangers, strains after consolation and hope in the memory of his higher blessings and endeavours ; and it costs him a struggle, not too difficult, to obtain consolation and invigoration in the prophetic calling. Immediately, in the first short strophé, this comes with the cry of supplication, vv. 2-5, and although in the further outburst of his feelings the consideration of the dangers recurs, here first eliciting indignation at such horrors from his distressed soul, vv. 6-9, yet much more nobly does comfort return, soothing his excitement, so that at last, in the increasing presentiment of certain deliverance, he renders inspired thanksgiving, vv. 10-14.—Thus there are three similar strophés, so that the twofold representation, compressed in the first, is unfolded and further arranged in the two following. That is the simple art of this song : but the short strophés become more ebullient ; and whilst the two first stream forth in four verses with nine members, the last is expanded to five verses, with—in some instances—very agitated members, to the number of eleven.

## 1.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Be gracious to me, O God ! for men snatch at me, | 2 |
| continually warriors oppress me ;                |   |
| my lyers-in-wait snort continually,              |   |
| for many proudly war against me.—                |   |
| On the day that I feared,                        |   |
| I flee, trusting to Thee,                        |   |
| through God I praise His word,                   | 5 |
| in God I trust without fear ;                    |   |
| what shall mortals do to me ?                    |   |



## 2.

Continually they wrest my words,  
 ill-disposed to me is all that they think :  
 they stir, lie in wait ; they watch my heels  
 as if they sought after my life.  
 According to their wickedness weigh out to them,  
 and anger overturn peoples, O God !  
 the breaths of my sighs Thou countest ;  
 —kept in Thy bottle are my tears,  
 yea, in Thy account-book.

## 3.

10 But my enemies shall turn back on the day that I call !  
 this I know, God is mine !  
 through God I praise the word ;  
 through Jahvé I praise the word ;  
 in God I trust without fear ;  
 what shall mortals do to me ?—  
 I owe Thee, O God, my vows :  
 I will pay thanks to Thee,  
 that Thou hast freed my life from death,  
 yea, my foot from overthrow,  
 that I may freely walk before God—in the light of life !

1. וְיִשְׁמַח, ver. 3, as lv. 19.—Ver. 4, יְהוָה in the st. const. (286 i, 332 d) here and lxxxviii. 2, in the briefer style of the poets of this time ; also the וְיִשְׁמַח, vv. 9, 14 is of peculiar brevity.—Ver. 5 shows the prophetic element. The highest element in the prophet is that he through God, in God's mind and strength, and thus by God impelled and inspired, praises the word of God, or His eternal promise of salvation in the right way, and thereby warns all mortals, or,—as was peculiarly necessary at that time among his companions in suffering,—consoles them (comp. cxxx. 5). Because this Divine word eternally endures through the whole history with a force independent



of the prophet and of all individual men, it may subsequently, ver. 11, be named absolutely,  $\text{דְּבַר}$ , "the word," almost  $\acute{o} \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ . Comp. Prov. xiii. 13; xvi. 20. If the poet departs not from this and from his praise, he may fearlessly meet all mortals; he may refuse to tremble in the presence of threats or dangers from men, as is here so powerfully expressed.

2. *They vex* indeed the poet most deeply by wresting his prophetic words and deeds, and persecuting him as a prophet, and who would not be carried away by indignation at this in the first moment? Thus the second strophé begins, vv. 6-9. *They stir*, ver. 7, the fire of contention and of persecution, cxi. 5, *lie in wait* in secret to see whether this fire is kindled, comp. lxiv. 6, 7; and though they do not openly urge on my destruction, yet they *haunt my steps*, as if *they lay in wait for my soul*, are like to my deadly enemies. The  $\text{וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ}$ , ver. 7, laying a fresh emphasis on the subject, appears because of the following strong comparison; for the  $\text{כַּאֲשֶׁר}$  is *as though*, and hence is connected (§ 355 b) with the *perf.*, because it expresses the equivalent of *as if*. Hence then breaks through irresistibly in this place, ver. 8, for the first time the might of prophetic indignation: according to *unrighteousness repay to them, O God!* (For  $\text{פְּלִיטָה}$  as "deliverance," xxxii. 7, will not suit here, nor as imperative, "deliver," but it appears =  $\text{פָּלַם}$  a frequent word in poets of this age, lviii. 1;  $\text{ט}$  may stand for  $\text{ד}$  from a copyist's mistake, or probably from change of sound;  $\text{עַל}$  thus expresses the measure, as in lxix. 28.) This indignation further increases immediately to its Messianic height; *in wrath cast down peoples!* comp. lvii. 6, 12. But it is as if the poet himself observed that his word could not remain in this most violent ebullition, so that before the end of the strophés, as if exculpating himself before God for this, ver. 9 points to the endless sighs which he had already consumed, and which, as he exclaims with renewed sighs, he hopes he had not spent in vain before God. Thus his word here becomes a half obscure sighing, dissolved in nameless grief, scarce indicating, as in



allusive words, how infinitely he has already sighed in his urgent prayer. נָד, the "being driven hither and thither," is here probably not the mere flight, the wandering about of an exile, which corresponds too little to the following "tears;" but is to be understood inwardly of the violent unrest, the complaint and cries of misery, comp. lv. 3, Jer. xxxi. 18; frequently the poet has thus complained in the highest grief, how great the measure of his sufferings is, yea, God knows, who has *counted* his sighs; and suddenly he adds,—carried away by sorrow through this recollection of the tears shed with indefinite frequency,—that he well knows that none of them is forgotten with God, that they do not all run away, dissolved into nothing, but would be taken up by Jahvé as into the great bottle in which He, as the Righteous One, keeps the tears of all the innocent until the right time, as he has marked all the deeds of man in his book (lxix. 29; cxxxix. 16). The figure of the bottle, נֹאֵר, thus lay at hand if only in נָד the tears were indicated. But we must not overlook the fact that at the same time a play of words mingles with the play of thoughts, and excuses this rare and bold figure. In German it may be thus represented: my *schluchzen*—thy *schlauch*; or, as this is not pointed enough, in the way adopted in the translation above (*hauche*—*schlauche*). And yet the poet, before he entirely concludes, must also complete the other figure of counting, so that he further suddenly adds, *yea, they are placed* to be noted at the right time in the book of numbers (reckoning-book), lxxxvii. 6. But we read instead of the unsuitable imperative שִׁמָּה *lege!* rather שִׁמָּה (§ 149 f.) Comp. also *Gesch. des V. Isr.*, III., p. 756, of the second edition.

3. Ver. 10. Yet at the crisis, if the highest danger threatens me, my enemies will rebound, as soon as I cry: אִם; thus at the same time adversative like *doch*, from *denn* (*dann*) *auch*, as in lxix. 5; Lat. *at*, comp. Sanskr. *atha* (§ 354 a). On *before God*, ver. 14, comp. that more definitely said in vi. 6; xli. 13.



In Ps. lvii., fresh irritation and menace, fresh complaint. But from the very beginning more resigned and trustful, the result gained in the preceding song of higher joyousness and certainty here from the first stirs in the poet's mind, and so also in the end leads to the serenest hope and boldest self-encouragement. The whole song so overflows with blessed exaltation and inspiration, that the recollection of present dangers but feebly breaks in during its course, passing away immediately in the Divine certainty which beams over all. When in this way from the first beginning and cry, the inspiration, speedily glorifying the picture of the present, has once reached the highest point in the wish for a universal Divine judgment upon all peoples, vv. 2-6 : it rises for the second time from the recurring picture of the present,—readily and through tranquil hope, to the same height vv. 7-12 ; so that the whole presentation exhausts itself in two similar strophés. Both conclude with the same primary thought, the last hope ; in the same way in the preceding Psalm the same highest thought, tranquillizing, glorifying, twice recurred, vv. 4-5, 11-12.

In one word, it is the Messianic hope,—which at the time of our poet must have been already all-powerful among prophetically minded men,—that here becomes—as the conclusion and the fresh firm ground of all conceptions—a recurrent verse, 6, 12. The style of the congregational song accordingly passes before the mind of our poet. See I., pp. 199 sq. And probably he feels as if this hope must become the leading thought of all pious men, as it is his own ; and thereby all fear and anxiety in presence of the dread experiences of the present is to be overcome. Thus the very structure of the strophés here is formed afresh by our poet. The song breaks into two strophés only, each, with inclusion of the recurrent verse, of fourteen verse-members.

1.

Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me,  
for to Thee my soul fleeth,

2



into the shadow of Thy wings I flee,  
 till the danger be past !  
 I cry to God the Highest,  
 the God Who doeth good to me,  
 to send from heaven and help me,  
 reproaching him who snorteth at me. \*  
 God send His mercy and His truth !  
 Among lions I live, tarry among greedy men,  
 among sons of men whose teeth are spears and  
 arrows,  
 and whose tongue is a sharp sword :  
*Lift Thyself high above the heavens, O God,*  
*over the whole earth high Thy glory !*

## 2.

They have placed a net for my steps :  
 their soul bends down !  
 have digged before me a grave  
 —and fall themselves therein ! \*  
 Firm is my heart, O God, firm is my heart ;  
 let me sing and play !  
 wake up, my noble part, up, Thou harp, zither,  
 let me wake up the dawn !  
 10 let me praise Thee among the peoples, Lord,  
 play to Thee among nations,  
 how, high unto heaven is Thy mercy,  
 to the very clouds Thy faithfulness !  
*Lift Thyself high above the heavens, O God,*  
*over the whole earth high Thy glory !*

1. The נִסְּךָ, ver. 3, is indeed properly finish, come to an end without an object, vii. 10 ; but from that very signification of finishing arises that of ready action, conduct towards persons (good or evil), in which it is then ordinarily more softly expressed as נִסְּךָ and is independent. Here however it appears in the above harsher expression, said with לְךָ of God who



ordains concerning man,—loads him especially with benefits, xiii. 6; ciii. 10; cxvi. 7; cxix. 17; cxlii. 8,—in the latter sense very well explained by *נָמַר בְּעַד* *do for any one*, cxxxviii. 8. On *יִשְׁלַח*, ver. 4, which in any case (§ 347 *a b*) must depend on ver. 3, we might compare xviii. 17: but as the figures would then be too mixed, it is better taken along with the last member, where by repetition its meaning is only completed. The *חָרַף* is however (§ 341 *b*) used in constant explanation of the subordinate action contemporaneous with the main action: *holding reviled*, i.e., violently thrust back as they deserve.

This strong figure is,—as *him who snorts for me* shows,—borrowed from wild beasts, whose snorting attack must be in time resisted with the right word. While then this figure of the lion openly appears in ver. 5, repeated in ver. 7 (for the lion *bends himself* in vain in the pit-nets laid deep under the earth), one may say it is introduced as the figure here generally most closely suggested to the poet through the whole song (comp. again lviii. 7). But our poet is wont to interweave the most different figures with one another (lvi. 9; lviii. 7-9); so also here vv. 4, 5. The *לָחַם* = *laham*, Arab., *לחם*, related also on the other side to *לָעַט*, Gen. xxv. 30, be *greedy* (eat), yields a new word for lion: but who these greedy lions are, is explained in the second member: men with consuming greed and sharp tongue, acting and speaking horribly, lii. 4.—On ver. 6, comp. vii. 7-9, which passage passed before the poet's mind, only that here the outlook of the poet in Messianic hope is infinitely extended.

2. Also on ver. 7, comp. vii. 16. The representation of the danger which has all but seized upon the poet, turns at the end with *נִפְלִי* into the opposite, the fall of the adversaries (§ 223 *b*) being looked upon as certain, and so desired in prayer from God; as this quickly returning confidence is then further suddenly explained, vv. 8 sqq. But for this very reason, according to the connexion of the whole discourse and its members, *נִפְשִׁי* must be read for *נִפְלִי*, while the LXX read



כַּפְפִּי, *they bound me*, which however, just as כַּפְפִּי, *my soul bound down*, would here express too much.—My noble part, ver. 9, my spirit, the noblest thing in man, likewise after vii. 6. In יְכַנֹּר הַנֶּבֶל the article belongs, because it is rather externally added in the address, also to the second nomen. The words, ver. 11, are echoed here as from the same poet, from xxxvi. 6: but the poet places them here, in accordance with his custom, only as dependent on ver. 10, and has in this ver. 10, as generally one of the first imitations of Davidic songs, Ps. xviii. 50 in his eye.—From ver. 9, it is clear that the poet was wont to sing much; as he at an earlier time sang much in prosperity, so he encourages himself now, when the joyous song was silenced, to sing in future again with equal serenity. And since he now speaks in the evening or in the night, as soon as possible in the still early morning he will thus cheerfully sing, *waking* as it were the *dawn* in his anticipatory zeal. The words from ver. 8 forwards to the conclusion are so readily separable into a short special prayer, that they are verbally repeated in Ps. cviii. 2-6.

