FESTAL DRAMA IN DEUTERO-ISAIAH

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

(See Bibliography for full particulars of works; also for abbreviations with an author's name and for citations by author's name only.)

ANES	Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East: Supplementary. . . .*
ANET	Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts.*
ASTI	Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute.
BDB	Brown, Driver, Briggs: *Oxford Hebrew Lexicon*, 1906.
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia.
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift.
BZAW	Beihefte zur *ZAW*.
DK	Ringgren, 'Deuterojesaja och kultspråket'.
G	Greek Version (LXX).
GK	Gesenius, Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar*,
HTC	Mowinckel, *He that Cometh.*
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature.
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies.
KJ	King James Version, 1611.
KK	Kaiser, *Der königliche Knecht.*
KP	Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms.*
M	Massoretic Text.
MRK	Hooke, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship.*
NEB	New English Bible, 1970.
ONHZ	Eaton, *Obadiah. . . .*
PIW	Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship.*
Q	Qumran Isaiah Scroll A.
RANE	Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East.*
RB	Revue Biblique.

RSV	Revised Standard Version, 1965.
S	Syriac Version.
SAHG	Falkenstein, *Sumerische. . . .*
SKAI	Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel.*
T	Targum.
TWAT	Botterweck, *Theologisches Wörterbuch. . . .*
VT	Vetus Testamentum.
VTS	Supplements to *VT*.
W	Witzel (see Bibliography).
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.

PREFACE

I have not used footnotes and have cited modern works often with the author's name only, reserving the details for the lists of abbreviations and of works cited. The verse numeration of the Hebrew psalms, unlike modern versions, includes the titles; to trace my psalm references to the English Bible, therefore, readers should in most cases deduct 1 from the (Hebrew) verse number which I give.

Arriving punctually on his bicycle at the old Oriental Institute in Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge, Professor D. Winton Thomas read and translated Deutero-Isaiah year by year, with comments to justify his translation. The little circle of his listeners some twenty-five years ago included my present colleague, Grace Emmerson, and myself. From then on I have had a special love of these passages and a desire to understand them in depth and as a whole. My hope and prayer in this present book is that such a fuller understanding may have come into view by way of my previous work on the Psalms.

Dr Herbert Adams has once more helped me greatly with checking; for the final stages I am indebted to Judith Lieu. I would like also to express my appreciation of the unfailing support given me through many years by our head of department, Professor J. Gordon Davies.

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How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,
that publisheth peace;
that bringeth good tidings of good,
that publisheth salvation;
that saith unto Zion,
Thy God reigneth!

All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way;
and the Lord hath laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

Ye shall go out with joy,
and be led forth with peace;
the mountains and the hills
shall break forth before you into singing,
and all the trees of the field
shall clap their hands.

I
THE ENQUIRY'S AIM AND PROCEDURE

1 *The enigma of Isaiah 40—55*

The cycle of prophecies in Isa. 40—55 has many inviting qualities. Comprehension, it seems, should be easily attained. The style is fluent. The effect is brilliant and exciting. The text is well preserved. The vocabulary is mostly well known. The political event which provoked this prophesying is reflected with unusual clarity: the rise of the Persian conqueror Cyrus, which promised the overthrow of Babylon and the end of the Jewish Exile.

And yet the work presents extremely difficult problems of interpretation, as is especially apparent in the continuing disagreement of scholars over the significance of the passages concerning Yahweh's Servant. For this problem cannot be isolated. Failure to interpret these passages satisfactorily must also be failure to appreciate the message as a whole, since all the major themes of the cycle are interwoven in mutual dependence. The controversial passages, often called 'the Servant Songs', are 42.1–4 or 1–7; 49.1–6 or 1–9; 50.4–9 or 4–11; 52.13—53.12. Here we meet a conception or conceptions of a Servant of Yahweh which in several ways may or must be distinguished from what the cycle also says about the servanthood of Jacob and his descendants, the nation Israel. Agreement about the intention of these passages seems as far away as when C. R. North compiled his useful history of interpretation, *The Suffering Servant* (1948/56), and H. H. Rowley wrote his lucid essay 'The Servant of the Lord' (1952/65). A few examples of currently influential views will suffice to show the diversity.

J. Begrich, in his important *Studien zu Deuterojesaja* (1938), revived the view that the Songs are the prophet's account of his own mission; ch. 53 is his anticipation of his death and restoration, ideas prompted by the psalmic tradition of the rescue of the sufferer from the power of Sheol. A similar view had been put forward by S. Mowinckel in his early work, but he eventually concluded that the Servant passages referred to a prophet from the circle of Deutero-Isaiah; the Songs were composed by

disciples after his death and express their faith that he would be raised again (*He That Cometh* (1956), pp. 250f). The position of R. N. Whybray in his commentary of 1975 and his study of 1978 is similar to Begrich's, but he explains ch. 53 as a thanksgiving for Deutero-Isaiah's release from a Babylonian prison.

G. von Rad treated the matter in his great *O. T. Theology* (II (1960/5), pp. 259f). He sees a Servant who is a future prophet, one who was expected to come in fulfilment of the promise that a prophet like Moses would be raised up (Deut. 18.18); thus the 'new Exodus' foretold by Deutero-Isaiah would be led by a new and greater Moses.

Various forms of national entity are still commonly proposed. O. Eissfeldt's paper of 1933, *Der Gottesknecht*, still commands respect in its sensitivity to ancient ways of thinking; he maintained that the Servant is the ideal Israel, arising from the idea of the national ancestor who can be seen both as identical with the exiled Israelites and as standing over against them. The Servant as a form of the nation is still the usual Jewish view, as noted with interesting comments by R. Loewe in his preface to the re-issue (1969) of Driver and Neubauer's *The Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah according to the Jewish Interpreters* (1876–7). The Servant as the city Zion is advocated by L. E. Wilshire in *JBL* 1975.

From the ancient Jewish interpretations to the present day support for a royal or messianic Servant has not been lacking. Provocative but never to be ignored, I. Engnell contended in his article 'The Ebed Yahweh Songs' (1945/8) that the Servant passages express a prophetic hope of a Messiah, a coming saviour-king whose character is based on royal passion rites, which Engnell believed to have existed widely in the ancient Near East. Though the manner of Engnell's formulating and arguing has rightly met with much disapproval, the kernel of his theory has had its effect on subsequent discussion. Thus O. Kaiser has argued in *Der königliche Knecht* (1959/62) that royal categories are used to portray the Servant, who is however a community, namely Israel as represented especially by the exiles in Babylon. In similar fashion, H. Ringgren's admirably balanced handbook *Israelite Religion* (1963/6) also regards the Servant as being the nation presented in royal concepts and with idealizing force. A. Kapelrud's article, 'The Identity of the Suffering Servant' (1971), relates the royal and national evidence somewhat differently; he prefers to describe the Servant as the exiles who are symbolized and represented by the exiled king Jehoiachin. J. Morgenstern (*VT* 1961–3) has argued that the Songs once formed an independent work, a tragic drama of the fifth century, influenced by

Greek dramas, and depicting a Davidic heir who was to become king of Israel.

A source of continuing disagreement has been the actual delimitation of the 'Servant Songs'. Apart from the shorter and longer definitions listed on p. 1, some scholars have more radical doubts. They fear that the customary picking out and marshalling together of such pieces may set up false problems. This fear is expressed by P. R. Ackroyd in his *Exile and Restoration* (1968), pp. 126–7; consequently he is unhappy about the use of 'the Servant' as a technical term with a capital S, and he makes little reference to the weighty passages in question in his long study of exilic thought. H. Orlinsky had already expressed a similar view at length in 'The so-called "Servant of the Lord"' (1967), contending that modern scholars have actually invented 'the Servant' as a specific concept; he takes 52.13–15 to refer to Israel, and the rest of the Songs as referring to the prophet-author.

2 *The formative tradition behind Isaiah 40—55*

Perhaps the greatest tension in these disputes of scholars is caused on the one hand by the distinctiveness of the Songs and on the other by the need to take them in their context. This tension is in fact in the nature of the material, and the modern debates have at least served to make this clear. The distinctiveness was brought out by the literary analysis begun especially by B. Duhm's commentary of 1892 (see North *SS*, pp. 47–8); it was reinforced by the form-critics' recognition of some seventy distinct units in chs. 40—55, as in the important work of J. Begrich, *Studien zu Deuterojesaja* (1938/63). But the importance of the context had then to be re-emphasized. Collected from their contexts, the Songs proved to be the victims of all sorts of subjective explanations, especially as to their relations to each other and to the chapters as a whole. Moreover there was ample evidence of links with the context, as stressed by those who see the Servant as a form of the nation.

If this tension has then to be accepted, the resultant problems of interpretation must be tackled by further penetration into the peculiar nature of the material. I believe we need to follow further the way along which much progress has already been made, the way which leads us to the tradition and situations which have given the material its peculiar character. If we fail to grasp this tradition and the situations from which it stemmed, if we read Deutero-Isaiah as the book or

collected pages of a freely creative writer, we shall never perceive the wholeness of the message.

It may be objected that form- and tradition-criticism has already been much used on Isa. 40—55 and has run into considerable difficulties. Despite the excellent work of Begrich and several more recent contributions (von Waldow, Melugin, Nielsen, Westermann, Schoors), there are many units which defy full comparison, not necessarily because of their originality, but arguably because adequate comparable material has not survived. The Songs themselves share this difficulty.

But while such criticism lacks the evidence to complete its work in detail, enough has already been done, I believe, to guide us to the decisive factors of tradition behind Isa. 40—55. It has long been recognized that many units in this cycle resemble the materials of earlier services in the Temple, such as the hymns, laments, and assuring oracles (Begrich, pp. 14f). Beyond this resemblance, there is the affinity with the chief annual pre-exilic festival, 'the Festival of Yahweh' held in the autumn at Jerusalem. This affinity was first clearly seen by Mowinckel (*Psalmenstudien*, II, (1921) pp. 195f). In *He That Cometh* (1956), pp. 138f, he expresses it thus:

> Deutero-Isaiah . . . lifts the whole conception of restoration up into a supra-terrestrial sphere, presenting it as a drama of cosmic dimensions. . . . Here he was able to start from a developed system of ideas which was already in existence. He derived both the framework and the details from a feature of Israelite religion which was already central as early as the period of the monarchy, namely those ideas and experiences which were associated with the most important festival in the temple cultus at Jerusalem, the autumn and New Year festival (the feast of Tabernacles), the festival of the manifestation (epiphany) of Yahweh, *hag* YHWH, also regarded as the festival of Yahweh's enthronement.

Yet in the very same book Mowinckel shows that he shares with most scholars their inability to understand the Songs as an integral part of the exilic prophecy of the rest of the cycle (above, pp. 1–2). The reason is a deficiency in his understanding of the pre-exilic festival. The festal element which corresponds (as I shall argue) to the Servant of the Songs is remarkably underestimated in Mowinckel's expositions of the festival. This element was a presentation of the ideal of the Davidic king, Yahweh's royal Servant who mediates his rule in Zion.

It was the merit of Engnell to have seen the total correspondence of

Deutero-Isaiah's scheme, including the Servant, with the festal ideas, which had included the vocation, ritual suffering, and glorification of the royal figure. He was thus in a good position to insist on the close-knit consistency of the whole cycle of material. Not only were the Songs themselves to be characterized as 'a prophetic re-modelling of a liturgical composition belonging to the Annual Festival' (Engnell, pp. 56–7). The whole cycle was modelled on the liturgy:

> Deutero-Isaiah is a prophetic collection of traditions of the type I have called *liturgy* . . . not a cult liturgy but a prophetic imitation thereof. . . . Our tradition has its own distinctive character in comparison with the rest of the material in Isaiah, not least owing to its strictly consistent composition, given by its very nature of an imitation of an actual Annual Festival liturgy. Of this unity the Servant Songs, too, form integral and indispensable items (p. 64).

To claim that Engnell had here found the key to the problem is by no means to suggest that the fundamental task had been done. The treatment in his article was far too spasmodic to carry conviction. His approach to the rites and ideas of kingship in the ancient Near East was open to grave objections, as made by De Fraine, Bernhardt, and many others. In any case he did little more specifically for the Israelite materials of kingship than project numerous hypotheses. Much work remained to be done to determine the nature of the royal rites and to make a systematic correlation with Deutero-Isaiah.

3 *The relevance of my 'Kingship and the Psalms'*

My hope to make good what is lacking in the contributions of Mowinckel and Engnell to this question arises from the studies published in my *Kingship and the Psalms* (1976). For convenient reference particular conclusions relevant to the present work will be itemized (and in some cases developed) in the next chapter. At this point I intend only to indicate the argument of my previous work as a whole and show how it has provided a basis for this fresh study of Deutero-Isaiah.

I maintained that those scholars were right who regarded the bulk of the Psalms of the Individual as royal psalms. In support of this I argued the weakness of alternative theories, the force of many general considerations, and the suitability of the psalms in question when examined separately, both in their details and in their wholeness. While I regarded most of these psalms as composed for some personal or political

crisis in the lives of the kings, I took a few others to be composed for the autumnal ritual (22, 23, 51, 75, 91, 121, 118); and of the numerous 'crisis' psalms, some reflected the annual ritual in a most useful fashion (especially 9—10, 40, 71).

Turning to the character of the autumn festival, I argued that Mowinckel had been right to see it as including a dramatic celebration of Yahweh's kingship, for which the psalms of Yahweh's throne-ascension and the Songs of Zion, together with some closely related psalms, were evidence. He should, however, have given more attention to the presentation of the Davidic king's vocation in the festival, as seen in their different ways by H. Schmidt, A. R. Johnson, and H.-J. Kraus. From a fresh examination of the psalms classified by Gunkel as Royal Psalms, I concluded that most of these were from the rites in the autumn festival whereby Davidic kings were enthroned or renewed in their office.

The clarification of these royal rites was then assisted by evidence from the larger mass of psalms I had claimed as royal. My conclusion was that the festal presentation of God's supremacy and kingship had indeed been combined with a presentation of the royal office as the chosen organ of that kingship, and that the glorification of the king in the grace of Yahweh was preceded by his symbolic humiliation to the verge of death. This humiliation appeared in greater fulness than in the fine work of Johnson, due to application of extra psalmody such as Pss. 22 and 144. While agreeing with Johnson that the ideal and ultimate values presented in this drama conveyed a prophetic challenge and hope, I found that the rites still kept a sacramental intention, to install and strengthen the king of the day and bring grace to all the faithful.

From my enlarging of the royal psalmody and from the re-examination of the festival, I drew materials for the reconsideration of the royal office as portrayed in the festal tradition and its related psalms. While the well-known aspects appeared now with fuller detail and brighter colouring, it seemed possible to add with confidence other aspects which had hitherto been neglected or disputed, such as the king's intimacy with God, his consequent priestly and prophetic functions, his mediation of life-giving law and grace, his work of atonement, intercession, admonition, and witness to Yahweh's power.

Thus my *Kingship and the Psalms* offers a fuller presentation of the festival, its royal rites, and the royal office. This presentation I now propose to use for the clarification of Isa. 40—55. After rehearsing in the next chapter the main items of the festal tradition, I shall survey Isa. 40—55, 60—62 to show the extent to which this tradition has been

drawn upon. It will finally be claimed that this tradition is in fact determinative of the main ideas in Isa. 40—55, including the Servant, and determinative also of the dramatic form in which they are presented, a form which is so perplexing when read as a document in a later age. With the identification of the determinative tradition, the connections which were understood by the prophet and his first hearers are recreated in our imagination. The assembly of pieces is transformed for us then into a living, organic whole. Only thus can the meaning of the total message and of its constituent parts dawn upon us across the centuries.

2
AN OUTLINE OF THE PRE-EXILIC FESTIVAL AND IDEAL OF KINGSHIP

I shall here give in outline the main elements of the pre-exilic autumnal festival, from which stemmed a tradition of immense theological importance, a tradition surely well-known to the cultic classes surviving in the Exile. The critical judgements underlying my reconstruction in this still controversial field have been justified, to the best of my ability, in my *KP* and given some further exposition in my article in *Tradition and Interpretation*, ed. G. W. Anderson (1979). Here the purpose is above all to give a useful outline for subsequent reference, and hence the numbering of items (§ 1, etc.). My interpretation of each psalm in itself can be seen in *KP* in the case of Psalms of the Individual and Royal Psalms, and in my small commentary *Psalms* in other cases (Hymns, etc.).

From the psalms which I cite now as evidence of the festal tradition, it will be apparent that I agree substantially with Mowinckel in ascribing to that tradition a large place in the Psalter. I do not see any grounds for incredulity that the principal festival of the state Temple should have so left its mark on the corpus of cultic songs handed down by that Temple. It should be no more surprising than that one particular tradition dominates the Book of Proverbs or Deuteronomy. While I consider that almost all the psalms I cite are pre-exilic, it should be realized that even one of later date can provide evidence of the ancient ideas, and in particular need by no means depend on Deutero-Isaiah. This point is well established in the massive treatment of some Yahweh-Enthronement psalms by E. Lipiński (1965/8). Westermann also has grasped this now.

Accordingly, I consider that the festal tradition, unaffected by Deutero-Isaiah, is especially exemplified by the following psalms: 47, 93, 96–9, proclaiming Yahweh's kingship; the closely related 95 with its covenant-speech of Yahweh; its formal twin 81 and the similar 50, also with covenant-speeches; the processional psalms 24, 68, 132; the dramatic Zion psalms 46, 48, 76, 87; 29, 65, 67 and 84, full of obviously

festal ideas – mastery of the rain-sources, etc.; the traditionally festal group 120—134; some psalms of decisive divine judgement, 75, 82, 149. The tradition is well seen also in several powerful hymns of a more general nature, notably 33, 103, 104, 115, 147. The rites of the Davidic office in the festival are illustrated by Gunkel's Royal Psalms 2, 18, 20, 21, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, 144, and by 22, 23, 91, 118, 121; indirectly also by 9—10, 40, 71, while 51 and 102 disclose other ceremonies of atonement. In §§ 24–37 the features of the royal ideal of the Psalms, as nourished especially by the festival, are derived from the evidence presented in my *KP*, where indications from the Royal Psalms, Psalms of the Individual, other O.T. sources, and foreign texts are compared and checked together.

§ 1 *The occasion of the festival*

The timing and duration of the autumnal festival, 'the festival of Yahweh', in royal Jerusalem are not known precisely. The tradition we are studying can be said to arise from the complex of observances that were the antecedents of the post-exilic new year's day (1 Tishri), Day of Atonement (10 Tishri) and week of Booths or Tabernacles (15–22 Tishri). The pattern of distribution may have been quite similar in the royal period, the main week of concourse being preceded by preparatory days, including ceremonies of purification. The crucial feature of this time of year was the keen anticipation of the winter rains, essential for the new year's growth and food supply, but by no means unfailingly regular. Whatever other themes might be introduced (historical election, eschatology, etc.), this great physical necessity affected the orientation of the festival towards the new year, as is well remembered in the post-exilic text Zech. 14:

> And on that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem . . . and Yahweh shall become king (*wᵉhāyā Y. lᵉmelek*) over all the earth . . . and all the remnant of the nations attacking Jerusalem shall ascend year by year to make obeisance to the King, Yahweh of Hosts, and to keep the pilgrim-feast of Booths. And whichever of the families of the earth do not ascend to Jerusalem to make obeisance to the King, Yahweh of Hosts, on them the rain will not fall. . . .

If Yahweh was favourable, he came in the festival and 'crowned the year of (his) goodness' (Ps. 65.12), that is, he inaugurated a new year which would bring rich provision for life.

§ 2 *The king as convener and president*

Just as Yahweh was considered responsible for the building of his Temple through the agency of the king, so the institution and conduct of the festival were considered to be ordinances of Yahweh (Ps. 81.5–6) executed by the king, as the stories of David, Solomon, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Jeroboam II, Josiah, etc., make clear. Having been responsible for the construction and maintenance of the installations, the appointment of ministers, and the very institution of the festivals, it was the king who finally called the people from far and wide to the great pilgrimage gathering (1 Kings 8.1, cf. 2 Kings 10.21). He then presided over the festival, taking the leading part in the worship (§§ 33, 37; *KP* pp. 172f).

§ 3 *Thoughts of the festival on the pilgrims' journey*

The journey to the festival was an important part of the worshippers' experience. Pss. 84 and 122 are more likely to have been composed for ceremonies at the Temple rather than as songs for use on the journey (cf. Isa. 30.29); but they still reflect the faith expected of devout pilgrims on their way and teach us much about the meaning found in the festival.

Ps. 122 shows how the pilgrim's heart fills with joy and admiration for Jerusalem as the place of the house of Yahweh, as the centre he has appointed for the assembly of the tribes of Israel in his immediate presence, as the embodiment of the people's unity, and as the point from which his *mišpāṭ* (healthful rule) radiates through the king's judgements; the worshippers' zeal is now bent on supplication for Jerusalem's *šālōm*, a unity of material and spiritual requirements, a prosperity which will extend to all who range themselves with her.

Ps. 84 gives further insights: the pilgrims come to the festival in Yahweh's courts as men perishing of thirst approach a spring; dry regions which they traverse and so touch with the grace of the festival will soon be saturated with the winter rains; important in the festival are the 'highways', the route of Yahweh's procession to his Temple; important above all is God's self-revelation in Zion, in some way giving visible signs of his presence; prayer rises especially for Yahweh's anointed king, so that he can mediate the care of the God who is now worshipped as true King, Sun and Shield of his people; in the few days of the festival, worshippers whose conduct and trust are pleasing to Yahweh are wonderfully replenished by his favour, glory, and good provision.

§ 4 *The pilgrimage is ideally for all nations*

To make the pilgrimage to the festival of Yahweh at Jerusalem was to be counted among the fellowship of those who trust him and openly acknowledge him as supreme Lord. The blessings that could be expected were such as only he could give who was master of all the processes of life. However strong the tribal and national traditions of Yahwism, Jerusalem, a centre of worship for the supreme Creator from pre-Israelite times (Gen. 14.18–20), continued to encourage the universal prospect. From early days, the festival expressed the subordination of all heavenly beings to Yahweh (Pss. 29; 18.32, etc.) and looked for his acknowledgement as Lord by all nations. The pilgrimage to Zion was thus imagined in the festal hymns as the destiny and joy of all nations (47.10; 65.3; 76.11–13; 87; 96.8–9, etc.).

§ 5 *Cleansing and forgiveness*

Since the festival meant close encounter with God, the need for purification, atonement, and forgiveness was readily acknowledged. Apart from the physical holiness which was established in priests, people, utensils, and places by such rites as are treated in the Pentateuch, the inculcation of moral demands on pilgrims (15; 24) had to be balanced with opportunities for penitence and expiation.

The connection of such expiation with the festival is evident in Ps. 65: those who would join the throngs of 'all humanity' to attend the great praises of God in Zion and fulfil their vows, can trust that he will grant atonement of their sins and enable them to abide in his sanctuary-presence and be filled with its holiness and life-force, and witness the mighty acts whereby he exerts mastery over the elements and prepares a year of growth. There will have been a pre-exilic counterpart of the later Day of Atonement and its obviously archaic rites (Lev. 16); from such ceremonies of national cleansing and new inner creation Ezekiel draws ritual concepts to predict a greater renewal (Ezek. 36.25, cf. Isa. 1.16). Ps. 51, which also associates purging and re-creation with ritual (v. 9), may well be the king's prayer during the annual atonement (*KP*, pp. 71f and 179), and Ps. 102, even if post-exilic, takes up a similar tradition (*KP*, p. 80). Among the festal 'songs of the steps' we have a prayer of Israel's leader from the deepest humiliation, which ends with confidence that God will redeem his people from all their sins (Ps. 130).

Main themes of the festival are well reflected in Ps. 103 (so also

Ringgren, pp. 169, 172–3); and here, before celebrating Yahweh's establishment of his throne and his universal kingship, even before mention of his rich provision and his renewing of his worshippers' youth 'like the eagle', there is testimony to his forgiveness of sins; hereby infirmities are healed and life is redeemed from the Pit. Another example of forgiveness as a theme in a psalm of festal language is 85.2–4, though the sequence of thought causes some difficulty of interpretation; Yahweh has shown favour to his land, has brought renewal to Jacob, has removed the iniquity of his people, has covered all their sin, has put away his anger.

§ 6 *Yahweh's kingship as an event in the festival*

The many depictions in the festal texts of Yahweh as supreme are by no means statements of static theology enlivened with pictorial form. They are excited responses to the divine action in the festival. The festal hour is a concentration of all the moments of creative salvation which gave the world and this society their origin and healthy order. In the festal hour the divine work of salvation is re-experienced. Yahweh overpowers chaos, takes his kingship, makes right order, sends forth life, and enters into intimate communion with his liberated people. The triumphant proclamation 'Yahweh has become king' or 'Yahweh is now king' expresses the heart of this exciting experience (93.1; 96.10; 97.1; 99.1; similarly 10.16; 47.9; 146.10; cf. 22.29; 29.10; Lipiński, pp. 336f; *KP*, pp. 105–9).

The form of worship attested by the Psalms apparently did not present an idea of Yahweh having been seasonally deprived of his kingship, now to be won back. The tradition of lamentation in times of drought, defeat, etc., thinks of Yahweh as holding himself far off, as seeming inactive or indifferent for a while. Lam. 5.19f speaks of God as eternally enthroned, but as now 'forgetting' and 'forsaking' his people. Admittedly there are traces that in some periods the worship may have envisaged Yahweh as held awhile by enemies and affected by the drowsiness of death (Ps. 78.61–6; 1 Sam. 4—6). But the great majority of our texts concentrate on his victory, his overpowering word, his devastating advent, his stunning effulgence, his procession of triumph, his ascension to his throne-centre on Mount Zion and in heaven. The dramatic counterfoil was provided, it seems, by lamentation of society's need for redemption from the Pit, from the death-state of drought, sin, and all the personal

and national disorders that came when God was distant, silent, displeased.

§ 7 *The diverse forces conquered by Yahweh*

The foregoing characterization of the divine action in the festival accounts for the diverse aspects of the enemies subjugated by Yahweh's victory. He masters the forces of chaos, seen as surging waters (Ps. 93.3–4) or as the ocean monsters Rahab (89.11) and Leviathan (74.14); he dominates the heavenly beings called 'gods', 'sons of the gods', 'sons of the Most High', 'holy ones', etc. (29.1–2; 82; 89.7f; 95.3; 96.4–5; 97.7, 9); he overpowers the hostile kings of the earth and their nations (46; 48; 76; 2; 110).

It is notable that the unique ascendancy of Yahweh is thus expressed through the concept of numerous 'gods'. To this effect they may be derided on account of their idol cults, illustrative of their powerlessness (96.5; 97.7; 115; cf. the pre-exilic Hab. 2.18–19 and Jer. 51.17–19); or they may be called upon to join in the tributes to Yahweh (29.1–2; 97.7b). Likewise the nations of the world may be seen as foes to be crushed (47.4; 48.5f; 76.4, etc.) or as joining in the acclamation of Yahweh's ascendancy (47.2, 10; 76.11f; 96.1; 97.1; 98.4).

§ 8 *Yahweh's victorious procession into Zion*

Yahweh's destruction of his enemies may have been enacted by symbolic gestures such as are common in the prophets. Similar gestures are well attested in Egyptian festivals (*KP*, pp. 96f), and some phrases may point to the like in Israelite worship (enemies as pots, 2.9, as wax, 68.3). In Babylon the warlike procession of the gods to a special station outside the city signified the re-enactment of the primeval battle; the victory over chaos may well have been completed by the setting of Marduk's image on top of a dais symbolizing Tiamat, the Sea (*KP*, pp. 93f). Also in Israel the processions were an important part of the representation of the divine victory.

As Yahweh came back to his city and Temple, good tidings of his victory were brought by messengers (68.12; cf. § 17) and celebrated by the singers and players who were part of the column (68.25–6). Perhaps also birds were sent flying over the city with the message of triumphant kingship (68.14, Lipiński, p. 446, Keel), somewhat as in Egypt (*KP*, pp. 99f). The idea that Yahweh himself marched or was borne enthroned in

the procession was vividly held, and the Ark was probably used for this purpose (68.2; 132; 24.7f).

In Zion his coming was eagerly awaited. Watch was kept for the first appearance of the heraldic messengers over the mountains, a gladdening sight (cf. Nah. 2.1; and perhaps Ps. 121.1–2; 130.6); the keepers of the sacred gates, watching first from the walls over the gateway, were ready for their part in the ceremony of entrance (24.7f). Eagerly the eyes of the worshippers gazed on the holy action, seeing all that was permitted of the divine revelation, adding to the impression received by their ears (68.25; 46.9; 48.9; 84.8)

The most likely direction of the processions would be from the east, via the Mount of Olives or Mount Scopus and the Kidron Valley, as indicated by the orientation of the Temple (entrance from the east, Ezek. 8.16, etc.), the sacred sites on the east (2 Sam. 15.32; 1 Kings 1.33), and Ezekiel's vision of the exit and return of Yahweh's glory via the east gate and the Mount of Olives (10.19; 11.23; 43.1–5). The ancient cultic traditions reflected in Zech. 14 include Yahweh's going forth to the Mount of Olives to conquer enemies and so to return to his city to begin his reign. The narrative of David's solemn going forth via Kidron and the Mount of Olives and his victorious return by the same route (2 Sam. 15—20) is also suggestive of processional practices on the east.

Such an approach was from the direction of the Judean wilderness, which indeed reaches close to Jerusalem's walls. The long summer drought leaves the eastern hills bare and parched. But the procession is a sign of Yahweh's marvellous work in preparation for the annual transformation of the hills to vivid green, for fountains and brooks to run, for flocks and herds and families to flourish, for 'righteousness' to spring up in the form of crops. So the mountains, woods, orchards, and all living things must join in the festal rejoicing, anticipating the coming of abundant growth (Ps. 65.9, 14; 89.13; 96.11–13; 97.1, 6; 98.4–9; cf. 148 and 150).

From 68.8–9 it seems that the procession could be brought into relation with the Exodus journey. A pre-monarchy use of processional worship to relive the ancient journey into Canaan has been traced in Josh. 2—6 and Ps. 114 (Kraus, pp. 152–65). The equation of the Exodus-Invasion journey with the festal procession of Yahweh as King into his chief sanctuary is indicated also by the hymn in Exod. 15, where the Exodus leads straight to Yahweh's mountain sanctuary in the settled land and to declaration of his kingship. The fusion of the relived Exodus and the universalist Zion worship is also discernible in Ps. 66. 1–12.

The importance of the triumphant procession lent importance to its route. As in other ancient temples, there will have been a 'sacred way' joining outer stations of the rites to the Temple gates, a highway which was repaired and cleared with great diligence for the procession. In comparable fashion, the Babylonian king ensured the preparation of the sacred route in the new year festival, as illustrated by this hymnic fragment which I translated from *SAHG*, pp. 257–8:

> At the appointed time of Nisan I arrange with splendour
> the festival of praise for Marduk the . . . of kings.
> I have expedited the going out of the son of Bel
> who knows the procedure and is familiar with the rites.
> His route is made beautiful, his way is renewed,
> the path is put in order for him, the road is opened.

A festal call to 'raise up' (*sollū*) the 'raised way' (*mᵉsillā*) seems to be given in Ps. 68.5, for its call to 'raise up for the Rider of the Clouds' can be filled out from Isa. 57.4 'Raise up, raise up, clear the way' and Isa. 62.10 'Clear the way, raise up, raise up the raised way, clear away the stones, raise the standard'. The 'raised ways' loved by the pilgrims (Ps. 84.6) are presumably the festal way, and its name 'the Holy Way' seems to be preserved in Isa. 35.8 (*PIW* I, pp. 170f).

The great procession into Zion was not just a preliminary to the manifestation of Yahweh's glory in the Temple. From Pss. 24, 68, and 47 we can see that it was an impressive public display of his main festal action. As the jubilant procession ascends, the achievements of his newly taken kingship are already projected: his enemies are defeated, the world is secured, the rains are prepared, the oppressed are relieved, salvation is bestowed on all his loyal people; in short, Yahweh enters as already dominant King over all.

It is not always clear whether processions reflected in the Psalms are to be identified with this major representation of Yahweh's advent to Zion as King and Saviour, or whether they are from other rites in the festival. The procession of Ps. 132 re-enacts the beginnings of Zion as Yahweh's central sanctuary, home of the Ark, and shows the Davidic covenant as important for this and for the salvation of the community of Zion. It could be part of the major procession, as Mowinckel thought. Ps. 48.13f may belong to a distinct rite seeking protection for Zion against future assaults (*KP*, pp. 108f). Ps. 65.12 alludes to the progress of Yahweh's throne-chariot, dripping with fertilizing grace; a separate rite with aspersion of the fields may be reflected, or such an action could have been

a feature of the major procession (cf. 68.10). The procession of Ps. 118, where the deliverance of the Davidic king is in the centre, seems to be from a separate series of rites concerning the king's office. Whatever subsidiary processions took place in the festival, however, all contributed to the central theme of the chief procession: Yahweh had come into Zion as King and Saviour, Creator and Provider.

