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THE METHOD OF STUDYING THE PSALTER.

II. PSALM XLV.

AN ODE CELEBRATING A ROYAL MARRIAGE.

THE occasion of this Psalm is evidently a royal marriage. The poet—as a modern poet among ourselves might do—puts into tuneful words the feelings of national pride and satisfaction befitting the occasion: he celebrates in glowing terms the graces and felicity of the bridegroom, the splendour of the queen, and anticipates for him a glorious and successful reign. The hopes to which the auspicious occasion gives rise are analogous to those which we find elsewhere in psalms or prophecies relating to the king; they differ only in so far as the occasion which evokes them is a marriage. We do not know either who the poet is, or whose nuptials he celebrates: verse 10*b*, if not verse 12, seems to imply that the bride is a foreigner; and so the marriage of Solomon with Pharaoh's daughter, or of Jehoram of Judah with Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, have been thought of. Happily we can understand the Psalm without knowing what the specific occasion is which it celebrates. We must only make an effort to transport ourselves from our own days to those of ancient Jerusalem—or, it may be, of Samaria—and picture in one of these ancient capitals of Israel a gala day—the people elated with enthusiasm and excitement, full of joyous anticipations, greeting their king and his bride with bright auguries and warm congratulations.

1 My heart is astir<sup>1</sup> with a goodly matter;

I will say<sup>2</sup> that which I have written<sup>3</sup> unto the king:  
my tongue is the pen of a ready writer—

<sup>1</sup> *Rāhash* occurs only here in the Old Testament: it does not mean to overflow (R.V.), but to keep moving, be astir (see the *Oxf. Heb. Lex.*, p. 935*b*, with the references).

<sup>2</sup> Lit. *I am saying*, i.e. *I am about to say* or *will say*; cf. Genesis xix. 13 'we will destroy this place' (lit. *are destroying*); 1 Samuel xii. 16 'which Jehovah will do before your eyes' (lit. *is doing*). See my *Hebrew Tenses*, § 135, 3; or G.-K. § 116*p*.

<sup>3</sup> Lit. *my work*, i.e. my composition (cf. Engl. *work*, of a book; and *ποίημα*,

and quick, therefore, to express the inspiring thoughts stirring in his heart. Forthwith he proceeds to describe the high qualities of the royal bridegroom—his personal beauty, the winsome smile upon his lips, witnessing to the gracious words that he can speak, and the gracious qualities, befitting a noble-minded monarch, which he possesses; and showing that he deserves, therefore, that God's blessing should rest continuously upon him—

2 Thou art fairer than the children of men :

graciousness is shed over thy lips :

therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

He is, moreover, a warrior, ready—as the Israelite kings ever were—to lead his army into battle and bravely wrestle with his foes; so the poet bids him equip himself in martial majesty and state, and use his weapons in the cause of truth and right—

3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O mighty one,<sup>1</sup>

(even) thy majesty and thy state.

4<sup>2</sup>And (in) thy state, <sup>3</sup>ride on, press through,<sup>3</sup>

on behalf of faithfulness, and humility, (and) righteousness:  
and may thy right hand teach thee terrible things!

not (P.B.V.) 'because of the *word* of truth,' etc., but '*on behalf of*,' i.e. '*in the cause of* faithfulness,' etc., in defence of virtues which are trampled under foot in evil times and under evil rulers, but which a just ruler would do his utmost to foster and promote. He is 'to protect the faithful as opposed to liars and deceivers, the righteous as opposed to breakers of the law, and the humble as opposed to the proud' (Cheyne). We remember how David and Solomon 'executed judgment and justice' in the land (2 Sam. viii. 15,

a 'poem.' In the translation 'my work,' is avoided, as a poor and prosaic expression; and a rendering adapted from the P.B.V. has been adopted.

<sup>1</sup> I.e. *O warrior*, according to the standing meaning of *gibbôr*, 'mighty one,' as in David's 'mighty men' (2 Sam. xxi. 8, etc.).

<sup>2</sup> The repetition of exactly the same word (גִּבּוֹר) that occurs at the end of v. 3, and the harshness of the construction in this verse, render the text very suspicious: but no convincing emendation has been proposed.

<sup>3</sup> Or, *prosper* (Jer. xxii. 20).