But with the purest prophetic boldness and severity the poet finally rises in those circumstances, in another moment, Ps. lviii., against unjust judges, certainly heathen ones, since he names them in heathen fashion, though with bitter scorn in his own sense,—*Gods*, ver. 2. It suffices not to the poet to express his anger and imprecations on the perverse behaviour of these mighty judges merely in the first way. Rather does he proceed with his views into the midst of the secret forge of their thoughts and purposes, and when he has thus ascertained and set them forth in their naked and irredeemable wickedness, the wish and the anticipation of the Messianic overthrow of those hardened ones in the midst of their power, and the deliverance of sufferers, can no longer be restrained, and then comes with the greater force. As if he desired to summon the judges only to self-defence, he calls to them



at first with taunting words, asking whether they who would be gods and as such be honoured, actually judged men and the earth righteously,—they the double-minded, unjust ones, who so bitterly destroyed everything by their actions: what is to be thought of them? vv. 2, 3. And since no answer and defence is heard, because it is impossible in the presence of the strict questioner who knows the inward life,—the questioner must himself in their stead, after the pause, answer, as if in explanation, with a sharp, severe, but just estimate and description of these completely corrupt and hardened, hopeless offenders, vv. 4-6. Thus despatching them, he now turns in prophetic prayer to God as the Destroyer of all evil, vv. 7-9, and with the prophetic forecast of the future towards those who are past deliverance, vv. 10-12.

Our poet is thoroughly original in this artistic manner of casting unobserved, bitter satire upon the mighty ones of the earth, and of operating by means of the only too deeply merited Divine anger; but he finds a worthy imitator later in the poet of Ps. lxxxii. And as in such sharp artistic representations a tranquil tenor from the first, and a correct distribution of all the larger shadows is the most necessary thing, he knows here completely how to adapt himself to the new style of such a satirical song. Four brief slender strophés in the most uniform style, with all the inward glow which at each step breaks forth. The first is even somewhat shorter than the others.

## 1.

Do ye then truly speak righteousness, ye gods, 2  
 judge with equity the sons of men;  
 and yet do wickedness in your heart,  
 weigh out upon earth the iniquity of your hands?—

## 2.

Estranged are the wicked from their mother's womb,  
 gone astray from the bosom they who speak lies!







them according to common opinion to pass for gods, and asks whether they are so actually, and deserved to remain so?—they who have only wickedness in their thoughts, and instead of right weigh out with unjust balance only the iniquity performed by their own hands. The opposition must not be overlooked: *children of men, earth.*

2. Vv. 4-6. The poet himself answers, since those addressed cannot defend themselves,—unwillingly indeed, yet at the same time indicating the reason, already anticipated, of their silence, and rising to a higher point, their wickedness. The reason of all this lies, in fact, in their finished malice. For when this has reached its highest degree, it appears unalterably bound up with the person as he is, firmly rooted in him; it has become his nature and his impulse. For even in sin as a disposition and impulse there is constancy and logical sequence, from the smallest and most secret beginning to the highest degree and indefinitely,—so far as the life of the individual admits of this. And if a completely impious man is seen, you there discover as little a visible beginning of his wicked disposition as an end—unless with the exception of death. As he is now once for all, so does all, from his birth, appear to have co-operated to form him, and as he through a dim, dark night appears to be from the earliest moment estranged and aberrant from the Divine life (li. 7), he is for the present and future indifferent in the midst of his wickedness to reflection and exhortation. He is like a poisonous serpent, which its tamer the magician thinks to be tame, but which nevertheless suddenly, as if it had in vain been sought to fetter it by arts and charms, again spits forth its venom, and which then stops as it were its ear against the most clever magician, at the very moment when the magician would most seek to lead it according to his art, by magic spells.\*

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\* That the art of serpent-taming and the magic connected with it is of high antiquity, especially in Egypt, and thence spread into surrounding lands, admits no doubt. Comp. the *Gesch. des V. Isr.*, ii., pp. 90 sq., 249 sq. of the 3rd edit.; and



As in the Bible frequently only this natural side of sin is brought out in strong, apparently too severe, but nevertheless true and apt figures (Isa. vi. 9, 10) : so also here appears uniquely the element of hardening and incapacity for amendment in the finished sinner, because this truth simply—at the view of the ungodly, impenetrable to every exhortation, refusing to defend themselves,—so strongly comes out, that the poet himself must reluctantly and mournfully doubt whether they could ever be cured. But that the poet, on the other side, conceives of the ungodly as fallen not merely by dark necessity or nature, but also through their own guilt, is self-intelligible, and comes out immediately, ver. 7.

3. But again in the two last strophés the figures are very severe, on account of the great bitterness between the two parties, when the greatest guilt incontestably lay with him here named the “ungodly.” If the reading, vv. 8, 9, were quite correct, of the four members the first and third would mutually correspond. May they pass away in and by themselves, as water vanishes, without trace, as wax gradually melts in the fire. (This sense of שבלול according to the LXX is more suitable than that of a snail, which seems to wear itself away by the streaming forth of its moisture as it crawls). The second and fourth member on the other hand would depict how they pass away, rejected as unserviceable and useless, as blunt arrows which are uselessly shot away (comp. xlv. 10, properly *let one stretch his arrows, i.e., the arrows may be shot as if they were blunt*), or as unripe births, which are quickly cast aside again, probably here and Eccl. vii. 6, thus expressed after Job iii. 16. But we must not mistake that a much better connexion both of these five

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from later times Jer. viii. 17; Eccl. x. 11; Sir. xii. 13; Clem. Hom. iii. 36; Plato's *Rep.*, ii. 2; *Journal of the R. As. Soc. of Lond.*, vii., pp. 109 f.; Seetzen's *Reisen*, iii., p. 446; Fletcher's *Narrative of Travel in Mesopotamia*, ii., p. 293 f.; Layard's *Discoveries*, p. 257; Onomandy's *Altes und Neues aus den Landern des Ostens*, i., pp. 59-63; N. Davis' *Carthage and her Remains*, pp. 425 f.



members as well as for the progress of the thoughts in the whole strophé arises if the second member of ver. 8 is joined to the first (as is done in the translation above). The interchange of the *sing.* with the *plur.* is then only such as frequently is found. On the connexion of נָפַל, however, see § 176 b.

4. Ver. 10. The ungodly are confused and sharp as thorns and thorn-bushes (Nah. i. 10): thorns may keenly prick and defend themselves, but *before your thorns observe it*, quickly therefore and unexpectedly, *will He* (God) carry away in the storm *the thorn-bushes* (the whole nest of the ungodly), *green and dry* (חֲרִירִי from חָרַר), be they dry or soft and fresh as you will (comp. § 360 a); for to the storm of Divine anger all must give way. The נָפַר is thus better attached to the second member; according to the accents it should be connected with the preceding word (§ 291 b); but in the first member the word is superfluous, in the second only in its right place. But in the picture of the tempest שָׁעַר is nevertheless here, where thorn-bushes are spoken of, far from appropriate. If, on the other hand, שָׁעַר be read, this may signify a *burning* or *burning up*, which far better agrees with all sides of this grandly executed picture, and is recommended also by the language about contemporaneous with our poet of Nah. i. 10, in the same figure. Comp. further the *Jahrbb. der Bibl. Wiss.*, v., p. 172. Bloody revenge is, ver. 11, in fact merely mentioned according to the general experience of the fearful wars of those times; in any other way retribution did not at that epoch usually come. But the great and main matter is indeed only that at last the true gods must ever again be recognized, ver. 12, with which purely Messianic truth the song most fitly recurs to its beginning. And that the language in the whole of the last strophé turns back in boldest address to the same man whom its first word, vv. 2, 3, had struck, but now in quite another manner, and seriously enough, is shown by the beautiful completion of the whole.



## 51. PSALM LIX.,

which stands in the midst of the main body of the songs just explained, has also in style and stamp much that is common with them and Pss. cxi.—cxlii. (comp. ver. 8 with lii. 4 and the places there noted; גִּיר, ver. 4 with cxi. 3; lvi. 7, and other instances), although the similarity of the representation, vv. 7, 15, to lv. 11 *b* is not so great that there could be reason for the assumption that this song falls in the time of the same siege of Jerusalem in which perhaps Ps. lv. arose. But the poet is probably another, since the language in other particulars has important deviations, and the peculiar situation of the poet is manifestly of that kind that he stands over against the besiegers here described as prince or king.

For the poet is in the city beleaguered by heathen peoples, vv. 6, 15, who scoff at Jahvé (ver. 8), who at the same time in rude arrogance, relying on groundless accusations, seek after his life. Already they have for several days more closely blockaded the city, in the night time especially holding stricter watch and thinking of attack and conquest, by day dispersing for plunder (comp. Isa. xv. 1; xxi. 4).

In the few moments of such a morning, when they have for a short time retired, the poet's anxiety pours itself forth and is relieved in a hymn to Jahvé; and the danger was manifestly no slight one, so urgent and importunate is the poet's cry for help to God. There is finally but *one* thought which can illuminate and give repose to his spirit, but *one* hope in which he can fortify himself and rise to even firmer confidence in God, that is, the Messianic conception,—how the fire dwelling within him at that time, since the Assyrian days, pp. 216 sqq., might readily arise in Jerusalem and especially in the mind of a king of Israel under such circumstances. Is this rude heathen people by which the king is thus harassed in the holy city, rather an individual people, accidentally at present so mighty, rushing against it, and against the whole status of a



kingdom of God upon earth? And must not the kingdom of God over all the Gentiles finally begin? Must not all who rise up against it end like the Assyrians before Jerusalem's walls? And the more the poet, manifestly a king in Jerusalem, is conscious how insolent and perverted the speeches and thoughts of those rude foes are, with the greater inspiration does he behold in Jahvé the eternal protector of Sion and of Israel, and the higher flame of hope is soon kindled from the fire of those ideas. And thus the song, beginning with an anxious cry for help, turns aside to prophetic anticipation and sarcastic portrayal of the terrible annulment of the hostile beginning which must at last ensue, and to joyous confidence in Jahvé. This progress is exhibited in three stages, whence flow three strophés of the song—at first a lively cry for help, description of wickedness, but also hope in Jahvé from this very fact, vv. 2-6 (2, 3, 4, 5, 6). Then, after a short reflection, the complete picture of the near danger presses forward, yet immediately in contrast with it still more powerfully the picture of Jahvé's dignity and grace, so that confidence in God here having risen to the highest pitch is menacingly directed against the foe, especially when his insolent God-denying speeches are noted, vv. 7-11 (7, 8, 9-11). But there then finally rises the hope, the wish and the prayer of the poet before God to the highest pitch, so that he exclaims: would that those rude warriors, safe from their present excursions, might again rush upon the city; their dreaded return must be their grave, so as finally to quiet their greed for destruction at this city! But this thought becoming too powerful, he fills the measure of the whole third strophé independently in such wise, that the glorious hope which the king has now apprehended,—after the outpouring of these thoughts before God,—with a confidence never before experienced, can only be expressed in a shorter concluding strophé. Thus there arise three strophés, each of five verses and eleven members, with a closing strophé; and the two oppositions



compressed in the second, separate in the two following, as the structure of Ps. lvi. (pp. 276 sqq.) quite similarly shows.

If it is asked what siege of Jerusalem is here meant, it is plain, from ver. 12, that the song may have been written a considerable time after the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian dominion; for the wondrous deliverance of the holy city (comp. above Ps. xlv. sqq.) passes before the poet's mind in a higher picture, and he wishes that the like may again occur; as generally the later writers from the Assyrian period frequently regard in the boldest manner and with the most swelling hopes the threatening of a powerful enemy of the holy city, Zech. xiv.; Jer. xxvi. 7 sqq.; Rev. xx. 9. Then too the opposition between Israel and the Gentiles is brought to an acmé; and we see here for the first time the greatest bitterness developed. Accordingly we might think of the first Chaldean siege, 2 Kings xxiii. 33; xxiv. 1, 2; but the description of the Chaldeans which at that time Habacquq gave, departs greatly from the picture here sketched of the besiegers, vv. 7, 15, and in other respects there is no indication leading us to that period. As the besiegers are here manifestly distinguished as rude nomad peoples, who give up the siege by day to plunder in the vicinity, but return towards evening like howling, greedy dogs: the Scythians are most readily suggested, who in Josia's reign overran Palestine as far as Egypt.\* In this view, what is known otherwise of the pious Josia very well suits him as the author of the song; and another song, which in all probability is referable to him, we shall presently find in Ps. xxviii. Indeed the very preservation of these two songs, poetically not greatly distinct from one another, is most readily explained in the theory of this pious king's authorship.

