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Lamentations

From Commentary on the Old Testament

C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch

adapted for Grace Notes training by Warren Doud

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The Lamentations of Jeremiah

Introduction

§ 1. The Name, Contents, and Arrangement of the Book

The Name.—The five Lamentations composed on the fall of Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah, which have received their position in the canon of the Old Testament among the Hagiographa, have for their heading, in Hebrew MSS and in printed editions of the Hebrew Bible, the word אֵיכָה (“alas! how ...”), which forms the characteristic initial word of three of these pieces (Lam. 1:1; 2:1, and 4:1). The

Rabbis name the collection קִינּוֹת (Lamentations), from the nature of its contents: so in the Talmud (*Tract. Baba Bathra*, f. 14*b*); cf. Jerome in the *Prol. galeat*, and in the prologue to his translation: “*incipiunt Threni*, i.e., *lamentationes, quae Cynoth hebraice inscribuntur.*” With this agree the designations Θρηνοι (LXX), and *Threni* or *Lamentationes*, also *Lamenta* in the Vulgate and among the Latin writers.

Contents.—The ancient custom of composing and singing lamentations over deceased friends (of which we find proof in the elegies of David on Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1:17ff., and on Abner, 2 Sam. 3:33ff., and in the notice given in 2 Chron. 35:25) was even in early times extended so as to apply to the general calamities that befell countries and cities; hence the prophets often speak of taking up lamentations over the fall of nations, countries, and cities; cf. Amos 5:1, Jer. 7:29; 9:9, 17f., Ezek. 19:1; 26:17; 27:2, etc. The five lamentations of the book now before us all refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the kingdom of Judah by the Chaldeans; in them are deplored the unutterable misery that has befallen the covenant people in this catastrophe, and the disgrace which the fallen daughter of Zion has thereby suffered. This subject is treated of in the five poems from different points of view. In the *first*, the lamentation is chiefly made over the carrying away of the people into captivity,

the desolation of Zion, the acts of oppression, the plundering and the starvation connected with the taking of Jerusalem, the scoffing and contempt shown by the enemy, and the helpless and comfortless condition of the city, now fallen so low. In the *second*, the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah is set forth as an act of God’s wrath against the sins of the people, the impotency of human comfort in the midst of the terrible calamity is shown, and the people are exhorted to seek help from the Lord. In the *third*, the deep spiritual sufferings of God’s people in the midst of the general distress form the subject of grievous complaint, out of which the soul endeavours to rise, and to see the compassion of the Lord, and the justice of His dealings on earth generally, as well as in this visitation of judgment; and on this is founded the confident expectation of help. In the *fourth*, the dreadful misery that has befallen Zion’s citizens of every class is represented as a punishment for the grievous sins of the people and their leaders. And lastly, in the *fifth*, the Lord is entreated to remove the disgrace from His people and restore them to their former state of grace. According to this view, one may readily perceive in these poems a well-cogitated plan in the treatment of the material common to the whole, and a distinct progress in the execution of this plan. There is no foundation, on the other hand, for the opinion of De Wette, that a gradation may be traced in the description given of the condition of the city; and the attempt of earlier expositors (Horrer, Pareau, Jahn, etc.) to explain and apply the contents of the different poems to different leading features in the Chaldean catastrophe—such as the siege, the capture, the destruction of the city and the temple—has entirely failed. Ewald, again, assumes that the five poems were composed for a time to be solemnly spent in sorrow and penitence, and that in the five lamentations the prophet-writer presents a kind of changing act (drama), making five different acts follow each other progressively; and further, that it is only with the changing series of these that the entire great act of real lamentation and divine sorrow concludes. But

neither in the design nor in the execution of these poems are any points to be found which form a safe foundation for this assumption. Ewald is so far correct, however, in his general remark, that the prophetic composer sought to present to the community, in their deep sorrow, words which were meant to direct the grieving heart to the only source of true comfort; and that he understood how “to lead the deeply sorrowing ones imperceptibly to a proper knowledge of themselves and of their own great guilt, and thereby, in the first place, to true sorrow and sighing; that he also knew how to resolve the wildest grief at last into true prayer for divine retribution, and to change new strength into rejoicing over the everlasting Messianic hope, and into the most touching request for the divine compassion” (*Die Dichter des Alt. Bundes*, 3 Ausg. i. 2, S. 322).

Form.—In order to give an air of continuity as well as of exhaustive completeness to the lamentation, which constantly assumes new figures and turns of thought, the poems, with the exception of the last (Lam. 5), are alphabetically arranged, and in such a form that the first three consist of long stanzas, each of three lines, which are for the most part further divided about the middle by a caesura into two portions of unequal length. These poems are so arranged in accordance with the letters of the alphabet, that in the first two, every verse of three lines, and in the third, every line in the verse, begins with the letters of the alphabet in their order. In this last [third] poem, moreover, all the letters of the alphabet occur thrice in succession, for which reason the Masoretes have divided these lines of the verses as if each formed a complete verse. In the fourth poem, the verses, which are also arranged and marked alphabetically, consist only of lines which are likewise divided into two by a caesura; in the fifth, the alphabetic arrangement of the verses is departed from, and it is only in their number that the verses of the poem are made like the letters of the alphabet. This alphabetic arrangement of the verses is exactly carried out in the four poems, but with the remarkable difference, that in the first only does the order

of the letters entirely agree with the traditional arrangement of the alphabet, while, in the other three, the verse beginning with **א** stands before that beginning with **ב**. This deviation from the rule does not admit of being explained by the assumption that the verses in question were afterwards transposed in consequence of an oversight on the part of the copyist, nor by the supposition that the order of the letters had not yet been absolutely fixed. The former assumption, adopted by Kennicott, Jahn, etc., is shown to be utterly incorrect, by the circumstance that the supposed transmutation cannot be reconciled with the course of thought in the poems; while the latter, which has been maintained by C. B. Michaelis, Ewald, etc., is disproved by the fact that no change has taken place in the order of the letters in the Shemitic alphabets (cf. Sommer, *Bibl. Abhandll.* i. S. 145; Gesenius, § 5, Rem. 2; Ewald, § 12, a); and other alphabetic poems, such as Ps. 111, 112, 119, and Prov. 31:10–31, exactly preserve the common arrangement of the letters. Still less does the irregularity in question permit of being attributed to an oversight on the part of the composer (which is Bertholdt's view), for the irregularity is repeated in three poems. It is rather connected with another circumstance. For we find in other alphabetic poems also, especially the older ones, many deviations from the rule, which undeniably prove that the composers bound themselves rigorously by the order of the alphabet only so long as it fitted in to the course of thought without any artificiality. Thus, for instance, in Ps. 145 the *Nun* verse is wanting; in Ps. 34 the *Vav* verse; while, at the close, after **ת**, there follows another verse with **פ**. Just such another closing verse is found in Ps. 25, in which, besides, the first two verses begin with **א**, while **ב** is wanting; two verses, moreover, begin with **ר** instead of **ק** and **ר**: in Ps. 37 **ע** is replaced by **ק**, which is again found after **פ** in its proper order. It is also to be considered that, in many of these poems, the division of the verses into strophes

is not continuously and regularly carried out; e.g., in these same Lamentations, 1:7 and 2:19, verses of four lines occur among those with three. Attempts have, indeed, been made to attribute these irregularities to later reviewers, who mistook the arrangement into strophes; but the arguments adduced will not stand the test; see details in Hävernicks *Einl.* iii. S. 51ff. If we gather all these elements together, we shall be obliged to seek for the reason of most, if not all of these deviations from the norm, in the free use made of such forms by the Hebrew poets. Gerlach here objects that, "in view of the loose connection of thought in alphabetic poems generally, and in these Lamentations particularly, and considering the evident dexterity with which the poet elsewhere uses the form, another arrangement of the series would not have caused him any difficulty." We reply that there is no want in these poems of a careful arrangement of thought; but that the skill of the poet, in making use of this arrangement, was not always sufficient to let him put his thoughts, corresponding to things, into the alphabetic form, without using artificial means or forced constructions; and that, in such cases, the form was rather sacrificed to the thought, than rigorously maintained through the adoption of forced and unnatural forms of expression.

Finally, the reason for the absence of the alphabetic arrangement from the fifth poem is simply, that the lamentation there resolves itself into a prayer, in which the careful consideration indispensable for the carrying out of the alphabetic arrangement must give place to the free and natural outcome of the feelings.

§ 2. The Author, Time of Composition, and Position in the Canon

Author.—In the Hebrew text no one is named as the author of the Lamentations; but an old tradition affirms that the prophet Jeremiah composed them. Even so early as in the Alexandrine version, we find prefixed to 1:1, the words, Καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ αἰχμαλωτισθῆναι

τὸν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐρημωθῆναι ἐκάθισεν Ἱερεμίας κλαίων καὶ ἐθρήνησε τὸν θρῆνον τοῦτον ἐπὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ εἶπε. These words are also found in the Vulgate; only, instead of *et dixit*, there is the amplification, *et amaro animo suspirans et ejulans dixit*. The Syriac is without this notice; but the Arabic exactly reproduces the words of the LXX, and the Targum begins with the words, *Dixit Jeremias propheta et sacerdos magnus*. After this, both in the Talmud (*Baba bathr.* f. 51. 1) and by the Church Fathers (Origen in *Euseb. hist. eccl.* iv. 25, Jerome in *prolog. gal.*, etc.), as well as the later theologians, the Jeremianic authorship was assumed as certain. The learned but eccentric Hermann von der Hardt was the first to call in question the Jeremianic composition of the book, in a "Programm" published in 1712 at Helmstädt; he attributed the five poems to Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and King Jehoiachin (!). This doubt was resumed at a later period by an unknown writer in the Tübingen *Theol. Quartalschr.* 1819, part i.; it was mentioned by Augusti (*Einl.*), and further carried out by Conz in *Bengel's Archiv*, iv. p. 161f. and 422ff. Kalkar was the next to question the traditional belief, and urged against it the position of the book among the כְּתוּבֵי קְדָשׁ, and the difference existing between the Greek translation of the Lamentations and that of the prophecies of Jeremiah; these objections he held to be not inconsiderable, yet not decisive. Then Ewald (*Poet. Bücher des A. B.* i. S. 145, and in the third edition of the same book, i. 2, S. 326; cf. *Bibl. Jahrb.* vii. S. 151f., and *History of the People of Israel*, iv. p. 22) decidedly refused to ascribe the book to the prophet, and rather attributed it to one of his pupils, Baruch or some other; in this opinion he is followed by Bunsen, as is usual in questions regarding the criticism of the Old Testament. Finally, Nägelsbach (in Lange's series, see Clark's *For. Theol. Lib.*), with the help of the Concordance, has prepared a table of those words and forms of words found in the Lamentations, but not occurring in the prophecies of Jeremiah; by this means he has endeavoured to set forth the difference of language in the two books, which

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he accepts as a decisive reason for rejecting the Jeremianic authorship of the Lamentations. And Thenius assures us that, "in consequence of pretty long and conscientious examination, he has become convinced" that Lam. 2 and 4, judging from their contents and form, undeniably proceeded from Jeremiah; while Lam. 1 and 3 were composed by one who was left behind in the country, some time after the destruction of Jerusalem, and shortly before the last deportation; but Lam. 5 is from a man "who was probably wandering about everywhere, as the *leader* of a band of nobles seeking a safe asylum, but unwilling to attach themselves to the caravan going to Egypt."