1 Kings x. 9), how often the defenceless and, especially, the godly poor were oppressed in Israel, and how to do justice and to help and protect the oppressed is mentioned, in both the prophets, and in other Psalms, as an attribute of the ideal ruler (Isa. ix. 7, xvi. 5; Jer. xxiii. 5; Isa. xi. 4, xxxii. 2; Ps. lxxii. 4, 12-14). May his right hand, the poet adds, teach him to do terrible things! i.e., may his courage show him how to do acts of terrible valour in defence of this great cause!

5 Thine arrows are sharpened ;  
 peoples fall under thee ;  
 (they are) in the heart of the king's enemies.

His arrows are sharp, ready to be aimed with fatal effect: his enemies fall before him, and he rides over their prostrate corpses (cf. Ps. xviii. 38 'I smite them through that they cannot rise: they fall under my feet'); each shaft has penetrated the heart of a foe.

The Psalmist continues—

6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever :  
 a sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

It is evident that the words are addressed to the king whose nobility and prowess the poet is celebrating. The words cannot, as from Hebrews i. 8 onwards has often been supposed, be an affirmation of the divinity of the Messiah, for the simple reason that the king whom the psalmist celebrates, though he is invested with ideal attributes, is not the Messiah—least of all the Christian Messiah, for he marries a queen and has children, who are spoken of in such terms that it would outrage all reasonable exegesis to understand them in any but a literal sense. Nor can we rend the Psalm in two, and apply the rest of the Psalm to the Israelite king, and this one verse to the Messiah. Thus, not upon theological but upon *exegetical* grounds, the current interpretation of the passage cannot be sus-

tained. Gressmann,<sup>1</sup> accepting the correctness of the text, supposes that the use of the term 'God' is a survival from a time when the Israelite king was regarded as divine and addressed as God. But that cannot be said to be probable. The rendering of R.V.m. would remove the difficulty; but it is questionable philologically.<sup>2</sup> If, however, with a very slight change of text, we might suppose, with Mr. Edghill,<sup>3</sup> that a *kaph*, written properly twice, had been transcribed only once, we should at once obtain a suitable sense: 'Thy throne is *as* God'—i.e. by Hebrew idiom, 'as God's throne' (cf. Ps. xviii. 33 'who maketh my feet like hinds,' i.e., of course, not like the hinds themselves, but 'like hinds' feet'; and see G.-K. § 141e, note). This appears to be the best suggestion for the explanation of the text that has been made: the textual change is slight, and the sense obtained is in excellent agreement with the context. The king's throne, it is said hyperbolically, is to be as permanent as God's throne: (cf. xxi. 4, where the king is said to have been given 'length of days for ever and ever (עוֹלָם וָעֶד),'<sup>4</sup> and lxi. 6, 7 'Days mayest thou add to the days of the king! May his years be as many generations! May he sit (enthroned) before God for ever (עוֹלָם)!'<sup>5</sup> And his rule is to be one of equity: 'A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom.' A rule of equity was always one of the first traits which the Israelite drew in his portrait of an ideal king (cf. Isa. xi. 4, 5, Jer. xxiii. 5, Ps. lxxii. 2, and elsewhere). And the poet views the king's present good fortune as the reward of his high moral attributes:—

7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity:  
therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee  
with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

<sup>1</sup> *Ursprung der Ier.-jüdischen Eschatologie* (1905), p. 256 f.

<sup>2</sup> See my *Hebrew Tenses*, § 194 Obs.

<sup>3</sup> *An Enquiry into the Evidential Value of Prophecy* (1906), p. 252.

The point in the last clause is not the anointing but the gladness : the anointing and the oil are both meant figuratively, the expression 'oil of gladness,' as in Isaiah lxi. 3, being suggested by the ancient custom of anointing with oil on festal occasions (Ps. civ. 15 ; Am. vi. 6 ; Luke vii. 46) ; the meaning is thus, not that he has been literally anointed, but that he has been made happier than other kings by his present auspicious marriage.

- 8 All thy garments are myrrh, and aloes, (and) cassia ;  
     out of ivory palaces stringed instruments make thee glad.  
 9 Kings' daughters are among thy precious ones :  
     upon thy right hand standeth the consort <sup>1</sup> in gold of Ophir.

V. 8 describes the king as he appears arrayed for the occasion ; his garments are scented with costly perfumes fetched from distant lands ; <sup>2</sup> as he approaches his palace, inlaid, like Ahab's, with ivory, the sounds of music greet him. V. 9, *kings'* daughters—so splendid is his court—are among the inmates of his harem—for that is the meaning of the 'honourable' <sup>3</sup> women of the English versions, Israelite kings being often polygamists ; but one of the wives takes precedence of the others, and occupies, like Bathsheba beside her son Solomon (1 Kings ii. 19), the post of honour at the king's right hand : in 'standeth,' or (R.V.) 'doth stand,'

<sup>1</sup> Not the usual word for *queen*. Elsewhere only Neh. ii. 6, Dan. v. 2, 3, 23 ('wives') ; and read by some scholars conjecturally in Judges v. 30 *end* ('for the neck of the consort').