We should not overlook that the procession took place as it were on two planes. On the earthly plane the local route, stations, and Temple signified Yahweh's presence among his people and his care for their habitat. But the earthly was symbolic of the heavenly. This progress of Yahweh was on the clouds (68.5, 34; cf. 18.7f), his ascent was 'on high' (68.18–19; 7.8), his column passed through the eternal gates of his heavenly abode (24.7), he sat enthroned above the heavenly ocean (29.10; 2.4), his worshippers at his feet were the company of heaven (29.1, etc.). Zion was the hill of Jerusalem, encompassed by higher mountains (68.17; 121.1; 125.2), but at the same time it was the divine mountain towering into the heavens (48.3). Thus the earthly procession into Zion conveyed in symbol events that governed the cosmos.

§ 9 *Yahweh takes his seat in Zion*

With the completion of his grand procession, Yahweh has taken up residence in his house and throne-centre, high above the heavenly ocean (29.10) and on Mount Zion (see previous para.). There he sits as King, manifest in supremacy, radiant in glory, active in ruling power. He is 'the One enthroned in Zion' (9.12), but still mighty in action; his fixing and occupying of his throne is associated with his rectifying acts of kingship (9.5–11). The ascended King is proclaimed in his newly manifest kingship (93, etc.) and greeted with acclamations of homage: – the concerted shouts and clappings, trumpets, strings, and psalms of praise (9.12; 47).

Examples of the praises sung in this situation can well be found in Pss. 93 and 96—9. There is no need to account for their style or content from outside the festival, for which they are entirely suitable (*KP*, pp. 104f). They proclaim the good news of Yahweh's newly active reign and call on all the world to acknowledge his awful supremacy; he has come to his throne-centre after routing all his enemies; his glory and holiness shine out; his rule will now be known in acts of judgement.

§ 10 *Yahweh's speech as Covenant-Lord*

From Pss. 50, 81, 85, 95 it appears that when God had so come to Zion and manifested his glory, he spoke through a prophetic minister to his people as their Covenant-Lord. The manifestation of God on Mount Zion after his acts of salvation thus corresponded to some extent to his revelation on Mount Sinai after the Exodus (cf. p. 14). The words of promise and admonition which he now delivers serve to emphasize the reality of his presence and to renew the relationship of the covenant. Within the conditions of the covenant, he promises rich provision and safety from enemies. But he also gives stern warnings. He demands their exclusive worship and honest dealing among themselves; an abundance of festal sacrifices is not allowed to obscure these hard requirements.

§ 11 *Yahweh sits as Judge in Zion*

The Hebrew idea of judgement can comprehend any exercise of rulership. God the King 'judges' when he conquers, punishes, saves, gives living order, etc. The symbolism of his festal battle and triumphal procession already conveyed much work as Judge. But when he has entered upon his residence in his throne-centre of Zion, it is particularly appropriate for him to sit in judgement (76.9–10; 99.4), to arraign particular offenders, to pronounce their sentences.

This event was imagined in the festival with some use of legal customs. The chair of judgement is placed (9.5, 8), an assembly gathers (82.1), complaints of the oppressed are heard (cf. 9—10; 94), accusations are made (82; cf. 58; 75), the guilty are punished (82.6–7; 75.8–9; 149.9). Thus God, now resident as enthroned King in Zion, deals with gods (82; cf. 96.4–5; 97.9), nations (9–10; 96.10c, 13; 98.8–9), power-hungry men (75), sinners in Israel (50.21–22; cf. *PIW* I, pp. 149–50).

§ 12 *Yahweh regulates the elements*

Yahweh's renewed rule from Zion includes giving order and function to the sun, moon, stars, and seasons. The praise of his sure utterances from his throne in Ps. 93.5 follows mention of his triumph over the chaos-waters and precedes mention of the holiness which now fills his Temple; the utterances in question thus seem to be the controlling decrees of creation, which order the world of life. The work of the Creator-King in this respect is given in more detail in Ps. 74 – the primeval events

which were actualized in the festival: the conquering and cleaving of the water-monsters are followed by provision of sweet-water sources, the day and night, luminaries and sun, the bounds of the earth, and summer and winter. Ps. 147 includes in Yahweh's great deeds of restoration his review of the stars, when he reckons up their numbers and holds roll-calls (v. 4). In Ps. 104 contemplation of Yahweh as enthroned master above the waters, resplendent in light and destroyer of the wicked, is connected with praise of all his work through the clouds, winds, lightning, sweet waters, provision for man and beast, the moon, sun, sea creatures, etc. Ps. 29 looks to the God who has dominated the waters by his thunder-word to give life and provision to his people. Ps. 65 declares that the God now praised in Zion is he who can decree a bountiful year and make the preparation for fertile growth; soon at his command the parched hills may flow with the winter rains and verdure and crops begin to spring; all nature will rejoice (cf. Pss. 85; 126—8).

§ 13 *The festal salvation is world-wide*

The work of Yahweh actualized in the festival is thus a universal salvation. Not only is pilgrimage appropriate for all peoples (§ 4). His salvation is shown before all peoples and to the boundaries of the world (98.2–3). His splendour shines to the ends of the earth (48.11). Having broken weapons throughout the world, he rises over the earth and all its peoples (46.11; 50.1–3); the heavens and earth and all peoples behold his righteous work and see his radiant glory (97.6). The summons to praise the Creator-King in Zion is thus in effect to all that has breath (150), to all elements of the cosmos (148), specifically the heavens (96.11), the earth (96.1; 98.4; 100.1), the gods (29.1–2), nations, clans, and kingdoms (47; 68.33; 96.7), the sea and its animals (96.11; 98.7), the rivers and mountains (98.8), the coastlands and islands (97.1).

This universal aspect is often treated as a late development, but on the contrary it is integral in the ideas of the oldest texts (e.g. 29, 47, 68) and in the royal psalms (2, 18, 89, 72, 110), and is bound up with pre-Israelite ideas in Jerusalem (Gen. 14.19; Ps. 110). It is present in most of the items listed in this chapter.

§ 14 *Yahweh's renewed royal care for his people*

The praise of God as universal King and Creator could logically pass directly to his provision for his people (29.11). For as master of all the

elements he is well able to be the royal Shepherd of Israel (95.7; 100.3; cf. 74.1; 80.2–4; 79.13). The shepherd who feeds and carries his sheep was a common figure for the office of king in the ancient Near East and is accordingly applied to Yahweh in praises and prayers (cf. also 28.9 of feeding and carrying).

Yahweh's provision of food was of course a prominent theme in the festival (65; 67; 132; 144; cf. p. 18). But his care for his people also took other forms. Already on his triumphal route he was celebrated as 'Father of the fatherless, Judge of the widows, the God who settles the solitary ones in homes (families), who brings forth the prisoners to freedom' (68.7). A similar pattern of benefits in Ps. 107 also includes settlement of the needy and displaced (v. 36, cf. v. 41) along with feeding, releasing from prison, transformation of the desert, etc. Relief of the oppressed, resettling of scattered people, releasing of the bound, etc. are typical of the blessings looked for from the ideal king in the ancient Near East. Hammurabi (d. 1686 B.C.) explains his royal commission thus:

> to make good the flesh of the people, to cause justice to prevail in the land, to destroy the wicked and the evil that the strong might not oppress the weak, to rise like the sun over mankind and to light up the land . . . the shepherd am I, the one who makes affluence and plenty abound . . . the shelter of the land, who collected the scattered people of Isin . . . refounder of the settlement of Kish . . . rescuer of the people of Malka from trouble, the founder of dwelling places for them in abundance . . . the saviour of his people from distress, who establishes in security their portion in the midst of Babylon, the shepherd of the people. . . . (*ANET*, pp. 164f)

> I sought out peaceful regions for them . . . I made an end of war . . . I made the people rest in friendly habitations . . . I became the beneficent shepherd . . . in my bosom I carried the peoples of the land of Sumer and Akkad . . . in order that the strong might not oppress the weak, that justice might be dealt the orphan and widow. . . . (*ANET*, pp. 177f)

§ 15 *Zion as mother, wife, and queen*

The place of the festival, Jerusalem, became an important part of the festal ideas. The name Zion was especially favoured for it as the residence of Yahweh the King in its ideal character. The name 'Zion' is absent from many biblical books but occurs thirty-eight times in Psalms and

fifteen times in the cultic poems of Lamentations; Isaiah also is notable for its forty-six occurrences (Koehler, p. 802).

The festal pilgrims yearned for Zion (cf. Pss. 84; 122), as later did the exiles (137). The great processional Ps. 132 repeated Yahweh's oracle concerning his choosing and desiring her (132.13). She especially belongs to Yahweh as *his* city and *his* holy mountain (rather than 'ours'). She is the centre of his kingship and of its expression in Davidic rule (9.12; 2.6; 110.2).

The festal community, 'Israel', is also called 'the sons of Zion' as they rejoice in the presence of Yahweh their King (149.2; 147.12–13). Zion's role as mother of Yahweh's worshippers is so strongly developed towards other nations in Ps. 87 that some regard the psalm as very late; but the basic ideas of 'Zion' reach back to early times, connecting with Canaanite concepts (48). The lamentations over Zion's ruins in the Exile recall the dazzling ideals which had been put upon her in earlier times (Lam. 2.15); as it happens, the titles quoted, 'Perfection of beauty' and 'Joy of the whole earth', are preserved also in the festal psalms (50.2; 48.3).

In the festal hymns personified Zion rejoices over the victorious advent of Yahweh the King, and especially on account of his 'judgements' (48.12; 97.8). It is clear that Zeph. 3.14f uses the same festal tradition: Zion is called to rejoice that Yahweh has come to her as King and rid her of the 'judgements' of her enemies; we understand that it is his judgements which now prevail. This traditionally pre-exilic passage is of special interest as picturing Yahweh's delight in her in terms that seem to denote conjugal love (cf. Isa. 62.4–5). His love and desire for Zion are stressed also in Ps. 132.13–14 and 87.2. Thus Zion seems to have in the festival the role of the bride of Yahweh ascribed to the personified people in Hosea, Jeremiah, etc. The special association of such a concept with Yahweh's coming to her as King in the festival may be an echo of the 'sacred marriage' element of some foreign new year festivals, attested best in Sumeria (*KP*, p. 88; *RANE*, pp. 25f). The dazzling beauty ascribed to Zion in the festival is thus that of the Queen, the much-desired wife of Yahweh the King. His conjugal visitation (*pqd*, *cf. MRK*, p. 184) of his bride in the festal season seems to be alluded to in 65.10 (the land, cf. Isa. 62.4) and 46.5 (Zion):

> Thou hast visited the land and impregnated her,
> abundantly thou hast enriched her.
> The channel of God is full of water.

> Thou hast prepared much corn,
> since thou hast truly 'prepared' her.
>
> His channels are a veritable river,
> They make glad the city of God,
> the holy place of the dwellings of the Most High.

§ 16 *The renewal and repair of city and Temple*

The new entry of God implies that his residence, which comprises Temple and city, is also made new. A Babylonian prayer in the new year festival asked of Marduk: 'The bolt of Babylon, the lock of (the temple) Esagila, the locks of (the temple) Ezida restore thou to their places' (*ANET*, pp. 390–1). In Jerusalem the repetition of the first entry of the Ark (Ps. 132) and the special praise of the Temple's holiness consequent upon Yahweh's entry (93.5) indicate the conception of Yahweh's residence made new.

References to the 'building up' of the walls (51.20) and city (147.2) or to the restoration of the bars of gates (147.13) could also originate in the festal ideas, rather than in the post-exilic rebuilding. In Ps. 147 such 'building' and 'repair' are associated with typical festal salvation – Yahweh's collecting of the outcasts, healing and comfort of the suffering, overthrow of the wicked, control of the elements, preparation of rain and food, covenant-address to Jacob-Israel. In Ps. 51 such 'building' follows ceremonies of the deepest penitence which could well belong to a day of atonement connected with the festival (p. 11). A similar tradition appears in Ps. 102, where there is expression of loving compassion for Zion's stones and dust and of hope that Yahweh will build her up and show his glory in her, for the hour of grace has come and the appointed time of assembly (*mō ʿēd*).

In the time of festal salvation the splendid and impregnable condition of Zion is duly surveyed by a procession of worshippers (48.13–14). This may be the conclusion of a rite indicating Yahweh's purpose to guard the city against future attacks, a rite performed first in the Temple and 'modelling' his covenant-love (v. 10, *KP*, p. 109).

§ 17 *A new start*

The divine action in the festival was experienced with all the excitement appropriate to a new reign, founded already on the defeat of evil powers,

a veritable dawn of salvation (§ 6). The appropriate response to God's work was therefore a 'new song' (33.3; 96.1; 98.1; 149.1). The Davidic ruler likewise responded with a 'new song' to the demonstration of his own salvation in the festival (40.4; 144.9). This 'new song' is related to the good news of Yahweh's victory and reign (96.2–3; 40.10; 68.12).

'New' also is the spirit and vitality of the leader following his expiation (51.12; 103.5). In the celebration of Yahweh's majesty as Creator there is hope also of the renewal of the face of the ground (104.30). It is possible that the expression *šūb šᵉbūt* ('restore perfectly', Sabottka, p. 81) was originally a festal expression for renewal of good conditions, as Mowinckel argued (*PIW*, I, p. 146; II, 249f). A similar idea is preserved in the language of Lam. 5.19–21: 'Thou Yahweh reignest for ever . . . restore us Yahweh to thee and we shall be restored, make new our days as at the first.'

§ 18 *Ideas combined in the festival*

The nature and circumstances of the festival at Jerusalem produced combinations of ideas in the texts which would otherwise be difficult to explain. As founder and upholder of right order, Yahweh comes with functions of creator, warrior, king, judge, saviour, shepherd and covenant-lord. The giver of happy life is also the militant vanquisher of chaos and destroyer of the disrupters; the master of the waters and other great elements is the demander of truth and kindness; the lover of Zion, the shepherd and saviour, is also the one who confronts his people with argument and admonition and the wicked with accusation and sentence; and the one who does all these things is shown especially in utter supremacy. These many elements are parts of a seamless robe, aspects of the central divine action in the festival.

Many of the older texts evince these rich combinations. In Ps. 68, for example, Yahweh is a warrior defeating enemies, the destroyer of the wicked, gladdener of the righteous, rider on the clouds, champion of the defenceless, settler of the homeless, releaser of prisoners, punisher of the rebellious, leader of his people through the desert, lord of Sinai, God of Israel, giver of rain, fertilizer of his land, victor over an alliance of kings, he who ascends his chosen mountain-residence with armed train, captives and spoil, saviour of his people, their rescuer from death and the water-powers, he who utters his thunder-roar against the marsh-monster, who splits the skull of his arch-foe, who enters in holy procession as King with leaders and squadrons of his covenant-people

and male and female musicians, who receives tribute and praise from the kings of the earth, who rides in the heavens and is glorious in the clouds, who reveals his dread godhead from his sanctuary and, finally, gives life and power to Israel. The theory that this psalm is but a catalogue of psalms, which quotes their beginnings, is testimony to the fact that it is indeed an incomprehensible mixture, until it is related to the festival.

More briefly, in Ps. 24 Yahweh is the founder of the earth on seas and rivers, lord of the earth and living things, who ceremonially enters the eternal gates of his Temple, who receives in his mountain-residence the pure and true, the God associated with Jacob, Yahweh the formidable warrior-champion, five times called all-glorious King. In Ps. 29 he is the King enthroned above the ocean, worshipped by the company of heaven and by all in his Temple, he whose majestic thunder-voice conveys his power over waters, forests, mountains, lightnings, deserts, animals, he who gives life and power to his people with the blessings of plenty and peace.

An important combination to notice is the blend of traditions from pre-Israelite Jerusalem with those of the tribal Israel. Although the process of assimilating some features of Canaanite theology no doubt began long before the monarchy, the situation of Jerusalem under David and Solomon was especially suited to a union of the traditions. Thus Jerusalem contributed the concept of El Elyon, God the Supreme, Creator-King of the world, served by the sacral kings of Jerusalem, while from the victorious tribes of Israel came the idea of the society as members (descendants) of the national father called either Jacob or Israel, the society brought by Yahweh from bondage in Egypt, given terms of covenant-relation with him at Sinai, brought by him through the wilderness and victoriously into Canaan.

In Ps. 68, for example, the tribal tradition is well represented in vv. 8 (Yeshimon), 9, 18 (Lord of Sinai, God of Israel), 28 (Benjamin, Zebulon, Naphtali), while the Jerusalem tradition may be found in vv. 30 (procession of the kings to God's palace-temple above Jerusalem), 23, 31 (water-foes), 33 (the kingdoms sing psalms to Adonay, Rider in the heavens), 25 (God as King). Or again in Ps. 24, the Jerusalem contribution can be felt in vv. 1–2 (Creator and universal Lord) and in the entry to the Temple of the King of Glory, while the tribal influence is present in v. 6 (Jacob) and probably in the titles 'Yahweh Champion of war' and 'Yahweh of Hosts'.

Another illustration is provided by Pss. 81 and 95 taken together. The culmination of these is their speech of Yahweh, decidedly in the tradition

of the tribal covenant-festivals. Ps. 81 is wholly in this tradition, except for the superscription, but 95 shows how the tribal inheritance could easily be brought into the context of the Jerusalem celebration of God's kingship. Another example of such combination is Ps. 84, which is largely explicable from Zion's festival of God's kingship, but easily takes up tribal tradition as in v. 9 (Yahweh God of Hosts, God of Jacob).

§ 19 *The festal presentation of the Davidic office*

So far our attention has been given to the advent of God in the festival and to the manifestation of kingship directly from his own person. It is now time to treat the part of the Davidic house as agent of this kingship.

For all its distinctiveness, Israelite festal theology shared the view common in the Near East that there was but a single kingship, that of the god, and for certain purposes it was represented by the human ruler, designated and empowered by the god (*KP*, pp. 135f). The presentation and experience of Yahweh's kingship in the festival was therefore appropriately combined with a presentation of the vocation of David and his line. This side of the festival could impress an ideal on the king himself, strengthen the people's acceptance of the monarchy, and challenge them also with a social ideal. It was also felt to share in the sacramental character of the other rites, divine grace coming to king and people through an activity of God in these ceremonies also. By these rites in the festival Yahweh was believed to carry out the first full enthronement of a new king and subsequently to renew it annually (*KP*, pp. 129–34).

§ 20 *The dramatic nature of the Davidic rites*

The festal presentation of the Davidic office shared the dramatic character we have seen in the celebration of Yahweh's own kingship. That the presentation was enacted by several parties in a succession of scenes is clear already in such generally accepted festal texts as Pss. 2, 21, 72, 101, 110, 132. Lively drama is here apparent. The classical story of David and Yahweh's ark is re-enacted (132). Danger is portrayed – an upsurge of universal disorder (2). The king cries from great need (101). The destruction of the wicked in symbolic actions is implied (2, 110). Speech is launched from different quarters. A group speaks (132.6–7; 118.22–7; cf. 20.6; 144.12–15). The king addresses the rebels (2). God

addresses his king (110; cf. 2.7f; 132.11f); a minister speaks blessings and prayers over the king (21; 72).

The main pattern discernible here is that Yahweh chooses and appoints his chief minister on earth, allows him for a while to be tested through humiliation under the attacks of enemies, then raises him up in confirmation of his office.

§ 21 *An outline of the royal drama*

I argued in *KP* that other important psalms come from these rites, notably 18, 20, 22, 23, 75, 89, 91, 118, 121, 144 (and 51 from a rite of atonement); also that informative references to the rites are made in further psalms, notably 9—10, 40, 71. While the full range of these texts will not have been in use every year and in every period, and while we cannot hope to reconstruct the rites in detail (logic being a fallible guide in liturgical matters), we can usefully arrange the psalms acording to major themes as follows. —

The king as anointed chief minister of Yahweh faces rebellious princes, prepares for war, and warns them of Yahweh's judgement (75; 2; 20). As the struggle begins, the king beseeches Yahweh to save him from the assailing death-powers, so that he can accomplish the festal celebration of Yahweh and health and plenty may come to all his society (144). But the enemies have their hour of apparent triumph. The king is bereft of his symbols of office and pleads for help with all the resources of skilful intercession, stressing Yahweh's promises, his own role as witness of Yahweh's fidelity (89) and his righteous rule (101). Still deeper he sinks into the death-sphere; the chief resource of his plea now is the pathos of his lament, depicting the horrors of death which envelop him; but he also pointedly pictures the mockery over the man of Yahweh's favour (22A).

From this extremity he is rescued and so rehabilitated at the centre of the festal congregation, feasting and celebrating the new power of God's kingship (22B), testifying to the Shepherd who proved stronger than the grim shepherd of the death-valley (23; cf. 49.15). He has been led in joyful procession up the sacred way that was symbolic of salvation, through the Temple gates and around the altar in the court (118). His hymns look back on his deliverance, recounting how Yahweh came riding on a cherub to take him from the power of the Underworld (18), or how by invocation of the name of Yahweh he cut down all his enemies (118). He had been brought to the lowest state, a worm, no

longer a man (22); he had been like a stone despised and cast aside by the builders (118). But he was now exalted to be head of the nations (18), the chief stone holding firm the whole structure of society (118).

So he is set beside Yahweh's own seat on Zion, his chief priest and strong ruler over all for ever (110), established in the glory and shelter of the Most High, guarded by his angels of protection (91; 121). Mediator of Yahweh's judgements, he will bring peace and plenty to his society (72). Better than the costliest animal sacrifices, he has offered himself; he bears Yahweh's law in his very heart and indeed carries a scroll of Yahweh's covenant on his person (40A). He announces to the congregation of the humble the gospel of the festival: Yahweh has triumphed, Yahweh has come as King; Yahweh has saved his Anointed; wrongs will be righted; the earth will flourish (§ 37).

§ 22 *The Davidic rites distinct but integral within the celebration of Yahweh's kingship*

It is not clear just how these rites of the Davidic office fitted in with the expressions of Yahweh's kingship discussed earlier. The central texts of Yahweh's kingship (Pss. 24, 29, 47, 68, 93, 95–99) do not refer to the human ruler, whose special rites seem to have been kept in a distinct series, as was the case also in Babylon (*KP*, p. 92).

Even so, the idea of a single heavenly kingship, served by David's line, was strongly expressed in the Davidic rites. The king's confrontation with the wicked was on behalf of Yahweh's authority (Ps. 2); the king's deliverance from symbolic suffering led to glorification of Yahweh's kingship (22); the king's enthronement was a seating beside Yahweh who was the true King and conqueror (110). As Yahweh's triumph is as universal Lord, so the Davidic ruler, his vizier on earth, speaks in the festival to all men and is presented as head of the nations (18, 89, etc.).

§ 23 *Royal passion rites: Near Eastern comparisons*

Since the Davidic kingship is certainly comparable with that of surrounding nations in respect of its ideology and some of its ceremonies, the question arises as to whether such comparability applies to the scenes of humiliation in the festival.

The most clearly known royal humiliation is that of the Babylonian king in the new year festival (*KP*, p. 92). On the fifth day, the tablets relate, he came before the state-god Marduk, his royal insignia were

removed and deposited before the god, he was dragged on his knees before the god and beaten about the head. He recited a statement claiming to have ruled righteously as the god required. Eventually the god declared his pleasure in the king and promised him blessing and victory. The king was then re-invested. Again he was struck, any resultant tears being taken as a good omen.

A full assessment of the significance of this ceremony is hampered by the fact that the tablets covering the central days of the eleven-day festival have not survived, while those that we have are sparing of explanation. But some points are clear. The king had to relinquish the symbols of his office and receive them anew from the god, as he had received them at his first enthronement. Yet he was not just brought down to the status of a commoner. He was ill-treated and beaten. Is this a penitential role, a punishment for faults in him or in society? This aspect is not elucidated in the text. Clearly, the rite showed that the god was the source of kingship and that the king emerged from the ordeal with renewed legitimation. He was now fit to conduct the culminating ceremonies of the festival, where the god's mighty triumph over the forces of chaos was re-enacted. Contrary to what some writers assume, there is no indication that this humiliation was expressive of the death and resurrection of a fertility god.

The Babylonian king's profession of righteous rule has a little similarity with Ps. 101. But the Davidic ceremonies in Pss. 2, 18, 89, etc., represent a far more elaborate and imaginative drama. The common ground is limited to renewal of office by way of a humiliation which entails loss of dignity and symbolic suffering; the lesson of dependence on the god; and perhaps an atoning force in the royal penance.

Turning now to the 'dying and rising' vegetation deities, we find difficulty in documenting and understanding their rites in the ancient Near East. Yet we know from the Old Testament that their influence was occasionally strong in Israel. For pre-exilic times, rites with plants in imitation of the vegetation god's youth and death are attested by Isa. 17.10–11. Just before the Exile, lamentation for Tammuz could be made in the Jerusalem temple (Ezek. 8). In post-exilic times Zech. 12.11 reflects the fame of the wailing in the valley of Megiddo for a Baal-type deity.

In the god Tammuz is represented especially the power of growth and vitality; the rites of lamentation correspond to the effects of the long hot summer, while the celebration of his youth and marriage matches the signs of renewal in Nature. Connections of Tammuz with kingship appear in various texts. The grounds of such a connection are the

wellknown relation of kingship to healthy order and growth. Kingship and growth are sometimes linked also in Israel (§ 32), and it would not be surprising therefore if the ritual suffering and restoration of the Davidic king received a little Tammuz-like colouring. In fact the sorrowful plight of the Israelite royal figure, especially in Pss. 89, 22 and (as we shall see) Isa. 40—55, is depicted in imagery and tones which have some resemblance to well-established traits of Tammuz which I now list; the illustrations are mostly cited from Witzel (= W).

Tammuz is called king (W, p. 109), glorious god (Langdon, p. 16) mighty one (W, p. 91), shepherd (W, p. 237), one 'like a lamb' (W, p. 91), purification-priest (W, p. 385). Terms of tenderness and love are applied to him – he is precious, beautiful, desired, beloved (*ANET*, p. 410b; *ANES*, p. 644a; W, pp. 353–5). He is spoken of as a plant, reed, or tree (*ANET*, p. 410b; *ANES*, p. 645a; W, pp. 237, 273). In his suffering indeed he is like a tree without water, a tree with torn up roots (W, p. 237). He is snatched to the grave or underworld (W, pp. 83, 315). He is bound or chained (W, p. 127; *SAHG*, p. 186). He is stripped of bright and sacred garments (W, pp. 127, 93–4), his crown and sceptre are snatched away (W, pp. 93–4), his form robbed of bright freshness (W, p. 439) and youth (W, p. 129). He is further ill-treated, beaten by demons as with a stick (Falkenstein, pp. 55–6), torn and blood-spattered (W, pp. 349, 439). In the Underworld he thirsts (W, pp. 84, 315, 323, 237). His enemies are devils ('Graspers', 'Slayers'), robbers, dogs, ravens, locusts, floods, storms, wilderness (W, ix).

Finally, we must take account of Egyptian rites (*KP* p. 96). Though we do not know of the Pharaoh being ritually humiliated, he was involved in a complex of rituals denoting continuity and renewal of kingship. Within this complex, at the transition of the seasons around October, was the burial of Osiris and the raising of the Ded pillar. In the figure of Osiris, kingship was harmoniously related to the divine world of gods and royal ancestors, while his son Horus was active in the office of the reigning king. The pious burial put right the violence which, according to the myth, had been perpetrated on Osiris; the body was restored and interred as a mummy; the enemies were punished; his son Horus reigned on earth. This peculiarly Egyptian treatment of the renewal and continuance of the divine living order is obviously rather remote from Israelite religion. Texts of the Davidic rites (e.g. Ps. 110), however, have affinity with some features of Egyptian royal style. The common ground in respect of annual royal rites may be found especially in the new proclamation of kingship and the symbolic destruction of enemies, and also in the elaborate use of drama.

§ 24 *Yahweh glorifies his king*

It will be convenient now to make mention of some particular features of the royal ideal seen in the Psalms, the ideal which was projected especially in the festival.

One such feature is the king's glory. As Yahweh's festal manifestation is imagined as an effulgence of glory, a radiance of beauty and power across the world, so his Davidic Servant is glorified through a reflection of this divine splendour. Yahweh has seated him on the divine throne, covered him with his presence, inundated him with the oil of his holiness (*KP*, pp. 142f). Out of affliction he delivers him and glorifies him, filling him richly with enduring life and salvation (91.15–16).

§ 25 *The king and Yahweh's law*

Law (*tōrā*) and justice (*mišpāṭ, ṣedeq*) in the Davidic realm are Yahweh's. The Davidic ruler is both subject to them and mediator of them (*KP*, pp. 141f). His judgement session at dawn was a sending out of God's light and order, and was especially in mind at the festival (Pss. 101; 122). The festal ceremonies also included a solemn entry and self-presentation of the king to Yahweh, as Yahweh's willing and obedient minister, in whose very heart Yahweh's law was written (40.8–9, *KP*, pp. 42f).

§ 26 *The king as Yahweh's son and servant*

The Davidic part in the one kingship of God is expressed in two titles of particular importance, son and servant. They are closely connected (e.g. Ps. 89), being both indications of the king's task and of his close relationship to Yahweh. The ostensibly high doctrine of the sonship is qualified by the aspect of filial obedience and subjection to strict discipline; the ostensibly lowly concept of servanthood gains dignity from its use for Yahweh's chief minister and executive.

The sonship concept places the king nearer God than any other human being. In the festal ideal none can compare with the Davidic king for intimacy with God; no prophet, no priest or other king is privileged as this 'most high' and 'firstborn' son. The concept is connected in the king's enthronement with images of a divine begetting and birth and with formulae of adoption. As son he exerts God-given authority over all men and can appeal to God with confidence of a hearing. But in this capacity he is also obliged obediently to fulfil God's will, on pain of

chastisement, which will be severe but not exceeding the purpose of correction. The latter theme appears in his symbolic humiliation:

> Yahweh has chastised me severely
> but to death he has not delivered me.
> (118.18; cf. 89.31f)

Fashioned by the hands of God (*KP*, p. 63), he was also brought up by God as his child, trained by him in the skills he would need, including a deadly aim against his foes.

As Yahweh's servant, the king has likewise been chosen for a position of extraordinary intimacy and trust, with authority as his first minister and executive. He is over the people as Yahweh's Chosen One (89.4; cf. 1 Sam. 10.24; 16.8f, etc.) and Shepherd, bearer of the sacred royal covenant and crown. Appearing before the face of Yahweh, he can request the destruction of his enemies. The concept is not specifically applied to the king's role of humiliation, though it is prominent in the great psalm of royal suffering, 89, and occurs in the title of Ps. 18. Rather, the weight of the title in the royal texts is on unique intimacy with God and authority. (Sonship is treated in *KP*, pp. 146f; servanthood in *KP*, pp. 149f, with reference especially to Pss. 78. 70–2; 132.10; 89.4, 21, 40; 143.12.)

§ 27 *The king as righteous*

The king is referred to as *saddiq*, 'righteous' or 'the Righteous One' (*KP*, pp. 151f, with reference especially to 2 Sam. 23.3f; Zech. 9.9; Pss. 75.11; 5.13; 92.13–14; 11.3). In this capacity he is in harmony with the will of God and stands up for God's cause against the rebellious disrupters; he is so at one with the Creator of the living order that he is filled with power of life and sheds light and living grace:

> When the ruler over mankind is righteous,
> ruling in the fear of God,
> he is like the light of morning when the sun rises,
> a morning without clouds,
> making brilliant (*m'naggah*) after rain
> the verdure from the earth. (2 Sam. 23.3f)

§ 28 *The king and God's spirit*

The king can undertake his tasks of unique magnitude only with the aid furnished by God. A favourite conception for such enabling grace to the king is the gift of a spirit (*rū'ḥ*), which came especially when Yahweh anointed him to his office (*KP*, pp. 156f, with reference especially to 1 Sam. 10; 16.13; Isa. 11.2; Pss. 143.10; 51.12–14). The king was sustained by the 'royal spirit' and Yahweh's 'holy spirit'; through such gifts of spirit he experienced Yahweh's readiness to help and guide him. As Yahweh's rejection of a king would mean withdrawal of the helpful spirit and its replacement by a harmful spirit, so Yahweh would emphasize his favour and approval of the king in the rites of installation by announcing gifts of the spirit.

§ 29 *The king and God's word*

The king's position is founded upon God's word, which is the essential in the Davidic covenant. The king praises God for his word, and in need he appeals to the assurances which it gave; by the oracle of God he was called and appointed, publicly approved and empowered, given promises of safety and success and in effect receives salvation itself (*KP*, pp. 154f, with reference to 18.31; 56.5, 11–12; 138.2; 7.7; 71.3).

§ 30 *The reassurance of the king*

Assurances and reassurances given by oracle to the king are a conspicuous part of the royal texts, as also in the surrounding countries (*KP*, pp. 157f). It had to be made clear to the king and his subjects that he retained God's favour (*hps*, *KP*, p. 146). God grasps his hand (73.23; 139.10) or supports him with his hand (18.36; 63.9; 80.18; 89.22), promises to be at his side (110.5), to guard him night and day (91.5; 121.5–6). He promises to lift him high in safety or in triumph (89.20; 20.2; 91.14, etc.), to give him victory over enemy armies (89.23–4) and dominion over all nations (18.44; 89.28; 110.2, etc.). He promises him enduring life and a continuing dynasty (§ 31). All such promises were of course integrated with ideals of conduct in accordance with God's will (§§ 25–7).