Schrader, in his late revision of De Wette's *Introduction*, § 339, has thus condensed the results of these critical investigations: In support of the old tradition, which mentions Jeremiah as the author, "one might appeal to the affinity in contents, spirit, tone, and language (De W.). Nevertheless, this same style of language, and the mode of representation, exhibit, again, so much that is peculiar; the artificiality of form, especially in Lam. 1, 2, and 4, is so unlike Jeremiah's style; the absence of certain specific Jeremianic peculiarities, and the contradiction between some expressions of the prophet and those of the author of the Lamentations, is again so striking, that one must characterize the authorship of Jeremiah as very improbable, if not quite impossible, especially since the points of likeness to the language used by Jeremiah, on the one hand, are sufficiently accounted for in general by the fact that both works were composed at the same time; and on the other hand, are nullified by other points of likeness to Ezekiel's style, which show that use has already been made of his prophecies." Again: "The hypothesis of Thenius, that the poems are by different authors, is refuted by the similarity in the fundamental character of the poems, and in the character of the language." We may therefore dispense with a special refutation of this hypothesis, especially since it will be shown in the exposition that the points which Thenius has brought forward in support of his view are

all founded on a wretchedly prosaic style of interpretation, which fails to recognise the true nature of poetry, and regards mere poetic figures as actual history. Of the considerations, however, which Schrader has adduced against the Jeremianic authorship, the last two that are mentioned would, of course, have decided influence, if there were any real foundation for them, viz., the contradiction between some expressions of Jeremiah and those of the author of the Lamentations. But they have no foundation in fact.

The only instance of a contradiction is said to exist between 5:7 and Jer. 31:29, 30. It is quoted by Schrader, who refers to Nöldeke, *die alttest. Literat.* S. 146. But the expression, "Our fathers have sinned, they are no more, we bear their iniquities" (Lam. 5:7), does not stand in contradiction to what is said in Jer. 39:29f. against the current proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth have become blunt," viz., that in the future, after the restoration of Israel, "every one shall die for his own iniquity, and the teeth of every one who eats sour grapes shall become blunt." One statement would contradict the other only if the latter meant that those who bear the punishment were guiltless, or thought themselves such. But how far this thought was from the mind of the suppliant in 5:7, is shown by what he says in v. 16: "Woe unto us, for we have sinned." According to these words, those in v. 7 can only mean, "We atone not merely for our own sins, but also the sins of our fathers," or, "The sins of our fathers as well as our own are visited on us." This confession accords with Scripture (cf. Ex. 20:5, Jer. 16:11, etc.), and is radically different from the proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes," etc., which was constantly in the mouth of those who considered themselves innocent, and who thereby perverted the great truth, that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children who hate Him, into the false statement, that innocent children must atone for the sins of their fathers. On this, cf. also the exposition of 5:7. But when Schrader, following Nöldeke, further remarks, "that Jeremiah would hardly

have said nothing whatever about God's having foretold all this suffering *through him*," there lies at the foundation of this remark the preposterous notion, that Jeremiah ought to have brought himself prominently forward in the Lamentations (supposing him to have written them), as one who ought not to suffer the evil under which the people were groaning. Such gross Pelagianism was foreign to the prophet Jeremiah. No one need speak, therefore, of a contradiction between the Lamentations and the prophecies of Jeremiah. As little proof is there for the assertion that the author of the Lamentations made use of the prophecies of Ezekiel. Nägelsbach and Schrader, in support of this allegation, have adduced only 2:14, compared with Ezek. 12:24; 13:5f.; and 2:15, compared with Ezek. 27:3; 28:12. Nägelsbach says: "The words, נְבִיאֵי דָּחִוּוּ, in 2:14, are no doubt a quotation from Ezek. 12:24; 13:6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 23; 21:28, 34; 22:28. For it is only in these passages, and nowhere else in the Old Testament, that the expression שָׂוֹא דָּחִוּוּ occurs, and in combination with תְּפִלָּה. Moreover, כְּלִילֵת יָפִי, in 2:15, is an expression decidedly peculiar to Ezekiel, for it occurs only in Ezek. 27:3 (cf. 28:12), and nowhere else." But the three expressions of these two passages form really too weak a proof that the author of the Lamentations made use of the prophecies of Ezekiel. Of course, as regards the mere form of the words, it is true that the expression כְּלִילֵת יָפִי, "she who is perfect in beauty," is found, besides Lam. 2:15, only in Ezek. 27:3, where the prophet says of Tyre, "Thou sayest, I am perfect in beauty," and in Ezek. 28:12, where it is said of the king of Tyre, "Thou art ... כְּלִילֵת יָפִי;" but the thing occurs also in Ps. 50:2, with the unimportant change in the form of the words מְכֻלֵּל יָפִי, "perfection of beauty," where Zion is so designated. Now, if we not merely gather out of the Concordance the expressions of like import, but also keep in view the idea presented in

2:15, "Is this the city שְׂוֹא מְשׁוּשׁ כְּלִילֵת יָפִי מְשׁוּשׁ" and at the same time consider that the poet says this of Jerusalem, there cannot be the least doubt that he did not take these epithets, which are applied to Jerusalem, from Ezekiel, who used them to designate Tyre, but that he had Ps. 50:2 in view, just as the other epithet, "a joy of the whole earth," points to Ps. 48:3. Only on the basis of these passages in the Psalms could he employ the expression שְׂוֹא מְשׁוּשׁ, "which they call." Or are we to believe that the word כְּלִילֵת יָפִי was originally unknown to the author of the Lamentations, and that he first became acquainted with it through Ezekiel? Nor, again, can we say that the words taken by Nägelsbach out of 2:14 are "undoubtedly a quotation from Ezekiel," because they do not occur in this way in any of the passages cited from Ezekiel. All that we can found on this assertion is, that in the prophecies of Jeremiah neither שָׂוֹא דָּחִוּוּ or the word-form תְּפִלָּה occurs; while Ezekiel not only uses שָׂוֹא דָּחִוּוּ, 12:14, דָּחִוּוּ, 12:14, and שָׂוֹא דָּחִוּוּ, 12:14, as synonymous with שָׂוֹא דָּחִוּוּ, 12:14, but also says of the false prophets, 13:9-11, "They build a wall, and plaster it over with lime" (טָחִים אֹתוֹ, 13:10, cf. vv. 14, 15, 18). These same false prophets are also called, in v. 11, טָחִי תִפֵּל, "those who plaster with lime." But Ezekiel uses the word תִּפֵּל only in the meaning of "lime," while the writer of these Lamentations employs it in the metaphorical sense, "absurdity, nonsense," in the same way as Jeremiah, 23:13, uses תִּפֵּל, "absurdity," of the prophets of Samaria. Now, just as Jeremiah has not taken תִּפֵּל from Ezekiel, where it does not occur at all (but only in Job 1:22; 24:12), so there is as little likelihood in the opinion that the word תִּפֵּל, in Lam. 2:14, has been derived from Ezekiel, because Job 6:6 shows that it was far from rarely used by the Hebrews.

Nor does the non-occurrence of *חֲזָה שְׂוֹא* in Jeremiah afford any tenable ground for the opinion that the expression, as found in Lam. 2:14, was taken from Ezekiel. The idea contained in *חֲזָה* was not unknown to Jeremiah; for he speaks, 14:14, of *חֲזוֹן שְׂקָר*, and in 23:16 of *חֲזוֹן מְלָכִים*, referring to the false prophets, whose doings he characterizes as *שְׂקָר*; cf. 6:13; 8:10; 14:14; 23:25f., 32, 27:10, 15; 28:16; 29:9, 23, 31. Further, if we consult only the text of the Bible instead of the Concordance, and ponder the connection of thought in the separate passages, we can easily perceive why, instead of *שְׂקָר (חֲזוֹן)*, *חֲזָה*, which is so frequent in Jeremiah, there is found in Lam. 2:14, *חֲזָה שְׂוֹא* and *חֲזָה מְשֹׂאוֹת שְׂוֹא*. In the addresses in which Jeremiah warns the people of the lying conduct of the false prophets, who spoke merely out of their own heart, *שְׂקָר* was the most suitable expression; in Lam. 2:14, on the contrary, where complaint is made that the prophecies of their prophets afford no comfort to the people in their present distress, *שְׂוֹא* was certainly the most appropriate word which the composer could select, even without a knowledge of Ezekiel. There can be no question, then, regarding a quotation from that prophet. but even though it were allowed that 2:14 implied an actual acquaintance with ch. 12 and 13 of Ezekiel, still, nothing would follow from that against the Jeremianic authorship of the Lamentations. For Jeremiah uttered these prophecies in the sixth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin, i.e., in the third year before the last siege, and the fifth before the destruction of Jerusalem; and considering the frequent intercourse carried on between the captives in Babylon and those who still remained in Judah and Jerusalem, in virtue of which the former even sent letters to Jerusalem (cf. Jer. 29:25), some of Ezekiel's prophecies might have become known in the latter city a considerable time before the final catastrophe, and even reached the ears of Jeremiah.

With the demolition of these two arguments, the main strength of our opponents, in the bringing forward of proof, has been broken. Schrader has not adduced a single instance showing "the absence of certain specific Jeremianic peculiarities." For "the comparatively less emphasis given to the sins of the people," which is alleged in Nöldeke's note, cannot be applied in support of that position, even if it were correct, in view of the prominence so frequently assigned to grievous sin, 1:5, 8, 14, 18, 22; 2:14; 3:39, 42; 4:6, 13; 5:7; because the Lamentations were not composed with the design of punishing the people for their sin, but were intended to comfort in their misery, and to raise up again, the people who had been severely chastised for the guilt of their sin, which was greater than the sin of Sodom (Lam. 4:6). Add to this, that Schrader, by using this argument, contradicts himself; for he has shortly before adduced the affinity in contents, spirit, tone, and language as an argument to which one might appeal in support of the Jeremianic authorship, and this affinity he has established by a long series of quotations.

Further, the remark that "the artificiality of form, especially in Lam. 1, 2, and 4, is unlike Jeremiah," is correct only in so far as no alphabetic poems are to be found in the prophetic book of Jeremiah. But are we then to look for poetic compositions in prophetic addresses and historical narratives? The remark now quoted is based on the assertion made by other critics, that the alphabetic arrangement of poetic compositions generally is a mere rhetorical work of art, and the production of a later but degenerate taste (Ed. Reuss and others), or a piece of trifling unworthy of the prophet. This view has long ago been shown groundless; cf. Hävernicks *Einl.* iii. S. 46ff. Even Hupfeld, who calls the alphabetical arrangement "artificiality or trifling," considers that it is of a kindred nature with collections of proverbs, and with small poems of a didactic character but deficient in close connection of thought; he thinks, too, that it may be comparatively ancient as a style of