<sup>2</sup> *Myrrh* was brought from Arabia. *Aloes* (Heb. *āhālōth*) is the Greek ἀγάλλοχον, the modern 'eagle-wood' (from the Malay *agil*), an aromatic wood, exported from India and Ceylon, which, when burnt, yields a fragrant odour. It is quite different from the bitter medicine which we call *aloes* (Gk. ἀλόη). The fragrant aloes are mentioned also in Cant. iv. 14, Proverbs vii. 17—in both places joined with 'myrrh.' *Cassia*—here lit. *scrapings* (the word in Exodus xxx. 24, Ezekiel xxvii. 19 is different), used specifically of the scrapings, or powder, of a fragrant bark—is the powdered bark of (probably) a species of cinnamon, indigenous in South India and Malacca (see *Enc. Bibl.*, i. 708).

<sup>3</sup> Lit. *precious, valued* : often of precious stones (2 Sam. xii. 30) ; of the 'sons of Zion,' once comparable to fine gold, but now esteemed only as 'earthen pitchers,' Lam. iv. 2. Cf. the cognate verb, *be precious*, of a life, 2 Kings i. 13, *al*.

the poet is anticipating the future place of the newly-wedded princess.

And now the poet turns to the queen, first (*v.* 10 *f.*) addressing her, and then (*v.* 12) describing her. She is youthful, we may suppose, and inexperienced: so he offers her some words of fatherly advice and encouragement suited to the occasion; he counsels her to forget her old home, and surrender herself to her new lord—

10 'Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear;  
forget also thine own people and thy father's house.

We are reminded here of the Homeric phrase, *εἰς εὐνὴν φαιτῶντε, φίλους λήθοντε τοκῆας*.

11 And when the king desireth thy beauty  
(for he is thy lord), then bow thyself unto him—

*viz.* in homage (Gen. xxiii. 7; 1 Kings i. 23, etc.): let her pay her husband—here called 'lord,' as Sarah calls Abraham 'lord' in Genesis xviii. 12—befitting respect and submission. 'God' in the P.B.V., is a gloss, derived from the Vulgate, and expressing, in a Christian sense, the current Messianic interpretation of the Psalm. But in the 'Great Bible' of Coverdale (1539), from which the P.B.V. is taken, it is shown, like other additions of the same kind (e.g. in Ps. i. 5), to be no part of the Hebrew text, by being placed within parentheses and printed in smaller type than the body of the Psalm. In early P.B. Psalters, and in the 'Sealed Book' of 1662, these distinguishing marks are still preserved, but they have since been gradually dropped. Their omission, as Bishop Westcott observes, is 'very greatly to be regretted.' See further my *Parallel Psalter*, pp. xix.—xx.

Next the queen is further encouraged, upon entering her new home, with the thought of the deference and respect which she will there receive, and of the eagerness with which gifts will be offered to her to win her favour.

*V.* 12 is difficult; we must, it seems, adopt one of two

interpretations. We may (1) suppose that a verb has fallen out, and render substantially as is done in A.V. and R.V.—

12 And the daughter of Tyre [shall come] with gifts,<sup>1</sup>  
the richest of the people shall intreat thy favour.

In this case the 'daughter of Tyre' will be the people of Tyre, personified, like the 'daughter of Zion, of Judah,' etc.; and this wealthy commercial nation will be represented as coming to court the favour of the royal bride.

Or (2) we may keep the text as it stands, and render the opening words as a vocative—

12 And, O daughter of Tyre,<sup>2</sup> with gifts  
the richest of the people shall intreat thy favour.

Upon this interpretation, the 'daughter of Tyre' will be the royal bride herself, who will in this case be a Tyrian princess, or at least a princess of Tyrian extraction, like Athaliah.