1.

2 Deliver me from my enemies, my God,  
protecting me before my adversaries;

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\* Comp. *Gesch. des V. Isr.*, III., pp. 689 sqq.



free me from evil-doers,  
 and from men of blood help Thou me !  
 For lo, they lie in wait against my life,  
 insolent ones stir against me—  
 without my guilt and my offence, O Jahve !  
 without cause they run and array themselves : 5  
 rouse Thyself, on my behalf, and behold !—  
 But Thou Jahve, God of Hosts, God of Israel,  
 awaken to punish all the peoples,  
 spare not any of the sinful robbers ! \*

## 2.

May they return towards evening,  
 howl as dogs and surround the city !  
 lo, they will boast with loud mouth,  
 swords upon their lips,  
 for “ who will hear it ? ”  
 But Thou, Jahvé, wilt laugh at them,  
 Thou wilt scorn all peoples !  
 my strength ! on Thee will I wait ! 10  
 for God is my fortress ;  
 my God will grant me His grace,  
 God will give me to prevail over those that lie in wait  
 for me !

## 3.

Slay them not, that my people may not forget it,  
 let them stagger through Thy strength and overthrow  
 them, Thou our shield, O Lord !  
 the sin of their mouth, the speech of their lips—  
 O let them be taken in their pride,  
 and for the perjury and the lies which they speak !  
 Consume in wrath, consume, that they pass away,  
 that men may know God rules in Jacob to the earth's  
 ends ! \*



- 15 And may they return toward evening,  
 howl as dogs and surround the city !  
 they will stagger at the meal,  
 satisfy themselves forsooth and—remain !

## 4.

But I will sing Thy strength,  
 And rejoice every morning in Thy grace,  
 that Thou wert to me a fortress,  
 and refuge on the day of my distress,  
 my strength, to Thee let me pray ;  
 for God is my fortress, my gracious God !

1. On לֹא פִשְׁעֵי comp. §§ 286 g, 320 c. The וְאִתָּהּ, ver. 6, is as ver. 9, and in a like manner further on, ver. 17 oppositional,—the poet now for the first time, on the approaching close of the strophé and of its conception, lifting himself as it were above himself and all the immediate present with its immediate distress and taking refuge in the Messianic ideas, and thus with altogether new fervour turning entirely to God, and immediately demanding, in more general terms, a judgment upon all the heathen. The connexion אֲנִי אֶנִּי is like הִבֵּלִי שָׁוָא, xxxi. 7.

2. The second strophé plainly moves in three main thoughts : may they, like dogs, greedily snapping, return to the siege, when they will renew their insolent scoffing speeches against Jahvé, Israel, and the king, hoping God will not hear and punish them, vv. 7, 8 : yet Jahvé will in calm dignity despise them (ver. 9 from ii. 4) as also the poet calmly relies upon Him and His victory, vv. 9-11. Yea, so boldly and securely does he, strengthened by this hope, look forward to the certain overthrow of the enemy, so certain is it in itself to him that villany, the more audacious and insolent it is, the more shamelessly in its blindness it assails the holiest, the more fearful and memorable will be its fall, that he



3. forthwith at the beginning of the third strophé, vv. 12-16, as if in righteous indignation at the impious speeches of the enemy, demands a *decision*, wishing that the enemy might not hold off, might not suddenly fall in the desert far from Jerusalem, unseen by the people of Jerusalem, but in their giddiness assail the sanctuary, and then in their extreme impiety, in the last crisis, perish for ever; partly to punish their pride, partly that thereby in view of the holy city a great and ever memorable token of the Divine power and retribution may be given, for Israel and for all peoples (as formerly at the time of the Assyrian attack on Jerusalem and its king, now alas! again forgotten by many faint-hearted unbelieving Jews themselves). Therefore, may God not slay them before they come again, but cause them to reel (גִּיַעַ) in the giddiness and drunkenness of pride, and suffer them so to come on and so overthrow them, like the giants in the attempt to storm Olympus. For he who is dizzy with passion becomes through his dizziness, as by irresistible Divine power, still more drunken and blinded till he reaches the edge of the precipice, comp. lxxv. 8, 9. That which, ver. 12, broke forth with such surprising swiftness, becomes, vv. 13, 14, milder and more tranquil, although always very agitated, and is further explained: "the sin of their mouth, their lips' word,"—that which concerns these already well-known impious speeches, "*so may they in their own (thus manifested) pride be taken,*" the ? in וַיִּלְכְּדוּ (§ 347 a). That the pride is especially expressed in speeches is explained by the following, "perjury and lies." Thus then the inspired language towards the end of the strophé, ver. 15, once more comprises that demand from ver. 7 more shortly and sharply: *may they but return!* but it may here also immediately add, ver. 16: *they will stagger to eat, i.e., come on, staggering, to their greed; but to quiet it for ever; forsooth they will satisfy themselves* (get sated at the meal of this Divine punishment, utterly drain the cup of reeling) and *remain*, be no longer able to stir in death, like one excessively drunk. But the poet would not have been



able to speak so clearly of the holy place had he not been able to hope for the present renewal of the example of the Assyrians; the type is perhaps Isa. xxix. 1-9, and a similar prophecy is much later, B. Zakh. xii. 2.

4. Ver. 17, "every morning," as to-day in the morning, agrees with vv. 7, 15. In accordance with עֵינַי and חֲסִדִּי, ver. 18, we expect also in vv. 10 and 11 the same reading, especially as the sense of both words is fixed by ver. 17. Nevertheless the present text has vv. 10, 11, עֵינַי and חֲסִדִּי, and strangely would only restore the Q'ri in ver. 11 חֲסִדִּי. The pronoun of the third person, according to vv. 6 and 12, was bound to be referred to Israel, because generally in this song Israel and the Gentiles are very sharply opposed, and the poet finds comfort in the fact that he belongs to Israel. But such a reference is not here so ready at hand; and in ver. 10 at least the old translators have the first person, while in ver. 11 the third, apart from the Q'ri, is substantiated by all original evidence. Perhaps, then, in ver. 11, חֲסִדִּי is correct, and אֵלַי to be read after ver. 2. If the connexion of the קִיָּם is taken as in xxi. 4, the full sense of ver. 11 is obviously improved, and a verbal repetition between vv. 10, 11 and ver. 18 is not to be supplied.—It is clear enough that neither vv. 7, 15, nor vv. 10, 11, 18, are intended to form a refrain in the artistic sense (I., pp. 198 sq.). The repetitions which this poet, more than any other, favours, are rather explained simply from the ideas of the strophé.

This song, Ps. lix. is thus unusual in its contents, as belonging to those times, because it does not, in the first place, like many of the above, refer to the confused internal condition of the people at that time. The large fragment, Ps. x. 2-11, would well belong to this place; but this will be better explained below.—But the sense of the sufferings of those times takes a quite peculiar form when as

B. 52, 53. PSALMS XXVI. AND XXVIII.  
show, a special and rare suffering, *e.g.*, a desolating malady



came upon them all. That these two songs which are still separated only by Ps. xxvii., explained on p. 176, have much that is alike, and originated in a rare occurrence is plain; and this occasion may be seen clearly to appear from xxvi. 9; xxviii. 3. A severe calamity, sweeping away many human beings, must have come upon the land, perhaps a pest, in short a general suffering, wherein, according to the sense of all antiquity, men viewed a punishment doomed upon the whole people, while the ancient horror of premature death increased the alarm to such an extent as was further described above, pp. 181 sqq. But as the feeling of such Divine punishment can only become most fearful to him who is already consciously unhappy and inwardly corrupt, and as it actually carries him off most speedily,—these songs spoken in the asylum of the Temple teach how the man who is free from the consciousness of guilt need not, even under such sufferings, despond, under this heavy burden need not bow down without feeling and without hope; for out of the midst of universal despondency and perplexity, we here see the faithful who had been earlier tried become conscious of their indefeasible hope in Jahvé. As high as these faithful ones are conscious of elevation above the great mass of the frivolous and impious and over their fear and horror,—so high is the comfort they obtain in believing prayer amidst fresh dangers that surprise all. We see here again, as in Ps. v., clearly the wide rent which at that time separated the few faithful who zealously visited the Temple from the great mass ever sinking lower,—a rent which in the course of time could not continue without alienation, easily attended by danger. For some found their token and their union in the Temple and its visitation, others in its neglect. Already these songs stand on the boundary whence the tenacious maintenance of separation may readily on the one side degenerate into spiritual pride, a danger which we meanwhile do not see realized in the innocent words of this Psalm. But we see clearly that which, under the predo-



minant idea of natural troubles, remains for the noble consciousness to do.\* Not indeed from the same poet (for the stamp of the language and conceptions is to be distinguished in the two) but yet certainly from the same time, the two songs originated, and in this way. The more beautiful, the more intense is Ps. xxvi.

In the poet of this song there is expressed with freedom and force the noble indignation against the opinion that he, like any other, must be carried away by the national calamity. Conscious of his innocence and inward strength, not shunning strict trial before God, would that he might long time and ever freshly as now be cheered at the sweet place of the sanctuary. He prays in prevailing hope to the Jahvé who knows him, to judge him whether he deserves such punishment, and gradually softens, in modest request to Jahvé, ever faithfully honoured, his first indignation into most tranquil hope. Hence three unequal strophés; the more agitated at the beginning, betraying indignation and hope, ver. 1,—further, the more tranquil recovery of the consciousness of his relation to God and the world with renewed prayer, vv. 2-10, and along with this abiding hope, vv. 11, 12; the long intermediate strophé falls of itself into three smaller, of three calm verses each. The song is manifestly a Temple-song, but one of no ordinary kind, and not one to be sung immediately at the sacrifice. It is best taken as the preparatory song for the sacrifice, occasioned by the peculiar great commotion and disquiet among the people above mentioned.

## 1.

1 Judge me, O Jahvé!  
for I—in my innocence I lived,  
and in Jahvé I trusted without wavering!

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\* Comp. on this and particularly on Ps. xxvi., further the *Jahrb. der Bibl. Wiss.*, ix., p. 169.



## 2a.

O prove, Jahvé, and try me,  
 search through my loins and my heart !  
 for thy grace is before mine eyes,  
 and I choose my way in Thy truth ;  
 I sat not ever with idle folk,  
 into the house of hypocrites I come not.

## 2b.

I hate every company of evil-doers, 5  
 with ungodly men I sit not together ;  
 in innocence I wash my hands,  
 to circle round about Thy altar, Jahvé,  
 singing praise with the loudest thanks,  
 and telling all Thy wonders !

## 2c.

Jahvé ! I love Thy house's refuge,  
 the place of the dwelling of Thy glory :  
 carry not away with sinners my soul,  
 nor my life with shedders of blood,  
 in whose hands are deeds of shame, 10  
 and whose right hand is full of bribery !

## 3.

But I—in my innocence I live :  
 redeem and be gracious to me !  
 on even ground stands my foot :  
 in holy choirs I bless Jahvé.

Ver. 3: for I know well that I may, in fidelity to Thee, firmly hope in Thy grace and faithfulness, comp. ver. 11. *Concealed ones*, ver. 4; false people, hypocrites. *Surround the altar*, vv. 6, 7, according to ancient custom—the sacrificer circling round the altar with singing and thanksgiving during the sacred function. Comp. the *Mégha-dûta* çl. 56, and Wilson's



observation thereon. That the poet actually sung this whole song at the sanctuary, and performed in presence of the sacrifice all the customary sacred usages amidst the rest of the assembled mass of praying and singing worshippers, is clear also from the last words, ver. 12 *b*, comp. with lxviii. 27. But for this very reason he might desire to join in the others that were in use, as is clear from ver. 7, comp. xl. 6. But for this is required the true preparation in the spirit; and since the poet alludes to this, ver. 6 *a*, וַאֲסַבְּרָה is best understood according to § 347 *a*. All this under the assumption that the song is designed to serve for something more than mere preparation for the solemn ceremony. Thus as an earnest self-probation before the sacred function, and on so serious an occasion, the poet does not speak too highly of himself, and it would be unjust to reproach him with self-righteousness. He is only as sincere and at the same time supported by a good conscience, as calm in God as David in Ps. xviii. 20-27.