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composition, and that it was not applied till later to other species of writing (as Lamentations). To this, Ed. Riehm, in the second edition of Hupfeld on the Psalms, i. p. 31, has added a very true remark: "In lyric poetry proper, the employment of this artificial form is naturally and intrinsically justified only when a single fundamental strain, that fills the whole soul of the poet,—deep, strong, and sustained,—seeks to die away in many different forms of chords; hence its employment in the elegy." The application of this artificial form to such a purpose is perfectly justified in these Lamentations; and the attempt to deny that these poems are the work of Jeremiah, on the ground of their artificial construction, would be as great an exhibition of arbitrary conduct, as if any one refused to ascribe the hymn "Befiehl du deine Wege" to Paul Gerhardt, or "Wie schön leucht' uns der Morgenstern" to Philip Nicolai, on the ground of the "artificiality" that manifests itself in the beginning of the verses. Finally, the language and the mode of representation in these poems certainly exhibit much that is peculiar; and we find in them many words, word-forms, and modes of expression, which do not occur in the prophecies of Jeremiah. But it must also be borne in mind that the Lamentations are not prophetic addresses intended to warn, rebuke, and comfort, but lyric poetry, which has its own proper style of language, and this different from prophetic address. Both the subject-matter and the poetic form of these poems, smooth though this is in general, necessarily resulted in this,—that through the prevalence of peculiar thoughts, modes of representation, and feelings, the language also received an impress, in words and modes of expression, that was peculiar to itself, and different from the prophetic diction of Jeremiah. The mere collection of the words, word-forms, and expressions peculiar to the Lamentations, and not occurring in the prophecies of Jeremiah, cannot furnish irrefragable proof that the authors of the two writings were different, unless it be shown, at the same time, that the character of the language in both writings is essentially

different, and that for the ideas, modes of representation, and thoughts common to both, other words and expressions are used in the Lamentations than those found in the prophecies of Jeremiah. But neither the one nor the other has been made out by Nägelsbach. After giving the long list he has prepared, which occupies five and a half columns, and which gives the words occurring in the different verses of the five chapters, he explains that he does not seek to lay any weight on the ἄπαιξι λυγόμενα, probably because Jeremiah also has many such words; but then he raises the question, "How is the fact to be accounted for, that Jeremiah never uses עָלִיּוֹן or אֲדֹנָי except as divine names, while the latter, nevertheless, occurs fourteen times in the Lamentations; that Jeremiah never uses חֲטָא, זָנַח, אָנַח, גָּגָה, הִבִּיט, יָחַל, נִגְיָנָה, חֲשָׁד, חִזָּה, עָטַף, עָפָר, לֹא חָמַל, בָּלַע, מִחֲמָד, נִשָּׂא פָּנָי, nor לָמוּ, the relative שׁ, or בְּקֶרֶב without a suffix, while all these expressions occur more or less frequently in the Lamentations? And it has been well remarked that these expressions are not of so specific a kind, that the fact of their not being used in the prophetic book, but employed in the Lamentations, might be explained from the nature of the contents; but they belong, in great measure, to what I may call the house-dress of the author, which he constantly wears,—which he more or less unconsciously and unintentionally uses." We answer that the simile of the house-dress has been most unhappily chosen. Although the style of a writer may possibly be compared to his coat, yet nobody is in the habit of wearing his house-coat always, on Sundays and week-days, in the house and out of it; so, too, no writer is in the habit of using always the same words in prose and poetry. When we investigate the matter itself, we find we must, first of all, deduct fully one-third of the words enumerated, although these have evidently been collected and arranged as the most convincing proof; the words thus rejected are also found in the prophetic book of Jeremiah, though not quite in the same grammatical form, as the note shows.

Then we ask the counter question, whether words which one who composed five poems employs only in one of these pieces, or only once or twice throughout the whole, ought to be reckoned as his house-dress? Of the words adduced, we do not find a single one in all the five poems, but חֶשֶׁךְ only in 3:2, נֶשֶׂא פְּנִים only in 4:16, נְגִינָה only in 3:14 and 5:14, פָּה פִּצָּה only in 2:16 and 3:46, עָלִיז only in 3:35 and 38, אָנָּה (Niphal) only in Lam. 1 (four times). Moreover, we ask whether Jeremiah might not also, in lyric poems, use poetic words which could not be employed in homely address? But of the words enumerated, לָמוֹ, עָלִיז, and אֲדֹנָי alone as a name of God, together with נְגִינָה, belong to the poetic style. They are therefore not found in Jeremiah, simply because his prophetic addresses are neither lyric poems, nor rise to the lyric height of prophetic address. The rest of the words mentioned are also found in the Psalms especially, and in Job, as will be shown in the detailed exposition. And when we go deeper into the matter, we find that, in the Lamentations, there is the same tendency to reproduce the thoughts and language of the Psalms (especially those describing the psalmist's sufferings) and of the book of Job, that characterizes the prophecies of Jeremiah, in the use he makes of Deuteronomy and the writings of earlier prophets. Another peculiarity of Jeremiah's style is seen in the fact that the composer of the Lamentations, like Jeremiah in his addresses, repeats himself much, not merely in his ideas, but also in his words: e.g., חָמַל occurs four times, of which three instances are in Lam. 2 (vv. 2, 17, 21) and one in 3:43; מְחַמֵּד (and מְחַמֹּד) also occurs four times (Lam. 1:7, 10, 11; 2:4), and נֶאֱנָה as frequently (Lam. 1:4, 8, 11, 21); יָגָה is found five times (Lam. 1:4, 5, 12; 3:32, 33), but in all the other Old Testament writings only thrice; and Jeremiah also uses יָגוֹן four times, while, of all the other prophets, Isaiah is the only one who employs it, and this he does twice.

These marks may be sufficient of themselves to show unmistakably that the peculiarity of the prophet as an author is also found in the Lamentations, and that nothing can be discovered showing a difference of language in the expression of thoughts common to both writings. But this will be still more evident if we consider, finally, the similarity, both as regards the subjects of thought and the style of expression, exhibited in a considerable number of instances in which certain expressions characteristic of Jeremiah are also found in Lamentations: e.g., the frequent employment of שָׁרָר and שָׁבַר בַּת עַמִּי 2:11, 13; 3:47, 48; 4:10, cf. with Jer. 4:6, 20; 6:1, 14; 8:11, 21; 10:19; 14:17, etc.; מְגוֹרֵי מִסְבֵּיב, 2:22, with מְגוֹר מִסְבֵּיב, Jer. 6:25; 20:3, 10; 46:5; 49:29; (מִים, or) עֵין יַרְדֵּה דְמָעָה (מים, or) 1:16; 2:18; 3:48; 2:11, cf. with Jer. 8:23; 9:17; 13:17; 14:17; הֵייתִי לְשֹׁחַק, 3:14, with הֵייתִי לְשֹׁחַק, Jer. 20:7; פָּחַד וְפָחַת, 3:47, as in Jer. 48:43. Cf. also the note on p. 471, after the passages quoted by De Wette. Pareau, then, had good reason when, long ago, he pointed out the peculiarities of Jeremiah in the style of the Lamentations; and only a superficial criticism can assert against this, that the existing coincidences find a sufficient explanation in the assumption that, speaking generally, the two books were composed at the same period. We therefore close this investigation, after having proved that the tradition which ascribes the Lamentations to the prophet Jeremiah as their author is as well-founded as any ancient historical tradition whatever.

Time of Composition.—From the organic connection of the five poems, as shown above, it follows of itself that they cannot have proceeded from different authors, nor originated at different periods, but were composed at brief intervals, one after the other, not long after the destruction of Jerusalem and the fall of the kingdom of Judah, and in the order in which they have been transmitted to us. What gives special support to this conclusion is the circumstance that, throughout these Lamentations, there is no possibility of

mistaking the expression of grief, still fresh in the writer's mind, over the horrors of that fearful catastrophe. The assumption, however, that the prophet, in the picture he draws, had before his eyes the ruins of the city, and the misery of those who had been left behind, cannot be certainly made out from a consideration of the contents of the poems. But there seems to be no doubt that Jeremiah composed them in the interval between the destruction of Jerusalem and his involuntary departure to Egypt. There is no tenable ground for the confident assertion of Ewald, that they were composed in Egypt; for the passages, 1:3; 4:18f., 5:5, 9, do not mean that the writer was then living among the fugitives who had fled in such vast multitudes to Egypt, partly before and partly after the destruction of the city.

Position of the Lamentations in the Canon.—The separation of the Lamentations from the book of the prophecies of Jeremiah, and their reception into the third division of the Old Testament canon (the *Kethubim*),—which Kalkschmidt and Thenius, in complete misunderstanding of the principle on which the tripartition of the canon is founded, would bring to bear as an argument against their having been composed by Jeremiah,—are fully accounted for by their subjective, lyric contents; in consequence of this they differ essentially from the prophecies, and take their place alongside of the Psalms and other productions of sacred poesy. This position of theirs among the *Kethubim* must be considered (against Bleek) as the original one; their arrangement by the side of the prophetic writings of Jeremiah in the LXX and Vulgate, which Luther [as well as the translators of the “authorized” English version] has retained, must have originated with the Alexandrine translators, who could not understand the arrangement of the Hebrew canon, and who afterwards, in order to make the number of the books of the Bible the same as that of the letters of the alphabet (twenty-two), counted the Lamentations as forming one book with the prophecies of Jeremiah. That this arrangement and enumeration of the Lamentations,

observed by the Hellenists, deviated from the tradition of the Jews of Palestine, may be perceived from the remark of Jerome, in his *Prol. galeat.*, regarding this mode of reckoning: *quamquam nonnulli Ruth et Cynoth inter hagiographa scriptitent, et hos libros in suo putent numero supputandos*. Their arrangement in the series of the five *Megilloth* (rolls appointed to be read on certain annual feast-days and memorial-days) in our editions of the Hebrew Bible was not fixed till a later period, when, according to the ordinance in the synagogal liturgy, the Lamentations were appointed to be read on the ninth of the month Ab, as the anniversary of the destruction of the temples of Solomon and of Herod. [Cf. Herzog's *Real-Encykl.* xv. 310.]

The importance of the Lamentations, as a part of the canon, does not so much consist in the mere fact that they were composed by Jeremiah, and contain outpourings of sorrow on different occasions over the misery of his people, as rather in their being an evidence of the interest with which Jeremiah, in the discharge of his functions as a prophet, continued to watch over the ruins of Jerusalem. In these Lamentations he seeks not merely to give expression to the sorrow of the people that he may weep with them, but by his outpour of complaint to rouse his fellow-countrymen to an acknowledgement of God's justice in this visitation, to keep them from despair under the burden of unutterable woe, and by teaching them how to give due submission to the judgment that has befallen them, to lead once more to God those who would not let themselves be brought to Him through his previous testimony regarding that judgment while it was yet impending. The Jewish synagogue has recognised and duly estimated the importance of the Lamentations in these respects, by appointing that the book should be read on the anniversary of the destruction of the temple. A like appreciation has been made by the Christian Church, which, rightly perceiving that the Israelitish community is the subject in these poems, attributed to them a reference to the church militant; and, viewing

the judgment on the people of God as a prophecy of the judgment that came on Him who took the sins of the whole world upon Himself, it has received a portion of the Lamentations into the ritual for the Passion Week, and concludes each of these lessons with the words, "*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum, deum tuum.*" Cf. *The Passion Week in its Ceremonies and Prayers*, Spires 1856, and the *Officium hebdomadae sanctae*, a reprinted extract from Dr. Reischl's *Passionale*, München 1857. The motives for this choice are so far set forth by Allioli (in Neumann, ii. S. 486) in the following terms: "The church wished believers to see, in the great punishments which God had ordained against Jerusalem by the instrumentality of Nebuchadnezzar, the still more severe chastisement that God has brought on Israel after the dreadful murder of the Messiah. She seeks to bewail the unhappy condition of the blinded nation, once favoured with the divine revelation. In the fall of Jerusalem, she seeks to deplore the evil that has come on herself from external and internal foes, the persecution of brother by brother, the havoc made by false teachers, the looseness of opinions, the sad advances made by indifference in matters of faith and by the corruption of morals. In the devastation and the penalties inflicted on Jerusalem, she wishes to present for consideration the destruction which comes on every soul that dies the death in sins. In the condition of the ruined city and the homeless nation, she seeks to make men bewail the homeless condition of the whole race, who have fallen into decay and disorder through Adam's sin. And lastly, in the nation visited with punishment, she seeks to set forth Jesus Christ Himself, in so far as He has become the substitute of all men, and suffered for their sins." This display of all these references is sadly deficient in logical arrangement; but it contains a precious kernel of biblical truth, which the Evangelical Church has endeavoured in many ways to turn to advantage. Regarding the adaptations of the Lamentations made for liturgical use in the Evangelical Church, see particulars in Schöberlein, *Schatz des*

liturgischen Chor- und Gemeindegesanges, ii. S. 444ff.

As to the commentaries on the Lamentations, see Keil's *Manual of Introduction to the Old Testament*, vol. i. p. 508 [Clark's Foreign Theol. Library]. To the list of works therein given are to be appended, as later productions, Ewald's recent treatment of the book in the third edition of the *Dichter des A. Bundes* (1866), i. 2, where the Lamentations have been inserted among the Psalms, S. 321ff.; Wilh. Engelhardt, *die Klagel. Jerem. übersetzt*. 1867; Ernst Gerlach, *die Klagel. erkl.* 1868; and Nägelsbach, in Lange's series of commentaries (Clark's English edition), 1868.