There follows a description of the queen's splendid bridal attire and of the state procession, in which, accompanied by a long train of attendants, she is escorted from her own apartments to the royal palace—

13 All glorious<sup>3</sup> is the king's daughter within (her chamber);  
her clothing is of chequer-work, inwrought with gold;

'Within'<sup>4</sup> means within a temple, palace, or, presumably, other building; here, apparently (Kirkepatrick), within the

<sup>1</sup> I.e. בַּמְנַחָה (תְּבוּאָה). The existing text cannot be rendered as is done in A.V., R.V.; and the construction of בַּת צַר with a plural verb is an objection to Ewald's rendering of the same text, adopted in the *Parallel Psalter*.

<sup>2</sup> For a vocative introduced by 'and,' without another vocative preceding, see Joel ii. 23. We should expect וְאַתְּ בַת צַר as in Joel וְאַתְּ בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן.

<sup>3</sup> Lit. (if the text is correct) *The whole of gloriousness*, a hyperbole. Cf. xxxix. 5, lit. *the whole of vanity*.

<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew is lit. *face-wards*, i.e. properly, in the inmost part of a hall or presence-chamber, where the throne would be facing those who enter it by the door at the further end (cf. the ἐνώπια παμφανόωντα of Homer), as of the Tent of Meeting (Lev. x. 18), the Temple (1 Kings vi. 18, 19; 2 Chron. xxix. 16), a palace (2 Kings vii. 11; 2 Chron. xxix. 18). The rendering 'within' (P.B.V., A.V.) suggests naturally 'inwardly,' 'within her own person'; but this is quite alien to the usage of the Hebrew word.



residence in Jerusalem to which she had been brought, and where she now stands, decked in bridal attire, ready to be conducted in state to the king's palace (*vv.* 14, 15). To render with R.V. 'within (the palace)' anticipates unduly *vv.* 14, 15, where the queen is first brought to it. Some modern scholars, however, for פנימה ממשבצות read פנינם במשבצות, i.e.

13 All glorious is the king's daughter;  
of pearls in filigree-settings of gold is her clothing.

For the rendering filigree-settings, see note <sup>1</sup> below.

'Chequer work' was some kind of decorative work, probably something of the nature of a 'check,'<sup>1</sup> whether, if of one colour, *quilted work*,<sup>2</sup> or, if of different colours, a *coloured check*: it was the material prescribed for the high priest's tunic (Exod. xxviii. 4, 39): here the fabric of the queen's dress is further decorated by being crossed, or varied in some way, with gold thread; cf. Vergil's *picturatas auri subtemine vestes* (*Aen.* 3. 483).

14 In variegated raiment shall she be escorted unto the king;  
the virgins her companions following her  
shall be brought unto thee.

15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be escorted;  
they shall enter into the king's palace.

V. 14. *Rikmah* certainly means *variegated* fabric (see Ezek. xvii. 3, where it is used of the plumage of a bird), and probably fabric *embroidered* in colours (see Kennedy, *Enc. Bibl.* iv. 5289). The 'work of the variegator' is prescribed for the screens of the Tent of Meeting and for the sash of the high priest (Exod. xxvi. 36, xxvii. 16, xxviii. 39): see also Judges v. 30; Ezek. xvi. 10, 13, xxvii. 7, 16, 24, *al.*

V. 15. The king meets the procession escorting the bride; and they enter the royal palace together. Cf. 1 Macc.

<sup>1</sup> In Exodus xxviii. 11, 13, 14, 20 the same word is used of the plaited gold settings of gems (A.V., R.V. 'ouches,' a now obsolete word for the frame in which a jewel is set: better, *filigree work*).

<sup>2</sup> See A. R. S. Kennedy's elaborate article, WEAVING, in the *Encycl. Bibl.* iv. 5288.

ix. 37, 39 : 'The children of Jambri were making a great marriage, and were bringing the bride from Nadabath with a great train, a daughter of one of the great nobles of Canaan . . . And the bridegroom came forth, and his friends and his brethren, to meet them with timbrels and minstrels and many weapons.' And the poet closes (*v.* 16) with happy wishes and anticipations for the future, addressed to the royal bridegroom : of the offspring of his marriage he may make princes—as Rehoboam, we are told, stationed his sons in various cities of Judah (2 Chron. xi. 23)—who may represent him in different parts of his realm ; and (*v.* 17) his memory will be perpetuated with undying fame, not in Israel only, but among other nations as well—

16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,

whom thou shalt make princes in all the land.<sup>1</sup>

17 I will make mention of thy name in all generations :

therefore shall the peoples give thanks unto thee for ever and ever.