§ 31 *God's bestowal of life on the king*

The gifts of God to his king culminate especially in the bestowal of 'life', a life which extends beyond immediate deliverance and even beyond a good natural life-span to an everlasting prospect (*KP*, pp. 160f). This everlasting life can to a large extent be explained as a continuance of the dynasty, where the life of the royal ancestor continues to flourish in the succession of his descendants ('seed'). But this concept does not exclude a king's hope that he personally would enjoy nearness to God even after physical death. In the ideal, the quality of royal life, as a specific gift and also in consequence of the king's being seated in God's aura, was so rich that it could challenge the usual negative conception of the after-life.

While the exact form of the royal gift of life is often not specified, the wonderful nature of the gift is much in evidence. In the annual royal rites, the scenes of humiliation were represented as an encounter with death; the king sank in the waters and mire of the mouth of Sheol (Pss. 18; 40) or felt the onset of dissolution in the dust of death (22) and the attacks of the horrible death-demons (22). All the more marvellous and joyful was the life to which he was then raised, in quality both of eternity and pleasure.

§ 32 *The king mediates life*

The benefits of Yahweh's covenant with his king reach the whole society (*KP*, pp. 165f). His grace of life means life for all his people. Further, he has a significance that can be compared with the rain, the dew, the light, the shade, the breath of the nostrils, and with one who feeds sheep.

Through his beloved king, God will give plentiful harvests, population, healthy birth and growth in family and cattle (72; 144). From the relationship between God and the Davidic house arises hope for ample food and all means of joyful life for the people of Zion (132). The rites of the king's deliverance from the region of death show a new access of life and joy throughout the world (22). With his exaltation after his conflict and chastisement, the light of God's salvation shines on all (118).

§ 33 *Priestly and prophetic functions in the king*

As Yahweh's son and servant, privileged to abide at Yahweh's side, made holy by Yahweh's anointing, equipped with his spirit, the king is

consequently Yahweh's chief cultic minister (*KP*, pp. 172f). He is the ruling steward-servant over God's house, appointing and controlling lesser servants, and responsible for the furnishings, programme, supplies, and repairs. He presents sacrifices, makes great petitions and intercessions, is granted visions and omens and oracles, and speaks to the world on God's behalf with admonition, judgement, and benediction. Thus priestly and prophetic functions, which are distributed in specialized forms among the various cultic orders and holy men, are seen in the ideal king as chief mediator between God and society.

Examples in the Psalms include his re-enactment of David's lively role before the Ark (132; cf. 42.5), his cultic music and praise (144.9; 40.4), his benediction (22.27; 69.33), his sacrifices (20.4; 66.15), his supplications with outspread arms (28.2; 143.6); his invocations of Yahweh's epiphany (7.7; 35.2, etc.) and of doom on enemies (7; 10; 36, etc.), his visions and revelations (27.4; 63.3, etc.), his hearing and declaring God's word (2.7; 35.3; 40.7; 62.12, etc.), his judging with the judgements he has heard from God (72.1–2; 75; 122.5, etc.).

Thus he comes from God to speak on his behalf to men, and goes to God to speak on behalf of the community. In some psalms the lack of emphasis on his royal person is due to his passing into the role of Israel's representative or embodiment (cf. the tribes being 'in David', 2 Sam. 19.44, 1 Kings 12.16); the 'I' and the 'we' alternate without any real shift of interest (44; 60; 66; 77; 80; 83; 102, etc.).

§ 34 *The king's work of atonement*

The ministry of atonement carried out annually by the post-exilic high priest was largely inherited from the king, as I argue in *KP*, pp. 177f, from his royal vestments (including the atoning crown-piece, Exod. 28.36–8), from the expiation performed by the ruler in Ezek. 45.17, and from the king's position as leader in the cult. Solomon's prayer makes a basis on which all future users of the Temple can come in hope of forgiveness (1 Kings 8).

Apart from various other pointers to the royal work of atonement, the psalms of royal humiliation in the festival are especially to be noted. In Ps. 22 the king's own person is at the centre, bearing the humiliation which precedes the new access of life and communion which comes to all. In Ps. 144 also, his symbolic suffering and deliverance give prospect of happy life under God for all the people. In Ps. 51 we gain a closer view of the pre-exilic rites of atonement: the king makes a comprehensive and

radical confession of sin; his affliction represents divine chastisement, even to 'breaking of bones', and a pounding clean as of clothes at the water's edge; he is sprinkled from a hyssop shrub and so purified and re-created; this offering of his 'broken heart' is more valued by God than the sacrifice of animals; it brings Zion into the 'good favour' (*rāṣōn*) of God, the favour which (as symbolized by his crown-piece, Exod. 28.36–8) his atoning person secured. The ready self-offering of the king, more valued than burnt offerings, seems also to have been represented in the central enthronement rites (*KP*, pp. 43f, after 40.7–9).

§ 35 *The king's power of prayer*

The king is specially privileged in prayer (*KP*, pp. 195f). God promises to hear and fulfil his petitions and invites him to ask what he will: 'Ask what I shall give you' (1 Kings 3.5), 'Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance' (Ps. 2.8). His powerful prayer is a deadly weapon against his enemies (2 Sam. 15.31f; Pss. 4.3–4; 89.27, etc.); but it is a strength to his people (20), an intercession supporting their whole relation to God (1 Kings 8).

§ 36 *The prominence of enemies in the royal texts*

The large place which 'enemies' have in the Psalms is due to the royal ideology (*KP*, pp. 137f). The king must continually reckon with enemies. In his scenes of triumph, he is shown overpowering them; in his hours of affliction he is encompassed by them and moves God with descriptions of their multitude and their horrible and crafty character. He sometimes speaks directly to his enemies, words of threat or doom (Pss. 2; 4; 52; 62, etc.); or again, he prophesies or invokes their destruction in his prayers to God (3.8; 28.3–5; 63.10–11; 144.5f, etc.).

His victory over them is achieved by virtue of his dependence on God; only rarely is his military prowess glorified, and then it is in order to show how marvellously God enables him. The king is sometimes shown as passive while God fights for him (110.1; 91.8; 132.17–18). The king's prayers from crises show him only as a man of prayer, weak, lonely, and lamenting; the power for conquest is envisaged as wholly in the hands of Yahweh.

§ 37 *The king as witness and proclaimer of Yahweh's triumph*

We have already seen the king as the man above all others who comes from God to address mankind (§§ 33, 36). In addition to his stern addresses, however, he proclaims the glory of Yahweh to all the world; he is Yahweh's 'witness' to the nations (Isa. 55.4; *KP*, pp. 182f).

This role is brought to a focus in the festival (as I have argued in *ASTI*, 7, p. 32f). In relation to the advent of Yahweh as triumphant King and to his own sacramental deliverance, the Davidic king has good tidings to proclaim. To the festal assembly, which represents Israel and indeed all the world, he preaches the gospel of Yahweh's victory over chaos and evil, a victory that betokens release of prisoners, rescue of the downtrodden, healing and resettlement, fertility, rich provision and peace, a new era crowned with divine goodness (cf. §§ 17, 14), and he testifies to the faithful help he has experienced in symbol, a sign of Yahweh's fidelity to all who trust in him. As he relates in Ps. 40:

> I proclaimed the victory of righteousness
> in the great congregation.
> Behold, my lips I did not restrain,
> O Yahweh, thou thyself knowest it.
> Thy righteous work I did not hide
> in the midst of my heart,
> thy faithfulness and salvation I announced.
> I did not conceal thy fidelity and truth
> from the great congregation.

As for the 'great congregation', the huge festal assembly, it was for them to receive this gospel as men humble and poor (*ʿănāwīm*), confessing their need before God, eager for the divine acts of restitution and reversal of fortunes (18.28; 22.26–7; 132.15).

Ps. 40 also illustrates how the king made reference to his role of witness and festal evangelist when he sought help in a crisis; Yahweh would surely not forsake one who had been so prominent in preaching his fidelity. The same point is fundamental to Ps. 89.

Among the favourite themes in the king's witness (summarized in *KP*, pp. 192f), we may note his exhortation to trust in Yahweh rather than in feeble humanity, his vaunting of Yahweh's incomparability, covenant-love, word and name, and his making of his own experience into a lesson of general application.

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§ 38 *Complaints of king and people*

The celebration of the festal glories that have now been described would sometimes be in such contrast with the political or economic conditions of the time that the liturgy itself took note of the fact. And it was precisely in the festival that the most moving appeals about current difficulties could be made. No only was God thought then to be near, ready to hear and to be found; the lamenting description of actual conditions could stand in such sharp contrast to the festal declarations that he must surely be moved to act. A description of the sufferings of widows, orphans, and other defenceless persons, for example, must move one who had been praised for his royal rule. An account of military defeat must move one who had just given assurances of victory to his Anointed.

So king and people raised their complaints to Yahweh in the closest conjunction with the proclamations of the festival, as is apparent in many texts. In Pss. 9—10, for example, the celebrations of Yahweh's kingship are echoed alongside lamentations about national sufferings. Or again, in Ps. 40 the king prefaces his lamenting prayer with vivid recollection of the royal rites in which God has crowned him with grace and favour, and in which the king has preached of God's salvation. In Ps. 44 the lament of the defeated king and people begins with reference to the recitals of ancestral salvation and citation of God's titles as King and bringer of salvation to Jacob. In Ps. 94, preserved within the sequence proclaiming Yahweh's kingship 93—99, appeal is made to God as King by stressing the persecution of the weak whose protection was the central royal duty. And in the Book of Habakkuk, which concludes with a festal psalm prophesying God's intervention (Eaton, *ZAW* (1964)), bitter reproach is first raised to God about the inconsistencies of faith in his rule and actual conditions. Habakkuk is notable for its dialogue, which passes through the prophet from people to God and from God to people, and it is likely that in the festival prophetic ministers mediated such dialogue, voicing the people's needs and Yahweh's responses (cf. § 10) and adding exhortations of their own. (Schoors in *VTS*, 24, pp. 36–7, lists all passages where oracle follows collective lament.) Through the participation of such prophets in worship, the presence of Yahweh was experienced as a living encounter, exciting suspense, fear, or relief. In the encounter of God and covenant-people there was thus opportunity for both parties to utter appeals, complaints, remonstrances. Such warm disputations were a sign of a living, heartfelt relationship.

That the tradition of lament in conjunction with the festal themes was influential in the exilic period is fairly clear from Ps. 74. The destruction of Jerusalem is contrasted with the celebration of Yahweh as King and Creator. Complaint is also made that the prophetic ministers at this time have no satisfactory answer to mediate from God.

3

FESTAL AND ROYAL MATTER IN ISAIAH 40—55, 60—62

Following on the outline of the festal tradition given in chapter 2 mostly from sources in the Psalms, we have now to see to what extent this tradition has influenced Isa. 40f. While the survey will take note of the units marked off by form-criticism, the sequence in which they have been handed down will also be respected. For if indeed a liturgical influence is present, sequences of different forms may be a feature of the original communication, as in many psalms, Hab. 1, etc.

40.1–11

A series of four units (vv. 1–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–11) outlines the good tidings which God commands to be proclaimed. The units are not in the characteristic prophetic form where God speaks directly to the people through the prophet. Rather, various persons already charged with his message pass it on to others for them to proclaim (or obey, vv. 3–5). The angle of speech changes: in vv. 1–2 instructions are given to a group of messengers, in v. 9 to 'tidings-bearer Zion/Jerusalem' (so North, Muilenburg, Westermann, Elliger, Whybray); in v. 6 a dialogue results from a single person's response to the instructions (G, Q 'and I said'; M 'and one is saying'). In two of the units the instructions are attributed to a 'voice': 'a voice is crying' v. 3, 'a voice is saying' v. 6.

This is thus a rather dramatic form of beginning. From the interplay of voices, the publication of God's new action is set in train, involving the participation of a number of messengers.

Some explain this form of material as arising from the idea of Yahweh's heavenly court: a heavenly minister conveys Yahweh's instructions to other angelic emissaries; the human prophet first hears and then participates in the scene. While Muilenburg and Elliger make much of such a heavenly council, Westermann holds aloof, in view of the lack of explicit reference in the text. In any case, comparison with

1 Kings 22.19–22, Isa. 6 or Job 1, where God is at the centre of the scene, does not explain the form here, where God's proclamations are transmitted by another to messengers in connection with a grand procession of God.

Now this procession, as we shall see, has great similarity to the old festal procession, which was also provided with messengers proclaiming glad tidings (p. 13). At the turning point in the festal drama, 'the Lord gave the word and great was the company of the preachers' (to use the hallowed translation of Ps. 68.12); from prophetic sources assurance could be given of God's good-will, inaugurating a time of salvation (cf. Ps. 85.9–14, ending with reference to God's advent as Saviour). Thus the festival was served by numbers of prophetic ministers, who stood ready to hear and pass on the decisions of God which gave momentum to the ceremonies and content to the proclamations.

From such prophetic groups in the festival we may gain a valuable clue to the curious opening of Deutero-Isaiah. For the interplay of voices here is like the co-operation in a prophetic group. As the members unite in concentration, the first to be inspired instructs the others (vv. 1–2, cf. 35.3–4), or one voice begins and another fills out the message (v. 6). Connections of Isa. 40—55 with corporate prophecy are supported by the appearance of a chorus conveying revelation in ch. 53 and by the simile in 50.4 of a prophetic group keeping vigil for a revelation at dawn (see below). So it is not unlikely that both the form and content of 40.1–11 arise from the tradition of group-prophesying in the festival, whereby heavenly messages were received, the proclamation of salvation was authorized and the grand procession launched. Engnell (p. 65) thus rightly referred to 'liturgic voices' in 40.1f, and the ancient Versions were on the right lines in addressing the messages to the priests (G) or the prophets (T).

This view does not exclude the notion of the messages originating in the heavenly court, handed down by an angelic official and caught by the prophetic ear, though it may render it unnecessary. But the theory that vv. 1–8 show us the vocation of 'Deutero-Isaiah' to be a prophet (Elliger) must be regarded as quite unsuited to the text.

The message itself in these verses is influenced by the festal tradition to an astonishing extent, not a single expression being peculiar to historical circumstances. Links with the festival may be listed thus:

(1) The message is a proclamation of 'good tidings' (v. 9, cf. 52.7), as was the festal announcement of salvation (p. 13 and §17).

(2) Surprisingly when the city is in ruins (cf. Young), 'Zion/Jerusalem' is the form in which God's people are imagined. This is surely a powerful legacy from the festal assembly and from the hymns which glorified Zion as God's bride and the mother of his worshippers (§ 15). Westermann (p. 22) rightly observes that '(The author) takes up the Zion tradition . . . in the second part of the book, he frequently calls Israel by that name, while the prophecies concerning Jerusalem are based on the praises . . . in the songs of Zion.'

(3) It is said that Jerusalem's ample chastisement is over and full satisfaction made for her sin; God comes to her now with comfort and restoration. Purification, atonement, and restoration were represented in the festival, where the annual rhythm of the rites brought the issues of alienation and reconciliation to a climax for the whole community (§ 5).

(4) The marvellous road, along which Yahweh is to progress as Saviour and so re-enter his residence in Jerusalem (cf. 52.8), is comparable to the route of his procession in the festival, when he came to Zion over the dry eastern hills with symbolism of triumphant glory (§ 8). The diligent clearing and levelling of the sacred route for the new year festival is known best from Babylon, but there are echoes of a similar practice in Jerusalem's worship (p. 15), and one should not assume with Muilenburg that vv. 3–4 derive only from Babylonian influence. Elliger considers that the concept is neither of an unrealistic route straight through the desert nor of a sacred way; he compares rather the improvement of highways made by various great kings on campaign. Westermann refers both to the sacred ways and the triumph processions of kings. In fact the sacred ways are a suitable comparison when their symbolism is fully appreciated. The route was used for the warlike departure to the station where the divine victory was symbolized, and then for the joyful return with manifestation of glory and salvation. The actual length of the route is unimportant; for it symbolized the Creator-King's journey over the breadth of earth and heaven (p. 16). The influence of tradition about the old festal route of Zion is recognizable in that Deutero-Isaiah's route is essentially 'the way of Yahweh' (v. 3), where his glory is revealed to the multitudes (v. 5), and (if we may enlarge from 52.11) where the sacred personnel accompany him after meticulous personal purifications, to enter at last the gates of Zion amid festal proclamations.

(5) God's progress along his way is to be an epiphany, revealing his glory to all (v. 5). While the revelation of God's glory or majesty, a

radiance throughout the world, was a central theme of the festival (Pss. 46.11; 50.1–3; 68.33–6; 93.1; 96; 97; 98.2; 99), the procession in particular was a revelation of the divine power and grace before the eyes of the multitudes (pp. 14, 15).

(6) The treatment of human transience and divine endurance in vv. 6–8 was recognized as dependent on ancient hymnic tradition by Begrich (pp. 99f). It is taken by Westermann as a prime example of Deutero-Isaiah's dependence on the Psalms (e.g. Ps. 90). More specifically, however, the close parallel in Ps. 103.15–18 points to the hymnic tradition of the festival, as Ringgren argues (above, p. 12). The king's witness to Yahweh, which was cultivated especially in the festival, vaunted the enduring and trustworthy character of Yahweh's word and covenant-love (*hesed*, § 37).

(7) The advent of God depicted especially in the 'good tidings' of vv. 9–11 has the same character as his kingly advent in the festival. The traditional nature of the form of the announcement is indicated by comparison with 52.7 and the pre-exilic Nahum 2.1 (English 1.15). In different words these three passages find their climax in declaring God's return in triumph: Nahum, 'Keep your festivals . . . Belial is totally destroyed!'; Isa. 52.7 'Your God reigns!'; 40.9 'Behold your God!' Though Isa. 40 lacks the specific term 'king' (*mlk*), there is no doubt that the picture is of the royal advent and new era of beneficent reign. Heralded by the victory-tidings, Yahweh comes with might and victorious arm and booty, the shepherd-ruler (vv. 10–11). Zion, Muilenburg rightly says, 'must announce his conquest and his victory, his bringing in of his kingdom and the institution of his sovereignty (v. 10b), and above all his acts of justice (v. 10c). . . . Yahweh comes as conqueror and victor, as king to bring in his kingdom'. All this is an inheritance from the festival, where the dramatic advent of Yahweh as King was as central as it is here (§ 8). There too was all the excitement of transition to a time of salvation, as proclamation was made of Yahweh's coming to reign as Saviour-King. There too the beneficence of his new kingship was loudly acclaimed in terms of his mighty arm, his care as shepherd, his release of prisoners, his work of resettlement (§ 14).

It may thus be concluded that the festal tradition has been a decisive influence on the character of 40.1–11. This is all the more significant as the passage opens the cycle, sets out its essential message, and is in many ways resumed in the closing passages (especially 52 and 54—5, cf. Westermann, p. 28; Muilenburg, p. 385b).

40.12–31

Begrich analyses this passage into four 'disputation sayings' (*Disputationswort*): 12–17; 18–20 + 25–6; 21–4; 27–31. Elliger finds three: 12–17; 18–26; 27–31, which he says are each independent. But Muilenburg considers the passage to be a poem of seven strophes (12; 13–14; 15–17; 18–20; 21–4; 25–7; 28–31) and Westermann also sees a connected whole. Schoors regards vv. 12–36 as 'a strong unity' which could be intended as substructure for the 'complete disputation' of vv. 27–31.

That the thought flows on through the small units seems to be a correct judgement, and the relation to 1–11 is also fairly plain. The good news of 1–11 has met with unbelief. The people of God, called 'Jacob' and 'Israel', can only lament that God has not in fact helped them (v. 27). Eloquent arguments are therefore addressed to them to convince them of his power to save. Muilenburg can thus say of v. 27 that it 'lies behind the whole poem'.

The passage is thus related to the old cultic pattern of congregational lament and prophetic answer, as found for example in Pss. 60 and 85. As Westermann (pp. 18, 59f) emphasizes, the words against which the prophet disputes are not private utterances, but words of the community in divine service, such as we find in the psalms of national lamentation (similarly von Waldow, pp. 266–8). As we have seen reason to regard such lamentation as an aspect of the festal tradition, a reaction to its gospel (§ 38), it is possible that this type of 'disputation' was also developed in the festal setting. This indeed seems a probability in view of the relation of this section to vv. 1–11, and in view of the disputation's use of festal themes which will now be noted.

At one point, God's own words are given in an oracle of hymnic self-praise, asserting his incomparability (v. 25); from the festal texts we may compare the short oracle in Ps. 46.11. For the rest, the speaker himself argues the case for God. An affinity with Wisdom language in v. 12f is natural in view of the subject matter – reflections on the composition of the universe; familiarity with Wisdom tradition was part of the educational heritage of priests, prophets, psalmists, as of other servants of the royal centre in pre-exilic times, and the style can easily affect any type of material.

But above all, the arguments of vv. 12–31 use the style of the hymns. Though we cannot adduce exact and sustained parallels from our existing stock of psalms, the echoes are so numerous that Westermann is

bold enough to say: 'This poem is stamped from beginning to end with the language of the psalms of praise' (German edn, p. 15). The following affinities come readily to mind: v. 16 and Ps. 50.8–13; vv. 19–20 and Ps. 115.4–8; v. 22 and Pss. 104.2 and 19.5; v. 23 and Ps. 33.10, 15f; v. 25 and Ps. 89.7–9; v. 26 and Pss. 147.4 and 8.4; v. 27 and Ps. 44.25; vv. 30–1 and Pss. 33.16f and 103.5. The passage shares with the psalms the glorification of God by reference to his work as Creator, easily passing to the theme of his power over earthly rulers.

Here especially is the link with the festal tradition. For the passage presents Yahweh's work as Creator in order to affirm his power to save his people, derision being heaped on the pretensions of the nations, their rulers and their gods and images. This combination of ideas was characteristic of the festival. Yahweh was there celebrated both as master or maker of the cosmic elements (§ 12) and as jealous of his unique godhead (§ 7); the ideas were often interwoven in a context of revelation and salvation (§ 18).

The ideal of 'waiting on Yahweh' (v. 31) is especially common in the Psalms (33.16–22; 27.14; 40.2, etc.). The simile of the eagles is found also in Ps. 103.5, a psalm which has already thrown light on the festal tradition behind Isa. 40.6–8 (p. 41).

41

A succession of some six units continues to convey the message that Yahweh intends salvation for his people and that he has the power to carry it out. In two of the units (1–4/5, 21–9) Yahweh speaks in the style of one arguing a case in a judgement assembly, his case being that he alone is true God, while the gods of the nations, who are imagined as present, are feeble and worthless. Attached to the first speech is a short mockery of idols (6–7) in the satirical style found also in 40.19–20; 42.17; 44.9–20; 45.16–17; 46.1–2, 5–7. For the rest, we have oracles of comfort and promise from Yahweh to his people; two of these (8–13, 14–16) take the form of 'salvation-oracles' (a form which Begrich has traced to the answers mediated by priests to an individual supplicant in the Temple); the third (17–20) has the form of an 'announcement of salvation' (a form which has been traced to the answers mediated by prophets to the supplicating community in the Temple, Westermann, p. 79; Elliger, p. 159).

All these forms are frequent in Deutero-Isaiah and have been much studied by recent scholars. The tendency has been to look for the pure

originals of such forms (for example speeches in a clearly defined situation of judgement in the town gateway, or an oracle to a persecuted individual in the Temple) and then to imagine Deutero-Isaiah picking such forms out of the great variety available from secular and sacred situations and adapting them to his use. The rather abrupt way in which he uses such forms, however, rather suggests that he was able to draw upon a tradition where these forms were already customarily applied within a coherent scheme of thought. In the forensic speeches of Yahweh, for instance, the scene is not described; the role of Yahweh in the court, the identity of his enemies, the stage reached in the legal procedure – such aspects are not explained and sometimes continue to be disputed by the form-critics (41.1–5, for example, is explained diversely in these respects by Muilenburg, Westermann, and Elliger; similarly 4.21–9, cf. Schoors, p. 222). Following on the striking links with the festival established for ch. 40, we may then consider whether the festal tradition has not also furnished the prophet with the forms which are associated together and so abruptly presented in ch. 41. The following points favour this explanation.

(1) In vv. 1–7 and 21–9 the forensic speeches and the satire on idols take up a prominent theme of the festival – the supremacy of Yahweh and his implacable hostility to would-be rivals. The hymns celebrated the great event of the liturgy, whereby Yahweh as King asserted his unique godhead, poured scorn on other claimants and filled the nations, their gods, and the great elements of the cosmos with awe (§ 7). Two details may further be noted. In v. 4 Yahweh's statement 'I am he' corresponds to the cultic confession 'Thou art he (=the true God)' Ps. 102.28; there seems to be truth in the view of M. Phillips that 'in Israelite tradition the formula ('I am God', etc.) is tied specifically to the covenant and the cult celebrations related to covenant renewal'. In v. 5 the 'coastlands' (a favourite term in these chapters) are also associated with the festal celebration of God's kingship (Ps. 97.1).

(2) The linking here of Yahweh's self-assertion with scenes of judgement can be compared with elements of divine assembly and judgement in the festival. The assembling of the gods for great decisions about the government of the world and the fates of gods and creatures is best known in the Babylonian new year festival (*KP*, p. 94), but there is some evidence that some such items existed also in the Israelite festal tradition (§ 11). Westermann writes on 41.1: 'There may be yet another background, the age-old concept, widespread in the ancient east, of a

heavenly court – the classical example is in the Babylonian epic Enuma Elish – which under the presidency of the god-king, deliberated on the destinies of gods and men, and also served as a court of law.' And certainly the surprising situation where Yahweh can argue in the style of a plaintiff before a court (41.1) would be more understandable if related to a liturgical tradition with some polytheistic antecedents. Behind Ps. 82 and Deut. 32.8–9 one may detect a situation where Yahweh could appear in the assembly over which El presided (cf. Emerton *JTS* (1958), pp. 240–1). With the establishment of 'monotheistic' Yahwism, Yahweh became the dominating figure in the court-scene, he who alone speaks and whose argument has the force of condemnation and sentence, as in Ps. 82 and Isa. 40—55. But elements of the polytheistic scene remained and were indeed applied as an expression of monotheism; in this way Yahweh's unique divinity was manifested through his absolute dominance over the 'gods'.

(3) The connection between the three oracles of comfort and the preceding and following forensic speeches can well be seen in terms of the tradition of God's momentous pronouncements of destiny at the festival. While we may not entirely accept Muilenburg's description of 41.1—42.4 as a 'poem' of 'nine strophes', we should not, with Elliger and Schoors, consider the formal units only in isolation. In the festal tradition, Yahweh's speeches of hostility to enemies and of comfort to his people fit together as expressions of his royal will at the momentous opening of the new era of his reign (§§ 10, 11, 17). A blend of judgement-speech and oracle of salvation occurs in 44.6–8.

(4) The previous point may also explain why the salvation oracles (8–13, 14–16) have a decidedly royal character, addressing Israel as a royal figure. For the festal tradition was above all a royal tradition, expressing the kingship of Yahweh and its mediation through the house of David and the holy centre, Jerusalem. The great liturgy was the occasion for oracles of high destiny, couched in high style. The ancestor Jacob-Israel, ever living in his descendants, was ancestor of the royal house and on this occasion in particular could be addressed in royal terms (cf. Ps. 105.15). It is significant that the typically festal promise of water, which here is expressed in the next unit (vv. 17–20), occurs in 44.1–5 within a salvation-oracle to royal Jacob–Israel.

The concept of the ancestor should not be taken as a simple equivalent of the people, a sort of poetic name for them. Here and in several other passages with a highly individualized conception, the thought is of the

ancestor Jacob-Israel, whose life and presence continue in his descendants. In 43.1–7, for example, the address to him makes reference to the people as his seed, which admittedly can then be treated (through parallelism in v. 5) as equivalent of himself. Or again, in 44.1–5, Yahweh promises the individualized Jacob-Israel that he will fructify his seed and progeny (cf. on 48.17–19, p. 60). The name is used specifically of the ancestor in 45.19, 25 and 48.1 (see below). And as the prophets could mediate an oracle of comfort to 'my servant Jacob/Israel' as the patriarch, so they could speak one also to his wife Rachel; such oracles to father and mother are found in Jer. 30—31.

This ancestor living in the nation is given royal dignity in Isa. 41. As were the kings, so he too is Yahweh's chosen (p. 30), his servant (§ 26), of favoured lineage, called, grasped, strengthened, upheld by Yahweh's right hand of righteousness (§ 30). This combination of elements under the theme-phrase 'fear not' may be a well-established form of oracle to kings on momentous occasions; we may compare (a) the 'fear not' oracles to Assyrian kings (*ANET*, pp. 449–51; note the reference to the assembly of the gods in the example in *SAHG*, p. 293); (b) the 'fear not' exhortations and oracles to leader and people in Israel's holy wars (Exod. 14.13; Deut. 20.3; Josh. 8.1; 10.8, 25; 11.6); and (c) the seeking of such an oracle by an embattled king in the Psalms (Ps. 35.3).

In vv. 14–16 a second oracle of salvation begins as an address to the patriarch or people under the figure of a worm and hence as a feminine singular, but changing to masculine singular in v. 15b. The worm will become a threshing-sledge; the weak and oppressed one will be given strength to crush enemies. The application of a threshing figure to royal conquests is found in Assyria (Young, p. 89; Schoors, p. 63). The contrast of present despised lowliness with future dominance is a theme applied to the king in Jerusalem's festival with the figures of a worm and a stone (Pss. 22.7; 118.22; § 21). Westermann notes that this oracle of salvation in Isaiah reflects cultic laments of the type found in the psalms; after mentioning the worm of Ps. 22, he compares the whole oracle with the lamenting Ps. 71.12–15, a psalm which I think is decidedly royal (*KP*, pp. 54f).

(5) The announcement of salvation in vv. 17–20 is closely related to the festal theme of rains and fertility. It may be that this promise of relief to the thirsty poor by abundance of waters and transformation of the wilderness implies miracles of refreshment and shade along the way for the returning exiles (Elliger, etc.). But the text says nothing of this.

Tradition governs its form: prophetic answer to the worshipping congregation's lament in a season of drought (Westermann). The old festal congregation had been depicted as 'poor' in humble acknowledgement of dependence on God (Pss. 18.28; 22.25–7; 132.15, etc.). After the long summer drought, they came with earnest entreaty for a winter of ample rains (p. 9; *KP*, p. 103). Yahweh's will in this respect was revealed through his prophets (Ps. 85; Joel 2.21 f). Isa. 41 draws on such prophetic utterance where the gift of rain was associated with the mighty acts of Yahweh's kingship and restoration. In accordance with the festal tradition, the promise of abundant waters and marvellous growth points to the fulness of the divine work of salvation.

(6) In the festival Yahweh was revealed as King (§ 6), and from his royal seat in Zion he gave judgement (§ 11). In v. 21, speaking here authoritatively and summoning the gods to justify themselves, he is also entitled King. The qualification 'King of Jacob' (cf. 43.15; 44.6; 52.7) is perhaps to emphasize Yahweh's will to protect his people and his opposition to the king-gods of other peoples, understandable emphases in the Exile. The tradition-history of the term 'Jacob' runs through Jerusalem's worship from David's time (§ 18).

From all these considerations we may conclude that the festal tradition is very influential in ch. 41. Its effect appears in many aspects of the chapter: the scornful opposition of Yahweh to the gods and their idols; the background of the divine assembly for judgement; the announcement of destinies; the patriarch-in-the-nation addressed in high royal style; the promise of water to relieve the thirsty poor; the weighty words of Yahweh as King; and hence probably the forms in which these themes are expressed.

42

The succession of formal units here consists of a designation by God of the chosen leader (vv. 1–4), an oracle directly to the chosen leader (5–9), a hymn like the festal psalms of Yahweh's kingship (10–17, with a salvation oracle 14–17), and a disputation or remonstrance of Yahweh with his complaining people (18–25).

In vv. 1–4 Yahweh directs attention to one whom he designates 'my servant', declaring to some unspecified audience that he has chosen him and equipped him with his spirit and empowered him to bring without fail good rule to all the world. The character of this passage can best

be understood as derived from the royal rites of initiation or renewal.

The basis of the king's enthronement was the word of God which expressed the divine choice, favour, support, equipment, and promise of success. To a third party God addressed the designation (cf. 'Behold the man' in 1 Sam. 9.15–17; 'This is he' in 16.12–13; 'He is my shepherd' Isa. 44.28). In the cultic ceremonies he spoke of his king's intimate relation to himself, his world-wide task and his endowment of success (cf. 44.28; Pss. 2 and 110). The explanation of the form of vv. 1–4 as an oracle of royal designation, presentation, and legitimation is accepted by scholars who do not in the end regard the Servant as a king, for example Mowinckel (*HTC*, p. 190), Kaiser (*KK*, pp. 16f), Westermann. The last rightly stresses that this form of royal designation is clearly distinguished from that of a prophet's call, in that God designates his king to others, bestowing on him a public legitimation. In the great ceremonies, the audience of such a presentation by God would be the congregational representatives, but ideally also an audience of universal proportions, for it behoved all in heaven and on earth to attend to God's great decisions about the dispensations of his kingship. The form of this passage is thus another link with the festival, where the divine legitimation and empowering of the king were shown in dramatic fashion (§§ 19–21).