Ps. xxviii. contains the same main prayer. ver. 3, but in far more threatening danger for him who prays, already near to death, ver. 1, and in much greater excitement against the party of the light-minded who persecute the poet. Yet the more violent this outburst of complaint, the more cheering is the addition, vv. 6-9, which joyously thanks Jahvé as the deliverer, concluding with noble prayer and hope. This was certainly added by the poet a short time after the passing by of the danger (as xxxi. 20-25). According to ver. 8, comp. lxxxiv. 10, a king must be the poet; for ver. 8 contains no mere prayer or a wish for the king, but the experience of his deliverance, which in this connexion presents itself entirely as a personal experience. The incomplete and abrupt suggestiveness of this song is thus best explained. And in fact the same Josiah whom we supposed to be the author of Ps. lix., may the more certainly be here assumed as the poet, the more clearly vv. 7, 8 and lix. 10, 11, 12, 17, 18 correspond to one another.



## 1.

To Thee, O Jahvé, I call, 1  
 my rock, be not silent before me,  
 that I may not, if thou art silent before me, be like  
     to those sunk into the grave !  
 hear my loud supplication, whilst I cry to Thee,  
 lift my hand to Thy holy chamber !

## 2.

Take me not away with ungodly men and with evil-  
     doers,  
 who speak peace with their neighbours—having  
     evil in the heart !  
 give them according to their desert, according to the  
     wickedness of their deeds,  
 according to their handiwork give to them,  
 repay their deeds to them !

## 3.

Because they heed not the deeds of Jahvé and His  
     handiwork, 5  
 let Him destroy them and build them not !

---

Blessed be Jahvé,  
 that He has heard my loud supplication !  
 Jahvé is my strength and my shield,  
 on Him my heart trusts and I am saved ;  
 and my heart rejoiced, with many a song will I praise  
     Him !

O Jahvé, who is strength to them,  
 and rock of deliverance of His Anointed,  
 help Thy people, give blessing to Thine heritage,  
 and tend them, and bear them for ever !



How the expression, ver. 2 *b*, points locally to the position of the king and the Temple, is remarked in the *Gesch. des V. Isr.*, III., pp. 342 sq., of the 3rd edit.

The *וְרָעָה*, ver. 3, introduces an additional proposition (§ 341 *a*). But by ver. 5 the violent prayer against the enemies is significantly founded in reason, and it is explained that the poet does not merely follow his own humour and vengeance. Jeremiah's book, as well as Ps. lxxix. 23-29, may be compared, and it may be borne in mind that history itself most terribly suggested the inner corruption of the state and the blinding of parties through the violent destruction of the whole kingdom, proving the impossible duration of such conditions impossible.

The *מִשִּׁירִי*, ver. 7, as *of my song*, is nevertheless best here taken as a modest expression instead of the pure accusation.—The first member, ver. 8, is very abrupt; but no one can be thought of under "them" except the Israelites generally who, considered as a people, ever are vividly present to the mind of the king as his counterpart; just so he says again, ver. 9, "them" for "us." We see that the poet stands between Jahvé and the people, comp. iii. 9; and quite the same impression is made on the whole by the poet of Ps. lix.

We connect with Ps. xxviii. one standing not merely in local neighbourhood to it,

#### 54. PSALM XXXI.,

which indeed proceeded out of similar perplexities to those above explained, Pss. lv., v., lii., but again reveals a quite peculiar situation of its poet. The poet, amidst incessant dangers, especially slanders, ver. 19, and threats of violent death, ver. 14, forsaken and scorned of all, completely exhausted and powerless, feels himself near to death. But strengthened by the experience of earlier times and by confirmed faith, he makes supplication in the midst of the deepest sufferings, full of confidence to Jahvé, placing his spirit in His



hands (vv. 6, 16). And so accustomed is he to this pure resignation, that he, in the first strophé, begs only that he may again be conscious and certain of it, vv. 2-7, in order then in the second to pour forth with fulness of detail his complaint and anguish, vv. 8-13; but again in the third finally to abide alone by hope and prayer, vv. 14-19. By this intense spirit of resignation the song is peculiarly distinguished, and quite as one would expect from one of the most pious sufferers of the Old Testament. However, the poet can only have written it down in its present form after the most threatening danger had passed by and the pleasure of deliverance was tasted,—from good recollection, but with free not distressful reproduction. For in two small strophés he has, vv. 20-25, added the expression of joy at the deliverance, thanksgiving and praise to Jahvé for this and for so many others, and the cheerful exhortation to all to true faith and perseverance. And thus the whole appears to be a monument of the feelings of the poet in the sufferings and the deliverance of an extraordinary time (comp. just previously Ps. xxviii.).

Each of the three strophés of the main song has six verses with thirteen members; each of those of the supplementary song, shorter by a half, has three verses with seven members, so that the two might be gathered into a large strophé of the same measure.

There can be no great doubt of the derivation of this song from the prophet Jérémjá. The stamp of the language is the same; the whole first half of ver. 14 recurs in these rare words, Jer. xx. 10. The figure of the worn-out vessel, ver. 13, after Hos. viii. 8, is only found in Jer. xxii. 28, xlviii. 38. Ver. 11 sounds like Jer. xx. 18. The mood also agrees with this; the peculiarity of Jérémjá's spirit shines out; and occasions for this song were not wanting in the life of the elegiacally gentle Jérémjá, who was strong in weakness. Even this connexion of complaint and hope, the quick transition from suffering to consolation, is in this style, in the description of his personal



features, peculiar to Jéremjá. The poet reveals himself as a prophet who is pre-eminently persecuted for his word's sake, vv. 19, 21.

## 1.

2 To Thee, Jahvé, I cleave; let me not for ever blush with  
shame  
through the rightness of Thy grace deliver me!  
bend to me Thine ear, free me speedily,  
be to me for a rock of defence,  
for a strong place, to help me!  
But Thou art my rock and refuge:  
and for Thy name's sake Thou wilt lead me and guide,  
5 draw me out of the net that they have hidden for me,  
because Thou art my place of protection.  
Into Thy hand I commend my spirit,  
Thou art my Redeemer, Jahvé, faithful God!  
Thou hatest those who wait on vain idols,  
but I trust in Jahvé.

## 2.

Let me rejoice and be glad in Thy favour,  
as Thou hast seen my suffering,  
known in distresses my soul,  
and not given me up to the hand of the enemy,  
placed my foot at large!  
10 Be gracious to me, Jahvé! for I am in distress,  
wasted in grief is my eye, my soul and body.  
For care makes my life to pass away, and my years sighs,  
my strength is sunk in my suffering, and my bones  
wasted because of all the oppressions;  
I was a scoff even to my neighbours greatly, and to my  
acquaintances a fear,  
they who see me without flee from me!  
forgotten like a dead man to every heart,  
valued as a broken vessel.



## 3.

Truly I heard the report of many, horror round about,  
as they together took counsel together against me,  
devised to take my soul.

But *I*—trust in Thee, Jahvé, 15

thinking that *Thou* art my God !

in Thy hand are my times ;

deliver me from the enemies' hand, from my perse-  
cutors !

let Thy glance shine upon Thy servant,

help me through Thy grace !

Jahvé ! let me not be ashamed, crying to Thee ;

let ungodly men be ashamed, be silent for the pit !

may lips of lies be silent,

which speak insolently against the righteous—in  
pride and contempt !

## 1.

How great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast stored up  
for Thy fearers, 20

hast shown to those praying to Thee

clearly before the children of men ;

protectest them in the shelter of Thy countenance from  
man's noises,

hidest them in a hut from the brawl of tongues !—

Blessed be Jahvé, that He has wondrously shown His  
grace to me

in the distress of oppression !

## 2.

I thought indeed in my anguish, “I am destroyed  
before Thine eyes :”

but thou didst hear my loud supplication, when I  
complained to Thee.



O love Jahvé, all His pious ones !  
 the faithful Jahvé ever preserves  
 and requites sufficiently those who indulge pride.  
 25 be strong and let your heart take courage  
 all ye who wait for Jahvé !

Vv. 2, 3, cry ; vv. 4, 5, justification of it through faith and experience, so that the first strophé, vv. 6, 7, concludes with the most hearty hope towards Jahvé as the true God and Redeemer.—Ver. 7, שָׁנֵאתָ, according to the LXX, necessary because of the opposition, comp. in like manner v. 6. הֶבְלִי for *idols* is a favourite expression of Jéremjá's ; but the whole phrase recurs only in Jona ii. 9.—Yet now in the second strophé the complaint breaks forth from the very beginning, ver. 8, the more freely, and the אִשָּׁר is best taken (because here the language is used of the manner of the gracious deliverance) according to § 333 a. “Wideness,” ver. 9, comp. iv. 2. And yet more strongly in ver. 10 the cry for help is raised because of great sufferings, more definitely, vv. 11-13, because of life-danger along with infinite sorrow and scorn. The מִכָּל צָרָי, ver. 12, seems to be better taken in conjunction with the preceding verse (as the Pesch. does) because it is only superfluous and troublesome in ver. 12, even destroying the sense (for not merely because of the many foes is any one so generally scorned) and the structure of the members ; with this agrees the fact that the poet certainly, according to vi. 8, speaks in the language of ver. 11, and the same construction here furthers the connexion of ver. 11.—Thus the supPLICATOR, in the beginning of the last strophé, ver. 14, can not keep back that which is most distressful in the present : but only the more purely recurs at the end, vv. 15-19, the believing prayer.

Ver. 21. רָדְּךְ is *rodjes*, Arab., comp. רָשַׁע *trouble, disquiet*, LXX correctly *ταραχή*, with which also the following member best agrees. Ver. 22. בְּעִיר מְצֹר must, taking עִיר as “city,”



signify the poet had been harassed and set free in a strong city (see on lx. 11), accordingly in Jerusalem, as we know from Jéremjá; and in fact this occurs of itself to the unprejudiced reader, according to lx. 11. But this long song falls nevertheless certainly in a time still anterior to the destruction of Jerusalem, which is nowhere indicated in it; for that period it is at the close too cheerful in tone. Again, the statement above would be here quite too cold and prosaical. Therefore עֵיִר here = צִיִּר be *anguish*, as Jer. xv. 8.—Ver. 25 after xxxii. 11, xxvii. 14; as ver. 17 *a* after Num. vi. 25.

We insert here

55. PSALM LXXXVIII.,

partly because, according to its contents, it is suitably placed here, although it probably belongs to the first half of the seventh century; partly because, so far as we can see, it stands alone with reference to its authorship, although it bears much resemblance to the songs to be explained below, Ps. xxxv. sqq. on the one hand, and Ps. lxxvii. on the other. It is in character an ordinary song of sickness, like a further development of Ps. vi.; it is only unique in the fact that of enemies whom the sick man has no mention whatever is made. The poet was still young, ver. 16, and had long struggled with the most deadly sickness, had undergone all the most grievous sufferings, and so lost all friends, had become an abhorrence to all men, and as weak and frail as if he had long been among the dead. The song is a long, languishing outburst of this mournful, almost disconsolate temper, which seeks but to excite pity and compassion by dread description of sufferings and renewal of more cheerful songs that had earlier escaped him. After a short introduction, vv. 2, 3, follows at once in great detail the description of his sufferings, vv. 4-8. But the fact that the sufferer merely through these sufferings had ever lost all friends among man, determines him to most woeful supplication to the Lord of Death and Life; and to the



reflection that he had, at an earlier day, sought to awaken the Divine compassion by sweet song, vv. 9-13. Thus the poet in extremity of suffering is carried away once more in a strain of lugubrious prayer, all but utterly succumbing in the renewed thought of the greatness of his sufferings and the approach of death, vv. 14-19. Each of the three strophés which are here formed after the brief prelude, has accordingly a compass of twelve members, and those, as usual with the majority of poets, of uniform short structure.

## 1.

2 O Jahvé, God of my salvation,  
when by day I call, in the night before Thee :  
let my prayer come before Thee,  
O bend Thine ear to my complaining !

## 2.

For satiate with evils is my soul,  
and away to the pit tends my life,  
5 I am esteemed as one sunk into the grave,  
become as a powerless man,  
among the dead is my couch,  
like to the slain, who rest in the grave,  
on whom Thou no more thinkest,  
since they are separated from Thy hand.  
Hast brought me into the deepest tomb,  
into darknesses, into shallows ;  
on me Thy glowing heat came down,  
Thou hast caused all thy waves to come down. \*

## 3.

Hast removed my trusted friends from me,  
made me an abhorrence to them,  
shut me in and without outlet !  
10 Mine eye wastes with grief :  
I call, Jahvé, to Thee each day,  
spreading out my hands to Thee :



“Dost Thou then wonders to the dead,  
 or do shadows stand, giving praise to Thee?  
 is then Thy grace told of in the grave,  
 and Thy faithfulness in destruction?  
 are Thy wonders known in the darkness,  
 Thy righteousness in the land of oblivion?”