The Psalm thus celebrates, in a high and noble strain, the nuptials of an Israelite king. It is Messianic, in so far as it portrays an *ideal*. The king, whoever he was, whom the poet addresses is invested by him with ideal attributes : he is the impersonation of high virtues and perfections ; he is fairer than the children of men, graciousness is shed over his lips, therefore he is blessed of God for ever ; he is to carry on a crusade on behalf of the faithful, the humble, and the righteous ; he loves righteousness and hates wickedness, and therefore extraordinary blessings and happiness are showered upon him. The Psalm thus falls into line with other Psalms and prophecies, in which similar thoughts are expressed and similar ideals projected—the 2nd and the 72nd, for instance, and with the 110th. These Psalms

<sup>1</sup> Or, *in all the earth*—for many peoples (*cf. vv.* 6c, 17b) will have been embraced in his domain. The Hebrew is ambiguous, and may bear either meaning.

express promises or hopes not fulfilled by any actual monarch of Israel ; they portray the king, not simply as what he was, but as what he should or might be ; in other words, they portray an *ideal*. They are thus, to use the technical expression, *typically* Messianic. And so, though sound exegesis will not permit *v.* 7 to be quoted, as it was wont to be quoted, as a proof of the Divinity of Christ, the Psalm may still be read with perfect propriety in our Church on Christmas Day, as setting forth a great ideal of kingly virtues and kingly rule, which Christ realised in the transfigured and spiritualised realm of David in which He assumed the throne.

## PSALM LXX.

## GOOD WISHES FOR A KING.

The poet prays that God will confer upon the king the gifts that will enable him to fulfil the ideal of his office. Thus equipped, may he prove himself the righteous ruler who secures for his subjects justice and peace ; and may he, as the reward of his upright rule, reign from sea to sea, receive the homage of distant nations, and look with satisfaction upon the prosperity of his people.

1 Give the king thy judgements, O God,  
and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

The poet prays God to give the king a store of His 'judgements,' or decisions, that he may appropriate and apply them when cases come before him for judgment ; and His 'righteousness,' that it may in the same way be expressed in the decisions that he gives.

In *vv.* 2-7 the consequences of the king's being thus equipped for his rule are developed : may he judge the poor—those common victims of oppression and injustice under an Oriental government—righteously ; may his people also themselves live righteously, and enjoy the fruits of good government and peace !

- 2 May he judge thy people with righteousness,  
and thy poor with judgement !
- 3 May the mountains bear peace to the people,  
and the hills righteousness !<sup>1</sup>
- 4 May he judge the poor of the people ;  
may he save the children of the needy,  
and crush the oppressor !

V. 2. With *righteousness* and *judgement*, as David did (2 Sam. viii. 15); and in accordance with the ideal, Jer. xxiii. 5.

*Thy poor.* Or *thine afflicted* (or, *humbled ones*), which is what the Hebrew word used properly means. So *vv.* 4, 12. See the article POOR in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, where the usage of the term is more fully explained.

In *v.* 3 the Hebrew has 'through righteousness.' But this greatly mars the parallelism of the verse, and doubtless Duhm is right in supposing that 'through righteousness' is an error of transcription due to the fact that (in the Hebrew) the same expression (בצדקה) occurs in *v.* 2*a.* For the figure of 'bearing' (viz. as *fruit*) cf. Isaiah xlv. 8 ('salvation,' i.e. deliverance, and 'righteousness,' to spring out of the earth). Peace and righteousness (as a civic virtue, among the people), the effects of a righteous rule, are viewed poetically as a fruit or growth of the mountains and hills. For the ideal picture cf. Isaiah xxxii. 15-17: 'Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high . . . Then judgement shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness shall abide in the garden-land; and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and confidence for ever.'

- 5 May he prolong (his days)<sup>2</sup> as long as the sun endureth,<sup>3</sup>  
and before the moon, through all generations !

<sup>1</sup> Hebrew text, *through righteousness*. See the note.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrew text, *May they fear thee*. See the note.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *with the sun*. See the same idiom in Daniel iv. 3 [Heb. iii. 23], lit. 'with generation and generation.'

- 6 May he come down like rain upon the mown grass,  
as showers, (even) drops<sup>1</sup> upon the earth!  
7 In his days may righteousness<sup>2</sup> flourish;  
and abundance of peace till the moon be no more!