Lamentations 1

Sorrow and Wailing Over the Fall of Jerusalem and Judah

- 1 Alas! how she sits alone, the city [that was] full of people! She has become like a widow, [that was] great among the nations; The princess among provinces has become a vassal.
- 2 She weeps bitterly through the night, and her tears are upon her cheek; She has no comforter out of all her lovers: All her friends have deceived her; they have become enemies to her.
- 3 Judah is taken captive out of affliction, and out of much servitude; She sitteth among the nations, she hath found no rest; All those who pursued her overtook her in the midst of her distresses.
- 4 The ways of Zion mourn, for want of those who went up to the appointed feast; All her gates are waste; her priests sigh; Her virgins are sad, and she herself is in bitterness.
- 5 Her enemies have become supreme; those who hate her are at ease; For Jahveh hath afflicted her because of the multitude of her transgressions: Her young children have gone into captivity before the oppressor.
- 6 And from the daughter of Zion all her honour has departed; Her princes have become like harts [that] have found no pasture, And have gone without strength before the pursuer.
- 7 In the days of her affliction and her persecutions, Jerusalem remembers all her pleasant things which have been from the days of old: When her people

fell by the hand of the oppressor, and there was none to help her, Her oppressors saw her,—they laughed at her times of rest.

8 Jerusalem hath sinned grievously, therefore she hath become an abomination: All those who honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness; And she herself sighs, and turns backward.

9 Her filth is on her flowing skirts; she remembered not her latter end; And so she sank wonderfully: she has no comforter. "O Jahveh, behold my misery!" for the enemy hath boasted.

10 The oppressor hath spread out his hand upon all her precious things; For she hath seen [how] the heathen have come into her sanctuary, [Concerning] whom Thou didst command that they should not enter into Thy community.

11 All her people [have been] sighing, seeking bread; They have given their precious things for bread, to revive their soul. See, O Jahveh, and consider that I am become despised.

12 [Is it] nothing to you, all ye that pass along the way? Consider, and see if there be sorrow like my sorrow which is done to me, Whom Jahveh hath afflicted in the day of the burning of His anger.

13 From above He sent fire in my bones, so that it mastered them; He hath spread a net for my feet, He hath turned me back; He hath made me desolate and ever languishing.

14 The yoke of my transgressions hath been fastened to by His hand; They have interwoven themselves, they have come up on my neck; it hath made my strength fail: The Lord hath put me into the hands of [those against whom] I cannot rise up.

15 The Lord hath removed all my strong ones in my midst; He hath proclaimed a festival against me, to break my young men in pieces: The Lord hath trodden the wine-press for the virgin daughter of Judah.

16 Because of these things I weep; my eye, my eye runneth down [with] water, Because a comforter is far from me, one to refresh my soul; My children are destroyed, because the enemy hath prevailed.

17 Zion stretcheth forth her hands, [yet] there is none to comfort her; Jahveh hath commanded concerning Jacob; his oppressors are round about him: Jerusalem hath become an abomination among them.

18 Jahveh is righteous, for I have rebelled against His mouth. Hear now, all ye peoples, and behold my sorrow; My virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.

19 I called for my lovers, [but] they have deceived me; My priests and my elders expired in the city, When they were seeking bread for themselves, that they might revive their spirit.

20 Behold, O Jahveh, how distressed I am! my bowels are moved; My heart is turned within me, for I was very rebellious: Without, the sword bereaveth [me]; within, [it is] like death.

21 They have heard that I sigh, I have no comforter: All mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad because Thou hast done it. Thou bringest the day [that] Thou hast proclaimed, that they may be like me.

22 Let all their wickedness come before Thee, And do to them as Thou hast done to me because of all my transgressions; For my sighs are many and my heart is faint.

Lamentations 1:1–22. The poem begins with a doleful meditation on the deeply degraded state into which Jerusalem has fallen; and in the first half (vv. 1–11), lament is made over the sad condition of the unhappy city, which, forsaken by all her friends, and persecuted by enemies, has lost all her glory, and, finding no comforter in her misery, pines in want and disesteem. In the second half (vv. 12–22), the city herself is introduced, weeping, and giving expression to her sorrow over the evil determined against her because of her sins. Both portions are closely connected. On the one hand, we find, even in vv. 9 and 11, tones of lamentation, like signs from the city, coming into the description of her misery, and preparing the way for the introduction of her lamentation in vv. 12–22; on the other hand, her sin is mentioned even so early as in vv. 5 and 8 as the cause of her misfortune, and the transition thus indicated from complaint to the confession of guilt found in the second part. This transition is made in v. 17 by means of a kind of meditation on the cheerless and helpless condition of the city. The second half of the poem is thereby divided into two equal portions, and in such a manner that, while in the former of these (vv. 12–16) it is

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complaint that prevails, and the thought of guilt comes forward only in v. 14, in the latter (vv. 18–22) the confession of God’s justice and of sin in the speaker becomes most prominent; and the repeated mention of misery and oppression rises into an entreaty for deliverance from the misery, and the hope that the Lord will requite all evil on the enemy.

Lamentations 1:1–11. Doleful consideration and description of the dishonour that has befallen Jerusalem. In these verses the prophet, in the name of the godly, pours out his heart before the Lord. The dreadful turn that things have taken is briefly declared in v. 1 in two clauses, which set forth the fall of Jerusalem from its former glory into the depths of disgrace and misery, in such a way that the verse contains the subject unfolded in the description that follows. We have deviated from the Masoretic pointing, and arranged the verse into three members, as in the succeeding verses, which nearly throughout form tristichs, and have been divided into two halves by means of the Athnach; but we agree with the remark of Gerlach, “that, according to the sense, **הִיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה** and not **הִיְתָה לְמָם** is the proper antithesis to **רַבְּתֵי בְּגוֹיִם**.” **רַבְּתֵי בְּגוֹיִם** is here, as in 2:1; 4:1, 2, an expression of complaint mingled with astonishment; so in Jer. 48:17, Isa. 1:21. “She sits solitary” (cf. Jer. 15:17) is intensified by “she has become like a widow.” Her sitting alone is a token of deep sorrow (cf. Neh. 1:4), and, as applied to a city, is a figure of desolation; cf. Isa. 27:10. Here, however, the former reference is the main one; for Jerusalem is personified as a woman, and, with regard to its numerous population, is viewed as the mother of a great multitude of children. **רַבְּתֵי** is a form of the construct state, lengthened by *Yod compaginis*, found thrice in this verse, and also in Isa. 1:21, elegiac composition; such forms are used, in general, only in poetry that preserves and affects the antique style, and reproduces its peculiar ring. According to the twofold meaning of **רַב** (*Much* and *Great*), **רַבְּתֵי** in the first clause designates the multiplicity, multitude of the

population; in the second, the greatness or dignity of the position that Jerusalem assumed among the nations, corresponding to the **שָׂרְתֵי מְדִינֹת**, “a princess among the provinces.” **מְדִינֹת** (properly, the circuit of judgment or jurisdiction), is the technical expression for the provinces of the empires in Asia (cf. Esth. 1:1, 22, etc.), and hence, after the exile, was sued of Judah, Ezra 2:1, Neh. 7:6, and in 1 Kings 20:17 of the districts in the kingdom of Israel. Here, however, **הַמְדִינֹת** are not the circuits or districts of Judah (Thenius), but the provinces of the heathen nations rendered subject to the kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon (corresponding to **הַגּוֹיִים**), as in Eccles. 2:8.

Jerusalem was formerly a princess among the provinces, during the flourishing period of the Jewish kingdom under David and Solomon. The writer keeps this time before his mind, in order to depict the contrast between the past and present. The city that once ruled over nations and provinces has now become but dependent on others. **מָם** (the derivation of which is disputed) does not mean soccage or tribute, but the one who gives soccage service, a soccager; see on Ex. 1:11 and 1 Kings 4:6. The words, “The princess has become a soccager,” signify nothing more than, “She who once ruled over peoples and countries has now fallen into abject servitude,” and are not (with Thenius) to be held as “referring to the fact that the remnant that has been left behind, or those also of the former inhabitants of the city who have returned home, have been set to harder labour by the conquerors.” When we find the same writer inferring from this, that these words presuppose a state of matters in which the country round Jerusalem has been for some time previously under the oppression of Chaldean officers, and moreover holding the opinion that the words “how she sits ...” could only have been written by one who had *for a considerable period* been looking on Jerusalem in its desolate condition, we can only wonder at such an utter want of power to understand poetic language.

Lamentations 1:2. In this sorrow of hers she has not a single comforter, since all her friends from whom she could expect consolation have become faithless to her, and turned enemies. בָּכוּ תִבְכֶּה, “weeping she weeps,” i.e., she weeps very much, or bitterly, not continually (Meier); the inf. abs. before the verb does not express the continuation, but the intensity of the action [Gesenius, § 131, 3, *a*; Ewald, § 312]. בַּלַּיְלָה, “in the night,” not “on into the night” (Ewald). The weeping by night does not exclude, but includes, weeping by day; cf. 2:18f. Night is mentioned as the time when grief and sorrow are wont to give place to sleep. When tears do not cease to flow even during the night, the sorrow must be overwhelming. The following clause, “and her tears are upon her cheek,” serves merely to intensify, and must not be placed (with Thenius) in antithesis to what precedes: “while her sorrow shows itself *most violently* during the loneliness of the night, her cheeks are yet always wet with tears (even during the day).” But the greatness of this sorrow of heart is due to the fact that she has no comforter,—a thought which is repeated in vv. 9, 16, 17, and 21. For her friends are faithless, and have become enemies. “Lovers” and “friends” are the nations with which Jerusalem made alliances, especially Egypt (cf. Jer. 2:36f.); then the smaller nations round about,—Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Phoenicians, with which Zedekiah had conspired against the king of Babylon, Jer. 27:3. Testimony is given in Ps. 137:7 to the hostile dealing on the part of the Edomites against Judah at the destruction of Jerusalem; and Ezekiel (Ezek. 25:3, 6) charges the Ammonite and Tyrians with having shown malicious delight over the fall of Jerusalem; but the hostility of the Moabites is evident from the inimical behaviour of their King Baalis towards Judah, mentioned in Jer. 40:14.

Lamentations 1:3. With v. 3 begins the specific account of the misery over which Jerusalem sorrows so deeply. Judah has gone into exile, but she does not find any rest there among the nations. “Judah” is the population not merely of

Jerusalem, but of the whole kingdom, whose deportation is bewailed by Jerusalem as the mother of the whole country. Although יהודה designates the people, and not the country, it is construed as a feminine, because the inhabitants are regarded as the daughter of the land; cf. Ewald, § 174, *b* [and Gesenius, § 107, 4, *a*]. מֵעַיִי וְגוֹרֵי has been explained, since J. D. Michaelis, by most modern expositors (Rosenmüller, Maurer, Ewald, Thenius, Nägelsbach), and previously by Calvin, as referring to the cause of the emigration, “from (because of) misery and much servitude;” and in harmony with this view, גְּלוֹתָהּ יְהוּדָה has been understood, not of the deportation of Judah into exile, but of the voluntary emigration of the fugitives who sought to escape from the power of the Chaldeans by fleeing into foreign countries, partly before and partly after the destruction of Jerusalem. But this interpretation neither agrees with the meaning of the words nor the context. Those fugitives cannot be designated “Judah,” because, however numerous one may think they were, they formed but a fraction of the inhabitants of Judah: the flower of the nation had been carried off to Babylon into exile, for which the usual word is גְּלוּתָהּ. The context also requires us to refer the words to involuntary emigration into exile. For, in comparison with this, the emigration of fugitives to different countries was so unimportant a matter that the writer could not possibly have been silent regarding the deportation of the people, and placed this secondary consideration in the foreground as the cause of the sorrow. מֵעַיִי is not to be taken in a causal sense, for מֵן simply denotes the coming out of a certain condition, “out of misery,” into which Judah had fallen through the occupation of the country, first by Pharaoh-Necho, then by the Chaldeans; and רַב עֲבֹדָה does not mean “much service,” but “much labour.” For עֲבֹדָה does not mean “service” (= עֲבָדוּת), but “labour, work, business,” e.g. עֲבֹדַת הַמֶּלֶךְ, “the service of the king,” i.e., the service to be

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rendered to the king in the shape of work (1 Chron. 26:30), and the labour connected with public worship (1 Chron. 9:13; 28:14, etc.); here, in connection with עָנָה, it means severe labour and toil which the people had to render, partly for the king, that he might get ready the tribute imposed on the country, and partly to defend the country and the capital against those who sought to conquer them. Although Judah had wandered out from a condition of misery and toil into exile, yet even there she found no rest among the nations, just as Moses had already predicted to the faithless nation, Deut. 28:65. All her pursuers find her בֵּין הַמְּצָרִים, *inter angustias* (Vulgate). This word denotes "straits," narrow places where escape is impossible (Ps. 116:3; 118:5), or circumstances in life from which no escape can be found.