## 4.

But I—to Thee, O Jahvé, complain,  
 and in the morning my prayer is beforehand.  
 Why dost Thou reject, Jahvé, my soul, 15  
 concealest Thy countenance from me?  
 wretched am I and departing from my youth,  
 I bear Thy terrors, I must pass away;  
 Thy glowing heats have gone over me,  
 Thy terrors destroy—destroyed me  
 surrounded me as floods daily,  
 encircled me together!  
 Hast removed lover and friend from me,  
 my trusted ones are—the place of darkness!

Ver. 2. The *צַעֲקָתִי* is necessarily understood also before *נִגְדָךְ*; but the whole second member is by means of the *יוֹם* connected according to § 332 *d*, only a relative sentence to the first, for that following the address is first seen in ver. 3. What was last said in ver. 4, how the poet feels himself near to hell or the dark lower world, or as if he were already among the dead, is further described in vv. 5-7. A *powerless* man = dead man, shadow; the *וַיִּפְּחֵהוּ*, ver. 6, introduces a static proposition, as it has to be explained why God no longer has any thought for the dead; for all that is living stands immediately in God's hand, Job xii. 10, not so the dead, violently separated from the upper world, and from the light, and in so far as if withdrawn from the hand of God, Ps. vi. 6; Jon. ii. 5, 7. More generally then is expressed in ver. 8 the sense of



most severe and most burning sufferings; עָנִיתָ is derived either from עָנָה work (prop. trouble, *ana*, Syr., comp. Koh.): suffer to be busy, set in activity, *appoint*, despatch, or better and here more appropriately from עָנָה in the physical sense be lowly, *fall*, come down (*ana* = *nazal*, Qam.): *sink*, cause to fall, LXX ἐπήγαγες; to the עָלִי in the beginning refer thus uniformly both members; comp. on the figure, xlii. 8; xxxviii. 2, 3.—If with the recollection of his general forsaken condition as a further consequence of the long sickness, a new strophé here, ver. 9, begins, this is just as in Job xix. 13; as the poet had certainly the Book of Job in its original form generally before his mind. *Shut in without outlet*, simply because all fled from him, he was limited to his forsaken desert spot; the figurative signification of one encompassed on all sides by calamity, Job iii. 23, xix. 8, does not suit this connexion. Thus did the poet cry with tearful eye long time for aid, seeking to move God's compassion by the cheerful recollection of the actual thanksgiving after his deliverance.—Vv. 11-13 is a development from earlier songs, comp. on the sense, vi. 6.

From the new beginning, ver. 14, it is clear that this is a morning song, like ver. 44, and still more like lvii. 9; the transition and ver. 16 like xl. 18, lxix. 14, 30, cix. 21, 22. אֶפְיָנָה, ver. 16, from פָּיַן = פָּנָה, *affan*, Arab., faint away, turn dizzy, lose consciousness. The voluntative seems to denote: I shall faint, a dizziness seizes me; the LXX ἐξηπορήθην, and frequently the LXX thus render the otherwise voluntative formation by the aorist, certainly not without reason, § 233 a, but not altogether suitably. On צָמַח תִּנֵּי, comp. § 120 a.—Ver. 19 closes with the most mournful turn: whilst all human living acquaintances have forsaken the poet, the dead have become his new intimates—the Orcus, comp. v. 7; Job xvii. 3, 4, may be present to the poet's mind.

#### C. 56. PSALM L.

There sounds indeed mightily even in these last times of the



ancient kingdom, even in song, once more the eternal prophetic truth addressed to the whole people, and it seeks in serious language to remove the great dangers which threaten from within. This is shown by Ps. 1., which may fall in the times of Josia. Since, that is to say, through King Josia's improvements the external reverence of Jahvé had been greatly increased, and was more strictly maintained from the court downwards, there arose a new evil. Side by side with the older evil of indifference prevailing in general among the people towards higher things, and the inclination to superstition, there sprung up hypocrisy in religion,—cunning men, under the cloak of external reverence and close acquaintance with the religion of Jahvé, the more securely practising their manifold impiety. Again, according to vv. 1, 23, the tranquillity of the kingdom must have been sorely troubled from without, as we know that Josia's reign was much disturbed by storms from external quarters. The better times which were expected from King Josia's new constitution of the kingdom refused to come, and Divine grace and help seemed to be as distant as possible. Through all this the kingdom was now threatened by extreme danger. The sense of misery mutely weighed upon the people, without any clear light on the true mode of deliverance (vv. 15, 23). A morose spirit, discontented with God and the world, had gained possession of the majority, whilst the hypocrites alluded to above fancied they would be able to live on quite securely in their practices. But a poet, who in the consciousness of the eternal Divine truth has deeply penetrated this condition of things, is so powerfully convinced that it cannot continue, that he already views in spirit in the most vivid manner the Divine judgment upon their perversities; and as he in a moment of devotion has seen this drama clearly within his own mind, and has plainly heard the voice of the strict judge—so now the appearance and indignation of the Supreme God is vividly renewed with detailed and powerful description. Both the manner of the appearance and



that of the language are closely connected and reciprocally correspond. For already the former must provisionally but definitely leave it to be anticipated who will speak, and how.

Here, however, there is nothing more important to be noted than that the style in which God is here conceived as speaking is borrowed from the custom of a king speaking in the assembled council. I have shown in the *History* that the people Israel once had its high assemblies, when the king addressed the assembled states of his kingdom: a diet in the kingdom of Juda, when the words of this prophetic poetic address could be heard, was of course not to be thought of; but only the more clearly does it stand before our poet-prophet's spirit how God must now speak to His solemnly assembled people when he appears, and how he was heard with his divinely enlightened but pre-eminently also divinely-judging word. The true God cannot appear, and for this purpose, in His own community without the bright light of His word scattering gloom and darkness of all kinds, as it becomes mighty among men; and here, too, this bright glad light of His word is not wanting. But since the address of the Supreme Judge must in this instance still further sound, denouncing grave sins, and threatening the last penalty, the poet could not here otherwise conceive God and represent Him than as Him from out of Sion, indeed, but as God of the whole world, cursing wrathfully, with all-subduing, all-ordering power, in desolating storm and fire, summoning heaven and earth as witnesses to His judgment on Israel,—Jahvé speaking amidst loud thunder, whom Israel, covenanted to Him, but now become unfaithful, must hear before all peoples in assembled congregation, as the strict Judge, vv. 1-6. The address thus introduced, turns justly first to the great mass,—the multitude that errs more through sloth and superstition than intentional wickedness, who are firmly admonished, with apt irony, that not by sacrifices senselessly offered amidst dull grief, which God does not require, but by the recognition of the Divine benefits, in a new life, assurance of Divine grace



and joy may be obtained, vv. 7-15. But then it flames up in indignation against the hypocrite or intentional wrongdoer in particular, vv. 16-21; and finally returns with a few words of benevolent intent, but serious menace, to exhortation to the whole people, vv. 22, 23. The thoughts in the whole song are as noble and profound as those in the greatest prophets; and although the poet without doubt speaks according to prophetic patterns, yet the whole disposition is peculiar to him, and in particular points the execution is of an unusual character.—That Sion still at that time was flourishing, entirely uninjured, is clear from the description, ver. 2, to which there is allusion later, Lam. ii. 15; but otherwise the language and the elegant metrical structure does not point to earlier times than King Josiah. As the poet here gave rather a prophetic forecast and address than a song, the ordinary structure of the strophés cannot be here applicable. But a correspondent measure is here retained, the main portion of the address being built up of three small strophés, each of three verses, and accordingly both the description of the appearing God at the beginning, and the second, or the more severe portion of the address, consists each of six verses, while the after-address admits of the greater brevity. Thus here too, the poetic sense, well articulating the whole, prevails.

The God of Gods, Jahvé, spake and called the earth 1  
 from sunrise to sunset.  
 From out of Sion, crown of beauty,  
 beamed forth God,  
 (let our God come and not be silent!)  
 Before Him devouring fire,  
 and about Him there was a great tempest.  
 He calls to heaven above  
 and to the earth that He would judge His people:  
 “assemble my saints before me, 5  
 who concluded my covenant with sacrifices!”



and the heavens announced His right,  
that God Himself now judges :

## 1.

“ Hear my people that I may speak,  
Israel, that I may exhort thee ;  
God, thy God am I !

Not for thy sacrifices do I punish thee,  
since before me are ever thy gifts ;  
will take no bullock from thy house,  
nor he-goat from thy folds !

10 All wild beasts of the forest are indeed mine,  
great beasts on a thousand mountains  
I know all mountain-birds,  
and the brood of the field is not strange to me ;  
should I hunger, I would not tell it thee :  
mine is indeed the world and its fulness !

Do I eat the flesh of bulls,  
drink blood of goats ?  
sacrifice thou to God thanksgiving  
and pay to the Highest thy vows  
15 and then call on me in the day of distress :  
and I will deliver thee and thou shalt honour me !”

## 2.

And to the wicked spake God :

“ How darest thou enumerate my doctrines,  
take my covenant on thy lips,  
for thou hatest correction,  
hast cast my word behind thee,  
seest thou a thief, willingly thou goest with him,  
and with adulterers hast thy portion,  
didst loose thy mouth with wickedness,  
causest thy tongue to weave deceit,



sitting speakest against thy brother,  
 against thy mother's son pourest out abuse?—  
 This didst thou—and I was silent;  
 thoughtest surely I were as Thou:  
 I will punish thee, and produce it against thee!"

## 3.

"Observe this, ye who forget God,  
 that I tear not asunder without deliverance!  
 He who sacrifices thanksgiving will honour me;  
 and he who walks carefully—  
 him will I cause to enjoy God's salvation!"

Vv. 1-6. The simple narration or the *perf.* predominates, because the poet has actually, before he thus writes, the scene in his mind. Of course, the prophet in the moment of consecration, can only be met by the thought in a concrete solid picture, which lays the more powerful hold on the imagination, the more it is undivided and concrete. For the development in particulars and the orderly description does not appear until afterwards, with the wish to fix and pursue the picture; but whilst the poet or prophet would now in particular set forth that which he beheld in concrete form, he necessarily turns back in thought to that moment, and may narrate in the *perf.* what he has beheld. But the personal wish for fulfilment may well be pressed forward, since in truth in the external sense nothing has yet been actually accomplished; and it is quite as if the poet heard with the words ver. 3 a, the deep-hearted exclamations with which the saints long for the Divine appearance and accompany its arrival.—The figure itself of the approaching God is indeed current at an earlier date, Ex. xix., and at a nearer time of the judging God, Mic. i. 2; Hab. iii.; but in the particular delineation there is much here that is new. First, the whole description of the God summoning the assembled world to judgment (highest God; incon-



testably the poet thinks of לַח in the *st. const.*) briefly set forth, ver. 1, then the description of this again more tranquilly and in more detail begun and completed, vv. 2-6. From His sanctuary, from out the beloved Sion the highest God, the God of Israel arises, calling heaven and earth as witnesses (Isa. i. 2; Deut. xxxii. 1) to the contest against His own people, who must at His behest, summoned by mighty angels or by the heralds of the assembly and the court, immediately appear, as it must be shown whether they who are honourably termed "the saints of Jahvé," who have entered into holy covenant and plight with Him (according to the idea of the true congregation, Ex. xix.—xxiv.) whether these are still actually what they ought to be, and may boast to have kept the covenant, ver. 5. After these preparations the judgment begins in presence of the assembled people, whilst the thunders announce the Divine right, or the fact that God has to speak in judgment, and what He has to say—that is, that God *Himself* (אֱלֹהִים § 314 a) judges, and speaks in the following way.

Now the first and at once serious word is directed, ver. 7, as the general summons of the Lord to hear His word, to the whole congregation thus assembled. But while the discourse first applies to the great multitude who err chiefly through superstition and dulness of mind, it betakes itself presently to subtle scorn, as the last weapon against this, and even lowers itself, with profound humanness, to the ideas of the people, vv. 8, 9, 12; but only the more readily to refute all that is erroneous, and cause the Divine truth the more freely to shine through, vv. 10, 11; and straightway with the beginning of the last small strophé, vv. 13, 14, to express the more briefly the truth in all its aspects. *If I hungered* is, ver. 12, only assumed as a pure possibility; but at last, ver. 13, this is also removed, and error having been thus chastised by irony, the highest truth may be stated in contrast with the more striking force, vv. 14, 15. The first and most necessary



thing is in every moment and under all circumstances to be conscious of the indestructibility of spiritual blessings or of Divine benefits, and to remain in the temper of one serenely and hopefully praising and thanking God; and thus instead of thinking, in dull indolence and unconsciousness, after a calamity, of external means of warding it off, *e.g.*, the bringing of guilt-offerings,—rather to offer the purely spiritual, conscious sacrifice of thanksgiving and of the external beginning of an oft-praised new life (Hos. xiv. 3; Mic. vi. 6-8). Only he who stands in this higher condition is fit and prepared for Divine salvation, and will not fear God as the Author of penalty, but reverence and honour Him as the wondrous Deliverer.