V. 5. *May he prolong* (his days). The Hebrew text has 'May they fear thee,'—words which might possibly be addressed to the king, though more probably, if they are correct, they are to be taken as addressed to God. In either case, however, and especially in the latter, the thought of the verse comes in abruptly, and is alien to the context. LXX read *συνπαρμενεῖ*, i.e. *shall continue with*, reading no doubt אֲרִיךְ יָמֶיךָ; and this yields a far better sense: 'May he *prolong* (his days) as long as the sun endureth'; the word, as Deuteronomy xvii. 20 and often; for the ellipse of 'days,' see Ecclesiastes vii. 15. The hyperbolic wish as 1 Kings i. 31; Psalm xxi. 4, lxi. 6, 7. (above p. 117).

V. 6. May his rule be as gentle and beneficent as rain upon a mown meadow, or showers upon the earth. Cf. the similar comparison of the effects of a righteous rule in 2 Samuel xxiii. 3c, d, 4. The figure is carried on in the 'flourish' or 'blossom' of v. 7.

In v. 7 for *righteous*, LXX, Jerome, and the Syriac version have *righteousness*. The sense is not appreciably different: but the abstract term suits the parallel *peace* better, and the change in the Hebrew is only one of vocalisation.

<sup>1</sup> The word (*zarziph*) is peculiar, and occurs in the Old Testament only here. It is cited as occurring once in the Talm. (*Yoma* 87a), of 'drops' scattered in throwing water from a bucket. Very possibly it is here a corruption of some verb meaning *to water* or *moisten*. יִרְזִיפוּ, from יִרְזֵף to *flow* (cited once from a late Midrash), does not give the right sense. If we might *infer* a verb יִרְזַף, not otherwise known in Hebrew, either from Syr. זִרְפָּתָא, a *heavy rain*, or Arab. *dharafa*, to *flow* (of tears), we could read יִרְזִיפוּ, 'that make the earth to flow.' Or we could read יִרְזִיפוּ, 'that make the earth to drop' (cf. Ps. lxxv. 12, R.V.m. [Heb. 13]). The best word, if the *ductus literarum* did not differ too widely from יִרְזִיפוּ, would be יִרְזִיפוּ, 'like showers that water the earth.' See Isaiah lv. 10; and for the form Psalm xxxvi. 8 [Heb. 9].

<sup>2</sup> Hebrew text, *the righteous*. See the note.

*Vv. 8-12.* May his realm be wider than that of Solomon, may all enemies be subdued before him, may the most distant and famous peoples do him homage!

8 May he have dominion also from sea to sea,  
and from the River unto the ends of the earth!

9 May the desert-dwellers bow before him;  
and his enemies lick the dust!

10 May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render presents!  
may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring dues!

11 Yea, may all kings fall down to him!  
may all nations serve him!

V. 8. A poetical extension of the limits assigned by tradition to the empire of Solomon (1 Kings iv. 21 [Heb. v. 1]), 'And Solomon was ruling over all the kingdoms from the River unto the land of the Philistines, and as far as the border of Egypt'; 24 'For he was having dominion [the same verb as here] over all the country beyond the River [i.e. west of it—viewed from the Babylonian standpoint], from Tiphсах [Thapsacus] as far as Gaza, over all the kings beyond the River.' 'The River,' as always in R.V. (e.g. Exod. xxiii. 31), when the word has a capital letter, is the Euphrates, *the river* κατ' ἐξοχὴν to the Hebrews. The greater part of *v. 8* recurs *verbatim* in Zech. ix. 10*b*, in the description of the rule of the ideal king of the future, 'And he shall speak peace unto the nations; and his rule shall be *from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth.*'

V. 9. The 'desert-dwellers' are the wild Bedouin, the free sons of the desert, who will not readily own any superior. The rendering, though it fits the context excellently, is, however, uncertain, since elsewhere the word always means 'desert-beasts' (Ps. lxxiv. 14; Isa. xiii. 21 *al.*); hence several recent scholars would read *his adversaries* (צריים ציים).

To *lick the dust* is a figure of abject submission: cf. the same words in Micah vii. 17; and to 'lick the dust of thy feet' in Isaiah xlix. 23. In Assyrian bas-reliefs captives

are often represented as crouching down, with their faces on the ground, at their conqueror's feet.

V. 10. *Tarshish* is Tartessus in Spain (Gen. x. 4, Ezek. xxvii. 12 *al.*; and, as a distant country, as here, Isa. lxvi. 19). The *isles* or *coasts*—for the term used includes both—are in particular the isles and coasts of the Mediterranean Sea. The word is frequent in Deutero-Isaiah.