The details of the passage fit well with the royal ideal. The position and capability of this 'servant' rest upon the utterance of Yahweh, as was true also of the king (§ 29). He is Yahweh's high minister designated 'my servant', as was also the king (§ 26). God grasps him, a sign of choice and favour, as also in the royal idea (*tmk*, Pss. 41.13; 63.9; § 30). He is his 'chosen one' as was the king (p. 30), the object of his delight (cf. Ps. 18.20, etc.; *KP*, p. 146). He is equipped by God with his spirit to effect the divine rule, as was also the king (§ 28). His work for Yahweh is world-wide, as in the royal ideal (§§ 26, 30). Effected through God's spirit, the law (*tōrā*) of this servant must be the mediation of God's, as it was in the royal work (§ 25), and the judgement (*mišpāṭ*) he effects (and which is given extraordinary emphasis) will be the application of God's kingship, his 'rule' (cf. Pss. 72.1; 101.1; § 25; Elliger p. 206). The meaning of *tōrā* and *mišpāṭ* is thus the same as in 51.4–5, where they shine out from God like the sun's rays, the expression of his healthful rule.

We may note a few details in support of this last point. In Ugaritic the equivalent of *mišpāṭ* (*mṯpṭ*) is coupled with *mlk*, 'kingship', for example in 'the throne of thy kingship . . . the sceptre of thy rule', and a similar pairing is found in Phoenician (*VT* (1968), pp. 355f). In Hebrew 'rule/reign' is a natural sense of *mišpāṭ*, in view of the basic sense 'to

rule/govern' of the verb *špṭ* (cf. BDB). The noun is associated with dawn and with God's morning work of justice also in Zeph. 3.5. The repeated statement in Isa. 42 (vv. 1, 3) that the servant will 'send out' this rule is suited to the idea of divine government shining out over the world like the sun's rays, as in 51.4. (Note NEB in 42.1, 3 'he will make justice shine', and in 51.4 'my law shall shine forth'.) De Savignac (pp. 115f), from Egyptian parallels, thinks a similar image is found in Ps. 110.2, 'the sceptre of thy power Yahweh will extend from Zion' – an effulgence of sun-like majesty. And we may compare Hammurabi, who was named by the gods to effect justice and to rise like the sun over mankind, lighting up the land (*ANET*, p. 164).

Vv. 2–3a are rather ambiguous. In v. 2, what kind of shouting is meant? 'To cry for help' is a common use of *ṣ'q*, but Elliger, after examining the statistics, concludes that the verb could denote harsh utterance (he thinks of the doom oracles of the pre-exilic prophets). Certainly, to judge from v. 3, the sense is 'He will not cry harshly', he will not crush the weak; that is, I take it, he will not rule tyranically. An interesting royal interpretation is suggested by E. Burrows (pp. 65, 75f), but it depends on taking the first two verbs impersonally with the servant as the object (the roar of the Davidic lion is not heard in the Exile, yet the damaged staff of royalty will not be broken, the dynastic lamp will not be put out). Such treatment of the verbs, however, is unnatural (cf. Elliger, p. 211). The reed and the wick have invited a number of ingenious explanations. The supposition that they derive from forensic customs where the breaking and extinguishing accompanied an execution has not been confirmed (Kaiser *KK*, pp. 27f; Elliger). Koenig's recent suggestion that they are the servant's pen and reading lamp, representing his legislative activity, is shown to be weak by Elliger (pp. 212–13), who especially complains about the elaborate explanations needed to make it fit the text. The best we can say is that the crushed reed and the smouldering wick represent the oppressed and needy, and may have reference especially to the sufferings of the Exile.

The next unit, vv. 5–9, begins with an impressive introduction in messenger style, 'Thus says the god Yahweh . . .', and replete with hymnic praise of the Creator. It addresses an oracle directly to a figure called and commissioned in royal manner. In vv. 8–9 however, Yahweh concludes in tones of antagonism against rival gods and asserts his power to a wider audience, as in the judgement speeches of ch. 41. As the content of the oracle is in harmony with vv. 1–4, it seems reasonable to let the sequence have its natural force. Accordingly, Yahweh's

declaration *about* his royal minister in 1–4 is followed by an oracle *to* him, reinforced with a statement of Yahweh's sovereign and 'jealous' power over creation and history; a similar sequence of 'enthronement words' is found in 44.24—45.7 (p. 55).

God affirms to him his divine vocation and appointment to effect healthful relationships, to be indeed the binding force and life-giving light; as 'covenant of people(s)' his role is like that of the king as keystone (p. 26, *KP*, pp. 62, 166); as 'light of the nations' he is like the king who mediates the light of life to society (§ 32). His freeing of prisoners (v. 7) is like the amnesties marking a new reign (Kaiser, *KK*, p. 39, and above, p. 19); his opening the eyes of the blind (if not a metaphor for freeing prisoners, so Paul, p. 182; Elliger) may be connected with the healing powers sometimes associated with kingship (cf. Ps. 147.3 of Yahweh, and Posener, ch. 6, of Pharaoh). Comparison can be made with Esarhaddon's reign, which was supposed to have brought freedom for prisoners and health to those long sick (Labat pp. 296, 282).

In the festal tradition, the king is the executive of the one true kingship, that of Yahweh (§ 19); his calling is a part of the assertion of Yahweh's supremacy. It is thus natural for the present passage to combine the call and commission of the royal minister with typical assertion of Yahweh's kingship (vv. 8–9). In Yahweh's declaration of 'new things' which will 'sprout', one can hear an echo of the new period (§ 17) and new growth (§§ 1, 8) envisaged in the festival.

In the next unit, a hymn like the psalms of Yahweh's kingship (vv. 10–13/17), the influence of the festal 'new era' is also strong; like Pss. 96, 98, 149, it begins with the call for a 'new song' (§ 17), and emphasizes his sovereignty over all the world, including deserts and waters. The weight falls on his fresh intervention; he is going into action as a warrior moves against his enemy. His utterance in vv. 14–16 (17?) gives further assurance of his intervention. The combination of such an oracle with a hymnic introduction was common in the festal hymns (Pss. 68.23–4; 75.3; 46.11; cf. § 10). The description of his epiphany shows him militant against his foes (v. 13) rather as he appears in Zeph. 1, Nahum 1 and Hab. 3, which are related to the festal scheme (*KP*, p. 106); if the message concerns political events in the Exile (the victories of Cyrus, according to Elliger), this has not penetrated the traditional language. Yahweh's leading of the blind into light may be compared with his leading out of prisoners in Ps. 68.7. The language of v. 14 seems to presuppose the lament of a worshipping congregation about Yahweh's inactivity, which he now answers (Westermann); such interchanges had a place in the festival (§ 38).

Vv. 18–25 give a further example of this interchange. Against the promises of his kingship (v. 21), there is complaint that he is blind and deaf to the distress of his people, who are plundered and driven into holes (v. 22). From Yahweh's side the argument comes back that it is the people who are blind and deaf, bringing disasters on themselves through disobedience. A festal background to such disputation (§ 38) could explain resemblances to the remonstrating speeches made by Yahweh in his festal epiphany (§ 10). V. 23 reminds one of Ps. 95.7 ('O that today you would listen to his voice') and 81.9 ('Hear O my people and I will admonish you; Israel, O that you would listen to me'). Vv. 24–5 resemble Ps. 81.12–13, '. . . Israel would not obey me, so I sent them away in the hardness of their heart, that they should walk in their own counsels.'

In v. 19 God's deaf and blind people, or rather patriarch-in-the-nation (cf. p. 45), is termed 'Yahweh's servant' and *mᵉšullām* (obscure, Schoors, pp. 203–4; 'covenanted person'?), but the individualizing concept of the nation wavers; the person changes through 2 plur., 3 sing., 1 plur. and 3 sing.

From this survey of the materials in ch. 42 it is apparent that the festal tradition is no less influential here than in chs. 40 and 41. Two units concern the appointment of a royal leader to effect the manifestation of Yahweh's kingly rule; a festal type of hymn celebrates the new irruption of this kingship and leads to Yahweh's own announcement of his coming. In the remainder he argues as it were with the festal congregation, who, in opposition to his promises, complain of their continuing sufferings.

43

The alternation of God's words of deliverance and of argument continues. Vv. 1–7 constitute a double oracle of salvation (cf. pp. 43, 45–6) to the individualized patriarch-in-the-nation, each part beginning with 'fear not'. Vv. 8–13 begin clearly in the form of a speech in a judgement-assembly, with Yahweh prepared to further the case (his claim to sole true godhead) by the summoning of witnesses both for his side and for the rival gods; but he continues by addressing his own witnesses, the Israelites, passing into the style of an argument with them (vv. 10–12). There follow two oracles of deliverance: in vv. 14–15 Yahweh tells his people (masc. plur) that he has purposed the overthrow of Babylon; in vv. 16–21, which is a more regular 'announcement of salvation' in response to congregational lament (Westermann, Schoors),

he promises to give water to his chosen people, working a miracle in the desert to outdo that in the Exodus sea.

In vv. 22–28 Yahweh argues with Jacob-Israel, rebutting complaints. Begrich calls this form of forensic speech 'Appellationsrede des Angeschuldigten', thinking of the preliminaries to a court hearing, where the parties argue together and one calls on the other to come with him before the court (v. 26). There is in fact an affinity with the disputations (40.12–31; 44.24–8; 45.9–13, etc.), with the festal covenant-speeches (§ 10), and with the oracles of comfort, inasmuch as all are parts of the dialogue which arises when Yahweh comes to meet his assembly of worshippers. In the present case, they have charged him with having given them up to afflictions although they had fulfilled his worship. His counter-argument, which is not quite clear, seems to be that this 'service' was in fact for him a burdensome trouble because of their unrepented sins. The people is addressed as 'Jacob-Israel' and the individualized form (masc. sing.) is maintained throughout. If 'thy first father' (v. 27) is Adam or Abraham, the people is still addressed as the patriarch-in-the-nation (pp. 45–6); Muilenburg, Westermann, and Schoors take the 'first father' as Jacob himself, however, so that the concept in 'thy' will have oscillated to the present generation. The traditional language in vv. 27–8 leaves the references to apostasy and devastation unspecified; examples could include Moses and Aaron (Ps. 99.8), Eli and Shiloh (Ps. 78.56–64), the Exile (2 Kings 25.18–21; Pss. 74; 79). In v. 28 the *śārē qōdeš*, to judge from 1 Chron. 24.5, are 'the officers of the sanctuary'.

The forms in this chapter are thus like those we have encountered in chs 40—2 and associated, on various grounds, with the festal tradition. Some particular points in the present chapter support such an association:

(1) The 'fear not' oracles to Jacob-Israel (vv. 1–7) again envisage the ancestor with a royal tendency (cf. pp. 45–6). As in royal ideals, he is the personal creation of the deity (vv. 1, 7, 15; cf. p. 30), named by the deity (so Cyrus 45.3; Hammurabi in *ANET*, p. 164) and miraculously protected (cf. § 30). His seed can be called sons and daughters of the deity (v. 6). Note also v. 20: they are 'my chosen one' (cf. p. 30), and as chosen servant have the duty of witnessing to Yahweh's uniqueness (v. 10, cf. § 37).

(2) The gathering of the scattered and captive people, historically so apposite, was a traditional item in the ideal of kingship (§ 14).

(3) Dependence on royal cult-psalmody is discernible in the themes of safe passage through fire and water (v. 2, cf. Ps. 66) and of preciousness to Yahweh (v. 4, cf. Ps. 116.15). Dependence on cultic tradition in these instances is noted and discussed by Ringgren (pp. 173–4).

(4) In Yahweh's forensic speech of vv. 8–13, he asserts his unique and jealous godhead, a central theme of the festival (see p. 44).

(5) Salvation is represented by the giving of water (v. 20). A similar use of festal tradition is discussed on pp. 46–7.

(6) That Yahweh's work is something 'new' and that it will 'sprout' (v. 19) may reflect the festal themes of a new era and new growth (§§ 1, 17).

(7) The combination of Exodus and King-Creator themes (even more striking in 51.9–11) was quite old in festal worship (§ 18). The Exodus is alluded to in vv. 16–17, with the implication of a new Exodus in 18–20. At the same time, Yahweh is King (v. 15), Master of the waters, Creator of people and events (vv. 1, 15, 19, 21), the only Saviour (v. 11). The 'lying down' of the Exodus enemy is reminiscent of the coma that was supposed to fall on Zion's attackers in the festal drama (Pss. 76.6–7; 48.7). The enemy's ships (v. 14) can be compared with the imaginary ships of Zion's attackers (Ps. 48.8). In the grateful animals of the desert (v. 20) is a hint of royal ideals (Isa. 11.6–9; Ps. 72.9).

(8) The subject of the value of sacrifice to Yahweh (vv. 22–8) was also treated in disputing style in his festal covenant speeches, where also he had much to say about sin and punishment (§ 10). Yahweh's willingness to wipe out sins was also represented in the great annual rites (§ 5).

44.1–23

Vv. 1–5 are an oracle of salvation to Jacob-Israel, also named Jeshurun, the ancestor living in the nation (which is his 'seed' and 'issue', v. 3, cf. pp. 45–6). As in previous occurrences of such oracles (41.8–13; 43.1–7), there are links with the festival. The patriarch receives a 'fear not' oracle in royal style as before: he is Yahweh's servant, chosen, specially created, and helped (pp. 46, 52). The grounds of reassurance are expressed in a way that is especially close to the festival and quite devoid of historical allusion or colour: Yahweh promises to pour down rain on the thirsty land and showers on the dry ground, and to pour down his fructifying spirit (cf. Ps. 104. 30) and blessing on the population, so that they spring

up like well-watered trees (cf. § 1; pp. 14–15). In v. 5, though the reference is hardly to foreign proselytes, there is a similarity with the Zion hymn Ps. 87; the vast new population is envisaged as registering, one by one, adherence to Yahweh's people.

In vv. 6–8 the oracle of Yahweh, introduced with the messenger's 'thus says . . .', has the style of a speech in a judgement-assembly, where Yahweh asserts his jealous claims to godhead and calls his people as witnesses; as in 43.10f, however, his chief interest is in addressing his people and he actually passes into the style of a salvation oracle ('Fear not . . .' v. 8). Thus we again gain the impression that the forms of forensic argument, etc., have not been newly chosen for the present purpose, but have a long history of association in such a context (cf. p. 44). As in previous forensic speeches, there are agreements with the festal tradition: Yahweh as King (p. 47), the divine judgement assembly and Yahweh's combative claim to sole godhead (pp. 44–5), the witness to his grace and favour (p. 52).

In vv. 9–20 occurs the longest of the seven passages deriding the image-cult of foreign gods (p. 43). Poetic form is still recognizable, though developed freely to give full scope to the satirical details; so Muilenburg, who also considers much of the language and imagery characteristic of Deutero-Isaiah. Though he thinks the passage intrusive here, in general he regards the polemic against the manufacture of idols as consistent with the whole tenor of Deutero-Isaiah's thought, 'an inevitable part of his view and portrait of God'. Spykerboer too has argued that these polemical passages are entirely at home in their context. That this material agrees well with the festal tradition has been noted on pp. 44–5. One may wonder if the free, vivid, and humorous development of the theme comes from the lighter moments of the festival; we might compare the entertaining use made of the plague stories in the Passover.

In vv. 21–2 Yahweh's exhortation to Jacob-Israel (a masc. sing. throughout) to return to him is largely in the style of a priestly oracle of salvation (Begrich); thus appeal is made in a way which should also induce a confident faith. Links with the festival may be found in the royal traits of the patriarch (Yahweh's servant and creation, pp. 46, 52), and in the great removal of sins (§ 5; cf. p. 40).

V. 23: as the festal hymns actualized Yahweh's mighty work by calling for the response of praise, so here the new salvation is greeted by a perfect little hymn, which calls for praise of the saviour God. As in the festal hymns Pss. 96.11f and 98.7–8, heaven and earth, mountains and trees, are

summoned to praise Yahweh for his work of salvation and his glorious epiphany in Israel. The redemption (*g'l*) of Jacob is a concept which probably arises from the Exodus tradition (p. 60), but the rejoicing of Nature, appropriate to a cosmic renewal, is a theme proper to the new year celebrations (§ 13). The absolute 'he has acted' is in this context reminiscent of the psalmody from the royal passion rites (Pss. 22.32; 118.24, cf. vv. 15, 16, and Ps. 52.11; § 21).

Throughout this sequence, then, the festival has been influential. Of especial importance is the filling of the oracles of salvation to the royally portrayed patriarch with the great festal themes of rain, fertility, and remission of sins. For this strengthens the case for regarding this type of oracle as part of the festal tradition (p. 45).

44.24—45.8

44.24–8 contains the first naming of Cyrus. Yahweh addresses to a masc. sing. (no doubt the patriarch-in-the-nation) an assurance about his restorative work. It is mostly formed as a hymn of self-praise, but since this amounts to a persuasive argument (namely, that the Creator must be able to conquer all opposition, fulfil his prophecies, appoint sovereignty on earth, and so restore Jerusalem) it is classified by Begrich as a disputation-saying (cf. 40.12–31, etc.). Westermann's opinion that it could not stand independently of 45.1–7 at least points to the continuity in the sequence. There is a resemblance to the important sequence in 42.1–4, 5–9, in that here also designation and empowering of a ruler (44.28, 'who says of Cyrus, He is my shepherd and all my desire shall he fulfil') is followed by an oracle to that ruler about his task (45.1–7).

The self-hymn is not represented in the Psalter, but it would be rash to conclude that the style has here been derived from Babylonian models; Yahweh was certainly represented in pre-exilic Israel as manifesting himself with self-predications (e.g. Exod. 34.6–7, cf. 20.2 and Ps. 81.7–8; *PIW*, I, p. 92). The ideas in 44.24–8 are very much in the festal tradition: Yahweh is Creator of heaven and earth (§ 12); hostile to the prognosticators who speak for rival gods (§ 7); speaking prophecies through his mediators (§ 10); pronouncing the restoration of Jerusalem and Judah's towns and the Temple (§ 16); showing dominance over the chaos-water enemy (§ 7); designating and empowering a king to carry out his will as his shepherd and restorer (§ 19).

In 45.1–7 occurs the second and last naming of Cyrus. To him is addressed this oracle of royal commission, which Begrich classifies as an

oracle of salvation, but Westermann more aptly aligns with enthronement oracles. Yahweh speaks as the God who has appointed Cyrus as his royal agent, granting him conquest and world-empire for the sake of Jacob-Israel, who also has a royal dignity as Yahweh's servant and chosen one (p. 46). As the agent of the sole Creator-King, Cyrus receives a commission in the usual style of festal kingship (cf. p. 24): his role is made a reality by God's word; God has anointed him, grasped his right hand, decreed his achievements, named him, robed him – items of the enthronement ceremonies. In this context the title 'his anointed' will simply denote that Cyrus is a king chosen by Yahweh to exercise world-dominion in the interests of Yahweh's own plans, and is thus equivalent to the 'my servant' applied in Jer. 27 to Nebuchadnezzar. To neither passage should we attribute the absolute intention to abrogate or transfer the covenant with the house of David. But certainly for the immediate purpose (which is the transformation of the political scene so that the exiles could return and Jerusalem be rebuilt) Cyrus has the part which festal theology properly gave to the Davidic house; for the immediate purpose he is presented as the executive of the saving kingship of Yahweh. One who does not know Yahweh has been called to a specific task 'for the sake of my servant Jacob, my chosen one Israel'.

In v. 8 the influence of the festival could not be clearer. Heaven and earth are called upon in joyful hymnic tone to respond to the Creator's will for good, so that rain may pour down and growth may flourish and the living order abound in 'righteousness' and 'salvation'. The piece seems to be oracular, conveying God's creative command of salvation. We are reminded strongly of Ps. 85.9–14, when the prophet announces God's will for blessing and plenty, 'fidelity', 'truth', 'righteousness', 'peace', 'goodness', and specifies 'our land will give its yield'.

45.9–25

Vv. 9–13 form a disputation-saying, in which Yahweh argues against some opposition to his Cyrus oracles. The two 'woe' sayings (vv. 9–10) which precede the new oracle (11–13) are the only examples in Deutero-Isaiah of this favourite prophetic form. As parables also, they may be compared with the series in Hab. 2, where we seem to have cultic prophecy linked with a festal psalm (ch. 3, p. 36) and heralding a change of world-empire. As so often in the disputations of Deutero-Isaiah, the decisive argument advanced is Yahweh's capacity as Creator, which proves his power and wisdom to work his will within what is his own

creation – an argument in harmony with the festal hymns (pp. 42–3).

Vv. 14–25 are divided by Begrich into an oracle of salvation (14–17) and a disputation-saying (18–25). Westermann, however, finds a collection of three fragments in vv. 14, 15, 16–17, while 18 and 19 are preparations respectively for 20–5 and 46.1–13; he thinks 20–5 has the form of forensic speech. Muilenburg argues for a unified poem, 14–25, in which various forms are fused. The passage does seem to be an example of the free use of forms which may have been long associated in a particular tradition (cf. p. 44). There is fluctuation in the concept of God's people. The address first thinks of them as a fem. sing., no doubt Zion and in queenly role (v. 14); then as masc. sing. 'Israel' (v. 17), immediately resolved as a second person plural. 'Jacob/Israel' in vv. 19, 25 are examples of the name denoting the patriarch himself, the nation being his 'seed'.

The oracle of glowing promise to what must be Zion (v. 14) at once points to the festal tradition; she is to receive gifts and obeisance as a queen at the centre of world-pilgrimage (§§ 4, 15). The festal theme of Yahweh's uniqueness continues from this oracle into Yahweh's speech of argument (vv. 18–25), where also the theme of the obeisance of the nations is resumed; associated with these are his work as Creator and opponent of chaos (18–19) and the derision of idols (20). This is the usual pattern of ideas in the divine speeches in Deutero-Isaiah to overcome incredulity or perplexity, and we have already noted its harmony with the festal tradition (pp. 43–5).

46

A number of forms are here united to express a continuous argument.

Vv. 1–2 come from a tradition of prophecy against foreign powers (cf. Nahum 2.8; Jer. 50.2); the predicted downfall is imagined as already accomplished and announced as victory-tidings (Westermann). The Babylonian gods Bel (=Marduk) and Nabu have fallen! Their images have been carried out, not for their famous new year procession, but for captivity! Comparison with the vivid prophecies of Nahum before the fall of Assyrian Nineveh are fruitful. Nahum anticipates the bringing of tidings that Yahweh's enemy Belial has been cut off (Nahum 2.1, English 1.15), the leading out of Ishtar's image with her hierodules in captive procession (2.8, English 2.7) and the singing of dirges over the tyrants (2.12–13/11–12; 3.18–19). Nahum, like Habakkuk, is very likely an example of prophecy in the context of the festival, when the current

foreign arch-enemy was identified with Yahweh's primeval chaos-foe (*ONHZ*; *KP*, p. 106). With the help of Nahum we can see the relation between Deutero-Isaiah's announcements of the fall of the enemy (46.1–2; 47) and the return of Yahweh (40.10–11; 52.7); it is the same scheme in which the temple-prophets had been accustomed to foresee Yahweh's conquest of his arch enemy and envisage the announcement of the downfall and the triumphant return. Similar materials are found in Isa. 13—14 and Jer. 50—1, which seem earlier than Deutero-Isaiah (cf. Bright, p. 360). The vivid skill of all these anticipatory celebrations was probably felt to make the outcome more sure, and certainly induced confidence in the message.

Such confidence is very much at issue here. The vivid portrayal of the future humiliation of the Babylonian gods is at once followed by persuasive speech of Yahweh to Israelite doubters (vv. 5–11, described by Begrich as a disputation-saying), culminating in an oracle of deliverance (12–13) which re-asserts Yahweh's promise to save Zion and be gloriously revealed to Israel. Yahweh's argument, which also resembles his judgement-speeches (Westermann), asserts his unique godhead and his power to control events and appoint sovereignty (Cyrus being the 'bird of prey'); the mockery of idols (5–8) fits the context well (Muilenburg). These themes have been met before and seen to be related to the emphases of the festival (pp. 43–5, 53–4).

Yahweh's chiding of his people as sinful (v. 8) and unreceptive (v. 12) reflects the tradition of dialogue between complaining congregation and their manifested and critical Lord (p. 51). The people are addressed in masc. plural as 'the house of Jacob' and 'all the remnant of the house of Israel' (v. 3); Jacob-Israel here is thus once more the ancestor himself, and the same may be true of v. 13 (Israel parallel with Zion).

Especially striking is the way Yahweh's argument develops an aspect of the introductory prophecy. The idols are carried, a burden even for the beasts; but Yahweh always carries his people and brings them to safety. The association of such 'carrying' and salvation is found in the ancient festal hymn Ps. 68.20, where in the hour of Yahweh's victory procession into Zion the cry was raised, 'Blessed be the Lord! Day by day he carries us, the God who is our salvation!'

47

Following closely on 46.1–2, this piece predicts Babylon's downfall in a style again derived from the tradition of cultic prophecy against foreign powers (p. 57). There are resemblances again to Nahum, to Jer. 50—1

and Isa. 13—14. The taunting, triumphant character should not obscure the fact that here Yahweh speaks to Babylon in accusation and sentence of doom. The queenly city will become a slave girl; like Nahum's Nineveh (Nahum 3.4), she is also a mistress of enchantments (a sorceress and harlot) who is to be shamefully exposed (vv. 3, 12). In the same tradition also, the prophet uses poetry of extraordinary power to deal his telling blow.

As argued on 46.1–2, these materials are part of the general pattern fostered by the festival. The prophets who announce the triumph and advent of Yahweh the King also proclaim and portray the downfall of his enemy. And as the pattern includes the raising up of Zion as Queen (§ 15; Isa. 45.14; 52.1–2; 54; 60; 62), so it includes the dethronement of Babylon.

48

In this section Yahweh speaks to his people with a remarkable mixture of promise and severe blame. The style resembles his forensic speeches (especially vv. 1–11), disputation-sayings (especially vv. 12–15) and oracles of salvation (vv. 17–19). Some scholars try to separate the harsher statements as later additions (e.g. Westermann), but Muilenburg stresses the unity of construction. It seems best to accept the text as it is, ascribing the fluctuation of tone to the tradition of dynamic encounter in festal worship, where Yahweh through his prophet disputes with his complaining people, mixing encouragement with rebuke (§§ 10, 38). As it happens, the festal text Ps. 81 provides a good parallel, as realized especially by Westermann (as also in his 'Jesaja 48').

The self-willed obstinacy and apostasy of Israel (vv. 4–5, 8) are similarly denounced in Ps. 81.12–13. The yearning promise of Isa. 48.18–19 ('O that you would listen to my commandments! Then your peace would be like a river. . . .') is very similar to Ps. 81.14 f: 'O that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways! I would soon subdue their enemies . . . I (M 'he') would feed him with the finest of the wheat . . .'. Even the concluding switch from second to third person is matched: Isa. 48.19 '*his* name would never be cut off . . .'; Ps. 81.17 'I would feed *him* . . .'. Possibly also, the comparison solves the difficulty of Isa. 48.16c, 'and now the Lord Yahweh has sent me and his spirit'. May not this be the prophet's introduction to the following oracle, declaring his inspiration in the same way as the spokesman does in Ps. 81.6c, 'I hear a language I have not known'?

The festal setting of confrontation between Yahweh and his people is

echoed at the outset of the chapter. For the people are addressed by Yahweh as a worshipping assembly: those who invoke or proclaim the name of the Covenant-God (v. 1) and take their own name from the holy city (i.e. Zion; v. 2). The people are addressed in second plural at first, changing to sing. in v. 4f, an alternation found also in the rest of the chapter. They are described as the product of Judah's semen (v. 1), a phrase which makes it clear that the parallel 'Jacob/Israel' denotes the ancestor. The oscillation to the concept of the ever-present ancestor is fairly clear also in vv. 17–19, Jacob being well known in tradition to have 'profited' (v. 17) by inspired cunning, and the people in v. 19 being his 'seed', 'issue', and 'name' (cf. Nahum 1.14).

The argument of Yahweh is aimed, as often before, to overcome resistance to his message of salvation and in particular to the part of Cyrus (vv. 14–15). As often, and in harmony with the festal hymns, reference is made to Yahweh's power as unique God and Creator (vv. 12–13). Provision of water for the thirsty, which we have often met in the message of salvation, here occurs more clearly with reference to the Exodus tradition (vv. 20–1), where the term 'redeemed' (*g'l*) was particularly used (Exod. 6.6; 15.13; Pss. 74.2; 77.16; 78.35; 106.10). This tradition had passed into the heritage of Jerusalem's festivals (e.g. Pss. 81; 95; § 18). The introduction to this passage (v. 20 'Depart from Babylon, flee from the Chaldeans') resembles the probably earlier Jer. 50.8 and 51.6 ('Flee from the midst of Babylon and depart from the land of the Chaldeans', 'Flee from the midst of Babylon and each of you save yourself . . .'); the style thus seems to come from the cultic prophecy discussed in relation to 46.1–2 and 47 (see pp. 57–9, cf. the excited cries in Nahum 2 and 3). V. 20bcd resembles the calls for proclamation of salvation in the festival (Ps. 96.2–3, 10; cf. 126.2).

Within the cycle of chs. 40—55, ch. 48 concludes the first half, a fairly distinct phase. After this, in the words of North, 'there are no references to Babylon or to Cyrus, no polemics against idolatry, no summonses to assize-inquests, and no appeals to the fulfilment of former prophecies. The address is to Zion-Jerusalem rather than to Jacob-Israel.' Muilenburg therefore sees ch. 48 as summarizing the foregoing arguments. Certainly the dialogue of God and congregation has reached its most earnest. The arguments that Yahweh, the Creator, has power to save and wills to do so through Cyrus are put to objectors with a hard force at times resembling Ezekiel's style, but with precedents also in Pss. 81, 95, 50. The concluding piece, bringing to mind the grace of God in the Exodus, underlines his will to give water to the thirsty and plentiful provision to a faithful congregation.

49

A speech is delivered to the nations by one called to be a leader (vv. 1–6). There follows an oracle to one who will rise from shame to be honoured by kings as chosen by Yahweh (v. 7). Then comes an oracle of salvation to one who will accomplish a leader's task (8–12). Next we hear a short hymn of universal praise (13). Then comes a series of oracles of salvation to complaining Zion (14–21, 22–3, 24–5). This arrangement is thus reminiscent of ch. 42, where a leader was presented, an oracle to a leader was pronounced, a hymn was sung, and salvation oracles and remonstrance were directed to a complaining people (see pp. 47, 51).

The form of the speech in vv. 1–6 seemed to Begrich to be like that of the 'individual's psalm of thanksgiving', inasmuch as the speech is a testimony to others about help received from God by one who confesses he had well-nigh despaired. However, there must surely be more to be said about the class of a speech addressed to coastlands and nations by one appointed to restore the Israelite tribes and bring salvation to all the world. Kaiser's view is more to scale. He thinks in the first place (after Widengren) of the self-vaunting speech of a king in his enthronement rites; or rather, the speech vaunting the word and will of God which give him the authority so to command all peoples (cf. Ps. 2). The content of the speech, as we shall see, largely supports this classification very well. But Kaiser feels that the speaker's confession of weariness in v. 4 is foreign to this connection and is thus a new development of the form, transforming the original tendency of the royal 'self-vaunting hymn'. However, the tribulation in v. 4 is so basic to the speech (cf. also v. 7), prompting the statement of greater glory and universal mission, that it is difficult to see why the author chose a form which did not originally suit it. The form-critic should not so hastily despair of explaining his material from a coherent tradition.

Reference to tribulation in a royal speech of this character is in fact not inconsistent with the Davidic enthronement rites as viewed above (§ 21). The royal calling was confirmed and expounded not only with rites of exaltation but also with the representation of tribulation and testing; the humiliation indeed was the foundation of the universal glory. The oracle of royal designation in 42.1–4 has already hinted at the theme of suffering (42.4), and the theme will be resumed again in oracles of royal character (49.7; 52.13f). There is also an interesting parallel with Ps. 73, a psalm which there is good reason to link with royal tradition (*KP*, pp. 75f). In Ps. 73.13f the speaker tells how he had thought his striving 'in vain' until he had been reassured, apparently in

some ceremony in the Temple signifying the overthrow of the wicked. We may also compare the speaker's assurance in Isa. 49.4 that his 'judgement' is with God with the 'judgement' God effects for his king in the Psalms (7.7; 9.5; 17.2; 35.23–4). Altogether, it is not unlikely that a form-tradition was available to Deutero-Isaiah, in which a king's speech to the nations about his commission to rule made some allusion to daunting trials, professing trust notwithstanding.

Among the features of vv. 1–6 which suit the description of the passage as basically a royal speech of destiny and commission, we may note first its address to the world – the 'coastland' and 'distant peoples'. As the festival had celebrated Yahweh's kingship over the world, including the 'coastlands' (p. 44), so it had envisaged for the Davidic ruler a similar scope as God's chief deputy (§ 26).