Lamentations 1:4. Zion (i.e., Jerusalem, as the holy city) is laid waste; feasts and rejoicing have disappeared from it. "The ways of Zion" are neither the streets of Jerusalem (Rosenmüller), which are called הַדְּרוֹת, nor the highways or main roads leading to Zion from different directions (Thenius, who erroneously assumes that the temple, which was situated on Moriah, together with its fore-courts, could only be reached through Zion), but the roads or highways leading to Jerusalem. These are "mourning," i.e., in plain language, desolate, deserted, because there are no longer any going up to Jerusalem to observe the feasts. For this same reason the gates of Zion (i.e., the city gates) are also in ruins, because there is no longer any one going out and in through them, and men no longer assemble there. The reason why the priests and the virgins are here conjoined as representatives of the inhabitants of Jerusalem is, that lamentation is made over the cessation of the religious feasts. The virgins are here considered as those who enlivened the national festivals by playing, singing, and dancing: Jer. 31:13; Ps. 68:26; Judg. 21:19, 21; Ex. 15:20. נִגְוָה (Niph'al of נָגַה) is used here, as in Zeph. 2:13, of sorrow over the cessation of the festivals. Following the arbitrary rendering,

ἀγόμενοι, of the LXX, Ewald would alter the word in the text into נִהְיָוָה, "carried captive." But there is no necessity for this: he does not observe that this rendering does not harmonize with the parallelism of the clauses, and that נִהְיָוָה means to drive away, but not to lead captive. וְהִיא, "and she (Zion) herself" is in bitterness (cf. Ruth 1:13, 20), i.e., she feels bitter sorrow. In vv. 6, 7, are mentioned the causes of this grief.

Lamentations 1:5. Her adversaries or oppressors, in relation to her, have become the head (and Judah thus the tail), as was threatened, Deut. 28:44; whereas, according to v. 13 in that same address of Moses, the reverse was intended. Her enemies, knowing that their power is supreme, and that Judah has been completely vanquished, are quite at ease, secure (שָׁלוֹן, cf. Jer. 12:1). This unhappy fate Zion has brought on herself through the multitude of her own transgressions. Her children (עוֹלָלִים, children of tender age) are driven away by the enemy like a flock. The comparison to a flock of lambs is indicated by לְפָנָי. But Zion has not merely lost what she loves most (the tender children), but all her glory; so that even her princes, enfeebled by hunger, cannot escape the pursuers, who overtake them and make them prisoners. Like deer that find no pasture, they flee exhausted before the pursuer. כְּאַיִלִים has been rendered ὡς κριοὶ by the LXX, and *ut arietes* by the Vulgate; hence Kalkschmidt, Böttcher (*Aehrenl.* S. 94), and Thenius would read כְּאַיִלִים, against which Rosenmüller has remarked: *perperam, nam hirci non sunt fugacia animalia, sed cervi*. Raschi had already indicated the point of the comparison in the words, *quibus nullae vires sunt ad effugiendum, fame eorum robore debilitato*. The objections raised against כְּאַיִלִים as the correct reading are founded on the erroneous supposition that the subject treated of is the carrying away of the princes into exile; and that for the princes, in contrast with the young, no more suitable emblem could be

chosen than the ram. But רֹדֵף does not mean “the driver,” him who leads or drives the captives into exile, but “the pursuer,” who runs after the fugitive and seeks to catch him. The words treat of the capture of the princes: the flight of the king and his princes at the taking of Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:3f.) hovered before the writer’s mind. For such a subject, the comparison of the fugitive princes to starved or badly fed rams is inappropriate; but it is suitable enough to compare them with harts which had lost all power to run, because they had been unable to find any pasture, and בְּלֵא־כֹחַ (without strength, i.e., in weakness) are pursued and caught.

Lamentations 1:7. The loss of all her magnificence (v. 7) brings to the remembrance of the sorrowing city, in her trouble, the former days of her now departed glory. “Jerusalem” is not the totality of those who are carried away (Thenius), but the city personified as the daughter of Zion (cf. v. 6). “The days of her affliction,” etc., is not the direct object of “remembers,” as Pareau and Kalkschmidt assume, with the LXX; the object is “all her pleasant things.” If “the days of her affliction” were also intended to be the object, “all her pleasant things” would be preceded by the copula ו, which Pareau indeed supplies, but arbitrarily. Moreover, the combination of the days of misery with the glory of bygone days is inappropriate, because Jerusalem feels her present misery directly, and does not need first to call them to remembrance. “The days of her affliction,” etc., is the accusative of duration. Living through the times of her adversity, Jerusalem thinks of former happy times, and this remembrance increases her sorrow. מְרֹדֵדִים occurs only here, in 3:19 and in Isa. 58:7: in meaning it is connected with רוּד, *vagari*, and signifies roaming,—not voluntary, but compulsory,—rejection, persecution; while the adjective מְרֹדֵדִים, found in Isaiah, is, as regards its form, taken from מְרַד, which is cognate with רוּד. מְרֹדֵדִים or מַחְמוּדִים (v. 11, *Kethib*) is perhaps

used in a more general sense than מְרֹדֵדִים, 2:4 and 1:11 (*Qeri*), an signifies what is costly, splendid, viz., gracious gifts, both of a temporal and spiritual kind, which Israel formerly possessed, while מְרֹדֵדִים signifies costly treasures. “The days of old” are the times of Moses and Joshua, of David and Solomon. In the words, “when her people fell,” etc., the days of misery are more exactly specified. The suffix in רְאוּהָ refers to Jerusalem. צָרִים are the foes into whose power Jerusalem fell helplessly, not specially the escorts of those who were carried away (Thenius). They made a mockery of her מְשַׁבְּתִים. This word is ἄπ. λεγ. It is not identical in meaning with שְׁבֻתוֹת, *sabbata* (Vulgate, Luther, etc.), though connected with it; nor does it signify *deletiones*, destructions (Gesenius), but *cessationes*. This last rendering, however, is not to be taken according to the explanation of Rosenmüller: *quod cessasset omnis ille decor, qui nominatus este ante, principatus et prosper rerum status*; but rather as L. Cappellus in his *nott. crit.* expresses it: *quod nunc terra ejus deserta jacet nec colitur et quasi cessat et feriatur*, though he does not quite exhaust the meaning. As Gerlach rightly remarks, the expression is “evidently used with reference to the threatenings given in the law, Lev. 26:34, 35, that the land would observe its Sabbaths,—that it will keep them during the whole period of the desolation, when Israel is in the land of his enemies.” We must not, however, restrict the reference merely to the uncultivated state of the fields, but extend it so that it shall be applied to cessation from all kinds of employment, even those connected with the worship of God, which were necessary for the hallowing of the Sabbath. The mockery of enemies does not apply to the Jewish celebration of the Sabbath (to which Grotius refers the words), but to the cessation of the public worship of the Lord, inasmuch as the heathen, by destroying Jerusalem and the temple, fancied they had not only put an end to the worship of God of the Jews, but also conquered the God of Israel as a helpless

national deity, and made a mock of Israel's faith in Jahveh as the only true God.

Lamentations 1:8f. But Jerusalem has brought this unutterable misery on herself through her grievous sins. **הִטָּוֶה** is intensified by the noun **טָוֶה**, instead of the inf. abs., as in Jer. 46:5.

Jerusalem has sinned grievously, and therefore has become an object of aversion. **נִדְּהָ** does not mean εἰς σάλον (LXX), or *instabilis* (Vulgate); nor is it, with the Chaldee, Raschi, and most of the ancient expositors, to be derived from **נָדָה**: we must rather, with modern expositors, regard it as a lengthened form of **נִדְּהָ**, which indeed is the reading given in twenty codices of Kennicott. Regarding these forms, cf. Ewald, § 84, *a*. **נִדְּהָ** (*prop.* what one should flee from) signifies in particular the uncleanness of the menstrual discharge in women, Lev. 12:2, 5, etc.; then the uncleanness of a woman in this condition, Lev. 15:19, etc.; here it is transferred to Jerusalem, personified as such an unclean woman, and therefore shunned. **הִזְיִל**, the Hiphil of **זָלַל** (as to the form, cf. Ewald, § 114, *c*), occurs only in this passage, and signifies to esteem lightly, the opposite of **כָּבַד**, to esteem, value highly; hence **זָלַל**, "despised," v. 11, as in Jer. 15:19. Those who formerly esteemed her—her friends, and those who honoured her, i.e., her allies—now despise her, because they have seen her nakedness. The nakedness of Jerusalem means her sins and vices that have now come to the light. She herself also, through the judgment that has befallen her, has come to see the infamy of her deeds, sighs over them, and turns away for shame, i.e., withdraws from the people so that they may no longer look on her in her shame.

Lamentations 1:9. In v. 9 the figure of uncleanness is further developed. Her uncleanness sticks to the hems or skirts of her garment. **טִמְאַה** is the defilement caused by touching a person or thing Levitically unclean, Lev. 5:3; 7:21; here, therefore, it means defilement by sins and crimes. This has now

been revealed by the judgment, because she did not think of her end. These words point to the warning given in the song of Moses, Deut. 32:29: "If they were wise, they would understand this (that apostasy from the Lord brings heavy punishment after it), they would think of their end," i.e., the evil issue of continued resistance to God's commands. But the words are especially a quotation from Isa. 47:7, where they are used of Babylon, that thought she would always remain mistress, and did not think of the end of her pride; therefore on her also came the sentence, "Come down from thy glory, sit in the dust," Isa. 47:1, cf. Jer. 48:18. Jerusalem has now experienced this also; she has come down wonderfully, or fallen from the height of her glory into the depths of misery and disgrace, where she has none to comfort her, and is constrained to sigh, "O Lord, behold my misery!" These words are to be taken as a sign from the daughter of Zion, deeply humbled through shame and repentance for her sins. This is required by the whole tenor of the words, and confirmed by a comparison with vv. 11 and 20. **פְּלֵאִים** is used adverbially; cf. Ewald, § 204, *b* [Gesenius, § 100, 2, *b*]. There is no need for supplying anything after **הִגְדִּיל**, cf. Jer. 48:26, 42, Dan. 8:4, 8, 11, 25, although **לְעֵשׂוֹת** originally stood with it, e.g., Joel 2:20; cf. Ewald, § 122, *c* [and Gesenius' *Lexicon*, *s.v.* **הִגְדִּיל**]. The clause **כִּי הִגְדִּיל**, which assigns the reason, refers not merely to the sighing of Jerusalem, but also to the words, "and she came down wonderfully." The boasting of the enemy shows itself in the regardless, arrogant treatment not merely of the people and their property, but also of their holy things.