*Shēbā* is the people known to the classical writers as *Sabaēi*, Sabaeans. Their home was in the S.W. of Arabia, where numerous inscriptions, showing that they were a civilised and well-governed nation, have recently been discovered. They are several times mentioned in the Old Testament as a distant and wealthy people, famed for its gold, precious stones, and frankincense (1 Kings x. 1 ff., 10; Jer. vi. 20; Isa. lx. 6; Ezek. xxvii. 22). *Sēbā* (also Gen. x. 7, a 'son' of Cush, and Isa. xliii. 3, xlv. 14, beside Egypt and Cush) was probably *Σαβαί*, a 'large city' mentioned by Strabo on the west coast of the Red Sea, on the Adulitic Gulf.

The thought of *vv.* 10, 11 is no doubt suggested by 1 Kings iv. 21 [Heb. v. 1], 'they (viz. all kingdoms from the Euphrates to the border of Egypt) were bringing "presents,"<sup>1</sup> and "served" Solomon'; x. 1, 10 (the Queen of Sheba and the gold, spices, and precious stones brought by her); x. 24 f. ('all the earth' were bringing him yearly 'presents'); x. 22 (the navy of 'Tarshish,'—though its voyages were, it is true, not to Tarshish but to Arabia).

*Vv.* 12-14. This far-reaching dominion and the world-wide homage which he will receive are the reward for his just and gracious rule. As before (*v.* 4), the king's special merit is his care for the poor and the oppressed.

<sup>1</sup> The 'present' (Heb. *minḥah*) was not an ordinary gift, but an offering intended to conciliate the good-will of a superior,—often more or less expected, or compulsory, and a mark of subjection (cf. 2 Sam. viii. 2, 6); hence in Psalm lxxii. 10 'render' (implying a *due*); so 2 Kings xvii. 3 Heb. (where A.V. *marg.* had 'tribute,' as R.V. *marg.* has here).

12 For he will deliver the needy when he crieth,  
the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

13 He will have pity on the feeble and the needy,  
and the souls of the needy he will save.

14 He will redeem their soul from oppression and violence;  
and precious will their blood be in his sight.

Their blood being 'precious,' he will take care that it is not unjustly shed.

*Vv. 15-17.* Three closing prayers, for the welfare of the king (*v. 15*), the fertility of the land and prosperity of the people (*v. 16*), and the honourable perpetuation of his name (*v. 17*).

15 And may he live, and may there be given unto him of the gold of Sheba!

may prayer also be made for him continually!  
may he be blessed all the day!

16 May there be abundance<sup>1</sup> of corn in the land upon the top of the mountains!

may the fruit thereof shake like Lebanon!  
and may men blossom out<sup>2</sup> of the city like the herb of the earth!

17 May his name be for ever!

before the sun may his name have increase:  
may all families of the earth<sup>3</sup> also bless themselves by him!  
may all nations call him happy!

In *v. 15* 'may he live' sounds like an echo of the regular exclamation, *May the king live!* (1 Kings i. 25 *al.*), which in Hebrew, as in French (*Vive le roi!*), is the idiomatic equivalent of our *God save the king*. 'May the people not only greet him with the customary acclamation, and offer him the choicest gifts, but pray for his welfare and bless him, as the source of their happiness and prosperity' (Kirkpatrick). In line 3 of the same verse, the P.B. Version *unto him* is not possible. There is no greater ambiguity in

<sup>1</sup> So with a change of text. The Hebrew word found here is otherwise unknown, and the meanings that have been given to it are purely conjectural.

<sup>2</sup> So LXX; see Genesis xii. 3. The words have probably accidentally fallen out in the Mass. text; the verb 'bless themselves' in the Hebrew lacks a subject, and the addition improves the balance of lines 3 and 4 of *v. 17*.



the sense of the Hebrew *b'ad*, than there is in that of the Greek *ὑπέρ*.

V. 16. The word פִּטְט occurs nowhere else, and no satisfactory explanation of it has ever been given.<sup>1</sup> In the translation Lagarde's conjecture תפעת, *abundance* (of water, Job xxii. 11, xxxviii. 34; camels, Isa. lx. 6; horses, Ezek. xxvi. 10; men, 2 Kings ix. 9 twice) has been followed.

*Blossom . . . like the herb of the earth.* Their numbers and their freshness are the *tertium comparationis*: cf. Isaiah xxvii. 6 ('Israel shall blossom and bud'), Job v. 25b ('And thine offspring shall be like the herb of the earth'). May his people both flourish, and increase largely in numbers!