The gathering and restoring of displaced populations (vv. 5, 6), appropriate at the end of the Exile, was also a traditional item in the good works expected of a new king (§ 14). The present speaker is to gather and restore the patriarchal body as a whole, with all its member tribes together as they were under David and as expected again under the future David in Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jer. 23.5–6; 30.9; 33.17; Ezek. 34.23–4; 37.24–5). In the festival the Davidic ruler was also seen as 'light' and mediator of 'salvation' (§ 32); as the sun shone on all nations and to the edges of the earth, so royal rule was seen as a radiation of divine order over all – 'light of the nations' and 'salvation to the end of the earth' (pp. 48–9).

The fierce images depicting the mouth like a sword and the whole person like a deadly arrow in God's quiver are understandable in a royal utterance. The royal capacity of Marduk was proved by the destructive and creative effect of his word (*KP*, p. 91). The future Davidic king of Isa. 11.4 will slay the wicked with the breath of his mouth. The image of the arrow suggests that the speaker will fight battles in God's name, just as the Davidic warrior-king was also only the instrument of God's power (§ 36; p. 30). Westermann insists that the concealment with God is not a preliminary to the speaker's work, but part of his 'equipment'; in this case, the idea might arise from the extraordinary position of the king seated beside Yahweh and covered by his shadow or aura (§ 24).

In v. 5 the speaker refers to his task of restoring Jacob-Israel alongside the prospect of his own glorification with the glorious power (*'ōz*) of God. Thus a royal task is mentioned along with the glory of a royal figure, who, set beside God, is radiant in the divine glory (§ 24). Likewise Ps. 91, which is best understood as an enthronement oracle

(*KP*, pp. 57f, 132) conveys God's promise that he who is enthroned under his covering will be delivered from affliction and *made glorious* (*kbd*) and sated with life and salvation. The statement 'my God becomes (shows himself as) my power' (Isa. 49.5) resembles the utterances studied in *KP*, pp. 170f, where the king expresses his special bond with God (e.g. Ps. 18.2–3; 144.1–2). The whole statement is well compared by E. Burrows (p. 67) with the prediction of a Davidic king by Mic. 5.3, 'and he shall stand (i.e. in service before Yahweh) and shepherd in the *power* (*'ōz*) of Yahweh, in the *splendour* (*g'ōn*) of the name of Yahweh *his God*'. The same prophecy, Burrows notes, is comparable also in its reference to the return of 'the rest of his brethren', its idiom concerning Bethlehem as *too little to be* among the clans of Judah, and its expectation that the king 'will be great *to the ends of the earth*'.

V. 3a ('And he said to me, You are my servant') is rightly aligned by Westermann with Ps. 2.7, where the king, in connection with his enthronement-address to the nations, states: 'He said to me, You are my son'. 'Son' and 'servant', as royal titles, are very close in their effect (§ 26), which is to mark out the highest of God's ministers. No such declaration, as Westermann observes, is ever found of a prophet.

In v. 3b the shorter reading of one Hebrew manuscript (Kennicott 96), omitting 'Israel', has been preferred by many scholars, and recently advocated by Mowinckel (*HTC*, pp. 462f), Westermann, and Orlinksy. This reading would fit the interpretation I have been giving without difficulty: by means of this royal servant, Yahweh proposed to manifest the splendour of his own kingship. However, the very fact that the longer reading, with 'Israel', seems at first sight to clash with the distinction of the speaker from Jacob-Israel in v. 5 and from the 'tribes of Jacob' and 'preserved of Israel' in v. 6, makes it unlikely that a later interpreter, influenced by 44.21, inserted 'Israel' in v. 3.

It has been suggested that the apparent contradiction in the longer text disappears if the translator can avoid making the 'servant' the subject of 'to bring back' in v. 5 and 'to raise up' and 'to restore' in v. 6. Muilenburg cites an attempt at such a translation of v. 5 by Bewer with some approval: 'And now Yahweh, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, has said that he would bring back Jacob to himself and that Israel should be gathered to him'. But this is not only an unnatural rendering – 'a cure worse than the disease' (Orlinksy); it spoils the main point of the speech, which is that the new development (marked by 'and now') is not the gathering of Israel but the unfolding of the mission to all nations. It does not seem possible to avoid the distinction in vv. 5, 6

between the speaker himself and the entity designated as Jacob, Israel, the tribes of Jacob, the preserved of Israel.

The solution must therefore lie in understanding a peculiar use of 'Israel' in v. 3b. Parallel with 'my servant' of v. 3a, it is best taken as a further predicate: 'Thou art my servant, (thou art) Israel through whom I will manifest my splendour.' The speaker is thus declaring that God has appointed him royal ruler (v. 3a) and, bestowing a name of destiny such as was lavished in enthronements, has allotted him something of the role of the ancestor-in-the-nation, to wit, to be a means of divine triumph (v. 3b, cf. 44.23). E. Burrows (p. 63) similarly describes 'Israel' in v. 3 as a name of honour applied for the reason given in the text, namely that he will serve God's glory. The application of the name to an individual is also recognized here by Ibn Ezra: either the individual speaker is designated as 'from the seed of Israel', he explains, or, as he prefers, the speaker is esteemed in God's eyes as the whole of Israel.

The application of the name or role of Israel is the more understandable in view of the royal character of the speech. As stressed by Nyberg (p. 71), a nation's ancestor, living on in his descendants, can be especially associated with the leader or king as the current head and 'father'. Although we do not find the Israelite king elsewhere named 'Israel', there are signs that he could be regarded in this way. According to 2 Sam. 19.44 the twelve tribes are 'in David' as in the loins of the ancestor; the ten of the north can say to Judah, 'I have ten parts in the king and so I am more in David than thou'. Later they break away with the words: 'What portion have we in David; we have no heritage in the son of Jesse' (1 Kings 12.16). This agrees with the well known fact that the king is his people's representative in a very full sense (§ 33, cf. *HTC*, pp. 69f). The use of 'Israel' in v. 3b is the more natural in view of the usage we have often noted in these chapters, where it usually refers not directly to the nation pure and simple but to the ancestor, the national father who has royal dignity (cf. especially 44.21, p. 54). We may wonder if the name 'Israel', compounded with *'ēl* and perhaps a root *śr(h)* 'be king' (cf. *miśrā* Isa. 9.5, 6), was especially congenial to the Jerusalem dynasty with its long association with El (Gen. 14.18 with Ps. 110.4). We could compare 'Immanuel' in Isa. 7.14, also the enthronment names *'ēl gibbōr . . . śar šālōm* in Isa. 9.5, where the intervening 'Enduring Father' may also be a significant name for the present discussion.

In conclusion then on vv. 1–6, it has seemed possible to take it throughout as a consistently royal type of utterance. Two apparent obstacles, the confession of weariness and the naming 'Israel', have not

proved to be insuperable. Much else suited a royal interpretation: the address to the world, the character of the 'self-vaunting' speech, the task of gathering and resettling tribes, the appointment as 'light' and 'salvation' to the nations, formation, calling and naming by God from the womb, the mouth like a sword and person like God's sharp arrow, the covering under God's hand, the glorification in the power of God, the bond expressed in 'my God . . . my power', the report of God's word 'You are my servant', and the position of vv. 1–6 before an oracle to one who will rise above mighty kings (v. 7) and an oracle to one who will accomplish royal tasks (8–12) and a hymn of universal praise (v. 13).

Westermann, however, believes that in spite of royal elements, the piece as a whole should be classified as a prophet's speech about his calling and commission. Muilenburg likewise calls it 'a confession in the manner of Jeremiah'. It is true that Jer. 1 does apply royal elements to the prophet's vocation: predestination, formation by God in the womb, appointment over the nations to destroy and rebuild (presumably by powerful words), fortification against the kings, officers, and people of Judah militant against him; and in his confessions he tells of his tribulations. But Jeremiah does not make a speech to the nations out of these elements; his task is clearly defined as that of a *nabi*-prophet who will go to whom he is sent and speak what he is commanded by God (1.5, 17); he does not claim to be himself the light of salvation to the nations nor to have been uniquely distinguished by such a formula as 'You are my servant', nor to be the means of Yahweh's own glorification, nor himself the object of a divine glorification. As Delitzsch justly observed, Isa. 49.1–6 depicts a figure altogether too glorious to be a prophet's self-presentation; such an explanation he describes as 'impossible'.

49.7 is an oracle, most naturally taken to refer to the one who spoke in vv. 1–6. Yahweh is introduced as Redeemer of Israel and Holy One of Israel; the one addressed is called (as we may best take it) 'one despised (Q) by men (cf. BDB, 4c), abhorred (BHS) by people, slave of rulers' – yet chosen by God the Holy One of Israel. The contrast of general abhorrence and high destiny resembles the themes of 52.13—53.12. Like the image of the 'worm' (p. 46), the theme of abhorrence could be related to the archetypal loneliness of the symbolically suffering king; we may compare Ps. 22.7, 'a worm, not a man, taunt of mankind, despised by people', also Isa. 14.19 where the glorious foreign king becomes an 'abhorred branch'. In 49.7 God promises that he will exalt this lowly figure, his elect one, so that the kings will do him homage; this is similar to 52.13–15, where the kings show reverence at the enthronement of

Yahweh's servant. The subordination of other kings was a theme prominent in the festal enthronement rites (Pss. 2; 110).

In vv. 8–12 a new oracular unit continues the address to the masc. sing. 'thou' and refers to the exiles he will release as 'they'. The recipient of the oracle thus clearly appears in the form of a leader who will save his people. He has royal stature: to him God affirms his promise to answer his prayers (§ 35) and succour him (§ 30), for he has created and appointed him as a binding covenant of society (p. 50) and to repopulate territories, having released prisoners from their dark dungeons (§ 14). The released exiles, like the festal worshippers of God the King, are pictured as a flock, wonderfully provided with water, proceeding on a level way (cf. p. 41). The oracle affirms help 'in the time of favour', 'on the day of salvation'; the connection of these phrases with cultic seasons is suggested by Isa. 58.5 (cf. Ps. 69.14), and for the new year in particular by Isa. 61.2 (cf. Ps. 102.14; p. 21).

V. 13 is a compact hymn or thanksgiving, responding to the foregoing words of salvation. Thus, as in ch. 42, materials in the tradition of the royal initiations culminate in an outburst of festal praise. The joy of heavens, earth, and hills was a marked feature of the festal hymns (96.11 f; 98.7 f). The description of '(God's) people' as 'his poor' had also been applied to the festal congregation (p. 35).

In vv. 14–26 it is the turn of the cultic community/city 'Zion' to be addressed and assured of salvation. Yahweh's words answer her laments, as in the old dialogues between God and his congregation (§ 38). She has complained that he has abandoned and forgotten her (v. 14). To this he responds (vv. 15–20) that his love surpasses that of a woman for her baby; he will not desert Zion, whose walls, etched on his palms, are ever before his mind. Her destroyers will flee, her builders and children will crowd into her. The theme of building or repairing the sacred centre, appropriate indeed at the end of the Exile, still has some counterpart in new year festivals (§ 16). Personified Zion comes more into prominence from here on, in line with the glorification of Zion in the festival, where she seems to have been the queen and bride of Yahweh the King (§ 15; cf. 49.22–3; 52.1–2; 54.11–12; 60.14–16; 62.1–5).

Zion expresses her amazement that her family could be so abundant (49.21), and Yahweh responds with a promise of the return of all her exiled children, who will be served by foreign kings and queens; the latter will do homage to Zion as to their enthroned sovereign, vv. 22–3. V. 24 expresses Zion's incredulity again; Yahweh's answer follows in 25–6. He will free Zion's children and cause her oppressors to consume

each other, revealing to all nations his might as Zion's redeemer and 'Mighty One of Jacob'. This last phrase, suggestive of the tribal federation (Gen. 49.24), was in fact particularly at home in Zion's worship, as shown by its other occurrences: the royal festal Psalm 132.2, 5 and the Zion passages Isa. 60.16 and 1.24 (in this last case 'Mighty One of Israel').

50

In vv. 1–3 Yahweh addresses the exiled children of Zion, who is pictured as his wife (p. 66). His style is argumentative, as if disputing complaints against him. As we have seen (pp. 50, 52, etc.), this style of oracle is in the tradition of answer to those complaining laments in worship which upbraided God with ill-treatment of his covenant-people (Pss. 44.10–15; 74) or with inactivity (83.2). The message is that Yahweh has not irrevocably 'divorced' Zion and is able to liberate her children. In proof of his power to deliver, he points to his mastery of the elements, implying his conquest of the chaos-waters and hence of all oppression (similarly Ps. 107.33f). His 'rebuke' of the sea is his thunder-word which conquered his enemy in the beginning (Ps. 104.7; Job 26.11–13), and is heard anew in the annual storms which precede the new springing of life (cf. his 'voice' in Ps. 29). Perhaps the mention of the death of the fish is an allusion to the conquest of the sea-creatures in whom the chaos-waters were personified – Rahab, Leviathan, the helpers of Tiamat. In the festival the theme of Yahweh's roar against the chaos-foe (Pss. 18.16; 68.31) covers also the defeat of enemy nations (Pss. 9.6; 76.7; Nahum 1.4; §§ 6, 7).

In vv. 4–9 someone speaks of his work for God, his acceptance of the attendant suffering, and his trust in God's help; his speech culminates in a challenge to his adversaries and a declaration of their feebleness and doom. He uses no terms for his own status, but the following passage seems to intend him in its reference to Yahweh's servant; in v. 10 obedience to this servant's voice is laid parallel to fearing Yahweh. To this indication of v. 10 that the speaker of vv. 4–9 is an authoritative leader, we must add that there is no indication in the chapter that he is a figure standing for the nation of Israel or the exilic community.

Consideration of the form-classification of vv. 4–9 takes us further in recognizing here a leader's utterance. Begrich (p. 54) aligned the passage with the psalms of individual lament, but since it lacks both lamentation proper and prayer, he could only claim that it contained some motifs of

this form. Westermann prefers to describe the underlying form as that of the individual's psalm of trust; from the resemblance of some elements to Jeremiah's laments, he moves on to categorize the passage as 'a confession of trust by a spokesman (of God)' (Vertrauensbekenntnis eines Wortmittlers). However, the nearest passage in Jeremiah, 20.7–12, is very different as a whole, being a lamenting prayer for vengeance, and not an address to men. Westermann (p. 20) finally judges our passage, with the other 'Servant Songs', to be formed in an *ad hoc* manner.

The comparisons in Begrich, Muilenburg, and Westermann are made by selecting two or three motifs from the passage. But more justice will be done to the passage as a whole if we compare all its main features. These may be listed for convenience as follows:

(a) it is a public declaration,
(b) the speaker tells of his task or an aspect of it,
(c) he tells of equipment and revelations given by God,
(d) he extols his willing endurance of the consequent suffering inflicted by opponents of his work,
(e) he expresses trust in the help God will give him,
(f) he portrays doom for his adversaries.

If he still speaks in vv. 10–11, referring to himself as Yahweh's servant, we should add:

(g) words to the loyal (counsel of trust),
(h) threatening address to adversaries.

The greatest similarities to this combination of elements seem to be in Pss. 2; 62; 4; 27; Isa. 49.1–7.

In Ps. 2, seven of the eight elements are clearly represented: item (a) in the whole psalm; items (b) and (c) in vv. 6, 7–9; (e) in vv. 4–10, 12; (f) in vv. 5, 9, 12; (g) in 12c, cf. 10–12b; (h) in the whole psalm, especially vv. 9–12. For the remaining element, (d), we can only observe the prospect of conflict, squarely and trustingly faced.

In Ps. 62 (*KP*, pp. 49f) four of the eight elements are well represented: (a) almost all the psalm; (e) in vv. 2–3, 6–8; (g) in vv. 9–11; (h) in v. 4. The other four items are not entirely missing. Thus for (b) we note that the speaker refers to his eminence, v. 5, while his duty of encouragement (cf. Isa. 50.4) is at least assumed in v. 9f; as regards (c) he is at least provided with security, glory, and power, and his revelations are illustrated in v. 12; for (d) we note his conflict and adversaries and his patient stillness before God; (f) would have a good parallel if we

translate with KJ, 'ye shall be slain all of you, as a bowing wall shall ye be', but otherwise we could point only to the implication of the damning characterization in vv. 4–5 and to 10b and 13b.

In Ps. 4 also (*KP*, pp. 29f) four of the eight elements are plainly represented: (a) in vv. 3–6, though enclosed in address to God; (e) in vv. 8–9; (g) in vv. 3–4; (h) in vv. 5–6. As regards (b), the speaker's words certainly imply a high appointment and responsibility to exhort. For (c) we can only note his special covenant-relation with God and its attendant privilege of effective prayer. For (d) there is only his joyful serenity amidst trouble and hostility. Doom for his adversaries, (f), is an implicit threat in vv. 3–4.

Ps. 27 gives a poorer comparison, but still worth study. The declaratory form, (a), is found in vv. 1–6, 13–14, and there is clear representation of (e) in vv. 1–3, 5–6, 13 and of (f) in vv. 2–3. As regards the speaker's task, (b), he portrays himself as warrior, cult-leader, and Yahweh's servant, and he may have the duty of encouragement in v. 14. For (c) there is only his protected status and his access to revelations in the Temple. For patient suffering, (d), we can only compare the long-suffering faith of vv. 13–14. For (g) an exact parallel would be found in v. 14 if there is no change of speaker. As regards (h), there is no address directly threatening enemies, though their downfall is asserted in v. 2.

Isa. 49.1–7, it is also worth noting, excellently represents elements (a), (b), (c), (e), while for (d) there is endurance of adversity. Isa. 61.1–3, treated below, well represents (a), (b), and (c).

Among Jeremiah's laments, which are often said to be similar to Isa. 50.4–9, the nearest comparison can be made with Jer. 20.7–12. Here only (e) and (f) are directly represented, while there are some other points of contact: for (c) the reference to Yahweh's word in v. 8; for (b) the ministry implicit in vv. 8–9; for (d), negatively, his futile resistance to God's pressure, v. 9. In its total aim, as a lamenting prayer for vengeance, this utterance of Jeremiah is quite different from the Isaiah speech.

Apart from this Jeremiah passage, all the texts compared are royal in character, according to the expositions given in the present chapter and (for the psalms) in *KP*. The most complete parallel, Ps. 2, is certainly so, and a link with the festival. Engnell (p. 70) therefore had some justification in regarding the passage as modelled on royal psalms of confidence.

Looking more closely now at the content of 50.4–11, we must first decide between two explanations of the simile in v. 4. On the one view, God gives the speaker the tongue of 'pupils'; he learns to recite exactly

and fluently the words he hears from God, and God commands his attention like a schoolmaster every morning (Westermann). However, pupils in class are not necessarily models of fluency; nor is there any obvious link between their patter and the solacing of the weary – far from it! Any further suggestion that v. 6 alludes to scholastic punishment (cf. Bentzen) is quite inappropriate, especially in view of the beard-pulling and spitting.

The other view (e.g. *HTC*, pp. 193f) is therefore to be preferred: the *limmūdīm*, as in Isa. 8.16, are young *prophets*, apprentices in the master's circle whom he sends out to extend his ministry (cf. Eaton, *VT* (1959), pp. 144f). Their 'tongue' is thus one which bears a faith-strengthening oracle of God. As for the 'mornings', the point would be that the prophetic circle together practise long vigils of concentration on God's will, rather like the corporate meditations of Buddhist monks; at dawn especially, God stirs up his oracular word in the ear of one of them. Prophetic groups are probably in evidence in 40.1–11 and 53 (see ad loc.) as well as in 8.16–20.

An important conclusion from this latter understanding of *limmūdīm* will be that the speaker is not a prophet pure and simple, for he *compares* himself to young prophets. His task has a prophetic quality – and this is what he is telling us through the comparison – inasmuch as he has to encourage the weary with words from God, be constantly open to God's revelations, and obey what he hears though it lead to suffering and shame. The deliberate comparison with prophetic *disciples* is probably chosen because it is especially these who are set to learn the ideal of prophethood; he feels himself likewise to have had this hard ideal laid on him by God. The comparison with the young prophets in fact characterizes most of the passage, as might be expected from the prominent and repetitive way it is introduced. So not only vv. 5–6 as already shown, but also the 'face like a flint' probably reflects the prophetic ideal (cf. Ezek. 3.8–9). The ideal of prophetic fidelity to the word without fear or favour is probably as old as prophecy; it is well represented in ancient figures such as Moses, Balaam, Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and Micaiah ben Imlah.

It is sometimes thought that the depiction of this service in prophetic terms removes it out of the royal sphere. But in fact the king's office, especially in the liturgical ideal, had affinities with the prophetic; from God's revelations he brings messages of warning and encouragement for men (§ 33). In Isa. 50 the thought of the revelations leads on to what is probably the main theme, the consequent sacrificial obedience. This

sequence of thought is similar to the royal theme in Ps. 40 (*KP*, pp. 42f, 179f); there too his 'open ear', attuned to revelations, leads on to his perfect obedience with overtones of sacrifice; and the aptness of the comparison with Ps. 40 is supported by Isa. 51.7–8, as mentioned below.

The language used of the adversaries in Isa. 50.8–11 is not very revealing. The king's psalms are of course notable for the sharpness of the enemy attacks and the king's counter-attacks (§ 36), and the royal enemies are sometimes confronted in the style of a law-case (Pss. 7; 17; 35; 43; 94.16; 109). There is no parallel to the fire imagery of v. 11, but Ps. 57.5 pictures the king's foes as fire-breathing beasts, while he threatens his foes with the blazing wrath of God in Pss. 2; 11; and 21.

In v. 11 'my hand' may indicate that the end of the chapter is oracular, as Muilenburg thinks. But if vv. 10–11 are spoken by the same voice as 4–9 (Engnell, Kaiser), the hand could be that of Yahweh's servant, who punishes with royal power in God's name (Pss. 75.11; 101; 21.9 'thy hand shall strike thine enemies without fail'). Whether or not there is a change of voice for vv. 10–11, these verses give strong support to my characterization of 4–9 as the speech of a royal leader in tribulation. They bring out the point of 4–9 as an admonition to friend and foe to the effect that, though this royal servant of Yahweh must walk in the dark valley of anguish (10b), 'his God' (as covenant-partner) will not forsake him; wise then are those who obey this chosen one of God. Muilenburg therefore seems to be on the right lines in finding a true unity throughout ch. 50.

51.1—52.12

This exciting sequence takes us beyond Yahweh's promises to restore his congregation and establish his reign (51.1–8); for now we hear sharp invocations for the arising of Yahweh to action (51.9–11) and of Zion to resurrection (51.17–20; 52.1–2), each invocation being followed by an oracle of deliverance (51.12–16; 51.21–3; 52.3–6). A thrilling piece in the festal hymnic tradition then anticipates the entry of Yahweh as King into Zion (52.7–10), and a summons is issued to the exiles to prepare for their promised participation in Yahweh's procession to Zion (11–12).

51.1–8 contains three probably oracular units: 1–3, 4–6, 7–8. In vv. 1–3 Yahweh speaks to dispel doubt that Zion could again be populous. Those addressed are described as 'pursuers of righteousness, seekers of Yahweh', and there has been much debate on the sense of 'righteousness' here (North). The phrase may have originally been an expression for the

festal congregation. 'Seeking' God commonly meant visiting his sanctuary and expressions of this kind denote the festal worshippers in Pss. 24.6; 40.17; 69.7; 70.5; 105.3; cf. 4.3; 27.8. In Canaanite Jerusalem *ṣedeq* may have been a divine name (cf. *SKAI*, pp. 36f), giving rise to the present idiom where 'seekers of Yahweh' matches 'pursuers of *ṣedeq*'. In Israelite usage *ṣedeq* would more likely denote the access of grace and blessing attendant on Yahweh's festal epiphany (Pss. 23.3; 40.10; 85.11; 118.19; 132.9; Isa. 45.8); it remained fixed in the ideology of Zion (Isa. 1.21, 27). 'Knowers of righteousness' in v. 7 may also have originally designated the congregation, as does 'knowers of the festal shout' in Ps. 89.16a, the people bathed in the light of Yahweh's face, 16b. The festal congregation were 'the righteous', 'the faithful', 'the humble', ideally meeting the standard presented in Pss. 15 and 24, and it is not surprising if such terms for the congregation are drawn out in their 'ethical' implications as in v. 7.

In v. 3 the message of fertility and multiplication is rounded off with what looks like the element in hymns which gives the grounds for praise. Here, however, the verse serves to affirm that Yahweh will indeed renew and replenish the holy city and community. The change from desert to paradisal growth is an image from the liturgical ideals of Zion; in the festival the new rains were in prospect, and Zion was pictured as the site of the paradisal fountain (Ps. 36.9; 46.5; 65.10; 72.8; 89.26; cf. Ezek. 47; Isa. 33.21; Joel 3.18; Zech. 14.8). The rejoicing is like that of the festal singing and playing (Ps. 81.2, 3; 51.10).

51.4–6 is also best taken as God's speech, as the style seems too self-vaunting for Israelite royal speech. He announces to his people that his healthful rule is about to shine out across the world. As we have discussed on the related 42.3–4, the sun was often associated with divine rule and justice; God's *tōrā* and *mišpāṭ*, *ṣedeq* and salvation, here are manifestations of his kingly rule which go out like the rays of dawn when he appears in the bright majesty of his epiphany. Thus NEB well translates: 'my law shall shine forth, I will flash the light of my judgement over the nations'. This use of *tōrā* and *mišpāṭ* of the divine rule is like that in 42.3–4, where God's emergent kingship is mediated by a leader. The sense of the terms is well brought out in 51.5: it is a time of salvation when God's arms will rule all peoples, and they turn to him in hope; in short, it is the time when he 'becomes King' (52.7). Thus the general conception is that presented in the festival (§ 6). In v. 6 the promise is reinforced by reference to Yahweh's superiority over the great natural elements, the underlying thought being like that of the festal Psalms 29; 68.9; 93.4; 96.9; 97.4–5;

99.1. The actual wording is matched by another psalm in the festal tradition, 102.26–9.

The oracle of 51.7–8 widens the ideal of the leader in 50.9 to his people, a treatment which can be compared with the generalizing of the king's example in royal psalms (p. 35). They too must not fear the reproaches and insults of men, for their adversaries also will perish like moth-eaten clothes. God is their help, for they too are obedient to his will. It is interesting that the obedience is described as having God's *tōrā* in their heart, since the psalm I adduced to show the royal affinities of 50.5 uses a similar expression (Ps. 40.9).

In 51.9–11 the interplay of speeches has a new and striking variation, the prophetic voice calling on the arm of Yahweh to awake, as it will soon call also on Jerusalem (51.17; 52.1). The style resembles that of the national laments in the cult (Westermann, p. 23; Schoors, p. 122f) and especially in the festival (§ 38), where Yahweh was called upon to cast off his inactivity (Pss. 44.24, 27; 83.2) and was reminded of his primeval victory (74; 89). Since the awakening of Zion will be pictured as a rising from a death-like stupor or bondage in the dust, it may be that in the calls to Yahweh's arm there is a vestige of a cultic awakening of a deity from deathly weakness, such as some scholars attribute to Baal before the triumph of his kingship (*KP*, p. 102 cf. above p. 12); Yahweh's kingship emerges in 52.7. However, the oracles of Yahweh which intersperse the invocations here illustrate how Israelite worship came to think of Yahweh as ever active, even behind the appearance of 'sleeping', 'silence', etc. (§ 6). The theme of Yahweh's conquest of the waters and their monster-forms (v. 9) is a close link with the festival, where the mixing of Creation and Exodus features evidenced in v. 10 may have taken place quite early (§ 18). The links with Jerusalem's worship continue in v. 11: it is to Zion that the exiles are to return, and the contrast of jubilation and groaning is like the well-known polarity of festal moods, as studied by Hvidberg, *Weeping and Laughter*.

51.12–16 brings Yahweh's rejoinder. The rapid change of 'you' from masc. plur. to fem. sing. in v. 12 and then to masc. sing. in vv. 13–16 is somewhat awkward. The masc. plural could be an error by dittography. Perhaps the switch from fem. to masc. sing. corresponds to a train of thought whereby the Zion community joins in the experience of the servant-leader (cf. on 51.7–8), for v. 16 echoes a phrase from the servant's speech in 49.2. The community is reproached by Yahweh for forgetting him in their fear of the oppressor. Assurance is given by reference to Yahweh's work as Creator and his power over the sea, and

by derision of human strength, all festal themes (pp. 43–5). V. 14 promises the speedy release of one who is bowed down (fettered?) and perhaps already in the land of death. He could be a figure representing all the exiles. Or is he the servant-leader, pictured in terrible darkness in 50.10, and then addressed in 51.15–16 (cf. North, *SS*, p. 137)? In this rather tangled section it is difficult to be sure.

In 51.17–23 the prophetic voice summons Jerusalem and her children to stir from their deathly sleep and adds an oracle of deliverance. They lie as in a faint, netted like trapped antelopes; this last figure is suggestive of the cords of the grim hunter Death (Ps. 18.5; 116.3). They have fallen into their stupor through having to drink Yahweh's cup of judgement; this figure of the cup is common in the prophets and psalms (Pss. 11.6; 60.5; 75.9, etc.) and may have a ritual origin (cf. Num. 5.11f). This cup will now pass to the oppressors, and it is to them that it really belongs. They are the ones who should fall into the death-stupor at the roar of the Creator-Saviour (v. 20), as Zion's festival had dramatized (p. 67, § 7).

In 52.1–6 the summons to revival is again backed by an oracle. The dust and fetters of the death-state are to be exchanged for robes of glory. Zion, like a queen, is called to take her throne (*šebī*), apparently a festal theme (§ 15). Yahweh promises in v. 6 the experience of his epiphany; the proclamation of his name and attributes in the cult signalled his nearness; his name was near (Ps. 75.2) and through his minister he would announce himself (Ps. 81.11).

52.7–10 takes a traditional hymnic form derived from the central event of the festal drama (p. 41). Although Yahweh's procession of victory is to come into a city that had been razed to the ground, watchmen are imagined on her walls, ready to signal the first sighting of the messenger and then to see the procession 'eye into eye'. The pattern is that of the festival, where all eyes gazed eagerly on Yahweh's return to his Temple as victor and King-manifest, and liturgical exchanges were sung with the guardians of the gates (§ 8). As in the festival, the triumph is proclaimed as the manifestation of Yahweh's kingship, a reign of salvation announced to all the world (§ 6); and also as in the festival, this kingship has relation to his conquest of the chaos-monsters (51.9, § 7).

In 52.11–12 the cultic model for Yahweh's return to Zion (§ 8) is again evident. The priests are to carry through their ritual purifications in full, for there is to be no hasty departure as in the Exodus (for Exodus and cultic procession cf, p. 14 and § 18); they must make themselves fit to carry in procession to Zion the sacred objects captured by the Babylonians. Yahweh's own presence in the procession will envelop it in

the safety of his divine aura. This call for preparation indicates that the hymn in vv. 7–10 is anticipatory: Yahweh will soon be so manifested.

52.13—53.12

In the preceding material the imagination of Yahweh's triumphant kingship and Zion's revival has risen to a climax. It is appropriate that in this context of climax there should now be the fullest expression of the theme of the servant-leader mediator of Yahweh's authority and salvation, a theme which has already taken an important place in chs. 42, 49, 50.

Between oracles of Yahweh, which convey victorious destiny to his servant, a chorus unfolds the mystery of this servant's passion. They disclose that in being deprived of glory, maltreated and smitten into the sphere of death, he was interposing himself for them and for the many, taking upon himself the load of their sins. His patient conduct has pleased Yahweh and won health for the many, and he himself will enjoy new life and posterity. The following chapters, as we shall see, at once proceed to the richest statements of salvation for Mother Zion and her children (ch. 54) and of fulfilment of Yahweh's covenant-word to David with gifts of life for all the community (ch. 55).

This consideration of the broad context already indicates a correspondence with the festal scheme, where the effulgence of God's kingship and the renewal of the society were complemented, in some measure implemented, through the vindication of the sorely-tried leader, the royal servant, mediator of Yahweh's rule (§§ 19–21). And just as the royal office in the festival was projected in dramatic scenes (§ 20), so it can justly be said by Muilenburg of the present passage: 'the dramatic power of the poem is almost overwhelming'.

In 52.13–15 we hear Yahweh speaking about his servant, as he had in 42.1–4. It is again an oracle of designation and destiny connected with enthronement tradition; the exceptional 'concerning *thee*', if textually sound, would indicate how this form of declaration to an assembly *about* the servant yet imagines him present. Yahweh affirms that his servant will be enthroned in triumph. That this is the conception is shown by the three-fold expression of his exaltation in v. 13b (cf. Isa. 6.1), the awe of the kings in v. 15, and the picture of martial triumph in 53.12. 52.13a should probably be translated: 'Behold, my servant shall be triumphant'; the verb is used elsewhere of the carrying out of royal or military office (Jer. 3.15; 10.21; 23.5; Josh. 1.8; 1 Sam. 18.5, 30; 1 Kings 2.3; 2 Kings

18.7, etc.). The absolute use here then indicates the manifestation of royal success, such as was symbolized by the enthronement in the parallel line.