Lamentations 1:10. This is specially mentioned in v. 10. The enemy has spread out his hand over all her jewels (**כֶּתֹמְדֵיהָ**, the costly treasures of Jerusalem which were plundered), and even forced into the sanctuary of the Lord to spoil it of its treasures and vessels. C. B. Michaelis, Thenius, Gerlach, Nägelsbach, etc., would restrict the meaning of **כֶּתֹמְדֵיהָ** to the

precious things of the sanctuary; but not only are there no sufficient reasons for this, but the structure of the clauses is against it. Neither does the expression, “all our precious things,” in Isa. 69:10, signify merely the articles used in public worship on which the people had placed their desire; nor are “all her pleasant vessels” merely the sacred vessels of the temple. In the latter passage, the suffix in *מִחֲמַדֶּיהָ* refers to Jerusalem; and inasmuch as the burning of all the palaces of the city (*אֶרְמֹנֶיהָ*) has been mentioned immediately before, we are so much the less at liberty to restrict “all her precious vessels” to the vessels of the temple, and must rather, under that expression, include all the precious vessels of the city, i.e., of the palaces and the temple. And Delitzsch has already remarked, on Isa. 64:10, that “under *מִחֲמַדֶּיהָ* may be included favourite spots, beautiful buildings, pleasure gardens; and only the parallelism induces us to think especially of articles used in public worship.” But when Thenius, in the passage now before us, brings forward the succeeding words, “for she hath seen,” as a proof that by “all her pleasant things” we are to understand especially the vessels and utensils of the temple, he shows that he has not duly considered the contents of the clause introduced by *כִּי* (for). The clause characterizes the enemy’s forcing his way into the sanctuary, i.e., the temple of Jerusalem, as an unheard of act of sacrilege, because *גוֹיִם* were not to enter even into the *קֹהֵל* of Jahveh. The subject treated of is not by any means the robbing of the temple—the plundering of its utensils and vessels. The prohibition against the coming, i.e., the receiving of foreigners into the “congregation,” is given, Deut. 23:4, with regard to the Ammonites and Moabites: this neither refers to the *jus connubii* (Grotius, Rosenmüller), nor to the civil rights of Jewish citizens (Kalkschmidt), but to reception into religious communion with Israel, the *ecclesia* of the Old Covenant (*קֹהֵל יְהוָה*). In Deut. 23:8, the restriction is relaxed in favour of the Edomites and Egyptians, but in Ezek. 44:7, 9, in

accordance with the *ratio legis*, extended to all uncircumcised sons of strangers. Hence, in the verse now before us, we must not, with Rosenmüller and Thenius, restrict the reference of *גוֹיִם* to the Ammonites and Moabites as accomplices of the Chaldeans in the capture of Jerusalem and the plundering of the temple (2 Kings 24:2); rather the *גוֹיִם* are identical with those mentioned in the first member of the verse as *צָר*, i.e., the Chaldeans, so called not “because their army was made up of different nationalities, but because the word contains the notice of their being *heathens*,—profane ones who had forced into the sanctuary” (Gerlach). But if we look at the structure of the clauses, we find that “for she saw,” etc., is parallel to “for the enemy hath boasted” of v. 9; and the clause, “for she saw nations coming,” etc., contains a further evidence of the deep humiliation of Jerusalem; so that we may take *כִּי* as showing the last step in a climax, since the connection of the thought is this: For the enemy hath boasted, spreading his hand over all her precious things,—he hath even forced his way into the sanctuary of the Lord. If this is mentioned as the greatest disgrace that could befall Jerusalem, then the spreading out of the hands over the precious things of Jerusalem cannot be understood of the plundering of the temple. The construction *גוֹיִם בָּאוּ* is in sense exactly similar to the Latin *vidit gentes venisse*, cf. Ewald, § 284, *b*; and on the construction *צוֹיְתָה* *לֹא יבֹאוּ*, cf. Ewald, § 336, *b*. *דָּן בְּקֹהֵל לְךָ* does not stand for *בְּקֹהֵל דָּן* (LXX, Pareau, Rosenmüller), for *הַקֹּהֵל* is not the congregation of Judah, but that of Jahveh; and the meaning is: They shall not come to thee, the people of God, into the congregation of the Lord.

Lamentations 1:11. Besides this disgrace, famine also comes on her. All her people, i.e., the whole of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, sigh after bread, and part with their jewels for food, merely to prolong their life. The participles *נֹאֲנָחִים*, *מְבַקְשִׁים*, are not to be translated by

preterites; they express a permanent condition of things, and the words are not to be restricted in their reference to the famine during the siege of the city (Jer. 37:21; 38:9; 52:6). Even after it was reduced, the want of provisions may have continued; so that the inhabitants of the city, starved into a surrender, delivered up their most valuable things to those who plundered them, for victuals to be obtained from these enemies. Yet it is not correct to refer the words to the present sad condition of those who were left behind, as distinguished from their condition during the siege and immediately after the taking of the city (Gerlach). This cannot be inferred from the participles. The use of these is fully accounted for by the fact that the writer sets forth, as present, the whole of the misery that came on Jerusalem during the siege, and which did not immediately cease with the capture of the city; he describes it as a state of matters that still continues. As to *מִחְמוֹדֵיהֶם*, see on v. 7. *הָשִׁיב נַפְשׁ*, “to bring back the soul,” the life, i.e., by giving food to revive one who is nearly fainting, to keep in his life (= *הָשִׁיב רוּחַ*); cf. Ruth 4:15, 1 Sam. 30:12, and in a spiritual sense, Ps. 19:8; 23:3. In the third member of the verse, the sigh which is uttered as a prayer (v. 9b) is repeated in an intensified form; and the way is thus prepared for the transition to the lamentation and suppliant request of Jerusalem, which forms the second half of the poem.

Lamentations 1:12–16. *The lamentation of the city.*—V. 12. The first words, *לֹא אֶלְיָכֶם*, are difficult to explain. The LXX have *οἱ πρὸς ὑμᾶς*; but the reading ought certainly to be *οἱ π. ὑ*. The Vulgate is, *o vos omnes*; the Chaldee, *adjuro vos omnes*. They all seem to have taken *לֹא* as an exclamation. Hence Le Clerc and others would read *לֹאִי*; but in this case one would require to supply a verb: thus, Le Clerc renders *utinam adspiciatis*, or, “O that my cry might reach you!” But these insertions are very suspicious. The same holds true of the explanation offered by J. D. Michaelis in his edition of Lowth on Hebrew Poetry, Lect. xxii.: *non vobis, transeuntes in via,*

haec acclamo (viz., the closing words of v. 11): this is decidedly opposed by the mere fact that passers-by certainly could not regard a call addressed to Jahveh as applying to them. Without supplying something or other, the words, as they stand, remain incomprehensible. Nägelsbach would connect them with what follows: “[Look] not to yourselves ... but look and see ...” But the antithesis, “Look not upon yourselves, but look on me (or on my sorrow),” has no proper meaning. If we compare the kindred thought presented in v. 18, “Hear, all ye peoples, and behold my sorrow,” then *לֹא אֶלְיָכֶם* seems to express an idea corresponding to *שָׁמְעוּ אֲנִי*. But we obtain this result only if we take the words as a question, as if *לֹא* = *הֲלֹא*, though not in the sense of an asseveration (which would be unsuitable here, for which reason also *הֲלֹא* is not used); the question is shown to be such merely by the tone, as in Ex. 8:22, 2 Sam. 23:5. Thus, we might render the sense with Gerlach: Does not (my sighing—or, more generally, my misery—come) to you? The Syriac, Lowth, Ewald, Thenius, and Vaihinger have taken the words as a question; Ewald, following Prov. 8:4, would supply *אֶקְרָא*. But such an insertion gives a rendering which is both harsh and unjustifiable, although it lies at the foundation of Luther’s “I say unto you.” Hence we prefer Gerlach’s explanation, and accordingly give the free rendering, “Do ye not observe, sc. what has befallen me,—or, my misery?” The words are, in any case, intended to prepare the way for, and thereby render more impressive, the summons addressed to all those passing by to look on and consider her sorrow. *עוֹלָלִי* is passive (Poal): “which is done to me.” Since *הוֹנָה* has no object, the second *אֶשָׂר* does not permit of being taken as parallel with the first, though the Chaldee, Rosenmüller, Kalkschmidt, and others have so regarded it, and translate: “with which Jahveh hath afflicted me.” With Ewald, Thenius, Gerlach, etc., we must refer it to *לִי*: “me whom Jahveh hath afflicted.” The expression, “on the

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day of the burning of His anger," is pretty often found in Jeremiah; see 4:8, 26; 25:37, etc.

Lamentations 1:13–15. In vv. 13–15, the misfortunes that have befallen Jerusalem are enumerated in a series of images. "Out from the height (i.e., down from heaven) hath He sent fire into my bones;" וַיִּרְדְּנָה is rendered by Luther, "and let it have the mastery" (Ger. *und dasselbige walten lassen*). Thenius explains this as being correct, and accordingly seeks to point the word וַיִּרְדְּנָה, while Ewald takes רָדָה to be cognate with רָתַח, and translates it "made them red-hot;" and Rosenmüller, following N. G. Schröder, attributes to רָדָה, from the Arabic, the meaning *collisit, percussit lapide*. All these explanations are not only far-fetched and incapable of lexical vindication, but also unnecessary. The change of vowels, so as to make it the Hiphil, is opposed by the fact that רָדָה, in the Hiphil, does not mean to cause to manage, rule, but to read down, subdue (Isa. 41:2). In Kal, it means to tread, tread down, and rule, as in Jer. 5:31, where Gesenius and Deitrich erroneously assume the meaning of "striding, going," and accordingly render this passage, "it stalks through them." The lexically substantiated meaning, "subdue, rule, govern, (or, more generally,) overpower," is quite sufficient for the present passage, since רָדָה is construed not merely with כִּי, but also with the accusative: the subject is שֶׁאֵשׁ, which is also construed as a masc. in Jer. 48:45; and the suffix נָהּ- may either be taken as a neuter, or referred to "my bones," without compelling us to explain it as meaning *unumquodque os* (Rosenmüller, etc.). The bones are regarded as bodily organs in which the pain is most felt, and are not to be explained away allegorically to mean *urbes meas munitas* (Chaldee). While fire from above penetrated the bones, God from beneath placed nets for the feet which thus were caught. On this figure, cf. Jer. 50:24, Hos. 7:12, etc. The consequence of this was that "He turned me back," *ita ut progredi pedemque extricare non possem, sed capta detinerer* (C. B.

Michaelis),—not, "he threw me down backwards," i.e., made me fall heavily (Thenius). "He hath made me desolate" (שׁוֹמְמָה),—not *obstupescentem, perturbatam, desperatam* (Rosenmüller); the same word is applied to Tamar, 2 Sam. 13:20, as one whose happiness in life has been destroyed. "The whole day (i.e., constantly, uninterruptedly) sick," or ill. The city is regarded as a person whose happiness in life has been destroyed, and whose health has been broken. This miserable condition is represented in v. 14, under another figure, as a yoke laid by God on this people for their sins. גָּשְׁקָד, ἄπ. λεγ., is explained by Kimchi as גִּקְשֵׁר אוֹ נִתְחַבֵּר, *compactum vel colligatum*, according to which שְׁקָד would be allied to עָקָד. This explanation suits the context; on the other hand, neither the interpretation based on the Talmudic סָקָד, *punxit, stimulavit*, which is given by Raschi and Aben Ezra, nor the interpretations of the LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate, which are founded on the reading גָּשְׁקָד, harmonize with עָל, which must be retained, as is shown by the words עָלוּ עַל-צְוֹנָרִי. Ewald supposes that שְׁקָד was the technical expression for the harnessing on of the yoke. "The yoke of my transgressions" (not "of my chastisements," as Gesenius, Rosenmüller, and Ewald think) means the yoke formed of the sins. The notion of punishment is not contained in פָּשְׁעֵי, but in the imposition of the yoke upon the neck, by which the misdeeds of sinful Jerusalem are laid on her, as a heavy, depressing burden which she must bear. These sins become interwoven or intertwine themselves (יִשְׁתַּרְגְּוּ), after the manner of intertwined vine-tendrils (שְׂרֵיגִים, Gen. 40:10; cf. remarks on Job 40:17), as the Chaldee paraphrase well shows; and, through this interweaving, form the yoke that has come on the neck of the sinful city. *Veluti ex contortis funibus aut complicatis lignis jugum quoddam construitur, ita h. l. praevaricationis tanquam materia insupportabilis jugi considerantur* (C. B.