V. 17. *Have increase, or be propagated*, viz. by his descendants. The Hebrew word occurs only here, but *nīn*, 'progeny' (Gen. xxi. 23; Job xviii. 19; Isa. xiv. 22: A.V., R.V. *son*) would be cognate. The figure, as applied to a name, is, however, somewhat strange, and perhaps *be established* (יָבִי for יָבִי) should be read.

*May all families of the earth also bless themselves by him*; i.e. use his name in blessing as a type of happiness, saying, 'God make me (or thee) like this king,' and so 'invoking for themselves the blessings which he enjoys, as the highest and best that they can imagine.' Jacob represents Israel as 'blessing themselves' by his two grandchildren, when he says (Gen. xlviii. 20), 'By thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh.'<sup>2</sup> The same expression occurs in Genesis xxii. 18 and xxvi. 4 (which should be rendered, 'And by thy seed shall all nations of the earth bless themselves').<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Handful* (A.V.) comes from a comparison of the Aram. *pas*, the *palm* of the hand (Dan. v. 5, 24); but this sense does not suit the context.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the opposite custom of using a name in cursing (Jer. xxix. 21), 'Jehovah made thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.'

<sup>3</sup> In Genesis xii. 3, xviii. 18, xxviii. 14 the form of the verb is different.

The verses which follow form no part of the Psalm, but are the doxology closing the second Book of the Psalms, added by a compiler—

- 18 Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,  
 who only doeth wondrous things:  
 19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever;  
 and let the whole earth be filled with his glory.  
 Amen, and Amen.

Compare the similar doxologies closing the first, third and fourth Books (xli. 13; lxxxix. 52; cvi. 48).

The Psalm (notice *v.* 1), if it relates to an Israelite king, reads like a prayer on his accession; what king, we do not know, but certainly one of the later ones—perhaps Josiah. This is shown both from the clear and easy style, which is just that of other Psalms which, upon independent grounds, are plainly not early; and also from the allusions in *vv.* 10, 12–14 to the oppression of the poor and needy, which resemble strongly allusions of the same kind in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and in Psalms of the same and later periods. The hopes and anticipations which the Psalm expresses for the king are suggested partly by reminiscences of Solomon's rule, partly by a sense of what the qualifications of a just ruler should be, in view of the social conditions of the time. The Psalm, if it was originally composed in view of an Israelite king, will be 'typically' Messianic in that it presents him under an *ideal* aspect, attributing to him an ideal rule of perfection and universality, extending to the ends of the earth, and attracting the homage of distant nations: the portrait in its entirety thus transcends that of an actual king, and depicts an *ideal* king, the father and protector of his people, the ruler worthy to command the homage of the world. It is, however, true that there are features in the Psalm that suggest a post-exilic date; in particular the names in *v.* 10 read like reminiscences of such passages as Isa. xlii. 4, 10 ('isles'), xliii. 3, lx. 6, 9;

and, as the Psalms are in their phraseology more usually dependent on the prophets than the prophets on the Psalms, there is a presumption that *v.* 8 is more probably derived from Zechariah ix. 10 than Zechariah ix. 10 from *v.* 8. Hence, as in this period there was no native king to whom *v.* 1 could refer, and a reference to a foreign ruler—such as one of the Ptolemies—is not probable, it is possible, as even Kirkpatrick (p. 417) allows, that it ‘does not refer to any particular king, but is a prayer for the establishment of the Messianic kingdom under a prince of David’s line, according to prophecy,’ a lyrical echo, in fact, of Zechariah ix. 10, and other passages of the prophets. Another possible view is that of Bätthgen, who remarks that *vv.* 12–14 state more naturally the reason for *v.* 7 than for *vv.* 8–11: accordingly he thinks that *vv.* 1–7, 12–17 formed the original Psalm, referring to one of the later kings of Judah, and that *vv.* 8–11 are an insertion made by a post-exilic poet for the purpose of imparting to the Psalm a Messianic character. Dr. Briggs’ view is similar; but he would include *v.* 17*c, d*, with its reminiscences of Genesis xii. 3 and xxii. 18, in the post-exilic additions. Upon either of these views—upon the first in the intention of the original poet, upon the second as accommodated to the conception by a later poet—it will be directly Messianic. We cannot be sure which of these three views of the original application of the Psalm is correct; but whichever be adopted, its general import will remain the same: as we have it, it is the portrait of an ideal ruler, either (1) foreshadowing, or (2 and 3) delineating directly, according to Jewish conceptions, the future ideal king, whom we call the ‘Messiah.’

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