As the king in the throne-speech breaking off, turns to a part of the assembly of the kingdoms, *e.g.*, to the great men in particular, so here, vv. 16-21, God turns to the proud scribes and lawyers, here termed *ungodly*; and here the character of the address changes forthwith to that of the gravest reproof, so that he demands of them what title they have to boast of their knowledge of law and their fidelity in religion, although they (with וְאֵתָהּ, ver. 17, begins the counter-series of static propositions) do the very opposite to all this.

Domestic crime, ver. 18, crafty invention, and devising of evil in evil company, ver. 19, and in good company, at all events calumny of the most intimate acquaintance or relative, ver. 20, are examples of accomplished villany on all sides (וְרָפָה properly thrust, blow, hence calumny = גִּדְּף, root strengthened in the beginning); and the fact that this remained without punishment for a time, has only strengthened the ungodly man in the error that God is as weak as he is, but now he is to learn the truth. The strangely-appearing connexion of the *inf. const.* הָיָה with its *verb. fin.* is explained if we reflect that the speech of the ungodly man demands indeed the *inf. abs.* ("certainly God is as I," therefore הָיָה יְהוָה); but because here this speech was indirectly interpolated, *i.e.*,



was more closely connected with the main sentence, the *inf. abs.* became fluxive, *i.e.*, passed into the *inf. const.*, for this is in truth the general distinction of the infinitives, § 240 c.

But the language must finally turn back to the general ; and that in vv. 22-23 the whole people is again addressed, is clear from ver. 23, comp. vv. 14, 15. The שׁוֹם is according to the brief usage of some poets of this time, *note* (B. Jes. xli. 20) : but observe that דֶּרֶךְ is quite indefinite, and does not take the form דֶּרְכִּי, since the whole mode of expression in this song is that of elegance, I., p. 27.

And shortly, the whole higher teaching of that century is brought by a poet who shows great affinity to the poet of Ps. xxvi., into proverbial poetry in

#### 57. PSALM I.,

a very simple, didactic song, with solid brevity and florid style,—embracing many elements, a song of pointed power and incisive effect. The general character of the contents and the position of this song at the head of the Psalter, makes it highly probable that it was from the first composed with the object of furnishing a suitable introduction to an (older, smaller) collection of Psalms ; as moreover it comprises the germ of many songs and perfectly denotes the temper in which an old poet may have first selected and collated Psalms, and in which he desires the collection to be read. The whole only one lengthy strophé in six verses, but in the middle dividing into its two halves.

Blessed the man who never went in the counsel of the  
ungodly,

nor trod the sinner's path,

nor sat in the society of the scorers ;

but has pleasure in Jahvé's doctrine,

on His doctrine meditates day and night :



he is like a tree planted by water-brooks,  
 which brings forth its fruit in season, and whose leaf  
 withers not :

and all that he doeth, succeeds.—

Not thus are the ungodly,

but like chaff, which the wind drives away.

Therefore ungodly men shall not stand in the judgment, 5  
 sinners in the congregation of the just :

for Jahvé knows the way of the righteous,  
 but the ungodly man's way disappears.

The felicitations of the faithful, according to his nature and his fruit, vv. 1-3, are followed more briefly by the description of the misery of the ungodly and of the eternal foundation and duration of those contrasted human fates in God, vv. 4-6. The first half is the most elaborate and the clearest. The picture of the faithful man, ver. 1, negatively depicted as complete alienation from evil both in disposition (counsel) and in deed, as well as in company and fellowship. He who thinks evil is already a עֲשֵׂי רָע, one led astray by passion; he who does the counselled evil is a חַטָּא sinner; he who is even so greatly inured to the suppression of a good conscience, that he despises and perverts in company the good, is a צֶלַח, scorner, and persons of the kind are wont to hold together that they may the more uninterruptedly, by themselves, gain strength in evil thoughts, xxvi. 4, 5. The affirmative description follows, ver. 2, suiting a time in which the written law first came truly into force, and formed a barrier against many dangers, comp. Jos. i. 8, with all the other Deuteronomic matter. The consequence or fruit of such a life is described, ver. 3 : וְיָקִיץ! "*so will it be* ever in strength and fulness, like the most happily planted and most delightfully flourishing tree" (Jer. xvii. 7, 8 is repeated and further developed from this passage), all his undertakings visibly succeed.—But since the ungodly are in themselves nothingless and insipid, without contents and con-



sistency, without force and duration, ver. 4, they cannot stand their ground and remain in the congregation, if once Divine judgment and the hour of trial arrives. They may indeed appear for a time prosperous and enduring, and at present the ungodly and the faithful live so together, but when the purification and strict trial comes, the time of decision, they will not abide in the community of the righteous, since the act of separation and punishment of the evil ever, even although now invisibly, comes on, or since God knows very well the two different modes of life (ver. 6, comp. vii. 10) and treats each according to its desert, so that,—which is here the main matter and the object of the discourse,—the way of the ungodly perishes for ever, leads never to blessedness and well-being. The conclusion, vv. 5, 6, is thus quite prophetic, indeed Messianic, describing what is ever valid, and therefore ever to be hoped and to be expected in the course of the world; only that at that time the hope of a Divine judgment was firmer and more concrete.

Again, in those times proverbial poetry, as is shown in I., pp. 60 sqq., was uncommonly active in amalgamating the ancient eternal truths of genuine religion with the experiences and informations of later times; and already proverbial poetry had begun to mingle itself with lyric poetry. We possess now of this mixed species in the Psalter the two grand pieces,

58, 59. PSALMS IX., X., XXXVII.,

which, according to all signs, belong not only to the same time, but also to the same poets. They are the two oldest alphabetic songs preserved, as both their spirit and very independent contents and their art teaches. The alphabet proceeds in them first with a small strophé of four lines, which conveniently here, according to I., pp. 202, 3, presents itself as the earliest mode. But each, because it appeared in this wide extension too long, falls into four greater divisions, just as the twenty-two letters readily



admit of being distributed into four sections, א—ו, ו—י, י—ל, ל—פ, פ—ת. In other respects we must immediately give a particular explanation of the two fragments.

That Pss. ix. and x. might readily be somewhat more strongly separated, follows from what has just been said. But that they originally were connected is not less clear from many proofs, specially from the peculiar resemblance of the language between ix. 1-21 and x. 1, 12-18 (comp. לעתות בצרה, ix. 10, x. 1; אנוש ix. 20, 21, x. 18; דך ix. 10, x. 18, elsewhere only lxxiv. 21). Further, Ps. ix. is not complete in itself: ix. 20 is further taken up, x. 12-18. We see now in the whole song (somewhat as in lxxxv. 2-8) thanksgiving and prayer pouring forth; whilst at first pure thanksgiving for a last great deliverance and revelation of gracious Divine operation is heard, ix. 2-11, but then in this glad look upon the near past, thought of the more troubled present and the prayer for help mingles, ix. 12-21; and after this distress of the present has been depicted in detailed complaint, x. 1-11, finally with the greater urgency the prayer for speedy help and restoration of right recurs, x. 12-18. These four uniform strophés appear to have been designed by the poet for so many alternate song-strophés in the Temple; for the *I*, in which he often here speaks, cannot designate an individual person in the people, but only the whole people as an assembled congregation,—as Israel.

But the description of the contempt and pride, of the craft and villany of the enemy, x. 2-11, is separated by a different and severer language, and greater coherence, significantly from the other parts, and may be interpolated only by the last poet from an older song, which belongs in its whole style to the first half of the seventh century, or to the period of Ps. lv., when general anarchy prevailed, and the right of the crafty and the stronger prevailed, comp. above, pp. 253 sq., on Ps. lv. sqq. In the proper verses of the last poet we discern also the arrangement or the beginning of an alphabetic order of verses, of four



members each. From 1-3, from 6-12, from 19-22, this order of twenty-two letters is quite plain (only in ix. 20 ק occurs instead of כ), and the looser broken bond of the succession of thoughts, the limitation of the immediate sense to four members, which is visible throughout, except in x. 2-11, substantiates sufficiently the purpose of this order: but before the completion of this art the poet must have been interrupted; for that the alphabetic pieces are not the borrowed ones, is shown also by this, that x. 12-18 are linked to x. 2-11, and draw their material from them, וְשִׁנִּי, ver. 13, from ver. 3, תִּדְרֹשׁ, ver. 13, 15, from ver. 4, and particularly הִלְכָה, ver. 14, from vv. 8, 10. In this way it might also come about that the fourth section, x. 12-18, is left somewhat shorter than it should be according to the rest of the arrangement; but more probably there are wanting only now before x. 12, the verses for וְ.

At the time of the last poet the external condition of the people, as is obvious from his indications, was the following. A great and rare example of Divine retribution, nearly affecting Israel, in the case of a mighty kingdom of the world of that time, had appeared in history. As we now learn from the whole tenor of this song, and especially from the words ix. 15, that Jerusalem at that time was not yet destroyed, we may understand by that mighty kingdom, over whose overthrow the song at the beginning rejoices, not the Chaldean but only the Assyrian, which completely passed away with the destruction of Nineve about 606 B.C.; and the great cities, for the utter destruction of which the song, ix. 7, thanks God, are above all those out of which Nineve itself was composed, as well as the others thick in its vicinity. But partly Juda itself was at that time overrun and subjugated by Gentiles (the Egyptians), whence the wish, x. 16, is explained; partly the light-minded prevailed again there, and this explains why the poet interweaves the large piece, x. 2-11.



## 1.\*

All my heart praises Jahvé, Thee, 2  
 I tell all Thy wonders,  
 let me rejoice in Thee and make merry,  
 make music to Thy name, O Highest,  
 Because of the conquest of my foes,  
 who stumble and pass away before Thee;  
 because thou didst carry out my judgment and my  
 cause,  
 didst sit on the throne as just judge!  
 Didst threaten peoples, didst destroy the ungodly,  
 didst blot out their name for ever, aye;  
 the foes became utterly an everlasting wreck,  
 and the cities which Thou didst destroy,—their,  
 their memory passed away:  
 but Jahvé is throned for ever,  
 has for judgment erected His throne;  
 and *He* will judge the world justly,  
 decide equitably upon peoples,  
 Giver of protection to the bowed down will be  
Jahvé 10  
 a protection for times of sultry distress,  
 and they who know Thy name trust Thee,  
 because Thou didst not forsake Thy seekers,  
Jahvé!

## 2.

Highly celebrate Jahvé, who inhabits Sion,  
 makes known among the people His deeds;  
 because He who avenges blood, remembered them,  
 forgot not the complaint of sufferers:  
 In grace, Jahvé! see my suffering from my haters,  
 thou who raisedst me from the gates of death,  
 that I may tell Thy whole praise, 15

---

\* The translation is conformed to the alphabetic arrangement, as in the German.—Tr.



in the daughter of Sion's gates may leap for joy  
at Thy deliverance!

Justly the Heathen sank into the pit which they made,  
in the net that they hid, their foot was taken;  
Jahvé made Himself known, carried out judgment,  
wicked men entangled themselves in their own  
handiwork,<sup>1</sup> \*

Know the ungodly shall return to hell,  
the heathen all, the God-forgetters;  
for not for ever will He forget the helpless,  
the hope of the sufferer shall not perish for ever!  
20 Up, Jahvé! let not mortal man scorn,  
let the peoples be clearly judged before Thee!  
prepare, Jahvé, for them a terror,  
let the peoples feel they are mortal! \*

## 3.

1 Meaning what, O Jahvé, stand'st Thou afar,  
with veiled eye for times of sultry distress?  
in the pride of the ungodly sufferers burn,  
be they taken by intrigues who devised them;  
the wicked man speaks praise to the lust of his soul,  
and greedily forsakes, despises Jahvé.

The wicked man according to his haughtiness, "no  
punishment,

"no God is there"—are all his thoughts.

5 victorious are his ways at all times,  
Thy judgments are too high, too far for him,  
all his foes,—he snorts at them,  
in his heart thinking, "never shall I waver  
in any time, I who am without ill!"

Of perjury his mouth is full, of treachery and deceit,  
mischief, destruction his tongue conceals;

---

<sup>1</sup> Here for once the fuller musical notice is retained, comp. I., p. 232.



he sits in the ambush of the villages,  
 in corners he murders the innocent;  
 his eyes spy out the feeble;  
 in the corner he lurks as the lion in the thicket!