In 52.14–15 several difficulties of language must be discussed. First, *yazze*, KJ 'he shall sprinkle', RSV 'he shall startle'. Muilenburg is able to muster the support of several recent scholars for 'sprinkle', the usual meaning in Hebrew, though elsewhere with a preposition before the recipients of the sprinkling. This seems to be the best choice, as it is easier to accept a small divergence of syntax than a meaning otherwise unattested in Hebrew, and Hebrew verbs are prone to vary their constructions considerably. (The syntactical development which we assume here is found in the case of *hōrā* 'he shot', Delitzsch.) The picture then fits well. The servant is elsewhere said to have a mission to the nations, to be himself the covenant of people, and to save the multitudes from their sins, ritual terms being used. Here then he sprinkles nations either to cleanse them from their sins (so S, cf. Ezek. 36.25; Lev. 14.7; Num. 19.18; Ps. 51.9) or to conclude them in a covenant with Yahweh (Exod. 24.8), or indeed both. Purification and conclusion of covenant were the appropriate work of the royal rulers of the peoples (§ 34). In Mesopotamia 'Purification-priest' is one of the titles of kings (Seux, p. 415) as well as of Tammuz (§ 23). The immediate parallelism is thus: 'So he will sprinkle many nations / Before him kings shall stop their mouths'. The point is that his sprinkling is the work of the supreme authority and the kings of the nations accept their subordination.

In 52.14b difficulty arises from the word *mšḥt* and from the function of 'so'. To transfer the line to 53.2 (NEB and many) against all textual evidence is not permissible; to pronounce *mošḥāt* 'corrupted' does not solve the problem of the clause's function. It is a great improvement, however, if we pronounce *mšḥt* as *māšaḥtī*, 'I have anointed' for which the normal spelling *mšḥty* is in fact found in the Qumran scroll (Q), a reading favourably considered by Barthélemy. The construction within the clause then loses its awkwardness, the idiom *mšḥ min* having confirmation in Ps. 45.8; at the same time the new meaning eases the problem of the clause's function. The defective spelling of the first person perfect is found with other roots (GK, 44i; Delitzsch and Dahood on Ps. 16.2); it is rare enough to cause difficulty in tradition (which may in any case have intended a noun or infinitive 'anointing' in formal construct *-t* from the root *mšḥ*). We then translate:

As many were dumbfounded concerning you (/him?),
so I have anointed his person above men and his form above mankind,

so he shall asperge many nations,
kings shall shut their mouths before him,
for things untold of they see
and things unheard of they contemplate.

The pattern here includes a chiastic parallelism which could account for the repeated 'so'. The structure is *a' b' b' a', a' a'*, where *a'* tells of astonished reactions, while *b'* treats of the servant's eminence. There is also some progression if the first line alludes to horror at his sufferings; the next five pass to his exaltation. The element of comparison expressed by 'as . . . so . . . so . . .' is presumably the amazement, first at his sufferings, then at his exaltation; but the latter becomes explicit only in the fourth line, to be stressed further in the fifth and sixth. What at first seems a rather confused passage thus can be seen to have considerable artistic power and it becomes easier to understand Muilenburg's claim that it is 'superbly constructed'. It may be added that the reading 'I have anointed' fits with the royal features of this and the other servant-leader passages, and can be seen as a link with 61.1 (see below).

Nevertheless, the preferences just expressed for *yazze* and *kn mšḥt* are not essential to my interpretation of the whole passage. For an alternative treatment I think we would have to follow that of Delitzsch, for all its problems: 'Just as many have been shocked concerning you – to such a degree was his appearance a deformation away from man, and his form away from the children of men – so shall he startle many nations, because of him kings will shut their mouths . . .'.

At 53.1 declaration about the servant of Yahweh is taken up by the chorus. They refer to their peculiar account as their *šᵉmūʿā*, KJ 'report', and the question arises whether the word has developed some specialized sense beyond 'thing heard', 'thing heard and so reported', just as in the Mishna it becomes technical for 'a Rabbinical tradition or decision'. The parallel line helps here: 'and over whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed?', meaning 'who has been enabled to perceive the mysterious working of God?' The 'thing heard' thus seems to be a revelation from God, heard from him as in the ear of prophets and subsequently preached, to be believed by those with ears to hear, the ears of faith. This explanation matches the nature of their message, disclosing the ineffable mystery of the servant's vicarious suffering. This was not a truth such as could be received by the chorus through any ordinary hearsay; it was a disclosure of Yahweh's hidden purpose, an inspired revelation of his holy work. A comparable use of the word may be found in Obadiah 1,

where the revelation is received by a group of prophets from Yahweh and preached by them and concerns God's work with the nations and the salvation of Israel. Again, in Isa. 28.9, the word has a similar sense in the controversy between Isaiah and other specialists in revelation, prophets and priests. He accuses them of erroneous visions. They scornfully respond, 'Whom will he teach knowledge (*yōre dē'ā*), whom will he make understand *šᶜmūʿā*?' In this rivalry of sacred teachings and prophecies, *šᶜmūʿā* appears as prophetic revelation of mysterious character, needing discernment in interpretation. Also, in Isa. 28.19 the difficulty of discerning it is clearly to the fore; here 'morning by morning', as in 50.4 (p. 70), may allude to Yahweh's coming to his prophets: he will come then often enough, says Isaiah, he will 'pass by' (cf. 1 Kings 19.11) and his revelations will affright and confuse.

Nyberg explains *šᶜmūʿā* as 'the myth preserved in tradition', and this may have some justification if we find that this chapter, like so much in the preceding ones, takes its character from the royal rites. This 'myth' would then have originally been the exposition of the rites, the unfolding of its mystery through divine revelation, ancient and traditional, *yet ever new and astounding on the ritual plane*. In any case, adequate reasons have been given above for connecting *šᶜmūʿā* with revelation, and this throws light on the nature of the preachers. Indeed, when we further note how their message is built into an oracular framework and even seems to melt into the direct speech of Yahweh (vv. 8, 11), it is fair to describe them as a priestly or prophetic chorus, a group dedicated to receiving, discerning, and teaching revelations of God. Such groups have left their mark on the Isaiah tradition in various ways (p. 70) and may be connected with the choral utterances in the festal Psalms, 20.6; 68.12; 132.6–7; 144.12–15; 118.22–27. Ps. 118.22f is especially notable as there the chorus interprets the suffering and exaltation of the royal figure as a source of festal salvation for all.

In 53.2 the chorus pass straight to the heart of their account, referring to their subject simply as 'he', and likewise in the following verses. This shows both the complete integration of this piece into the oracles where Yahweh has already defined the subject as 'my servant', and also gives the impression of a traditional form in a traditional situation, such as would be the case if there were a ritual background.

They tell how the servant came up like a shoot from a tree in the arid desert; 'before him' is most simply taken to mean 'before Yahweh', indicating his peculiar relation to Yahweh even in his period of suffering. (Driver, p. 92, has forsaken the explanation which he first gave

in *JTS* (1937), p. 48: 'before himself', hence 'he shot straight up'.) The beauty, majesty, and admiration, which apparently were to have been expected, were in fact wholly missing. Indeed, men would avoid him or pass by with covered face, fearing the contagion of divine displeasure from this figure of torments and disease. (Or, according to Thomas, the stricken servant was obliged to hide from men.) Other aspects of suffering are laid upon him later in the text.

What lies behind this strange beginning of their narrative? Is there, as some maintain, a dependence on Tammuz liturgies (§ 23)? Muilenburg for one says: 'it is probable that these liturgies have influenced the poet's portrait'. It seems fair to say that, while the Tammuz texts do not reveal a coherent similarity, they do aid our sensitivity to the style of Isa. 53, pointing to its derivation from a ritual depiction of archetypal sufferings. As Engnell (p. 80) implies, the parallels serve to sharpen our eyesight, as we gaze across the gulf of time and circumstance, to recognize in Isa. 53 what is in fact a self-consistent Israelite concept, matured in the tradition of Israelite royal ritual.

The language does in fact connect with the ideology of the Davidic dynasty. Comparison of kings generally with trees and shoots was common, indicating royal splendour and vitality, but sometimes also suffering. According to Isa. 11.1, 10 the saviour-king is to come as a rod or shoot from the trunk of Jesse (*šrš* in v. 10 as 53.2); likewise Jeremiah (23.5; 33.15) and Zechariah (3.8; 6.12) depict him as a shoot. With the exile of the king to Babylon, Ezekiel (19) laments that the vine stock, which had once sent up glorious rods to become rulers' sceptres, has now been torn out and planted in the arid desert (*'ereṣ ṣiyyā* as Isa. 53.2). The foreign king in Isa. 14.19 is punished as 'an abhorred branch'; Tammuz suffers as a thirsty tree, an uprooted plant (§ 23). The account of Yahweh's servant given by the chorus plunges straight into the figure of a tree-shoot, but in the negative aspect as in Ezek. 19.13. He lacked the beauty and majesty (*tō'ar* and *hādār*) which should have been his. In his isolation and range of sufferings he may be compared with the afflicted king in the psalms, reviled and facing a world of hostility (§ 36). In particular Ps. 22 from the royal rites (*KP*, pp. 34f) shows the king as 'a worm and no man, scorned by mankind and despised by people', though in the end Yahweh proved not to despise him *nor to hide his face from him*, v. 25; the implication is that the scornful people had so hidden their faces from him – just as in the case of the servant in Isa. 53.3.

From 53.4 the chorus give the revealed interpretation of these sufferings, which is repeated several times in a rather didactic manner: '*he*

was wounded for *our* sins' etc. Later the atonement is said to be for the 'many', and no doubt when they say '*we* accounted him not . . . *our* sicknesses . . . *our* pains . . . *we* are healed . . . *all we* like sheep' they speak representatively for men in general.

The sufferings seem to be presented in several forms: 'sickness' (*ḥ^{o}lī* vv. 3, 4), the 'stroke' of some divine punishment (vv. 4, 8), a piercing and a crushing (v. 5), chastisement (v. 5), torture and execution (vv. 7–8), and burial as a criminal (v. 9, where we may read *bāmātō* 'his burial mound' after Q and Ibn Ezra, and with Reider and Driver understand *'āšīr* not as 'rich' but as 'corrupt' or 'base'). It is not a logical whole, but conveys the impression of total suffering and rejection. For such a comprehensive picture we may compare from Ps. 22 the reviling, the attacks of the death-powers, the laying in the dust of death, the imagery of dissolution, the apportioning of the victim's clothes and the piercing or binding of his hands and feet. From other psalms we may compare the symbolic chastisement and suffering in Sheol borne by the king (§§ 21, 34).

In 53.8b the construction naturally gives 'who has regard for his *dōr*?', but the usual sense of *dōr*, 'period, generation', does not fit. Help has been sought (Driver, Thomas) from Akkadian *dūru* of 'state or rank in life' and the Arabic cognate. But the Akkadian should help us to see a reference not to the servant's present 'plight' or 'fate' (which *were* regarded, though with scorn) but to his 'rank'. While the Akkadian is used of social and occupational class regarded as permanent characterizations, some of the Hebrew uses tend this way, referring to 'a generation characterized by quality or condition, *class* of men' (so BDB, p. 190a. 3). The concept of royal rank may be found in Ps. 55.14 (*'rk*, *KP*, p. 74). That *dōr* alludes to the royal house is the opinion of Ackroyd, though with reference to the meanings 'circle', 'assembly', 'community', 'household'. He points out that the first line of v. 8 could describe the servant as taken away from his '(royal) power and administration', as Ahlström has also argued with reference to similar views of older commentators. In short, the verse gives excellent sense if we translate: 'From power (cf. Judg. 18.7; 1 Sam. 9.17) and rule (cf. p. 48) he was removed, and who gave heed to his rank?' This is virtually the same as the result reached by Torrey: 'From dominion and rule he was plucked down, and who could make account of his line?' (= 'how was anyone to think it worthy of notice?').

In 53.8cd it is said that the sufferer was 'cut off from the land of life/the living', 'cut off' perhaps resuming the plant imagery of v. 2; 'for the sin of my people the stroke (fell) on him'. 'My people' (M, VSS) or 'his

people' (Q) marks the servant off fairly clearly from the nation. 'My' is the more difficult reading in this choral passage, but may be a touch of oracular style.

The innocence and merit of the servant are indicated in several ways: 'he opened not his mouth' before his persecutors (v. 7), 'he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth' (v. 9), he is 'righteous' (v. 11), voluntarily 'he exposed his soul to death' (v. 12), his soul 'made a sin-offering for others' (v. 10). In the royal rites the king has merit as having humbly and faithfully gone through his ordeal; he is humble (*'ānī*, Ps. 22.25; *KP*, p. 180) and righteous (§ 27). The demonstration of these qualities is a key element in the rites, denoting not an absolute sinlessness, but a sound relation with Yahweh. When the king is led into Zion as proved in these qualities, he is acclaimed with joy, for the universal reign of peace is in prospect (cf. Zech. 9.9).

People and king are often pictured as flock and shepherd (e.g. Ezek. 34.23); when deprived of their king the people are scattered like a flock without its shepherd (1 Kings 22.17; Nahum 3.18). In 53.6, if a similar relationship is intended, the picture is rather that the flock has wilfully strayed, leaving the shepherd to bear the penalty. Engnell (p. 84) may perhaps be right, therefore, in affirming that the servant is here assumed to be the royal shepherd.

In 53.10 there are four lines, with the root *ḥpṣ* 'will, desire' effecting a correspondence between the first and fourth. I suggest that *'im*, usually 'if, when', is here an adverb of confirmation, 'truly' (cf. Ugaritic *hm* 'if', 'whether', and 'truly', Aistleitner nos. 836–7; another example may be in Job 14.5). Otherwise we might explain it of Yahweh's desire (cf. 'if but . . . !' BDB, p. 50a) and render 'desiring that'. Thus:

> But Yahweh had willed (*ḥpṣ*) to crush and afflict him,
> truly his soul made an offering for sin
> (*or* desiring that his soul make an offering for sin).
> He shall see descendants, he shall live long,
> and by his hand the will (*ḥpṣ*) of Yahweh shall flourish.

The last line is in accord with the ideal of the kings by whose agency the royal will of Yahweh should be effected (§§ 19, 25). The importance of *ḥpṣ* in this passage also fits with its importance in royal election (*KP*, p. 146 after 1 Kings 10.9; Pss. 18.20; 22.9, etc.). It seemed to Jeremiah (22.28–30) that King Jehoiachin had lost Yahweh's good will (*ḥpṣ*) and would not 'flourish' (*ṣlḥ*) or have descendants on the throne. It is not necessary to agree with Burrows that Isa. 53.10 is a deliberate reversal of

the oracle to Jehoiachin to acknowledge that the comparison indicates the royal character of the servant here.

As in Ps. 22, there is no description of how the restoration to the land of life is effected, as would be desirable if the pictures of death had been on the matter-of-fact plane. As in Ps. 22 (*KP*, pp. 166 f), there is instead stress on his abundance of life, which extends through unnumbered years and children (cf. § 31). The offering of his life constitutes an offering for sin, *'āšām* here obviously denoting an expiation commensurable with the expressions 'bear their iniquities', 'make many righteous' in the other verses (*TWAT*, p. 470b). There is no statement to equal this in the Psalms. Nevertheless, there is evidence for the association of the king with a work of atonement for his people, both in performance of rituals like those of the Day of Atonement and in the festal drama; this had the consequence of bringing his people into renewed communion with Yahweh, a state of grace and blessing (§ 34). For this work great value was put upon the king's own person, offered humbly to God in obedience and representative penitence, an offering which in a few texts is contrasted or compared with sacrifices; his own person, dedicated to Yahweh's will, 'broken' and 'crushed' in humility, but 'crushed' also by divine chastisement, avails more than animal offerings; accepted, he will be able to intercede for Zion and gain for her God's goodwill (§ 34).

In 53.11 we find that the utterance of the chorus has passed without any marked transition into utterance of Yahweh, in accordance with the revelatory character of the whole. 'By his knowledge' is explained by Engnell (p. 88): 'by means of the cultic-mystic unity with the Saviour every participant shares in the realized salvation'. The suffix would here be objective: by their 'knowledge of him'. A simpler course is to translate: 'by his humiliation', a meaning advocated by Thomas and for which the evidence is extensive (see Emerton, *JSS*, 1970). Thus:

> The outcome of his soul's pain he shall see and be satisfied.
> By his humiliation the Righteous One rights
> – my servant (rights) the multitudes,
> for it is their iniquities which he bears.

The naming 'righteous one' and 'my servant' in parallelism would fit well a royal figure (§§ 26, 27), who would also be responsible for helping his people with saving judgement and for mediating the grace of God's righteousness (§§ 25, 32). In the present case, however, the saving judgement is combined with atonement; by expiating their sins, the

servant has brought the multitudes into the joy of right standing with God – they too are 'righteous' (cf. §§ 32, 34). The 'multitudes' stand in contrast to his own unique and formerly solitary figure and seem to be ideally the masses of mankind (cf. 52.15); their conversion was also envisaged in connection with the royal rites (§ 37; Pss. 40.4; 71.7; *KP*, pp. 191 f, 186 f).

53.12 may mean 'Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and with the mighty he shall share spoil'. This would seem to be a picturesque way of saying he would be counted among the greatest of conquering kings. Alternatively we can render (cf. North):

> Therefore I will give him the multitudes as his portion,
> and the masses he shall acquire as his spoil.

This has the advantage of maintaining the sense of *rabbīm* 'many'; it gives the suitable thought that the servant will achieve dominion over all nations (cf. § 30). Dominion is granted to him 'because he exposed his soul to Death'. This description of his ordeal is reminiscent of the ritual psalms which relate a confrontation with the enemy-figures Death, Belial, Sheol (Pss. 18.5–6; 118.18; 48.15; 68.21). He had suffered as only sinners should, but he was making atonement for the sins of the multitudes and interposing for the sinners. The last phrase is part of the general idea of his atoning work, and as such is comparable to the royal expiation already mentioned. But interceding was also a natural duty of the king as Yahweh's chief minister. He prays for his people with special efficacy; his prayers undergird the people's use of the Temple (§ 35). The interposing of a great leader was not a new idea; it is vividly illustrated in the case of Moses (Deut. 9.18, 25f; cf. the rather different case of David, 2 Sam. 24.17). In Isa. 59.16 the absence of any 'interposer' is part of a general lack of righteousness, which Yahweh remedies by coming himself in helmet and breastplate to bring salvation to the oppressed; we might deduce from the passage that the missing interposer was the ruler who ideally effects justice and salvation. Finally, we may compare Jer. 30, which has affinities with Isa. 40—55: the nation as 'Jacob/Israel' groans under its sin and guilt; but restoration is promised, and a king who will be privileged to 'draw near' to Yahweh. Mowinckel (*HTC*, p. 239) explains: 'As long as the community is under the judgement and wrath of Yahweh, none of its members dare risk his life by appearing before him. Therefore Yahweh must himself appoint and authorize a man for this task, a king of David's line; and through his

constant intercession in the cult, the new covenant will be upheld for ever.'

Reflecting on 52.13—53.12 as a whole, one is struck by the clear and fluent way its message is presented, although at first sight its character and contents seem so peculiar. The foregoing study indicates that fundamentally its conceptions are quite close to the royal ideal of the Psalms, especially as found in the dramatic festal presentation of the royal office. There will have been ritual texts other than psalms, and in such non-psalmic texts the rites would appear from another angle. Allowing for this, we can reasonably posit some prototype among the royal ritual texts for our passage. While the author of our passage would be free to express his own inspiration and situation through such an old tradition, he would seem to have been remarkably restrained in this respect. There is not a single element expressly referring to the circumstances of the Exile or indeed any other national situation. If certain circumstances were in the author's mind, such as the sufferings and exaltation of Jehoiachin, as argued by Burrows, the material as a whole does not seem to have been freshly created to express them. Neither is there the slightest trace in the passage that the servant is to be understood as the nation Israel. That the speakers of 53.1f are foreign nations, or the kings whose mouths were stopped up in 52.15, is most improbable. As argued above, and in accordance with the revelatory nature of their preaching, their prototypes will be some group of cultic ministers who would utter revelations and sacred teachings in the festal rites, addressing the congregation and the world about the ritual sufferings and restoration of Yahweh's servant-king, experiences reflected for us from another angle in the king's own songs, the psalms.

Our author will have been as familiar with such traditional material as he was with other festal matter. Once more it is apparent how the liturgy was in large measure his thought-world and the mould of his utterances. What he had to present concerning the servant-leader he presented in chs. 42, 49, 50, 52—3 with natural ease through the royal festal traditions which had expressed the ideals of royal election, commission, faithful and sacrificial service, and exaltation, and all in relation to Yahweh's own advent to Zion as King and Saviour. It is possible that our author has significantly developed the atoning aspect of the royal rites, since the directness of his statements here cannot be matched in the psalms; yet, in the light of the comparisons made above, even this should not be taken for granted. The question of what application he intended the material to have in his historical situation is one to which we will return.

54

Words of promise and blessing now convey to the community a happy destiny, a state of growth, abundance, and peace.

Begrich finds here a short 'instruction' (Anweisung, vv. 1–3), followed by 'oracles of salvation' (vv. 4–6, 7–10, 11–12 + 13b, 14a + 13a–17). Schoors finds an oracle of salvation in vv. 4–6 and proclamations of salvation in 7–10 and 11–17. Muilenburg treats the chapter as a unity 'in the manner of the oracle of salvation'. Westermann sees vv. 1–10 as a poem using motifs of hymns and of promises and announcements of salvation, and (like the old oracles in worship) presupposing congregational laments; he calls 11–17 a 'promise of blessing' which could be a continuation of 1–10. In stressing the use of old traditions of worship and psalmody, he relates this promise of blessing to Pss. 91 and 121 and to the songs of Zion, while he matches the kernel of the message, vv. 7–8, with Ps. 30.6.

The feminine singular figure addressed by these words of comfort is no doubt Zion. Whether or not the thought of Sarah (cf. 51.2) has induced the nomadic imagery in v. 2, the wife of Yahweh Sebaoth (54.5), barren in the Exile but now to be a jewelled city and mother of multitudes must be Zion. Zion in fact has such a role in neighbouring passages and in accordance with the ideas of the festival (p. 66). In the old celebrations Yahweh had come to Zion as King to queenly bride, and the theme of the blessings was that she would be the happy mother of many children. So here, after the earlier chapters have projected Yahweh's new manifestation of kingship with his mighty acts, coming to Zion, vindication of his royal servant, etc., attention turns to Zion his wife, her beauty, fertility, and prosperity.

The marriage is a 'covenant of peace' (v. 10), which is described (as elsewhere the Davidic covenant) as permanent. Its comparison with the 'waters' or (another reading) 'days' of Noah is relevant not only for its constancy and universal implications, but also for its association with the order of fertility. Noah's covenant meant that the great waters were harnessed for good purposes and the seasons of the living order were safely established – cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night; and Noah's family would be fertile and fill the earth (Gen. 8.15—9.19).

The adornment of Zion with jewels and eye-cosmetic (*pūk*, v. 11) may relate to her preparation as royal bride of Yahweh and also have paradisal associations (cf. North and Ezek. 28.11f). Her establishment in 'righteousness' (vv. 14, 17) is an ancient theme of Zion's ideology

(pp. 71–2). The pronouncing of a protective oracle over her in vv. 14–17, giving her invulnerability against future attacks, resembles her old protective rites (p. 15).

Some think that v. 13 describes Zion's builders (*bōnayik*) as trained by Yahweh and in this respect his 'pupils' (Westermann). Otherwise, there may be here another case of generalization from the experience of the servant-leader in 50.4 (p. 73): as he was like the ideal of the young prophets, *limmūdīm*, in obedience to Yahweh, so shall all Zion's children be; all will truly be 'servants of Yahweh', v. 17.

55

While Muilenburg regards this as a poem of five strophes (vv. 1–2, 3–5, 6–9, 10–11, 12–13), Westermann finds first an announcement of salvation (1–5, centring in 3b), then a piece which functions as an epilogue to chs. 40—55 (vv. 6–11, where v. 7 looks like a later addition), and then a final prophecy of return (12–13). Both agree as to the force of the chapter in rounding off the message of chs. 40—55. It is all the more significant, therefore, that the promised salvation is here expressly seen as fulfilment of the covenant with David (v. 3).

Westermann justly stresses the resemblance of vv. 1–3 to the cries of vendors rather than to the similar invitations by personified Wisdom (Begrich). In the 1950s I heard Arab criers in Jerusalem calling in just such a style: 'O thirsty one—free water (*sabīl*)!' 'Drink for half a piastre!' 'Drink it and pray for the Beautiful – I brought it from the mosque of the Prophet!' 'Cure and leaven, this *sūs* (a sweet drink)!' 'It is from Mount Hermon, O thirsty one!' 'God is generous!'

From time immemorial, no doubt, such cries were available for preachers to copy. In many ways the invitation here sounds like an invitation from the deity to his festal worshippers to enter into the richness of his sacramental communion. The holy encounter meant the bestowal of rich gifts of life, represented in the sacrificial meals (Isa. 62.9; Ps. 22.27; 23.5) and in the hope of prosperity in the days to come; the thirsty (84.3) and impoverished (132.15) were replenished with blessings that would bring prosperity (65.10–14; 144.12–15). And as we shall see, the style of the old invitations to worship is clearly followed in vv. 6–7.

In v. 3 therefore, Yahweh's proposal to make with his worshippers a covenant in the Davidic pattern may also arise as a traditional element. The great festal meeting with Yahweh in a context of renewal (§ 17) meant a restored relationship and in some degree a 'renewal of the

covenant' (Weiser, pp. 23–52). In Jerusalem's festival, it was especially under the covenant with the Davidic house that the 'poor' of Zion looked for blessing (Pss. 132; 72, etc.). So now in Isaiah, it may be in quite traditional manner that Yahweh invites the thirsty and poor and offers them an eternal covenant, namely 'the sure covenant-promises to David'. For if what is meant is the renewal of the covenant, it becomes understandable that the covenant which is proposed is also identified with a covenant at once ancient and everlasting.

In v. 4 we could take the perfect tense with reference to a new initiative of Yahweh, as often in oracles of promise: 'Behold I have now appointed him witness to the nations . . .', giving new force to an old royal ideal (§§ 37, 2). V. 5 might then continue in parallelism (note the repetition of 'Behold') to address this appointed person, 'David': 'Behold thou shalt call a nation thou knewest not . . .', entirely in keeping with the promise to the king in Ps. 18.44–5 (so Bentzen, Torrey, Kissane). Though somewhat compressed and abrupt, the pattern would be that noted on pp. 50 and 55: an oracular appointment of a royal leader in the third person, followed by an oracle to the leader in the second person.

If, however, we follow the majority of scholars in regarding v. 5 as addressed to the people as a masc. sing. entity, v. 4 may be a reference to the past as a comparison: 'Behold (as) I appointed him witness . . . behold (so) thou shalt call a nation . . .'. Vv. 4–5 thus develop v. 3 in a particular aspect: when the people gather to worship Yahweh, there to be concluded afresh in the Davidic covenant (v. 3), then, as the house of David had been commissioned to preside with authority over the pilgrimage of many nations (v. 4), so once more the call to the nations will go out from Israel (v. 5); resplendent Israel will have the authority of being the nation at the centre of the pilgrimage. V. 4, it must be stressed, alludes to the duties of the king in the festival (§§ 37, 2). By making it refer to the conquests of David, Westermann sets up a false contrast between the militancy of the old Davidic rule (v. 4) and a new religious leadership of Israel (v. 5).

Westermann here is agreeing with a popular view (Begrich, Von Rad, Eissfeldt, Balzer, Schoors, etc.) that the prophet means to abrogate the role of the Davidic house and replace it with a function of the people as a whole. The Davidic covenant is hereby taken from the royal line and given instead to the whole nation, 'a fundamental transformation of the royal theology' (Westermann). But there is nothing in the text to express such a drastic change; it seems that these scholars are making it fit

their own misreading of royal elements in earlier chapters. For it is entirely natural that the text should mention blessings accruing to the nation from the Davidic covenant, without thereby implying a break with the central point of that covenant, a covenant expressly described here as eternal. God's work with his king always had implications for the people (§ 32). In this text there is simply special reference to the abundant life (vv. 1–3) and religio-political pre-eminence which ideally come to Israel through the Davidic covenant.

If the author had intended to make a fundamental change in the Davidic doctrine embedded in most of the prophets, not least in Isaiah and in the contemporary Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah, he would surely have needed to be more explicit. The *ḥasʿdē dāwīd*, the pledges given to David (Ps. 89.50; 2 Chron. 6.42), centred on his having descendants sitting upon his throne, a perpetual lamp in Zion; in consequence of this central grace were the blessings for Zion's priests and people (Ps. 132, etc.). We must assume our author uses the phrase in a similar way, since he gives no indication to the contrary. The nation is to be blessed within the radius of the Davidic covenant, but the destiny of the royal house remains (so *HTC*, p. 166; Duhm, Skinner, Bentzen, etc.). It would be a poor sort of eternity that the covenant would have, if its heart were taken out!

In 55.6–7 the appeal is clearly in the festal tradition, and Westermann rightly sees that v. 6 is formed after a cultic cry. The worshippers came to 'seek' Yahweh at the appointed time when he would make his epiphany, permitting men to find him (Ps. 46.2, 6); then he was near (75.2), attentive to their prayers. That was a time to repent and seek his pardon (Isa. 55.7, § 5). That was also the time to pray for the winter rain and snow, the sprouting they caused, the food, the clothing of the hills with verdure, the flourishing of the trees, – the very things which the prophet now cites to illustrate the fruitful power of Yahweh's word (vv. 10, 12; cf. Ps. 65.10–14). Indeed, the festal themes are so dominant that the application to history, even in v. 12a, can only be deduced from the earlier chapters. That God's word, like his rain, will be effective is no doubt an implicit reference to the foregoing promises of Israel's restoration from the Exile to fulness of life. But if his word has sounded in this cycle of prophecies, it is also continuous with his ancient purposes and promises, especially the everlasting covenant with David (v. 3, § 29). Neither the ancient promise nor its contemporary application, the chapter seems to say, would fail; God's covenant-love would persist eternally and surely achieve its goal of a society blessed with fulness of life.

This concluding chapter in the cycle of Isa. 40—55 thus lends great support to my derivation of the cycle generally from festal tradition. Being itself a kind of summarizing epilogue, the chapter appropriately takes the form of a summons to communion in festal encounter with renewal of the eternal covenant-grace to David for the benefit of all society, and it eloquently develops the themes of God's word, proposals of destiny, and fertilizing power.

56—66

Most scholars agree that, while these chapters have important points of contact with 40—55, they are sufficiently removed in content and background to be treated separately. It can be reasonably concluded that they emanate from the same prophetic circle but located now in Jerusalem *after* Cyrus had permitted the beginnings of a return and restoration.

A full review of these chapters is not necessary for the present purpose. But some account must be taken of chs. 60—2, which contain material closely linked with 40—55. Westermann has described 60—2 as indeed the 'kernel' of 56—66, representing a ministry which carried forward that of Deutero-Isaiah by answering the laments of the early post-exilic congregation. The psalmic laments (in 59 and 63—4) which now surround 60—2 thus illustrate the kind of situation in which these fresh announcements of salvation were given. Around the kernel, Westermann suggests, some three or four layers of tradition subsequently gathered, resulting at last in the present sequence of 56—66.

60

This chapter consists of announcements and depictions of salvation to Zion. Zion's salvation is to come with an epiphany of Yahweh, who will rise to shine on her like the sun rising from darkness; there is a resemblance here, as Westermann notes, to the royal prophecy in 9.1f. Zion herself will also be like a radiant luminary, nations and kings being drawn to her and making obeisance as to a queen (v. 14). With them come Zion's sons and daughters and the wealth of the nations in offerings at Yahweh's altar and in his newly glorified Temple. The men of the coastlands are eager to serve Yahweh, and the ships of Tarshish transport the exiles home; these vessels, a little surprising here, could signify the conversion of old enemies (Pss. 76; 87, etc.), since they were imagined to

attack Zion in the festal drama (Ps. 48.8). Peace, salvation, praise, and especially righteousness (pp. 71–2) again characterize her; her people are all 'righteous ones', who will be exceedingly fecund.

Thus the chapter is very similar to the previous addresses to Zion; prominent are the festal themes of Yahweh's epiphany at Zion (§ 9), the universal worship at his Temple (§ 4), and Zion as mother and queen (§ 15).

61

In vv. 1–3 someone speaks expansively of his appointment and equipment by God, a form reminiscent of the servant-leader's speeches in chs. 49 and 50; there is similarity of content also with Yahweh's designation of his servant in 42.1f. The combination of Yahweh's anointing him and putting his spirit on him can be paralleled only by the royal anointing (1 Sam. 16.13; 2 Sam. 23.1–2). What is not so obvious is why this royal preparation is said to be for the purpose of announcing glad tidings, etc. Westermann indeed concludes that disparate items of old offices are here accumulated into a baroque and artificial picture, having lost their old connotations.

The whole presentation, however, is remarkably true to the royal duty in the new year festival (§ 37), as Widengren (pp. 57f) has seen. In the festival God anointed and equipped his king to be the mediator of the divine kingdom, which itself seemed to enter on a new era. After the symbolic defeat of God's enemies, the king announced the glad tidings of the divine victory to the chastened and humble people. God's kingship was proclaimed anew, with all the joyful accompaniments of a new reign with its hopes of redressing wrongs and granting amnesties; penitential attire would be replaced with beautiful robes, weeping succeeded by jubilation.