Michaelis). עָלָה is used of the imposition of the yoke, as in Num. 19:2, 1 Sam. 6:7. The effect of the imposition of this yoke is: "it hath made my strength to stumble (fail)." Pareau, Thenius, Vaihinger, and Nägelsbach assume God as the subject of the verb הִקְשִׁיל; but this neither accords with the current of the description, nor with the emphatic mention of the subject אֲדֹנָי in the clause succeeding this. Inasmuch as, in the first member of the verse, God is not the subject, but the address takes a passive turn, it is only the leading word עָלָה that can be the subject of הִקְשִׁיל: the yoke of sins which, twined together, have come on the neck, has made the strength stumble, i.e., broken it. This effect of the yoke of sins is stated, in the last member, in simple and unfigurative speech: "the Lord hath given me into the hands of those whom I cannot withstand," i.e., before whom I cannot maintain my ground. On the construction לֹא אוֹכֵל, cf. Ewald, § 333, *b*; Gesenius, § 116, 3. קוֹם is here viewed in the sense of standing fast, maintaining ground, as in Ps. 18:39; and, construed with the accusative, it signifies, to withstand any one; its meaning is not *surgere*, which Thenius, following the Vulgate, would prefer: the construction here requires the active meaning of the verb.

Lamentations 1:15. In v. 15 this thought is further carried out. סָלָה and סָלָה, "to lift up," is only used in poetry; in Ps. 119:118 it takes the Aramaic meaning *vilipendere*, as if in reference to things that can be lifted easily; here it means *tollere*, to lift up, take away (LXX ἐξήρσε, Vulgate *abstulit*), tear away forcibly, just as both meanings are combined in נָשָׂא: it does not mean to outweigh, or raise with a jerk,—the warriors being regarded as weighty things, that speedily were raised when the Chaldean power was thrown into the scale (Thenius, and Böttcher in his *Aehrenl.* S. 94). This meaning is not confirmed for the Piel by Job 28:16, 19. קָרָא מוֹעֵד does not mean to summon an assembly, i.e., the multitude of foes (Raschi, Rosenmüller,

Gesenius, Neumann), but to proclaim a festival (cf. 2:22), because in v. 4 and 2:6 (cf. Lev. 23:4) קָרָא יוֹם denotes the feast-day, and in v. 21 קָרָא יוֹם means to proclaim a day. עָלָי means "against me;" for those invited to the feast are the nations that God has invited to destroy the youths, i.e., the young troops of Jerusalem. These celebrate a feast like that of the vintage, at which Jahveh treads the wine-press for the daughter of Judah, because her young men are cut off like clusters of grapes (Jer. 6:9), and thrown into the wine-press (Joel 4:13). The last judgment also is set forth under this figure, Isa. 63:2f.; Rev. 14:19f., 19:15. לְבַת־וִּירְמֵיָהוּ, "to (for) the virgin of Judah;" her young men are regarded as a mass of grapes, whose life-sap (blood) is trodden out in the wine-press. As to the expression בְּתוּלַת בַּת, see on Jer. 14:17.

"The addition of the word 'virgin' brings out the contrast between this fate, brought on through the enemy, at God's command, and the peculiar privilege of Judah as the people of God, in being free from the attacks of enemies" (Gerlach).

Lamentations 1:16. V. 16 concludes this series of thoughts, since the address returns to the idea presented in v. 12, and the unprecedented sorrow (v. 12) gives vent to itself in tears. "Because of these things" refers to the painful realities mentioned in vv. 13–15, which Jerusalem has experienced. The form בּוֹכִיָּה is like the feminine form פְּרִיָּה in Ps. 128:3, Isa. 17:6; cf. Ges. § 75, Rem. 5. The repetition of "my eye" gives greater emphasis, and is quite in the style of Jeremiah; cf. 4:19; 6:14 (Jer. 8:11), 22:29; 23:25; the second עֵינִי is not to be expunged (Pareau and Thenius), although it is not found in the LXX, Vulgate, Arabic, and some codices. On יִרְדָּה מַיִם, cf. Jer. 9:17; 13:17; 14:17.

In these passages stands דִּמְעָה, but here מַיִם, as the stronger expression: the eye flows like water, as if it were running to the ground in water. Gesenius, in his *Thesaurus*, appositely cites the German "sich die Augen aus dem Kopfe weinen" [with which the English corresponds: "to weep one's eyes out of his

head”]. Still stronger is the expression in 3:48. But the sorrow becomes thus grievous, because the weeping one has none to comfort her; friends who could comfort her have faithlessly forsaken her (cf. vv. 2, 9), and her sons are שׁוֹמְמִים, i.e., destroyed, not “astonished” (Jer. 18:16; 19:8), but, as in v. 13, made desolate, i.e., made so unhappy that they cannot bring their mother comfort in her misery. On מָשִׁיב נֶפֶשׁ, cf. v. 11. “Because the enemy hath become strong,” i.e., prevailed (נָבַר as in Jer. 9:2).

Lamentations 1:17. The complaint regarding the want of comforters is corroborated by the writer, who further develops this thought, and gives some proof of it. By this contemplative digression he breaks in on the lamentation of the city, as if the voice of the weeping one were choked with tears, thus he introduces into the complaint a suitable pause, that both serves to divide the lamentation into two, and also brings a turn in its contents. It is in vain that Zion stretches out her hands (פָּרַשׂ בָּ, to make a spreading out with the hands) for comforters and helpers; there is none she can embrace, for Jahveh has given orders against Jacob, [that] those round about him should act as oppressors. סְבִיבָיו are the neighbouring nations round about Israel. These are all of hostile disposition, and strive but to increase his misery; cf. v. 2. Jerusalem has become their abomination (cf. v. 8), since God, in punishment for sins, has exposed her before the heathen nations (cf. v. 8). בֵּינֵיהֶם, “between them,” the neighbouring nations, who live round about Judah. The thought that Jahveh has decreed the suffering which has come on Jerusalem, is laid to heart by her who makes complaint, so that, in v. 18, she owns God’s justice, and lets herself be roused to ask for pity, vv. 19–22.

Starting with the acknowledgment that Jahveh is righteous, because Jerusalem has opposed His word, the sorrowing one anew (v. 18, as in v. 12) calls on the nations to regard her sorrow, which attains its climax when her children, in the bloom of youth, are taken captives by the enemy. But she finds no commiseration among

men; for some, her former friends, prove faithless, and her counsellors have perished (v. 19); therefore she turns to God, making complaint to Him of her great misery (v. 20), because the rest, her enemies, even rejoice over her misery (v. 21): she prays that God may punish these. Gerlach has properly remarked, that this conclusion of the chapter shows Jerusalem does not set forth her fate as an example for the warning of the nations, nor desires thereby to obtain commiseration from them in her present state (Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Thenius, Vaihinger); but that the apostrophe addressed to the nations, as well as that to passers-by (v. 12), is nothing more than a poetic turn, used to express the boundless magnitude of this her sorrow and her suffering. On the confession “Righteous is Jahveh,” cf. Jer. 12:1, Deut. 32:4, 2 Chron. 12:6, Ps. 119:37, etc. “Because I have rebelled against His mouth” (i.e., His words and commandments), therefore I am suffering what I have merited. On מָרָה פִּיהוּ, cf. Num. 20:24, 1 Kings 13:26. כְּלִ-עַמִּים (without the article, which the *Qeri* supplies) is a form of expression used in poetry, which often drops the article; moreover, we must here bear in mind, that it is not by any means the idea of the totality of the nations that predominates, but nations are addressed merely in indefinite generality: the expression in the text means nations of all places and countries. In order to indicate the greatness of her grief, the sorrowing one mentions the carrying into captivity of the young men and virgins, who are a mother’s joy and hope.

Lamentations 1:19. Ver. 19 is not a continuation of the direct address to the nations, to whom she complains of her distress, but merely a complaint to God regarding the sorrow she endures. The perfects קָרְאוּתֵי, רַמּוֹנֵי, are not preterites, and thus are not to be referred to the past, as if complaint were made that, in the time of need, the lovers of Jerusalem forsook her; they rather indicate accomplished facts, whose consequences reach down to the present time. It was not merely in former times, during the siege, that Jerusalem called to her

friends for help; but even now she still calls, that she may be comforted by them, yet all in vain. Her friends have deceived her, i.e., shamefully disappointed her expectations. From those who are connected with her, too, she can expect neither comfort nor counsel. The priests and the elders, as the helpers and advisers of the city,—the former as representing the community before God, and being the medium of His grace, the latter as being leaders in civil matters,—pined away (גָּוַעַ, *expirare*; here, to pine away through hunger, and expire). כִּי is a temporal particle: “when they were seeking for bread” to prolong their life (וְהִשִּׁיב הָ as in v. 11). The LXX have added καὶ οὐκ ἔσθλον, which Thenius is inclined to regard as a portion of the original text; but it is very evidently a mere conjecture from the context, and becomes superfluous when כִּי is taken as a particle of time.

Lamentations 1:20. Since neither comfort nor advice is to be found with men, Jerusalem makes her complaint of need to God the Lord. “See, Jahveh, that I am distressed. My bowels glow.” הִמְרָמְרוּ, the passive enhancing form, from הִמַּר, is found, besides, only in 2:11, where the clause before us is repeated, and in Job 16:16, where it is used of the countenance, and can only mean to be glowing red; it is scarcely legitimate to derive it from הִמַּר, Arab. *hmr*, to be made red, and must rather be referred to Arab. *chmr*, to ferment, rise into froth; for even in Ps. 55:9 הִמַּר does not mean to be red, but to rise into froth. מַעֲיִם, “bowels,” are the nobler portions of the internal organs of the body, the seat of the affections; cf. Delitzsch’s *Biblical Psychology* (Clark’s translation), p. 314ff. “My heart has turned within me” is an expression used in Hos. 11:8 to designate the feeling of compassion; but here it indicates the most severe internal pain, which becomes thus agonizing through the consciousness of its being deserved on account of resistance to God. מָרוּ for מָרָה, like בָּכוּ, Jer. 22:10; 30:19, etc. Both

forms occur together in other verbs also; cf. Olshausen, *Gram.* § 245, *h* [Ewald, § 238, *e*; Gesen., § 75, Rem. 2]. But the judgment also is fearful; for “without (מְחוּץ, *foris*, i.e., in the streets and the open country) the sword renders childless,” through the slaughter of the troops; “within (בְּבֵית, in the houses) כְּמָוֶת, like death.” It is difficult to account for the use of ךְּ; for neither the ךְּ of comparison nor the so-called ךְּ *veritatis* affords a suitable meaning; and the transposition of the words into *sicut mors intus* (Rosenmüller, after Löwe and Wolfsohn) is an arbitrary change. Death, mentioned in connection with the sword, does not mean death in general, but special forms of death through maladies and plagues, as in Jer. 15:2; 18:21, not merely the fever of hunger, Jer. 14:18; on the other hand, cf. Ezek. 7:15, “the sword without, pestilence and hunger within.” But the difficulty connected with כְּמָוֶת is not thereby removed. The verb שָׁבַל belongs to both clauses; but “the sword” cannot also be the subject of the second clause, of which the nominative must be כְּמָוֶת, “all that is like death,” i.e., everything besides the sword that kills, all other causes of death,—pestilences, famine, etc. ךְּ is used as in כְּמָרָאָה, Dan. 10:18. That this is the meaning is shown by a comparison of the present passage with Deut. 32:25, which must have been before the writer’s mind, so that he took the words of the first clause, viz., “without, the sword bereaves,” almost as they stood, but changed וּמַחְדָּרִים אֵימָה into בְּבֵית כְּמָוֶת, —thus preferring “what is like death,” instead of “terror,” to describe the cause of destruction. Calvin long ago hit the sense in his paraphrase *multae mortes*, and the accompanying explanation: *utitur nota similitudinis, quasi diceret: nihil domi occurrere nisi mortale* (more correctly *mortiferum*). Much light is thrown on the expression by the parallel adduced by Kalkschmidt from *Aeneid*, ii. 368, 369: *crudelis ubique Luctus, ubique pavor, et plurima mortis imago*.