Lurks to seize a sufferer,  
 seizes the sufferer, drawing him into his net;  
 quietly he stoops, bows down,— 10  
 and into his claws fall the feeble,  
 while he thinks in his heart, "God has forgotten it,  
 concealed His countenance, never beholding it!"

## 4.

Up, Jahvé! God, raise Thy hand,  
 forget not the sufferers!  
 why does the wicked man forget God,  
 thinking in his heart, Thou didst not punish?—  
 Verily Thou didst see it! because mischief and trouble  
 Thou dost behold  
 into Thy hand to mark them;  
 To Thee the feeble commits it:  
 the orphan *Thou* didst ever help.  
 Wilt break that arm of the wicked, 15  
 the evil man—seeking his wickedness shall find it  
 no more!

Jahvé is king, ever, aye,  
 the heathen passed away from his land!  
 To (*Zu*) Thee has pierced the longing of the sufferers,  
 Jahvé!

Thou wilt raise up their heart, open Thine ear,  
 to judge the orphan and bowed down,  
 that earthly men may not further resist!

Vv. 2-11 are just ten verses, according to the Massóra for  
 8—1: but the strophé is now wanting for 11, since ver. 7  
 begins too early with 11, and would be a transposition of the



verse against the sense. But it is possible that in ver. 8 it originally ran *יֵהוּה יִהְיֶה*, *let Jahvé see . . .* for *וַיִּהְיֶה*.

1. ix. 7. *הָיָה* is immediately united with a predicate, thus in the sense: become wholly, utterly something, comp. § 298 b, *Gr. ar.* II., p. 159; for without difficulty *הָאֵיבִים* is connected with the *plur.* of the verb (comp. for the interchange of *sing.* and *pl.* § 317 b). According to this connexion one is indeed tempted to take *עָרִים*, not as cities but as = *צָרִים* (comp. § 58 b): but that this is not necessary is said above, and *נָתַשׁ* better suits for cities. The emphatic *הֵמָּה* § 311 a, finds its opposition immediately, ver. 8, in Jahvé, as remote in Israel, whose immediate overthrow had at that time been long expected.—The close of the first part, vv. 10, 11, alludes to a prayer lying in the background, for *יְיָ* must be understood according to § 347 a. *בִּצְרָה* is the withholding of rain, *sultriness* and dryness which often lasts so long, comp. *שָׁנָה בִּצְרָה*, Jer. xvii. 9; xiv. 1.

2. In the second part there is a twofold transition from thanksgiving to prayer, vv. 12, 13 to 14, 15, and vv. 16, 17 to 18-21: through recollection of what has been experienced, prayer and hope for the future is prepared. For *הִנֵּנִי* some copies read, perhaps more correctly, *הִנֵּנִי*, as derived from *הִנֵּן*; the doubled *נ* is thus at least more readily explained. The *נוֹקֵשׁ*, ver. 17, might be taken as part. Qal from *נָקַשׁ* = *יָקַשׁ*, so that either *רָשָׁע* would be subject: for his own work the enemy lays snares (1 Sam. xxviii. 9), or that Jahvé would be subject: by his own work He snares, takes him. But, to pass over other difficulties, here the *perf.* only suits according to the whole connexion, vv. 16, 17, in opposition to vv. 18-21. It must therefore be *perf.* Nif. § 140 a; comp. on the sense, Prov. xxix. 5. *מוֹרָה*, ver. 21, appears a worse mode of writing for *מִוְרָא*, something at which one is shocked, which again awakens the thought of God and His fear, Deut. iv. 34. Further, from the word-play on the *gates* of hell and those of Sion, vv. 14, 15, it may be most plainly



recognized that the song was designed for a festival, to be sung in the Temple at Jerusalem.

3. In the description of the oppression of the tyrant, x. 2-11, the true ground of the conduct of the wicked man, his contempt of Jahvé and of Divine right, is first brought out, vv. 3-6, then further his impious speech, ver. 7, and behaviour is characterized, vv. 8-11, so that the discourse in vv. 8-11 recurs to ver. 2. הָלַל עַל, ver. 3, is: he expresses not praise concerning Jahvé, as was seemly, but concerning his own pleasure, comp. Hab. i. 11-16. That which stands at the end of the first and in the beginning of the second member, ver. 4, must contain the thoughts of the wicked man; "He resents not (comp. ver. 13), indeed, there is no God;" for if the living, operative, all-punishing God be taken away, it is equivalent to taking away any true God. But he is tempted, according to ver. 5, to such deeds and thoughts, by the fact that *his ways* at all times appear to be victorious (הַחִיל, formed after עָשָׂה חִיל, Num. xxiv. 18), he sins so long without interruption, and the Divine judgments hitherto are too high (concealed in heaven) and distant, and he has not yet felt them; comp. Job xxii. 12 sqq., so that he thinks never to come to harm, never to waver. The word, misapprehended from the Q'rî, to be read probably חֲלָפָאִים, ver. 10, *sing.* חֲלָפָה, vv. 8, 14, is formed like חֲפָשִׁי, only according to § 164 c, with the more Aram. adjective-ending *ae* for *i*; from חֲלָה, *weakness*, properly *darkness*, to be confused before the eyes, comp. *hâlakḥ* and *hâkhal*, Arab., which also *Qâm.*, p. 1354, holds to be related; Aq. Sym., aptly, ἀσθενείς; *halakh* is *grey*, *grizzled*, of the scapegoat, *Hamâsa*, p. 443, 6, or *dim*, *dark*, *Ibn.-'Arabshâh's Fakih.* p. 207, 2, and elsewhere.—Ver. 9. סָפָה may be read without suffix, according to Job xxxviii. 40, and since in ver. 10 the יִשְׁחֹו, according to the above passage in Job, plainly continues the figure of the beast of prey (as also עֲצִימִים denotes, "the two strong ones," the claws, comp. עֲצִלָּתִים, § 180 a), יִרְכָּה (according to the *K'tib*) is



also to be understood of the self-compression, or stooping of him who lies in wait.

4. The beginning, ver. 12, with ק, is observable as in ix. 20.—Ver. 14. *Give into the hand*, place, mark there, so that it may never be forgotten, ever to see before oneself, according to the figure B. Isa. xlix. 16.—Ver. 16 shows plainly how it was wished that the Canaan, overrun by the heathen (and heathen lords), might be purged from them; and the *perf.* is certainly to be understood according to § 223 b.—The last words, ver. 18, may be either thus connected according to the accentuation: “*that* (still dependent on the preceding ל, § 350 b) *he* (the wicked man, ver. 15) may not still further frighten men out of the land, hunt the unhappy Israelites by terror out of Canaan,” but in that case a more correspondent word would be used instead of אָנוּשׁ, which recalls ix. 21,—possibly עֲנִיִּים; or rather thus: *that not still further may men of the earth, earthly ones, strive against* (עָרַד *eradd*, Arab., Isa. xlvii. 12, hence also be in fear, from reluctance, dread) the Divine will.

The interwoven piece, x. 2-11 (to which also ver. 1 might belong), has quite another structure of verses, since here manifestly three verses are found in each case united. One would like to know to what kind of poetry this piece originally belonged; for an original song the language in it winds off too slowly. Earlier it was simply a fragment of a longer discourse of the kind of which we find an example in Hab. ii. 6 sqq., but immediately designed to obtain a Divine answer to this long and yearning prayer, like to that which follows with vv. 9 sqq. in the far more briefly constructed Ps. lxxxv.

Ps. xxxvii. is one of the best alphabetic songs in warmth of contents and inner connexion (so far as an alphabetic song can have this). An aged, much experienced poet and teacher gives here to the disciple golden sayings with a view to engrave the truth that, since wrong and wickedness are ever in



the end their own punishment, the apparent momentary good fortune of the wicked is not to be envied, but in rest and resignation the salvation of Jahvé, inwardly secure, is to be expected. In that time this doctrine was clearly illustrated in fact by the history of so many overthrows of unjust kingdoms and so many falls of tyrants, and is brought forward here with the higher confidence of a teacher blessed by such insight and experiences. And it may be truly said that the poet, who in the preceding song expressed the true joy and the true prayer for the congregation on a festive occasion, now seizes in this place artistic means to stamp by a properly proverbial poem the truth,—the more necessary under the intense disquiet and doubts of that period, that men must not allow themselves to be deceived by the prosperity of unrighteousness.

The arrangement of the series of proverbs expounded p. 320 also answers to this highest object. The four sections are quite correspondently divided into a twofold series of 6 and 5 (= 22) letters; but at the head of each of these four sections the language starts from the unrighteous, in order to come by contrast to that which it is the duty of the pious to do. Further, the contents of this piece are indeed too diverse from the preceding to permit us to find very many similar expressions in the two; yet such are not wanting, as x. 15 *a* and xxxvii. 17 *a*; x. 15 *b* and xxxvii. 36 *b*.

## 1.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Ah, be not jealous of mis-doers,              | 1 |
| envy not them who practise vice;              |   |
| for like the grass they quickly fade,         |   |
| pass away like the green herb.                |   |
| By doing well trust in God;                   |   |
| then dwell in the land and feed securely      |   |
| and have thy pleasure in Jahvé,               |   |
| and may He give thee thy heart's wishes!      |   |
| Destiny leave to Jahvé,                       | 5 |
| trust in Him, and <i>He</i> will bring about, |   |



will make sun-bright thy right  
and thy cause like the noon-beam !  
Even wait for Jahvé, calmly given up to Him,  
and be not jealous of the prosperity of many,  
because of those who do wickedness.  
Flee anger, cease from wrath,  
and be not jealous—only to sin ;  
for mis-doers are destroyed,  
and those who wait for God — they are heirs  
of the land.

10 Give heed awhile : the wicked is gone,  
thou lookest for his place : he is away !  
but sufferers become heirs of the land,  
delight in the rich salvation.

## 2.

Hard gnasheth the wicked man with his teeth,  
meditating evil to the pious ;  
but the Lord laugheth at him,  
certain that His day is coming.  
Is the sword of the wicked also sharpened, their bow  
bent,  
to fell sufferers, helpless ones, to slay those who  
walk uprightly :

15 but their sword enters their own heart,  
their bows are broken asunder.  
Judge better a little for the godly man,  
than the baggage of many wicked ;  
for the arm of the wicked is broken,  
but the righteous Jahvé supports.  
Known to the Lord are blameless lives,  
and eternal shall their heritage be ;  
in misfortune they are not put to shame,  
and are sated in time of hunger.



Light-minded men do disappear, 20  
 and Jahvé's foes are like the pomp of the meadows,  
 passed away in the smoke, passed away!

## 3.

Moving about, borrowing, the wicked pay not;  
 the godly presents and gives;  
 for they whom *He* blesses become heirs of the land,  
 they whom *He* curses, are destroyed.

None but Jahvé places the man's steps securely  
 and has pleasure in his way;  
 if he falls, he is not prostrated,  
 for Jahvé takes his hand.

Oh, whether young I was, or old I am : 25  
 never saw I the godly forsaken and his seed  
 seeking bread;

he makes presents every day and lends,  
 and blessed must his seed be.

Plighted to duty avoid thou evil:  
 so dwellest thou for ever firm;  
 for Jahvé loveth right  
 and forsakes not His beloved.

Reprobates are overthrown for ever,  
 the seed of the wicked is destroyed;  
 righteous men become heirs of the land  
 and dwell ever therein.

Still doth the mouth of the righteous meditate  
 wisdom, 30

and his tongue speaks right;  
 the instruction of his God is in his heart:  
 his steps shall not waver!

## 4.

The wicked spying out, strives  
 and seeks to slay the righteous;  
 but Jahvé leaves him not in his hand,  
 rejects him not, when he is judged.



Unfailing in hope keep Jahvé's way :  
 and He will exalt thee, to inherit the land,  
 shalt joyfully behold the destruction of the wicked.  
 35 Verily, I saw the profligate great and fearful,  
 spreading himself out like a green shoot :  
 but he passed away—and was gone ;  
 I sought him—not to be found.  
 Well mark the honest, upright man,  
 how the man of peace has posterity :  
 but evil-doers are together overthrown,  
 the posterity of the wicked is destroyed.  
 Towards (*Zu*) Jahvé is the strong hope of the godly,  
 from Him their victory in time of need ;  
 40 Jahvé supports, delivers them,  
 delivers from the wicked, helps them, because  
 they trust in Him.