So the anointed leader of this chapter also announces the glad tidings to the humble. He is to comfort the broken-hearted (an allusion to penitence, cf. Ps. 51.19), to announce an amnesty, to proclaim the 'year' and the 'day' when Yahweh favourably accepts his people and strikes down their oppressors; so the mournful congregation of Zion puts away the ashes of penitence and appears in festive attire. Then are they bright with 'righteousness', the festal grace, and vital like trees planted by Yahweh (cf. Ps. 92.13–16); then is the time of restoration.

Zimmerli ('Gnadenjahr') interprets the passage as reflecting the proclamations of release and restoration for a sabbatical or jubilee year

on new year's day (Lev. 25). This connects in Isa. 61 with the proclamation of release and return of property, but not with other features (royal mission, bound captives, vengeance, garments, vitality). We must conclude, therefore, that this special form of new year custom is not the true background.

In vv. 5–7 the speaker continues with words of promise addressed to the second person masc. plural, no doubt the people of Zion. The foreigners who have lorded it over them will serve them, while they will have favour and intimacy with him in the manner of his priesthood. In vv. 8–9 Yahweh's words are given directly, promising the people justice, an everlasting covenant and blessing on their descendants.

In 61.10 the individuality of the speaker appears again in a hymn of thanksgiving. The form is that of the individual thanksgiving: 'I will rejoice . . for he has clothed *me* . .'. When we take account of the chapter's opening, it is fair to say that this response is also in accord with the royal style, seeing all God's work of salvation for community and world as his work for 'me' (cf. *KP*, pp. 165f, 191). The imagery could descend from the appearance of the king in his ordeal in penitential garb, then restored to his glorious vestments (cf. the Babylonian king, *KP*, p. 92, and the Jewish high priest in Zech. 3). The conclusion in v. 11 accords with the festal materials in picturing salvation as the springing forth of verdure and crops.

62

The chapter treats of the salvation of Zion. The first person in vv. 1–6, if not Yahweh, is an authoritative person, a leader in charge of Jerusalem and its cult; he has authority to appoint 'watchers' on the walls, men who by invocations, psalms, horn-blowing and the like, maintained appeal to Yahweh for Jerusalem. He himself also has the role of intercessor and undertakes not to desist until her righteousness and salvation shine forth (v. 1); intercessory power was a feature of the old royal office (§ 35) and of the servant in Isa. 53.12.

The chapter resumes several festal themes found in 40—55: Zion's righteousness (pp. 71–2), the attention of nations and kings, her royal state, her marriage, her victuals (pictured here in a festal meal), her sacred way and procession, and the heralded entry of God the Victor and Saviour.

4

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF 'THE SERVANT' FOR ISAIAH 40—55

1 *Isaiah 40—55 a unity in the festal pattern*

In chapter 3 we have seen a remarkable correspondence between Isa. 40f and the tradition of the autumnal festival of pre-exilic Jerusalem. The coherence of the materials in Deutero-Isaiah, arising from this correspondence with the tradition, will best be seen in the following summary of ch. 3.

40.1–11: Salvation is proclaimed by drawing upon the festal tradition of Yahweh's advent-procession with its prophetic groups and messengers.

40.12–31: The congregation's disbelieving response is answered by arguments of the prophet and an oracle, the thought and expression being similar to the psalms, especially to the festal hymns. The passage is thus related to the festal dialogue of God and people in accordance with § 38.

41: Assurance continues in a complex of forms which again can be connected with the festal tradition: arguments of Yahweh against the gods in a judgement-assembly, mockery of idols, oracle to the people promising rain, oracles of assurance in royal style.

42: God's saving work is further announced and debated in a series of forms of decidedly festal character: oracle designating royal leader, oracle of destiny and support to royal leader, hymn with oracle expressing assertion of Yahweh's sovereignty, interchanges of Yahweh and his complaining congregation with obvious resemblances to festal psalms.

43: There follow further oracles and remonstrances of Yahweh to his people, again with points of contact with the festal dialogues.

44.1–23: Oracles of salvation to the royally portrayed ancestor are filled with the festal themes of rain, fertility, and atonement. An extended and humorous mockery of idols, suggesting the lighter moments of the festival, reinforces the message of Yahweh's imminent self-assertion.

44.24—45.8: The declaration of deliverance is developed further with a political detail but still in the festal style: Yahweh designates Cyrus as his royal agent, anointed; he addresses an oracle to him and invokes a joyful prospect of rain and abundance of good.

45.9–25: Yahweh further assures and argues with his congregation in the forms and ideas appropriate to the festival – his supreme power as Creator, Zion as his royal bride, derision of idols.

46—47: Scorn and doom are hurled at Yahweh's enemy in the manner of dramatic prophecy in worship, while there are assuring oracles and arguments for Yahweh's congregation. As in the festal scheme, such defeat of his arch-enemy and dethroning of the personified enemy city are the counterparts of Yahweh's triumphant return to his Temple and the enthroning of his queen Zion.

48: The foregoing dialogues between Yahweh and his worshippers now reach a climax, as Yahweh assures and chides them most earnestly in the tradition of the festal Psalms 81, 95, and 50.

49: The second half of the cycle 40—55 begins here. In a sequence similar to ch. 42, a royal leader is presented speaking to the world; the royal leader receives oracles assuring him of succeeding after suffering; a hymn of celebration involves all nature in the festal style; the congregation's complaints are countered by Yahweh's words of assurance and remonstrance. Thus the materials in this chapter resemble the liturgies of royal initiation or renewal in the autumn festival and the consequent dialogues of Yahweh and congregation through his prophets.

50: The themes of salvation and suffering continue to react together, and the festal tradition can be seen in the speech of Yahweh arguing his victory over chaos to his lamenting congregation, and in the standing forth of God's royal minister, faithful through tribulation, whom men are admonished to obey.

51.1—52.12: Excitement rises as the material answers to the heart of the old liturgies of Yahweh's saving kingship. After Yahweh's promises to

restore his congregation and establish his reign, there come dramatic invocations for Yahweh to bestir himself and for Zion to rise from the dust, with further oracles of deliverance; the old festal procession of Yahweh as King into Zion shapes the vision of imminent political restoration.

52.13—53.12: The festal presentations of the Davidic role are now matched by the fullest expression of the work of the royal servant, complementing the effulgence of Yahweh's kingship just imagined. Choral prophecy of the mystery of the servant's victory through suffering is framed by oracles of Yahweh affirming his enthronement in priestly and martial supremacy.

54: The worshipping community, Zion, now is assured of festal blessings: growth, wealth, peace. Yahweh the King will soon have come to Zion his beloved bride.

55: The goal of the cycle is expressed as the fulfilment of Yahweh's covenantal pledges to David: the old festal meaning of these pledges (the Davidic life to flourish in his line, and his people to be replenished with good) is not contradicted. Invitations to enjoy the richness of cultic communion are followed by assurances using the imagery of rain, fertility, and growth.

60: The sacred community of Zion receives promises in which the chief ideas follow the festal tradition: Yahweh's epiphany at Zion, universal pilgrimage to his Temple, Zion as mother and queen.

61: The festal gospel is proclaimed as though by the king in the old liturgy, who used to announce the good news of Yahweh's victorious kingship to his humble and needy people. Blessings for Zion are pictured in the festal manner: salvation as springing crops etc.

62: The favourite festal themes are again resumed: Zion's salvation, her supremacy, marriage, victuals, and processional way, and the heralded entrance of God as Victor and Saviour.

This conspectus indicates the homogeneity of the forms and ideas, corresponding to that of the earlier liturgy. As in the psalms cited in § 38, there is an underlying tension between the liturgical-prophetic ideal, proclaiming the arrival of Yahweh's saviour-kingship, and the real conditions of life; thus there arises the dialogue of the complaining congregation and the reassuring or expostulating God. Entirely at home

in this context are the presentations of the special minister of Yahweh's saviour-kingship, the Servant Songs in chs. 42, 49, 50, 52—3. While the application of this part of the festal tradition remains to be discussed, we can at this stage affirm that these materials correspond to an important limb in the underlying body of tradition, and now occur again as part of an organic whole. Indeed, in view of the tension just mentioned – that struggle between idealistic proclamation and realistic pessimism which is the creative force behind Isaiah 40f – the old dramatic element of Yahweh's royal servant who triumphs through tribulation becomes all the more essential to the context.

I thus conclude that Engnell's basic insight (p. 5) was correct. The festal tradition *is* determinative of the main ideas in Deutero-Isaiah, including the Servant Songs, and determinative also of the dramatic form in which they are presented.

2 *Is there a Servant distinct from the people Israel?*

The question remains as to what the prophets intended to convey through the traditional forms of Isa. 40—55. What were the historical realities envisaged here in the age-old liturgical patterns? The forthcoming defeat of Babylon, return of the exiles, rebuilding of Zion and the Temple – so much is clear. But what historical reality was intended in the Servant Songs? It was argued in ch. 3 that these passages draw on the concept of the king's role in the festival. But the question now is whether, in the context of Isa. 40—55, this concept stands out sufficiently to be distinct from the servanthood also ascribed to Israel. If not, we might say with Kaiser and Ringgren (above, p. 2) that the nation has here been given the role that had belonged in liturgy to the Davidic king. Since some royal traits are applied to the nation, and especially to its personification in the ancestor Jacob/Israel, this is a possible theory. But since there are grave and well-known difficulties in taking the Servant Songs of the nation, such a theory is better made the last resort. The difficulties in question are (a) the contrast between what is said on the one hand about the nation's sin and punishment and on the other about the good standing of the sufferer in the Songs with Yahweh, the suffering in ch. 53 being borne for the fault of others; (b) the consistently individual aspect of the figure in the Songs, the naming 'Israel' in 49.3 being immediately modified by the context; (c) his mission to the nation, releasing prisoners, rehabilitating the population, and generally acting as its royal head. Ingenious efforts have been made to counter these

difficulties, as when Kaiser supposes (a) that there was an undeserved national suffering at the end of the Exile subsequent to the deserved one, (b) that the description of silent patience is only meant to teach what ought to be, and (c) that the servant is a representative group within the nation, namely the exiles in Babylon (*KK*, pp. 110, 127f). Quite apart from such difficulties of detail as his speculative equation of the prophetic chorus in ch. 53 with foreign nations, this kind of interpretation greatly confuses the coherence of these chapters. Here is a traditional scheme in which salvation comes to the people through the saviour whom God appoints, and now on Kaiser's view the scheme would be made to signify that this saviour is themselves! Nor are the difficulties evaded by manipulation of ancestor-ideology as in Eissfeldt's study (above, p. 2); in the surrounding chapters the patriarch stands condemned and does not have a commission resembling that given in the Servant Songs.

But let us look more closely at the contexts to find if the Songs do stand out with sufficient distinctness to make it credible that the reference is not to the nation or patriarch living in the nation. Three of the four Songs occur in the sub-cycle Isa. 49—55, where in fact they stand out well. For in this sub-cycle the community is generally individualized as the female Zion, mother and wife; otherwise the nation appears here as a plurality, except for the patchy 51.13–16, for which the introductory v. 12 (with masc. plur. and fem. sing.) already marks the reference to the community. Here, vv. 14–16, is the only place in chs. 49—55 where the distinction between the community and its servant-leader is uncertain. Notwithstanding the naming 'Israel' in 49.3 (pp. 63–4), the Songs in these chapters consistently show an individual, an authoritative and royal leader, Yahweh's high minister. To take this figure to be a collective would be as artificial as the collectivist interpretation of the psalms rejected early in this century (*KP*, p. 13).

But of course we should not wish to consider chs. 49—55 in total separation from 40—8, especially since the servant's first speech (49) immediately follows the junction. In ch. 48, indeed, we hear of Jacob/Israel 'my called one' (v. 12), while 'his servant Jacob' occurs in v. 20, passing into the plural in v. 21. Nevertheless the nation is so roundly condemned in ch. 48 that the speaker in ch. 49 comes through as a fresh and distinct person.

My survey in ch. 3 found that 51.7–8 and perhaps 51.15–16 make the people share in the the destiny of the servant-leader, while ch. 55 affirms their share in the blessings of the royal covenant. I took this to be a natural consequence of their solidarity with their leader; it does not mean that they supplant him.

The question of the distinctness of the servant-leader from his community is more difficult in chs. 40—8, for in this sub-cycle the nation is usually personified not as the female Zion, but as the ever-living patriarch Jacob/Israel. God addresses this ancestor by name as 'Jacob/Israel' (and 'Jeshurun' 44.2); he is God's 'servant', his chosen and called one, his special creation. The passages usually give him reassurance; they do not deal with his task (a decisive difference from the Songs according to Elliger, p. 204).

The three of these passages which seem most in harmony with the Songs, since they do not criticize Jacob/Israel, are 41.8f; 43.1f; 44.1f. In all these, however, the sequence quickly shifts or resolves the personifications: 41.14–16 fem. sing.; 43.10 masc. plur.; 44.8 masc. plur.

The other three passages centre on the sins of the servant Jacob/Israel: 44.21–22 declares their forgiveness; 48 remonstrates about his obstinacy, treachery, and disobedience; and in 42.18–25 he is punished for sins but still does not respond. Furthermore, in the last two cases the personification fades: 48.1–2, 14–16 'you' masc. plur.; 42.18–25 'you' masc. plur., 'he', 'we', 'him'.

We may conclude then that there is indeed a distinction between the servant-patriarch/nation and the servant-leader, a distinction which is sharp in 49—55 and certainly not negligible in 40—8. That the concept of servanthood could be used so of the two entities, nation and leader, and in close proximity is not surprising. In the space of one verse, Ezek. 37.25, we hear both of the servant-patriarch and of the future servant-king 'David':

> And they shall dwell upon the land which I have given to my servant Jacob, in which their father dwelt, and they shall dwell upon it, they and their sons and their sons' sons for ever, having David my servant as leader for ever.

In other texts the two figures, king and patriarch/nation, are mentioned in close proximity, the specification 'servant' happening to fall now on the one, now on the other. Thus:

> And he chose David his Servant and took him from the sheepfolds; from behind the ewes-in-milk he fetched him to shepherd Jacob his people and Israel his heritage (Ps. 78.70–1).

> And they shall serve Yahweh their God and David their king whom I will raise for them. And thou, fear not, my Servant Jacob, says Yahweh, and have no dread, Israel . . . (Jer. 30.9–10).

> If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the ordinances of heaven and earth, then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and of David my Servant and will not choose one of his descendants to rule over the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (Jer. 33.25–6).

3 *The distinctness of Cyrus*

In chs. 40—8 there is another potential source of confusion – the passages concerning Cyrus (44.24–8; 45.1–7; and probably 41.2–4, 25), a leader called, grasped, anointed, commissioned by Yahweh, though not termed 'servant'. Some scholars have indeed thought that the servant in the first Song (42.1–7) is intended to be Cyrus.

The claims of this candidate at least prove one thing: that the concept of 42.1–7 was sufficiently distinct in itself to the prophet and his public. For it must have been distinct – either from the patriarch-nation or from Cyrus or from both. Because of an underlying tradition and well-understood associations it must have been capable of conveying its own identity, distinct from one or both of these other entities.

If anything, the servant of 42.1–7 is closer to the Cyrus figure than to 'Jacob/Israel'. The form seems to be from royal initiation, the launching of a new king; the body of the commission has no parallel in the 'Jacob/Israel' passages; the naming 'Jacob/Israel', so prominent in the patriarch passages, is notably absent. If chs. 40—8 stood alone, Cyrus might be a fair candidate for this passage, as Bonnard thinks. But the Songs in chs. 49—55 (61) turn the balance away from Cyrus; they have enough in common with 42.1–7 to make an alignment of its intention with theirs the soundest course (similarly Elliger, p. 210).

4 *Dramatic speech and the autobiographical theory*

Consideration of the dramatic style of chs. 40—55 will help both to explain their manner of presenting the servant-leader, which in course of time became obscure, and also to make unnecessary a recourse to the theory that in chs. 49 and 50 the prophet is speaking in his own person, concerning his own ministry.

This 'autobiographical' theory has already been made improbable by the discussion in ch. 3 (pp. 61–71). The speeches are those of a royal leader of vast authority, distinguished in many features from the prophets and their ministries. The relation with the other Servant Songs

also weighs against the autobiographical theory; all are homogeneous in their portrayal of a royal leader brought through tribulation to triumph, a portrayal cast in the mould of the earlier liturgy.

But the point I would stress here is that once the dramatic character of Isa. 40—55 is taken into account, the autobiographical theory is unnecessary and indeed inappropriate. The personality in 49 and 50 belongs to one of several *dramatis personae* represented by the declaiming prophets. At the outset, in ch. 40 (pp. 38f), the live speeches flow so briskly that we still argue as to the persons represented. Likewise, we still argue as to the *personae* whose voices are carried in ch. 53. The 'I' of Yahweh, as often in the prophets and psalms, is also directly taken up by the spokesman, and can again leave us disputing the identity if the stereotyped markers of oracular speech happen not to be used (e.g. 50.11; 51.4–6; cf. 62.1–6).

Prophets and psalmists were wont to carry the voice of Yahweh and the voice of the people. It is likely that they would also assist the king by undertaking some of the liturgical utterances that fell to his office; a practice of speaking on his behalf and so entering into the royal *persona* would thus be known. Some idea of a spokesman for the head of the people being comparable in function to the spokesman for God is found in Exod. 4.14f and 7.1–2.

The unannounced switch of *persona* speaking that we often find in the prophets and psalms (e.g. Isa. 33.2, 3, 5, 7, 8; Jer. 10.6, 17, 19, 23; Hosea 6.1, 4; Isa. 40.6–7; 59.9; Pss. 134.3; 14.3, 4; 81.7; 82.6) suggests that such changes will have been clarified either by one spokesman succeeding another or by a single reciter identifying himself in turn with the various conversing *personae*, making his roles clear by tone and gesture.

We sometimes find in churches today that a minister without warning speaks in the words of Christ, relying only on his tone or the people's familiarity with the tradition to make it clear who the 'I' really is. Thus in the Communion service of the Church of England (1662) the priest may turn to the people directly after the Creed and say: 'Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' It is not felt necessary to explain that 'me' means 'Christ'. In ordinary conversation, also, one sometimes meets people who tell their story by entering into the *dramatis personae* without warning. A Spanish friend of mine did this frequently, sometimes so abruptly that one might think she was speaking for herself when in fact she was representing someone whose views she intended to oppose. Comprehending through long

acquaintance, I sometimes helped other listeners who lacked her vivid sense of actuality by interjecting the missing indications of *personae* and scenario.

In these examples, understanding is facilitated by familiarity with the style or tradition employed and by the gestures, tone, etc. of the speaker. The written record Isa. 40—55 now stands like a bare transcript of the original voices, and if read without awareness of the tradition from which it sprang, is naturally problematic with its series of utterances from different angles. But the first hearers of these dramatic declarations, being familiar with the festal tradition and sensitive to the tones and gestures of the speaker, will have realized that the *persona* of the second and third Songs (49; 50), corresponding to the royal figure in the old liturgy, was not that of the prophet himself.

(In *ANET*, p. 41, we find a Sumerian example of dramatic poetry transcribed without identification of the speaking parties. Several commentators show awareness of the dramatic quality of Deutero-Isaiah. Already Begrich, pp. 38, 45–6, had observed that the full sense of 41.21–9 and 50.1–2 would depend on the manner of oral delivery, a significant pause being used to demonstrate the speechlessness of Yahweh's adversaries. Subsequently von Waldow has grasped the character of Isa. 40—55 as speech in exilic assemblies, while Elliger treats some passages in this way. Morgenstern (above, p. 2) suggested that the Songs came from a drama concerning the Davidic hope comparable to Greek drama. Muilenburg strongly emphasizes the dramatic character of Isa. 40—55, pervading every poem, including the Songs – 'all the materials are here except the architectonics of the drama itself'.)

5 *A Davidic hope*

The force of the argument in this chapter so far may be put thus:

(i) The festal tradition was indeed determinative of the main ideas and forms of Isa. 40—55.

(ii) The Servant Songs are thus part of a traditional *coherent* scheme of salvation, in that they resume the old liturgical role of the Davidic king.

(iii) Although the nation is personified with use of some royal categories, it remains distinct from the figure in the Songs.

(iv) The unity of person presented by the Songs, arising from the royal person in the old liturgy, need not be confused by seeing Cyrus in the

first Song or the prophet's own person in the second and third. In the original situation, traditionally dramatic, the royal *persona* of the Songs, was sufficiently distinct and recognizable.

Consideration of the festal tradition and its dramatic forms has thus led to the conclusion that in the Songs a consistent *persona* was presented, distinct from that of the eponym or people Israel/Jacob, from that of Cyrus, and from that of the declaiming prophet. And this *persona* corresponds in great measure to the old liturgical presentation of the Davidic office.

We are now in a position to clarify the application intended by the prophet for his traditional concept in the circumstances of his time. The essence of the festal scheme, as followed by Isa. 40—55, had envisaged salvation for Zion through the assertion of the kingship of Yahweh and his ruler: (i) Yahweh conquered the foe and came as Creator-King Manifest to his Temple; (ii) his ruler in Zion was shown as chosen, equipped, commissioned, tested, humbled to death's verge, saved, enthroned – the atoner, intercessor, and witness to all nations of Yahweh's victorious godhead; (iii) Zion, with the tribal people and universal community she represents, was cleansed, forgiven, restored, and replenished, amidst a universal salvation pictured as life-giving waters, light, growth, abundant provisions and population, a joyful and worshipping world. In Isa. 40—55 the actualization of items (i) and (iii) is clearly expected through the predicted overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus, the return of the exiles, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple. Since we have not found evidence that Isa. 40—55 drastically displaced item (ii) in this scheme, we must accept that its actualization was envisaged as the installing of the Davidic king again on Zion, in the context of the restoration brought about through Cyrus.

This Davidic figure is envisaged in the ideal terms of the old liturgy, just as the whole salvation projected in this cycle, though applied to a political event, has a glory exceeding mundane experience, a perfection corresponding to the proclamations in the pre-exilic festival. But just as in the festival the ideal intersected with the circumstantial, in that a particular ruler was installed or strengthened by sacraments – to which he would refer when praying in political crises (*KP*, p. 134), so now the ideal figure is connected with history. The dramatic mysteries of royal suffering in the old rites will have seemed to these prophets to have been manifested historically in the cutting off of the dynasty and the long imprisonment of the virtually innocent Jehoiachin, its last main

representative. The old ritual vindication and exaltation of the royal sufferer would therefore have been expected by these prophets to appear historically in a restoration of the Jerusalem kingdom; perhaps Jehoiachin's release and exaltation above other detained kings in 561 B.C. had seemed a good omen of this, though the royal hope in this cycle is not focused on a specific Davidic heir.

The argument has thus reached a position basically like that reached by Burrows by a quite different route. Relying chiefly on royal passages in the prophets, he came to this conclusion:

> My suggestion is that the Servant is not Israel nor any of the collectives or abstractions proposed; nor precisely any individual; but the HOUSE OF DAVID, the messianic house in the past, present, or future as the case may be; his title of Servant of Yahweh being suggested by that of David himself; his vocation to give law to the nations being that indicated by messianic prophecy; his history during the exile being that of Jehoiachin, the representative of the house of David at that time; his future being the messianic king (*Gospel of the Infancy*, p. 60).

In my own conclusion, however, the crucial point is that the servant takes his character not directly from the 'house of David' as such, but from the almost transfigured king of the festal rites; with this figure, in fact, Burrows' sources in 'messianic prophecy' have much in common. But his explanation of Isa. 53 from the fate of Jehoiachin does not do justice to the peculiar and mysterious character of this material. Like so much else in this cycle, the material has a traditional cultic character on which historical circumstances have made little impression. Nor was Burrow's brilliant paper, published after his death, able to deal with the dramatic form of the cycle or the remarkable coherence of all the chapters which we have established from the study of the festal tradition.

5
RELATION TO OTHER PROPHETIC COLLECTIONS

1 *The Kingship of God and his Davidic Servant in Isaiah 1—39*

The conclusions that have now been reached concerning Isa. 40—55 will be seen to fit well with characteristics of other relevant prophetic collections. In the first place we must note that Isa. 1—39 has many important links with the themes of Zion's festal worship and in particular encourages hope for salvation through the house of David.

Isaiah's fundamental prophetic experience was his vision of Yahweh as universal King, manifest in splendour on his throne in the Temple and pronouncing a doom-laden destiny for his erring people (ch. 6). The resemblance to the festal epiphany has often been noticed (Engnell, *Call of Isaiah*). The resemblance can also be observed in the passages where Yahweh manifests his dread godhead, overwhelming idol-gods and their worshippers and all presumptuous creatures (2.17–18; 5.15–16; 24.23, etc.). As in the festival, Yahweh is known as the God who sits enthroned on Mount Zion (8.18); Zion is the centre of his work to purge evil and create salvation (1.8, 21–30; 2.2–4; 3.16—4.1; 4.2–5; 10.12, 24; 11.9–10; 14.32; 16.1–5; 24.23; 25.6; 26; 27.10–12; 28.16; 30.19, 29; 31.4–5; 33.5, 14, 20; 34.8; 37.22, 32–5). The liturgical glorification of Zion (Pss. 46; 48; 76; 84; 87; 122) is matched by the prophetic vision of Zion's exaltation when Yahweh's rule is perfected (2.1–4).

And as in the festival, so in Isa. 1—39: Yahweh, for the exercise of his sovereignty from Zion makes use of his chosen dynasty. The great value attached to the Davidic kingship in Isa. 1—39 appears with regard to past and present experience as well as the future hope. Isaiah exerts himself in the oracular guidance of Ahaz and Hezekiah (7; 36—9); he assumes the old view that cursing the king is blasphemy (8.21); the secession of Northern Israel from the house of David is regarded as a disaster (7.17); Yahweh spares Zion 'for the sake of David my servant' (37.35; cf. 38.5). The hope of these chapters for future salvation through the Davidic line matches the theme I have found in Isa. 40—55, disaster

and suffering leading to a glorious effulgence of royal salvation: the people walking in darkness (cf. p. 71) and in the nearness of death will see the light of salvation under a great heir of David (9.1–6); from the stump of the felled tree of the dynasty will come a new shoot (cf. p. 79), life from death, a ruler filled with gifts of spirit to effect Yahweh's order (11.1–9; cf. pp. 48, 62, 90). This offshoot from the afflicted dynasty will become the sign to all peoples, visited by them in his glorious abode (11.10; 16.5). The disaster of Ahaz will be offset by Immanuel (7.14). Bad times and evil ways will be changed by the reign of a future king in righteousness (32.1–8). Present oppressors will be scattered when the coming king appears in his beauty (33.17).

It can be concluded that my interpretation of Isa. 40—55 as announcing Yahweh's coming kingship, to be exercised from Zion through the Davidic line, turning woe into joy, agrees with a dominant emphasis in 1—39.

2 *Liturgical forms in Isaiah 1—39*

In addition to the festal ideas just noted, Isa. 1—39 contains liturgical forms which further suggest the involvement of the Isaianic circle in Zion's worship. The judgement-speech in ch. 1, where Yahweh appears before his people to argue and to assess severely their standing in the covenant-relation, can be connected with the severe speeches of Yahweh to the festal congregation (§ 10). Celebratory psalms appear in ch. 12. Dramatic words against foreign foes, such as were used in the cult (pp. 110–14), are found in chs. 13 and 14. The most remarkable example of liturgical forms is found in ch. 33, clearly showing the involvement of oracular ministers in the festal worship of Yahweh as King on Zion. Here beyond doubt we see the flourishing of the great liturgical tradition within the stream of Isaianic prophecy.

Ten times in this dramatic chapter the voice changes, but only in two, perhaps three, cases (vv. 7, 10, ? 14) is the new *persona* identified. There are two main series, vv. 1–6 and 7–24. In the first, we hear at the outset a word of doom launched by a prophet against a great foreign foe (v. 1). Then we hear a prayer for help from a congregational psalm of lament (v. 2). The divine answer to this follows in the form of a prophet's account of what God has now shown him in a vision – God routs the foe (vv. 3–4). The congregation now express their confidence that their prayer has been heard by breaking into hymnic thanksgiving; they praise

God as exalted ruler, protector of Zion, vanquisher of the oppressor (v. 5).

In the second series, we hear first congregational lament: Jerusalem's emissaries weep at the Temple and complain that the land is oppressed and withered (vv. 7–9). In an answering oracle God affirms that he will intervene on their behalf and announces it to peoples far and near (vv. 10–13). In v. 14 penitents in Zion, apprehensive of Yahweh's advent, ask how they may stand in his fiery presence. Vv. 15–16 give the answering priestly *tōrā* (resembling Pss. 15 and 24), stating five requirements for fellowship with God on his sanctuary-hill and for the resultant gifts of food and water. We now hear divine promise to him who, the context implies, meets the requirements – the promise to show Jerusalem as a fine and firm tent in ideal grazing land (vv. 17–20). Finally the congregation sing hymnic acknowledgement, expressing confidence in having been heard; they envisage Jerusalem as secure amidst streams, with all peace and fertility, Yahweh having shown himself as their King and having vanquished the foe, vv. 21–4. (A similar analysis of verses and forms is given by Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja*; the major pioneering study is that of Gunkel in *ZAW* (1924)).

In Isa. 24—7 there are further good examples of liturgical prophecy, with its interplay of prophetic announcements, psalmic laments and celebrations, utterances of God, etc. Thus a prophetic announcement in 24.1–3 is followed by lamenting, then hymnic song (24.4–16a), then by further announcement by a travailing visionary (24.16b–20). Again, a prophetic prediction of Yahweh's becoming King on Zion (24.21–3) is answered by a psalm of thanksgiving (25.1–5); further foretelling, concerning the royal banquet on Zion, is followed by a congregational song of thanksgiving (25.9–10/12). A fresh psalm now reflects festal procession into Zion (26.1–6) and is followed by the community's lamenting prayer (frequently 'we') led by a representative singer ('I' v. 9), who moves through 'confidence of having been heard' (26.18b–19) to exhortation of the congregation (26.20–1). Then prophetic announcement of the defeat of the chaos-monster (27.1) is followed by song-like utterance of God himself (27.2–6) and further prophetic announcement (27.12–13).

It has already been remarked (p. 89) that Isa. 56—66 also shows prophecy as part of the dialogue of God and his worshipping assembly; the psalmic laments on behalf of the congregation formed a counterpoint to prophetic promises of help from God's side.

3 *The Isaianic circle and its tradition*

The two previous sections have noted the occurrence in the Book of Isaiah as a whole of characteristics I have found in chs. 40—55. Again and again we find prophecy expressive of liturgical ideas (especially regarding the celebration of divine kingship on Zion) and uttered within the dialogue of God and congregation. Whether these materials are records of actual transactions in worship or, as some think, only shaped in imitation of such, it would be reasonable to conclude that the prophetic circles that produced these texts were such as functioned in worship.

In an article of 1959 (*VT* 9) I gathered arguments for regarding the Book of Isaiah as the product of a fellowship of temple-prophets, beginning as the disciples of that great prophet who had personally seen and heard Yahweh manifest as King in the Temple, and continuing through several generations into post-exilic times.

As arguments for this I noted that there is no reason to dissociate Isaiah from the cultus. His pronouncement of Yahweh's rejection of certain worshippers is not in principle anti-cultic (indeed it was a cultic function to pronounce one way or the other on the validity of sacrifices – Würthwein). He was married to a prophetess (8.3), wore a coarse garment (20.2), performed signs (7.11; 38.7), acted prophetic mimes (20), knew overpowering inspiration (8.11), had a vision (6) moulded by tradition (cf. 1 Kings 22) and by major cultic conceptions, speaks in sympathy with 'the seers' (30.9f), centres his prophecy on Yahweh's work at Zion and with the dynasty of David, refers to his disciples as keepers of his testimony and teaching and as signs from the God enthroned on Zion, and expects this group to be consulted for oracles by the people (8.16–19). Further, I noted that the Book of Isaiah in many ways has the appearance of accumulated layers of tradition spanning several centuries yet having a homogeneity characterized by festal ideas and liturgical forms. Such an accumulation of tradition could well be the product of a close-knit and continuing fellowship based on the cultic centre and observing Isaiah's charge to guard his teaching and wait and witness till the era of fulfilment should come.

From such a fellowship of prophets the characteristics of Isa. 40—55 which I have expounded are understandable. There is no report here of a new prophetic ministry comparable to that of the first master, Isaiah. While we may think the the brilliance and energy of these chapters indicate the rise of a gifted prophet in the later exilic years, there are

certainly signs of group-prophesying (pp. 38–9). The ideas and procedures of the royal autumn festival have been decisive both for the content and the dramatic form of these chapters, so much so that we should surely conclude that they are the product of a circle which had been accustomed to participate in the festival before 586 and which continued to function in such gatherings for worship as were possible in the Exile. Thus, as the people in the exilic period assembled for encounter with Yahweh (as evidenced by Pss. 74, 79, 137, Lamentations, Ezra 6.3; Zech. 7.3; 8.18–19; Jer. 41.5; cf. Zimmerli on Ezek. 1.1) there was still a task for liturgical prophecy in mediating that encounter. However badly the old procedures had been disrupted, there was still a meeting where Yahweh was ready to hear and speak, and where the people were able to tell him of their penitence and complaints. Prophets were still needed to make the congregation's words reach home to Yahweh's heart, and to announce his words to them. When at last the Isaianic circle felt impelled to proclaim Yahweh's decisive advent with salvation, inaugurating a new era for his people, they naturally conceived and expressed the message in the style of the old liturgy of Yahweh's kingship. Perhaps the message was launched in gatherings at about the season of the old festival. Here the announcements met with much resistance from a people whose hopes had long grown cold. So a large part of the prophetic work was to remonstrate with disbelief and to argue the enduring power and love of Yahweh. The dramatic form of the prophecy certainly helped in this regard, drawing the listeners into a lively actualization of the salvation, seeking to recapture the old festal ecstasy: the procession of Yahweh the Saviour-King seems actually to be launched, the entranced ear already hears the acclamations of joy, hears Yahweh designate and empower his viceroy-servant, and hears this servant's words of witness carried by prophets from the very midst of his awesome tribulations. All the tragedy of existence, and of the exilic sufferings in particular, seems to be gathered in this atoning mystery, but triumph is the prevailing theme. The prophets draw their hearers into the actual hearing of Yahweh's words of pleasure over his faithful viceroy and into the resultant vision of Zion newly glorious in Yahweh's perfected reign.

How extensive were the deliveries of material in the initial situations? The units and groups of units set out in ch. 3 represent revelations and dialogues which together could have extended over days, and perhaps months and years. The collecting and eventual writing together of these homogeneous materials leaves us with a continuous cycle, unbroken by

headings or dates. The overall unity of character in the festal tradition leaves us with little chance of defining the extent and occasions of the original deliveries. But from the liturgical interpretation that I have adopted, I would be inclined to allow that large expanses of material could have been generated and delivered in connected utterances in a few days. The mentality steeped in tradition, the intensity of prophetic experience, the assisting of the individual by his group – all help to explain how magnificent compositions could be quickly born of prophets in the midst of their liturgical functions and indelibly printed in their minds.

After such initial occasions the prophetic fellowship would devote themselves to gathering and rehearsing their materials, which were taken to be divine words deserving the utmost care. The traditions of former and present generations were joined, the whole corpus representing the unity of the fellowship over the generations. The fundamentally oral process will have been complemented sooner or later by written records, eventually resulting in our Book of Isaiah.

4 *Hopes of Davidic restoration in other collections*

My conclusion that the servant of the Songs is a form of Davidic hope in liturgical categories has been shown to match an emphasis in the Isaianic tradition (pp. 103f). We shall now take note that the hope was also very much alive in the other prophetic circles of which we have evidence in and around the exilic period.

In this respect the prophets were able to respond to supplications of the lamenting exilic congregations. When the worshippers depicted before God the tragedy of his holy city, his covenant-people, and his anointed dynasty – the kings that had been the breath of their nostrils, the tree under whose shade they could live, the guardians of divine order, but now were like harts expiring in drought or caught in hunters' traps (Lam. 1.6; 2.9; 4.20) – such lament was like a prayer for restoration of the whole order of God's rule from Zion through the royal house. Such restoration is envisaged in most of the prophetic collections.

Those passages associated with earlier ministries (Amos, Hosea, Micah) may indeed have an origin earlier than the sixth century, but with their contexts of gathering the dispersed etc. they would be much heeded during the Exile. These prophecies spoke of a restoration to the land with peace and fertility, all Israel being united under God's rule through David or his descendants. Yahweh would re-erect 'the fallen

booth of David' (Amos 9.11); the people would unite under 'one head' (Hos. 2.2/1.11) and would 'seek Yahweh their God and David their king' (Hos. 3.5). A more mysterious oracle preserved in Mic. 5 told of one who would issue from David's native town of Bethlehem, one eternally destined to exercise the shepherd-kingship in the majesty of Yahweh. *S. mysterious!*

In the Jeremiah collection, oracles promise that the returned people will 'serve Yahweh their God and David their king' (30.9) or that for David a 'righteous shoot (*semaḥ*)' will be raised to become king and triumph (cf. p. 75, *yaśkīl*) and effect justice (23.5–7; 33.14–16). David would never lack a man to sit upon the throne; strong as the covenant with day and night is Yahweh's promise to multiply the seed of David his servant and appoint from it rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (33.17–26). More veiled is the promise that when the glorious one, the ruler, emerges, Yahweh will give him access to his presence (30.21, cf. p. 83).

The Ezekiel collection matches its lament over the dynastic tree transplanted into the desert (19.10–14, cf. p. 79) with the promise of a shoot that will be planted on Yahweh's mountain to become a great shelter (17.22–4). More explicitly it is twice said that over restored and united Israel Yahweh will set up his servant David to be shepherd-king (34.23–4; 37.24–5).

Actualization of the royal hope was an issue in the days of Haggai and Zechariah, when the restoration was in progress. Jehoiachin's grandson, having been appointed governor in Jerusalem, was the recipient of an oracle from Haggai (2.20–3): when Yahweh overthrows the kingdoms, he will make his servant Zerubbabel, his chosen one, as his signet, i.e. to convey the divine rule. Before a priestly circle who (rather like the Isaianic fellowship) are a wonderful sign of God's work, Zechariah promises the sprouting up of God's servant 'the Shoot (*semaḥ*)', who will build the Temple and reign in glory from the throne (Zech. 3.8; 6.12–13, cf. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, pp. 197–200).

Finally we may mention that the Deutero-Zechariah chapters, which preserve so well the associations of the autumn festival as the worship of Yahweh the King (14.16–17), also announce the advent of the human king in the pattern of the old liturgy: the king who is to rule in peace from the River to the ends of the earth rides up to Jerusalem on an ass, the royal mount of ancient times, and is seen to be 'righteous', 'saved', and 'humble' (9.9). From the same chapters we hear rather obscure predictions of a future crisis at Jerusalem, where the house of David will

have a leading part to play and there will be mourning for 'him whom they have pierced', wailing as in the famous rites of Hadad in the valley of Megiddo (Zech. 12); one may wonder if the festal tradition behind Isa. 53 has also had some effect here (cf. Gressmann, pp. 327 f).

In the light of these comparisons, we may conclude that to understand the servant of the Songs as a special form of royal hope is to align Isa. 40—55 with a well-attested current of thought in and around the exilic period. If Isa. 40—55 intended a radical transformation of this hope, substituting the whole people or some other entity for the royal house, it would surely have been necessary to have put this explicitly, in view of the prevailing trend of thought and assumption. Rather, on my view, Isa. 40—55 represents the royal hope, though with a certain veiling which may be compared to that in many of the oracles of royal hope just adduced, where obvious terms like 'David', 'king', 'anointed' do not occur (Isa. 7.14; Jer. 30.21; Ezek. 17.22–4; Hos. 2.2/1.11; Mic. 5; Hag. 2.20–3; Zech. 3.8; 6.12–13).

5 *Dramatic prophecy in the festival*

My interpretation of Isa. 40—55 can be correlated with other prophets in another aspect, that of cult-drama.

We have already seen that cult-drama has left its mark on these chapters – 40.1–11 draws upon the messages that had launched the festal procession, ch. 53 on the choral revelation that had interpreted the ritual mystery, chs. 49 and 50 on the speeches of the king in the rites, chs. 46 and 47 on the cult-prophetic poetry that had been wielded as a weapon against oppressors. It is important to see more fully how the kind of dramatic prophecy reflected here is exemplified by a variety of texts from the late seventh century onwards. (For the following analyses cf. especially my *ONHZ*.)

First of these we may mention Nahum. As in Isa. 40—55, we have two series or sub-cycles (Nahum 1.2—2.13/12; 2.14/13—3), consisting of varied units which together speak salvation for Judah and doom for the great oppressor. The scenes created in the imagination change swiftly. The direct addresses may switch abruptly from party to party without indication in the text, but clarified no doubt by the manner of oral delivery (e.g. 1.12–14). Each of the two series shows God challenging his foes, launching his attack, winning his victory, and each ends with a dirge over the fallen enemy; the second series differs from the first in containing no word of salvation directly to God's people, and it is more

specific about Nineveh's sin. The actuality is so vivid (one sees the bounding and jostling chariots, hears the crack of the whip, etc.) that some exegetes have been misled into thinking the composition followed the event.

In two respects we are especially reminded of Isa. 40—55. Firstly that Yahweh's battle-march and triumph lead to a scene of messengers bringing good tidings over the mountains to Zion, launching the celebration of the festivities: 'Behold upon the mountains the feet of the tidings-bearer announcing peace . . .' (2.1/1.15). It is apparent from this that Isa. 40—55 follows pre-exilic precedent in envisaging the end of imperial oppression in terms of Yahweh's festal victory and advent (pp. 41, 74–5). The second obvious resemblance between Nahum and Isa. 40—55 lies in the doom-words against the foe which vividly imagine the downfall of the capital city and the capture of the images (pp. 57–9).

Another comparable work of cultic prophecy is the Book of Habakkuk. Here we find first the familiar pattern when a prophet assisted in the meeting of God and congregation: he voices a lament about the oppression of society (1.2–4), mediates an answering oracle (1.5–11), voices a second lament (1.12–17), and after a vigil (2.1) mediates a second divine answer (2.2–4) which was also to be written as a placard of witness. And now the doom of the imperial oppressor is hastened by a divine assault through the prophetic mouth – a series of execrations, mysterious parables by which the arrows of divine justice will find their appropriate target (2.5–20). In ch. 3 we find the prophet actualizing God's battle against the arch-foe by falling into ecstasy and describing the fearful divine warfare which he sees in vision; the details here, such as the dearth in nature and the conquest of the waters, point to a setting in the autumn festival in the presence of king and assembly (3.13), as I have argued in *ZAW* (1964). The vision of Yahweh going into battle may be compared with that in Isa. 42.10–17 (pp. 50–1); through both, promise of salvation is strengthened. Note also the comparability of the parabolic woes (Isa. 45.9–10; Hab. 2.6, 9, 12, 15, 19) and of the ridiculing of idols (pp. 43, 54; Hab. 2.18–19).

The Book of Zephaniah, when seen as a whole, is also evidence of prophetic drama. The units here are mostly oracles in form with occasional variations such as prophetic announcements (1.7, 14–16, 18) and festal hymns (3.14–15, 16–17). The recital presents to the imagination in awful actuality the supreme intervention of Yahweh, his 'Day'. The imagined events come before us in three 'acts', progressive and also having an inner symmetry. The first 'act' is wholly concerned

with the terrible wrath of Yahweh against a corrupted world; two pieces see this wrath bearing against the whole earth (1.2; 1.3), then four relate it to Jerusalem (1.4–7; 1.8–9; 1.10–11; 1.12–13), then two again relate it to the whole earth (1.14–16; 1.17–18). The second 'act' imagines Yahweh's victorious warfare against all oppression, both in the heathen nations and in Jerusalem; the dreadful aspect of his Day is continued here, but some elements of hope for a 'remnant' begin to emerge; two pieces convey a last warning as the divine warfare commences (2.1–2; 2.3–4); in a geographical pattern like that used by Amos 1—2, four pieces picture the fall of God's enemies on all sides (2.5–7; 2.8–11; 2.12; 2.13–15) and two pieces convey his attack on sinners in Jerusalem (3.1–7; 3.8). The third 'act' shows the positive result of Yahweh's Day, a purged and restored society gathered about a glorious Zion; after the universal prospect (3.9–10), a series of short oracles and hymns centre on Zion, singing a crescendo of joy over her transformation (3.11–20). Words of the festivals resound most clearly in 1.7 (applied threateningly) and in 3.5, 14–15, 16–17. Resemblance to Isa. 40—55 is most obvious in the celebration of Zion's restoration, especially the hymnic response to the coming of Yahweh King of Israel to his bride Zion (3.15, 17).

Especially close to Nahum and to Isa. 46—7 is Jer. 50—1. Again we find the prophet creating a vivid actuality of the future downfall of the imperial foe. The assailing armies are called to and encouraged, the axe of Yahweh is adjured and empowered, the downfall is announced, the taunts are raised. A few extracts will illustrate the drama:

> Declare among the nations and proclaim . . . Babylon is taken! Bel is put to shame! Marduk is dismayed! Her images are put to shame. . . . Flee from the midst of Babylon. . . . Set yourselves in array against Babylon, all that bend the bow . . . her bulwarks are fallen, her walls thrown down . . . the noise of battle is in the land and of great destruction. How is the hammer of the whole earth cut down and broken! How is Babylon become a horror among the nations. . . . Hark, they flee and escape out of the land of Babylon to declare in Zion the vengeance of Yahweh our God, the vengeance of his Temple. . . . Behold I am against you, O proud one, says the Lord Yahweh of Hosts. . . . A sword against the Chaldeans, says Yahweh . . . a sword against her warriors . . . a sword against their horses and chariots . . . a sword against her treasures . . . a drought against her waters. . . . My battle-axe are you, my weapon of war, with you will I break in pieces the nations . . . and with you will I break in pieces man and woman, and with you will I break in pieces young man and maid, and with you will I break in pieces the shepherd and his flock, and with you will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke, and with you will I break in pieces the governors and commanders, and before your very eyes will I requite Babylon . . . for all the evil they have done in Zion, says Yahweh.

And so the imagination of the terrible scenes of Yahweh's intervention continues here at length and with sustained excitement.

Among other examples I mention only Isa. 13—14, with resemblances to all the materials that have been adduced here, not least Zephaniah's Day of Yahweh. Prediction passes into actualization; the mocking elegy (14.4f) is raised over the doomed tyrant.

From the texts just considered we learn of an important contribution of the prophetic classes at the centre of worship. In addition to the articulation of the dialogue between the manifest deity and his gathered people, the prophets contributed to another basic action in the festival, Yahweh's victory over chaos and oppression. Their words, no doubt accompanied by gestures and filling out the meaning of liturgical movements, created vivid scenes in the imagination of all participants, scenes of preparation for the war, calling out of armies, adjuring Yahweh's weapons, doom-laden condemnations, the advance of the warrior God, his challenge to combat, the din, smoke, fire, and slaughter of battle, the relief of Zion, songs of mockery, Yahweh's return to his beloved Zion, hymns of joy, visions of fertility. It was natural that these basic festal themes and scenes should be linked at times of crisis with current political experiences. At climaxes of history prophets would thus apply their traditions to the prediction of a particular tyrant's downfall and Zion's relief from a particular affliction.

In launching these dramatically imagined scenes of Yahweh's warfare, which actualize their perception of the imminent future, the prophets could achieve several aims. They prepare the people's understanding of coming events, showing them as the work of Yahweh in judgement and fidelity. Further, by drawing the assembly into their vision, they may change their present attitude: sinners may tremble (Zephaniah), pessimists regain faith. More directly, the prophets intended to assist in the battle of Yahweh, hastening on and ensuring the reality yet to come, for it was held that the prophetic word could hew peoples like a sword (Hos. 6.5), devastate like a sledge-hammer (Jer. 23.29), tear down

kingdoms and plant new ones (Jer. 1.9f). With such motivation the prophets' speech rose to a fierce and brilliant power, all their strength and skill being devoted to the lively actualization of the imagined scenes. The succession of units is not necessarily the result of later redaction, for it is often the series which builds up the intensity of the scenes. As the prophets functioned in groups, sometimes one ecstatic speaker will have succeeded another, carrying the visionary drama a stage further.

The Isaianic circle (pp. 106f) was such a group, to judge from Isa. 13—14, 24—7, 33, etc. Their work in 40—55 is in many respects another example of dramatic prophecy in worship to add to the specimens we have in Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jer. 50—1. Their imagination was not fatally restricted by the circumstances of the exilic period. No less than their predecessors, they were able to project in brilliant words the festal triumph of Yahweh the King and through it declare the imminent political deliverance of Israel: Yahweh the warrior goes forth to the vengeance (42.13f), down comes the queenly tyrant-city in disgrace (47), the images and their ministers troop off into captivity (46), in triumph the King Yahweh marches to Zion (40; 52), his power of salvation and rich providence radiates to the ends of the world, his highest minister, his royal servant, is brought through greatest trials to eminence, where he shares in the glorious reign. All this salvation is dramatized in brilliant words and combined with extensive elements of argument in the tradition of the festal dialogues (§ 38, pp. 42, 51, etc.) to uplift the assembly with vision, faith, and hope.

6
SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In chapter 1 it was argued that Isa. 40—55 must remain an enigma until the relationship of its parts, including the Servant Songs, could be grasped. The difficulty in this respect arose from the nature of the composition, which was not that of a 'book' in the modern sense, but was rather that of a cycle of units which had taken their form from special kinds of oral transactions. Progress in understanding must therefore be along the way of form- and tradition-criticism.

But here there was a danger of not seeing the wood for the trees. What was needed above all was to explore further the insights of Mowinckel and Engnell and ascertain whether the pre-exilic autumn festival provided the key. Was the tradition of that great liturgy the determinative influence on the ideas and forms of Isa. 40—55, including the Songs? Mowinckel had not followed up sufficiently the question of the Davidic king's part in the festival, while Engnell's work was noted more for its stimulating intuitions than for solid and balanced argument. Having gone thoroughly into the study of the pre-exilic festival, and especially the king's part, in my *Kingship and the Psalms*, I felt ready to take further the investigation of the decisive influence on Isa. 40—55.

In ch. 2 I drew on my *Kingship and the Psalms* to present an account of the tradition stemming from the pre-exilic festival, listing thirty-eight items evidenced mainly from the Psalms. It was clear that the autumn liturgy had conveyed an experience of divine action: Yahweh showed himself as Lord and Saviour, vanquishing evil forces and every rival, and marching in triumph to his throne above Zion. His coming was like the opening of a new reign, bringing relief to the oppressed and scattered people and restoration and glorification to his city and Temple. Health-giving order shone forth – righteousness, assurance of rains, fertility, and peace. This triumph of his kingship was proclaimed as the central gospel of the liturgy: *Yahweh mālāk!*

Two phases of the long festival were especially noteworthy – the

presentation of the Davidic office under God and the dialogue of God and people through the prophets. The Davidic office was presented most fully within the festival when a new ruler was installed, but the main themes would be resumed in the annual celebrations. Thus the rites showed that as Yahweh now asserted his sole kingship, so he had now made provision for an earthly officer or 'servant' of that kingship, a new David enthroned beside his Temple on his holy mountain. The presentation maintained the dramatic character of the festival and was enacted by several parties in a succession of scenes, speeches being uttered in the name of God, of the king, and of a collectivity. Yahweh thus indicated and authorized the man of his choice and bestowed on him strength and success – but not before subjecting him to a symbolic humiliation. The role of the king was accordingly not seen in simple terms of power, but through the ritual poetry it reverberated with many rich tones – the frailty of man, the force of evil, the horrors of death, the mysteries of suffering and atonement, the unique power of God, his faithfulness, salvation, and gifts of transcending life.

As regards the dialogue between the manifest Lord and his gathered people, we saw clear examples of God's admonitions, criticisms, encouragements, and promises. But there was good reason also to grant the well-known pattern of communal lament and divine answer a place in the festal proceedings. Some of the great extant laments clearly react to the festal gospel, sharpening their appeal by drawing the contrast between the ideals proclaimed and the present sufferings of the society. In such dialogue prophetic ministers took the lead, giving intercessory power to the people's complaints and bringing back Yahweh's words. From their inspiration came the possibility of the unexpected. Thus the encounter with the divine had its moments of tension and relief, adding to the strong emotions which marked the festival. Prophetic classes made other contributions to the festival, as is evident for example in the oracles given during the king's ordination and in the messages which launched Yahweh's procession of triumph.

In ch. 3 the units which form-criticism marks off in Isa. 40—55, 60—2 were examined in their given sequence and ample reason was found to accept that the message of restoration from exile through the victories of Cyrus was formed and delivered in a manner governed by the festal tradition. A summary of this survey was given on pp. 92–5, where it was also stressed that the correlation with the festival shows the homogeneity and coherence of the units; this includes the Servant Songs, which correspond to the festal rites of royal ordination. There was good

reason to conclude that all the main classes of speech in Isa. 40—55 were derived from festal usage: forensic speeches, disputations, oracles and proclamations of salvation, hymns, laments, victory-tidings and processional calls, oracles and testimonies from ordination rites, satires on idol-gods. From this point of view one could not only recognize their coherence, but also their present point and function. Thus, for example, the words of doom and mockery which portray in advance the downfall of the enemy gods and capital city (46; 47) were seen as part of the pattern which also projects the march of Yahweh to Zion as triumphant King (40; 52). Or again, the characteristic interweaving of words of salvation and dispute was found to be of the essence of the festal tradition; for precisely the proclamation of Yahweh's advent as Saviour-King gave rise to complaints from a still suffering people and to rejoinders from the manifest God.

In ch. 4 the application of the festal tradition was studied. What historical message was now conveyed through the inherited liturgical patterns? It was clear enough that Isa. 40—55 predicted the overthrow of Babylon, the return of the exiles, the renewed glory of Zion and Temple. As for the Servant Songs, corresponding to the old ordination sequence, the nearest explanation should be that, in accordance with the old scheme, they referred to the renewed destiny of David's line; this role of the high servant of Yahweh's kingship at Zion would thus be part of the new era. This explanation was found to be satisfactory. The arguments usually raised against it seemed now to have been overcome. The traits of the servant and the forms of the Songs had been shown to match the old liturgy and nothing else. The Songs' reference to a royal leader was found to be sufficiently distinct from the other references to Jacob or people as Yahweh's servant for the original hearers to have understood the shift. While Cyrus had taken on a little of the colour of Yahweh's royal officer, the special role of the foreign emperor would have been understood as separate from that of the servant. The origin of the materials in dramatic oral situations was a crucial consideration. Rapport between speaker and audience, traditional associations, gesture and tone, – all facilitated understanding of the speaker's intention. In the manner of drama, the prophetic speaker would assume a *persona* not his own: thus he might use the first person on behalf of God, or of the envisaged leader, or of the community, as well as speaking in his own person. Thus there was little cause to favour theories which necessitate a disruption of the old festal pattern, supposing for example that the second and third Songs (in chs. 49 and 50) were the prophet's account of

his own mission, or that the servant of the songs is a community – identifications which carry difficulties of their own.

Isa. 40—55 thus conveyed a message about the political situation by applying to it the received festal scheme as a whole and without dislocation. In the Exile, around 550 B.C., confidence grew that salvation was approaching. The message of restoration could easily clothe itself in the language of the old liturgy: sin put away, God encountered as saving King, the giver of rains and fertile life, who glorifies Zion with his holy presence and effects his royal work through his anointed servant. So in the midst of the dramatic cycle we hear Yahweh give the essential basis to this royal leader's position (Isa. 42): in the style of an enthronement ceremony he declares him the man of his favour and so legitimately the chief minister and representative of God's kingship, destined to cause its liberating and healing light to radiate from Zion. Later (ch. 49) the designated figure himself is given voice, in the manner of the king in the liturgy. Despite his vocation and equipment by God, he has to tell of heavy burdens that test his faith. God assures him that the divine majesty will be expanded through his service, and that the scorn now shown him by other kings will eventually turn to homage. In a further speech (50.4f) it is said on the royal servant's behalf that he accepts the prophetic ideal of obedience to God's word whatever the cost. He pronounces doom on his foes. Men will be well advised to fear Yahweh and obey the voice of this his servant.

When the anticipation of the triumph of Yahweh's kingship has risen to a climax, Yahweh speaks again (ch. 52). He tells of the final triumph and enthronement of his servant, who is to be held in awe by the kings of the peoples, over whom he will stand as priestly head. The oracle of God is then succeeded by further revelation (53), the choral form of utterance being such as we can connect with a company of liturgical ministers of revelation. Their chant describes the suffering to death which the royal figure has undergone – an archetypal story of degradation – and then reveals that it was not imposed by God for sins of his own, but was undertaken as an atoning and interposing work on behalf of the multitudes. Consequently, Yahweh grants him restoration, abundant life and descendants, and conquering triumph.

Although the suffering of the servant is not given any explicit historical application, we may suppose that prominence has been given to this part of the liturgical tradition in view of the cruel fate that had befallen David's line in the Exile. The figure of the servant does not emerge as that of any particular individual. His person, derived from the

poetically transfigured king of the old rites, expresses both the tragedy and hope of David's line. The cycle then concludes appropriately with reference to the fulfilment of the *ḥasʿdē dāwīd*, the covenanted promises to David (ch. 55), which had always centred on the continuance of descendants on his throne. The view of some scholars that Isa. 55 intends the transfer of the eternal covenant from the dynasty to the people was rejected. Rather we see here the solidarity of king and people, the latter enjoying prosperity through the new life of their king.

The Isaianic prophets had yet more to say about the glorification of Zion and the work of Yahweh's leader. The liturgical traditions are used again to similar purpose in chs. 60—2. The appropriateness of the sequence is remarkable. While the earlier chapters gave dramatic expression to the vocation, tribulation, vindication, and enthronement of the royal figure, now the expected sequel is provided: the voice of the Anointed (Isa. 61) is conveyed, proclaiming the gospel of the new era, the new year where Yahweh's saving kingship streams forth with deliverance, healing, and abundance. The festal situation of the king, adorned with vestments of glory and filled with Yahweh's spirit, shines through this material. And perhaps his intercessory work and priestly authority are represented in Isa. 62.

In ch. 5 my conclusions about Isa. 40—55 were strengthened by showing how well they fit with features of other relevant prophetic collections. In particular Isa. 1—39 was notable for prominence of the ideology of Yahweh's kingship on Zion and his purpose of salvation through the Davidic line; also for materials shaped in the manner of liturgies. This pointed to the likelihood that the Book of Isaiah resulted from the tradition of a prophetic circle which over several generations had functioned in national worship. Isaiah, who had seen Yahweh manifest as King in the Temple, had left a fellowship at Zion to preserve and continue his tradition. While an individual of genius may have given a decisive lead in Isa. 40—55, we should see the chapters basically as emanating from the group – the Isaianic circle which had been accustomed to participate in the pre-exilic festival and continued to contribute to such assemblies for worship as were possible in the Exile. Prophetic classes would maintain their old work of articulating the dialogue of God and his seekers, sharpening the laments and looking to give Yahweh's answers. As the star of Cyrus rose, the time came when the perception of imminent deliverance grew strong in the Isaianic circle. At gatherings, perhaps such as marked what had been the old festal season, the prophets gave their message of salvation in the patterns

of the old liturgy of Yahweh's triumphant Saviour-Kingship, and also laboured to dispute on Yahweh's behalf with those who reacted with disbelief. While we could not specify how long a period or how many occasions were needed for the creation of all the materials in Isa. 40—55, we must recognize that in the conditions of prophecy poetic utterances of great beauty and power could be quickly born, and *sequences* of units were sometimes generated in the original encounters of worship. Created in oral conditions, the prophecies were well remembered and gathered in oral tradition. Written records were a complementary aid to this process, eventually taking on the main burden of transmission, but not greatly affecting the character of the originally oral material.

A survey of the prophecies of hope for the Davidic line in other collections was then made. It became apparent that my interpretation had placed Isa. 40—55 in a well-attested current of thought of that period, along with the other main prophetic collections, which likewise often predicted a restored line with a certain veiling, as appropriate to oracular mysteries.

Finally, I related my interpretation of Isa. 40—55 to a range of other prophecies of peculiar dramatic force. From Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jer. 50—1 and Isa. 13—14 an important contribution of prophetic classes to the festival was clarified. As the liturgy actualized the supremacy of God, representing him in action to overcome evil and establish healthful order, the prophets contributed much to the imagination of this divine victory. They were pre-eminent in seeing the unseen, hearing the unheard, and projecting the result in brilliant poetry. The scenes of Yahweh's war, triumph, and advent with salvation lived through their words. Thus they imparted to the assembly a faith in the nearness of the reign of righteousness. Moreover, such prophets would sometimes be inspired to link such festal vision with political developments of their day, as when Nahum felt able to identify Nineveh with Yahweh's foe and envisage her overthrow by his fiery legions, her shame, her gods led captive, and the runners bringing Zion the tidings of salvation and peace.

The Isaianic prophets had been accustomed to contribute in this fashion to the great occasions of worship. In spite of the circumstances of the Exile, Isa. 40—55 shows that they were still able to project a vision of the festal kingdom of God breaking into the political order of their day. Through their words and gestures dramatic scenes unfold: invocation of Yahweh's arm rings out; Yahweh announces his going out to war; the gods of his defeated enemy are seen to be humiliated in a kind of anti-

festival, a procession of shame; the queenly tyrant-city is mockingly addressed as already fallen into disgrace; Yahweh's triumph-march to Zion is proclaimed and portrayed, his royal glory streaming far and wide; Zion is invoked to resurrection from the dust; Yahweh appoints his servant, the agent of his royal rule; his servant speaks words of witness; the servant's sufferings, which include within their depth of meaning the recent tragedies of the Davidic house, are interpreted as leading to salvation; Zion is seen in glory, her worshippers being called to the feast of Yahweh. In all these dramatic scenes the traditional function of the festal prophets is exercised again, a prediction of international upheaval being clothed in the festal vision of God's new advent. With this contribution Isa. 40—55 combines another well-known role of the festal prophets, as for example Habakkuk had done earlier and Malachi was to do later. Here the prophets, in addition to projecting the great advent, took account of the community's continuing troubles and complaints, which seemed only heightened by the depiction of Yahweh's saving righteousness; and so they answered complaints in Yahweh's name, reasoning, criticizing, reassuring.

The next step

All that has been written in the preceding pages is but a foreword to the main task – the evaluation and appreciation of these chapters of Isaiah in all their greatness, a task which perhaps in the end each reader must accomplish for himself. Like most of the biblical materials, their truth and value cannot be adequately translated into a systematic, prosaic account. The heart fails at the thought of trying to set out the theology of this visionary poetry. The likehood is that once we have adopted a position where the material can speak to us in its true character and wholeness we shall find ever more and more meaning in it. I will only suggest what kind of effect my particular conclusions should have on our general appreciation. Three aspects deserve mention, all arising from the alignment of prophecy and ritual.

Firstly, I have argued for the coherence of the many units in an interlocking pattern descended from the festival. The universal supremacy and the fidelity of God are thus proclaimed in a symphony which includes the theme of his royal servant's passion. God's order of salvation and righteousness is not to come by power alone. The way to the new order is through the suffering which the Man of Sorrows bears for others.

Secondly, the relating of the prophecies to a ritual tradition shows up a depth and range in their meaning which is missed by an interpretation restricted to the historical view. Taken in its political context, Isa. 40—55 could be judged as a prediction which was partly confirmed by the success and subsequent policy of the Persian empire, and partly proved wrong with regard to the supremacy and happiness forecast for Israel, Jerusalem, and (on my view) the royal line. Those who heard the prophets of Isa. 40—55 did not live to see historical developments commensurate with what they were promised. If Isa. 53 were only a prediction about a certain person or group of persons at the time, its claim to greatness would be mocked by events. But a prophecy speaking from ritual tells of truth from of old and to everlasting, which touches and illumines history but does not fade with it. The Man of Sorrows is a figure of eternal and inexhaustible meaning.

Thirdly, my placing of this cycle in the succession of prophetic liturgical dramas holds it up as a work of intense imagination. Perhaps the imagination is somewhat discounted in a scientific era. Yet it is the soul of art, of poetry, of music, of drama, and it has much, very much, to do with 'the Kingdom of God'. The prophetic ministers, through their dramatic art, made the triumph of God's righteousness and mercy real and present to their minds and to the minds of the fellow-worshippers they carried with them. If the unjust world also seemed a reality and persistently present, it could now seem a lesser reality, always about to be overtaken by the reign of God.

Was not this a great work of the prophets, to nourish a vision which would strengthen in men the sense of the supremacy of goodness, and restrain in them the ruthlessness which otherwise masquerades as the sure winner? In Isa. 40—55 the ecstatic cult-dramatists have left us their greatest vision. Their words, still resonant with dramatic power, bring the reality of the Kingdom all about us: the effulgence of God's splendour, the redeeming agony, the triumph of right and fidelity, the jubilation, the perfect community. True, life goes on, the life tormented by cruelty and death. But the vision of the Kingdom will not altogether leave us. The drama was something done, something achieved. We have been heartened to believe it better to be true than false, kind than callous, self-sacrificing than self-seeking. We have been turned to a reality greater than the disappointing reality of this world; yet the greater reality will not blot out the lesser, but will illumine it and at last, incredibly, redeem it.

Let the ecstatic poet-prophets of Isaiah 40—55 then continue to stage

their drama in the human imagination. Let us hear and see them prepare the triumph-way of God through the arid wastes, exalting every valley, bringing low every mountain, and calling to the cities 'Behold your God!'. The divine Shepherd appears, bearing the tiny lambs in his arms, gently leading the ewes with young. The many vivid scenes follow, as suffering and faithfulness are raised to triumph. Back in the real world, he who has shared the vision of their drama will remember that, against all appearances, the strength spent for the Kingdom will not be for nought; the crushed reed will not be broken off; the failing lamp will not be snuffed out. The vision is the greater reality.

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SELECT INDEXES
(supplementing the Table of Contents)

1 BIBLICAL REFERENCES

4 TOPICS