Ver. 3 *b* plainly from vv. 9, 11, 22, 34, especially vv. 27, 29 sqq.; Jer. xxv. 5, xxxv. 15 and § 347 *b*.—Ver. 28. Before לעולם the verse must plainly begin with ע, so that the first word has been dropped out. One might suppose עֲשֵׂי טוֹב; more readily, according to the LXX, אֱלֹהִים, so that then נִשְׁמְרוּ, according to ver. 38, is to be read for נִשְׁמְרוּ.—Ver. 35 *b*. The LXX read quite unsuitably פִּתְּחוּ הַלְבָּנוֹן ὡς τὰς κέδρους τοῦ Λιβάνου.—Observe, in other respects, how artistically this poet composes his fine song out of more ancient flowers of poetry, especially a book of Solomonic sayings, the book of Job and older Psalms, comp. ver. 1 with Prov. xxiv. 19; ver. 4 with Job xxvii. 10; ver. 5 with Ps. xxii. 9, 32; ver. 6 with Job xi. 17; vv. 10, 36 with Job viii. 18; ver. 13 with Ps. ii. 4; ver. 18 with Prov. xii. 10; ver. 23 with Prov. xx. 24; ver. 34 with Ps. xci. 8, &c. אֶהְרִית, ver. 37, perhaps taken somewhat more sensuously than Prov. xxiii. 18, xxiv. 14, 20. Yet this dependence of the poet on such patterns proves nothing against his age as determined above, as it is seen in other writers of the same period as in Jéremjá.



And finally the Messianic hope, which had long become so mighty and so fixed, remains unaltered in those times as

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shows. For this song was without question composed on the occasion of the accession of a new ruler: for the king's son (ver. 1) had,—this much is clear from the song—performed as yet no deeds of his own, and all that is said of him is wish and anticipation. If now the appearance of any new ruler afresh and mightily awakens the eternal hope, so peculiarly that of a young ruler, who gives much promise; and a poet here seizes on such an occasion, in the finest manner, the hopes which the time caused to germinate. About those times into which this song introduces us, the Messianic hopes had long been kindled: they were according to their nature necessarily immature until they were finally fulfilled; and if they were hitherto unfulfilled in any king of David's house, they might arise afresh with every new one, especially if he were young and uncorrupted; for they went far beyond the individuals with whom they might possibly be connected. In this spirit then the poet here sees in the first instance that all salvation must come by means of inward improvement and strength, and righteousness in highest purity, and with full decisive force must proceed from the king, in order to guard the people from corruption and vanity of mind. In this sense he further sees that if in this way true insight, strength, and power are diffused from within, at first in a narrow space, rule and power may then readily of themselves pass into the external sphere, not by means of the subjugating sword, but through pure spiritual ascendancy; strangers streaming in astonishment to that quarter where they see extraordinary prosperity prevailing, and allowing themselves to be taught and directed by *the* king whose distinction is true insight and practical goodness, vv. 8-15. And thus, on the concurrence of this inner and outer salvation, the highest conceivable prosperity



may arise on earth, and the earth itself, as if made young and new again, may bear the fruit of the purest weal for men who no longer pollute it, vv. 16, 17. (For the poetry gives the experience that the rudeness of the earth of human formation gives way, again anticipating only that which is higher and more spiritual.) But the higher this portion of the hopes of the poet is, the more clearly does he see that the fulfilment of such great things lies beyond the power of a common man, and even of a king. Therefore all his hopes take the form of a wish to God, with the prayer that he will thus strengthen the king. The whole song is directed not immediately to the king, but to God: as, moreover, doubtless the poet cannot be understood to speak on the question whether what he anticipates is fulfilled at once and in the person of the same king who offered him the occasion for the song; for he speaks,—even where he discourses on the suggestion of individual men,—not so much of those, as of eternal thoughts or hopes. Here peculiarly predominates the pure and lofty Messianic hope, and this has its eternal strength. But how much of this, and when it is to be fulfilled in history, is quite another question.

But the poet has certainly not expressed the substance of such hopes for the first time: the way is already plainly smooth for him, and long before him great prophets had discoursed in a similar strain, after their manner. The Davidic kingdom was at that time greatly lessened, impoverished, and decayed; the world-dominion was lost, and was to be regained after another fashion. And this leads to the inference that the king cannot be Salomo,\* but a later successor of David, perhaps Josia, or if possible, one still later. For the language and much of presentation is also too light and fugitive for an older poet, it is too artificially polished and elaborated, and frequently it only further develops older thoughts and pictures or merely

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\* The short observation in the superscription of this song, "Salômo's," can only express a later conjecture; but perhaps the last collector found this song in a collection of Salomonic songs in the sense explained in Vol. I., p. 236.



repeats them. The poet of Ps. lxxxix. has, meantime, already read this song and partly imitated it; and that the king was a king of Israel and successor of David's may be gathered from the fact that it is here hoped his kingdom will extend from the people Israel (יִשְׂרָאֵל), vv. 1-7, over the whole circuit of the ancient Davidic kingdom, yea, if possible over the heathen peoples, vv. 8-15. *Who* the king was can now be stated with as little positiveness as the name of the poet; but nothing would be more perverse than were we to think of a foreign (heathen) king, on the ground that the song belongs thoroughly to later times. On the contrary, the picture of the boundaries to be desired, vv. 8, 9, and not merely so, but also every other sign in the song points to a Davidic king; and that Israel had not to learn the prayer on behalf of the king, ver. 15, for the first time (as would be erroneously inferred from Jer. xxix. 7; Ez. vi. 10) from foreigners, is partly understood of itself, and partly it may be proved from Pss. lxi. 7; lxiii. 12; Lam. iv. 20.

The structure of the strophés here manifestly proceeds by four verses and nine members, whilst the last concludes more abruptly with seven members. But the two first times two of those strophés are plainly blended into one larger strophé; but before ver. 5, according to all indications, a two-membered verse has been lost.

## 1.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| God! give Thy judgments to the king,           | 1 |
| Thy righteousness to the king's son,           |   |
| in equity to judge Thy people                  |   |
| and Thy poor according to the right;           |   |
| that mountains may bring welfare to the people |   |
| and hills by righteousness!                    |   |
| Suffering folk let Him judge,                  |   |
| let Him help poor children of men,             |   |
| break in pieces oppressors!                    |   |



\* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \*

- 5 That men may fear Thee so long as the sun stands,  
in the sight of the moon, eternal times !  
Like rain let it trickle on the shorn pastures,  
like showers of rain, the satiation of the earth ;  
let the righteous man flourish in His days,  
be there much of welfare, till the moon is no more.

## 2.

- And let Him rule from sea to sea,  
and from the stream to the earth's ends ;  
The Adversaries shall bow before Him,  
and His enemies lick dust ;  
10 kings of Tarschisch and the Isles offer presents,  
Schebá's and Saba's kings present thanks,  
and all the kings do Him homage,  
the peoples all serve Him !  
Because He delivers the suppliant and helpless,  
the sufferer, who is without saviour,  
spares the needy and poor,  
and saves the souls of the helpless,  
—from oppression and severity He relieves their soul,  
and precious appears to Him their blood—  
15 that reviving he may give him of the gold of Schebá,  
and for him pray unceasingly,  
daily bless Him !

## 3.

Be there superfluity of corn in the land on the mountain  
tops !

Its fruit o'ertop like the Lebanon,  
and the people of the city blossom like herb of the earth !  
let His name be for ever,  
so long as the sun stands, may His name increase ;



and may they bless themselves through Him—  
all peoples happily praise Him !

According to the language, all is here the expression of wishes ; each strophé begins with the jussive, and it cannot be once said in the progress of it that the jussive is resolved into the more tranquil description of an anticipated and desired future, as would be possible according to § 350 *a*. On יִרְיֶה, ver. 2, and יוֹשִׁיעַ, ver. 4, comp. § 224 *b*.

1. Ver. 3. Comp. lxxxv. 12 ; Zach. vi. 12 ; נִשָּׂא rare in this sense for עָשָׂה, according to another figure, Ez. xvii. 18.—But correctly as the poet makes righteousness his starting point as the first and last thing to be expected from royal government, and the foundation of all other welfare, as touched upon, ver. 3, correctly as he brings out the truth that they chiefly to whom good must come are the most depressed in the kingdom and the most dependent on others ; it is nevertheless unmistakable that the connexion of the language according to the present arrangement of words is entirely broken off after ver. 4. For the close of the great strophé, ver. 7, corresponds,—in designating prosperity as the last fruit of righteousness,—plainly enough to the close of the first half, vv. 3, 4 ; the requirement of the fear of God, in ver. 5, appears however here so entirely detached, that the second half cannot possibly begin with it. Equally obscure is it to what the figure of the rain which freshly revives the shorn pastures, and lifts them up, ver. 6, is intended to refer. On these grounds we infer with certainty, quite apart from the broken structure of the strophés, that a two-membered verse must have fallen out before ver. 5 ; and little as we presume to be able entirely to restore it with the words of the poet, we may nevertheless, according to all indications, justly suppose that it ran somewhat as follows :

God ! strengthen with Thy right the king,  
and arm him with Thy salvation,  
that men may fear Thee, etc.



For the view that in ver. 5 the king is addressed, most roughly mars not only the whole connexion and the tenor of the song, but also the life of the old true religion. It is however perfectly true that the fear of God in general in the life of a people is purified and increased the more plainly that all men see that the righteousness demanded by God is no vain and fruitless thing, and conversely, doubt and denial of God are increased if the people see unrighteousness too long prevailing, as is expressed so strongly especially in Ps. lxxiii. In this way the clear ground-word to ver. 6 appears, namely, *the Divine right and salvation*, if it was named again before ver. 5 on the new beginning of the address; and the figure of the richly refreshing rain is there similar to the passage in 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, in the like connexion.—To describe eternity by comparison with the unchangeably shining heavenly bodies, ever returning in their path, as our poet loves to do, is in the Old Testament very rare (though lying so near at hand), and is only found further in lxxxix. 30, 37, 38, from imitation of this Ps., comp. *Anquetil Zend Av. T. I.*, pp. clxxvi. sq. Only such passages as Job xiv. 12; Deut. xi. 21, form the transition to this. These modes of expression are in fact too greatly borrowed from astrology to admit of their having been earlier favoured in the people of Israel. For other particulars, comp. above, pp. 112, 167.

2. Ver. 8. From the South-east or the Arabian Sea to the North-west on the Great Sea, and again from the North-east or the Euphrates to the South-west, where Canaan ends in deserts without fixed boundaries, Canaan therefore in its widest extent, as David and Solomon had scarcely ruled it in its entirety, Exod. xxiii. 31, Gen. xv. 18; in the first instance from Zach. ix. 10. From the lands without the Davidic territory, ver. 10, homages are only expected of the same kind and for the same services as in Isa. xviii., lx., ii. 2-4; but that also the most bitter *enemies*, even the *adversaries* (*unholde*)—on עֲדָוָה, comp. § 146 *f.* note—*i.e.*, the most savage men, must



finally come to recognize him, is here, as above, Ps. lxxvi. 11-13, the main matter; and the phrase *lick dust* signifies also, according to Mikha vii. 17, in these later times nothing but to lie on the ground.—But now, as in the second half, vv. 12-15, only righteousness is named as the reason impelling strangers to such acts of homage—whose magic power, once become great, will extend itself even over the nearest bounds of the kingdom—the language recurs to its first starting-point, so that it then in a short after-word, vv. 16, 17, may the more suddenly come quite to an end. Ver. 12, וְיִשְׁתָּחֲוּ is a static proposition to describe the עֲבָדֶיךָ, § 341 a; the whole verse almost literally from Job. xxix. 12. After ver. 14 has been interjected, in order to depict the greatness of the love and activity of this king, in ver. 15 comes the completion of vv. 12, 13 and the true close of the whole conception; the *sing.* also recurs for that reason as at the beginning, vv. 12, 13. On וְיִשְׁתָּחֲוּ, comp. § 347 a. Similar large connexion of sentences, xlix. 8-10, which passage is present to the mind of this poet.

3. Ver. 16. Even to the tops of the mountains may the land produce the richest fruits, and the fruit of the bulky thick corn on all mountains be moved and rustle in the wind (beautiful to behold and hear) as now takes place only in the fruitful parts of the Libanon (Hos. xiv. 7). נֶסֶם be dispersed, divided, hence partly spread out, as here the substantive, and partly pass away, take away, as the verb, xii. 2. In this sense only the luxuriance of the growth of the corn, and of the people would be here finally alluded to; but the image in the second member would be of little significance. Since the language at the end manifestly comprises further in all brevity the most important matter, the intermediate member is better thus understood: (שְׂעִיר from שִׂנְיָ) *like to the Libanon his*, the king's fruit, his posterity, as Ps. xxi. 11. In such unusual figures this song is rich. The city is Jerusalem, just as in the passages adduced above, p. 252.



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