From speaking of friends, a transition is made in v. 21 to enemies. Regarding the explanation of Rosenmüller, *audiverunt quidem amici mei, a me implorati* v. 19, *quod gemens ego ... imo sunt omnes hostes mei*, Thenius observes that it introduces too much. This remark is still more applicable to his own interpretation: "People (certainly) hear how I sigh, (yet) I have no comforter." The antithesis introduced by the insertion of "yet" destroys the simplicity of arrangement among the clauses, although C. B. Michaelis and Gerlach also explain the passage in the same manner. The subject of the words, "they have heard," in the first clause, is not the friends who are said in v. 19 to have been called upon for help, nor those designated in the second clause of v. 21 as "all mine enemies," but persons unnamed, who are only characterized in the second clause as enemies, because they rejoice over the calamity which they have heard of as having befallen Jerusalem. The first clause forms the medium of transition from the faithless friends (v. 19) to the open enemies (v. 21*b*); hence the subject is left undefined, so that one may think of friends and enemies. The foes rejoice that God has brought the evil on her. The words *וְגַם הִבְיֵאתָ וְגַם*, which follow, cannot also be dependent on *כִּי* ("that Thou hast brought the day which Thou hast announced"), inasmuch as the last clause, "and they shall be like me," does not harmonize with them. Indeed, Nägelsbach and Gerlach, who assume that this is the connection of the clause "Thou hast brought," etc., take *וְגַם* adversatively: "but they shall be like me." If, however, "they shall be," etc., were intended to form an antithesis to "all mine enemies have heard," etc., the former clause would be introduced by *וְגַם*. The mere change of tense is insufficient to prove the point. It must further be borne in mind, that in such a case there would be introduced by the words "and they shall be," etc., a new series of ideas, the second great division of the prayer; but this is opposed by the arrangement of the clauses. The second portion of the prayer cannot be attached to the end of the verse. The new series of thoughts

begins rather with "Thou hast brought," which the Syriac has rendered by the imperative, *venire fac*. Similarly Luther translates: "then (therefore) let the day come." C. B. Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Pareau, etc., also take the words optatively, referring to the Arabic idiom, according to which a wish is expressed in a vivid manner by the perfect. This optative use of the perfect certainly cannot be shown to exist in the Hebrew; but perhaps it may be employed to mark what is viewed as certain to follow, in which case the Germans use the present. The use of the perfect shows that the occurrence expected is regarded as so certain to happen, that it is represented as if it had already taken place. The perfects in 3:56–61 are taken in this sense by nearly all expositors. Similarly we take the clause now before us to mean, "Thou bringest on the day which Thou hast proclaimed (announced)," i.e., the day of judgment on the nations, Jer. 25, "so that they become like me," i.e., so that the foes who rejoice over my misfortune suffer the same fate as myself. "The day [which] Thou hast proclaimed" has been specifically rendered in the Vulgate, *adduxisti diem consolationis*, probably with a reference of the proclamation to Isa. 40:2.—After this expression of certainty regarding the coming of a day of punishment for her enemies, there follows, v. 22, the request that all the evil they have done to Jerusalem may come before the face of God, in order that He may punish it (cf. Ps. 109:15 with v. 14),—do to them as He has done to Jerusalem, because of her transgressions. The clause which assigns the reason ("for many are my sighs," etc.) does not refer to that which immediately precedes; for neither the request that retribution should be taken, nor the confession of guilt ("for all my transgressions"), can be accounted for by pointing to the deep misery of Jerusalem, inasmuch as her sighing and sickness are not brought on her by her enemies, but are the result of the sufferings ordained by God regarding her. The words contain the ground of the request that God would look on the misery (v. 20), and show to the wretched one the compassion which men

refuse her. לָבִי דָוָי is exactly the same expression as that in Jer. 8:18; cf. also Isa. 1:5. The reason thus given for making the entreaty forms an abrupt termination, and with these words the sound of lamentation dies away.

Lamentations 2

Lamentation Over the Judgment of Destruction that Has Come on Zion and the Desolation of Judah

- 1 Alas! how the Lord envelopes the daughter of Zion in His wrath! He hath cast down the glory of Israel from heaven to earth; Nor hath He remembered His footstool in the day of His wrath.
- 2 The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, He hath not spared: He hath broken down, in His anger, the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; He hath smitten [them] down to the earth. He hath profaned the kingdom and its princes.
- 3 He hath cut off, in the burning of wrath, every horn of Israel; He hath drawn back His right hand from before the enemy, And hath burned among Jacob like a flaming fire, [which] devours round about.
- 4 He hath bent His bow like an enemy, standing [with] His right hand like an adversary, And He slew all the desires of the eye; On the tent of the daughter of Zion hath He poured out His fury like fire.
- 5 The Lord hath become like an enemy; He hath swallowed up Israel. He hath swallowed up all her palaces, He hath destroyed his strongholds, And hath increased on the daughter of Judah groaning and moaning.
- 6 And He hath violently treated His own enclosure, like a garden; He hath destroyed His own place of meeting: Jahveh hath caused to be forgotten in Zion the festival and the Sabbath, And in the fierceness of His wrath He hath rejected king and priest.
- 7 The Lord hath spurned His own altar, He hath abhorred His own sanctuary; He hath delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; They have made a noise in the house of Jahveh, as [on] the day of a festival.
- 8 Jahveh hath purposed to destroy the walls of the daughter of Zion: He hath stretched out a line, He

hath not drawn back His hand from demolishing; And He hath made the rampart and the [city] wall to mourn; they sorrow together.

9 Her gates have sunk into the earth; He hath destroyed and broken her bars: Her king and her princes are among the nations; there is no law. Her prophets also find no vision from Jahveh.

10 The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, they silent; They have cast up dust upon their head, they have clothed themselves with sackcloth garments: The virgins of Jerusalem have brought down their head to the earth.

11 Mine eyes waste away with tears, My bowels glow, My liver is poured out on the earth, because of the destruction of the daughter of my people; Because the young child and the suckling pine away in the streets of the city.

12 They said to their mothers, Where is corn and wine? When they were fainting like one wounded in the streets of the city, When their soul was poured out into the bosom of their mothers.

13 What shall I testify against thee? what shall I compare to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? What shall I liken to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? For thy destruction is great, like the sea; who can heal thee?

14 Thy prophets have seen for thee vanity and absurdity, And have not revealed thine iniquity, to turn thy captivity; But they have seen for thee burdens of vanity, and expulsion.

15 All that pass by the way clap [their] hands against thee; They hiss and shake their head against the daughter of Jerusalem, [saying, "Is] this the city that they call 'The perfection of beauty, a joy of the whole earth?' "

16 All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: They hiss and gnash the teeth; they say, "We have swallowed [her]; Assuredly this is the day that we have expected; we have found [it], we have seen [it]."

17 Jahveh hath done what He hath purposed: He hath executed His word which He commanded from the days of yore: He hath broken down, and hath not spared: And He hath made the enemy rejoice over thee; He hath raised up the horn of thine adversaries.

18 Their heart crieth out unto the Lord. O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a

stream by day and by night: Give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease.

19 Arise, wail in the night; at the beginning of the watches, Pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord: Lift up thine hands to Him for the soul of thy young children, That faint for hunger at the head of every street.

20 See, O Jahveh, and consider to whom Thou hast acted thus! Shall women eat their [body's] fruit, the children of their care? Or shall priest and prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?

21 The boy and the old man lie without, on the ground; My virgins and my young men have fallen by the sword: Thou hast slain in the day of Thy wrath, Thou hast slaughtered, Thou hast not spared.

22 Thou summonest, as on a feast-day, my terrors round about; And in the day of wrath of Jahveh there was no fugitive or survivor Whom I would have nursed and brought up; mine enemy destroyed them.

Lamentations 2:1–22. This second poem contains a new and more bitter lamentation regarding the fall of Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah; and it is distinguished from the first, partly by the bitterness of the complaint, but chiefly by the fact that while, in the first, the oppressed, helpless, and comfortless condition of Jerusalem is the main feature,—here, on the other hand, it is the judgment which the Lord, in His wrath, has decreed against Jerusalem and Judah, that forms the leading thought in the complaint, as is shown by the prominence repeatedly given to the wrath, rage, burning wrath, etc. (v. 1ff.). The description of this judgment occupies the first part of the poem (vv. 1–10); then follows, in the second part (vv. 11–19), the lamentation over the impotency of human consolation, and over the scoffing of enemies at the misfortunes of Jerusalem (vv. 11–16). It was the Lord who sent this judgment; and it is He alone who can give comfort and help in this distress. To Him must the daughter of Zion betake herself with her complaint (vv. 17–19); and this she actually does in the concluding portion (vv. 20–22).

Lamentations 2:1–10. *Description of the judgment.*—V. 1. The lamentation opens with

signs for the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The first member of the verse contains the general idea that the Lord (יְהוָה, the Lord κατ' ἐξοχήν, very suitably used instead of יהוה) has, in His wrath, enveloped Jerusalem with clouds. This thought is particularized in the two members that follow, and is referred to the overthrow of Jerusalem and the temple. יָעִיב, from עִיב (which is ἄπ. λεγ. as a verb, and is probably a denominative from עָב, a cloud), signifies to cover or surround with clouds. בְּאַפָּיִם does not mean “with His wrath” (Ewald, Thenius), but “in His wrath,” as is shown by vv. 3, 6, 21, 22. “The daughter of Zion” here means the city of Jerusalem, which in the second member is called “the glory (or ornament) of Israel,” by which we are to understand neither *res Judaeorum florentissimae* in general (Rosenmüller), nor the temple in special, as the “splendid house,” Isa. 64:10 (Michaelis, Vaihinger). Jerusalem is called the glory or ornament of Israel, in the same way as Babylon in Isa. 64:10 is called “the glory of the splendour of the Chaldeans” (Thenius, Gerlach). In the figurative expression, “He cast down from heaven to earth,” we are not to think there is any reference to a thunderbolt which knocks down an object, such as a lofty tower that reaches to heaven (Thenius); “from heaven” implies that what is to be thrown down was in heaven, as has been already remarked by Raschi in his explanation, *postquam sustulisset eos (Judaeos) usque ad coelum, eosdem dejecit in terram*, where we have merely to substitute “Jerusalem,” for *eos*, which is too vague. Gerlach has rightly remarked that the expression “cast down from heaven” is to be accounted for by the fact that, in the first member of the verse, Jerusalem is compared to a star, in the same way as Babylon is expressly called a tar in Isa. 14:12; nay, what is more, Jerusalem is here compared to a star that has fallen from heaven; the reference to that passage thus becomes unmistakable. Moreover, the casting down from heaven means something more than deprivation of the glory that had come on the

city in consequence of God's dwelling in the midst of it (Gerlach); it signifies, besides, the destruction of the city, viz., that it would be laid in ashes. In all this, the Lord has not been thinking of, i.e., paid any regard to, His footstool, i.e., the ark of the covenant (1 Chron. 28:2; Ps. 99:5),—not the temple (Ewald), although we cannot think of the ark without at the same thinking of the temple as the house in which it was kept. The ark, and not the temple, is named, because the temple became a habitation of the Lord, and a place where He revealed Himself, only through the ark of the covenant, with which the Lord had graciously connected His presence among His people. It is further implied, in the fact that God does not think of His footstool, that the ark itself was destroyed along with the temple and the city.

Lamentations 2:2. The Lord has destroyed not merely Jerusalem, but the whole kingdom. *בָּלַע*, “to swallow up,” involves the idea of utter annihilation, the fury of destruction, just in the same way as it [viz. the fury] is peculiar to *עֲבָרָה*, the overflowing of anger. “He hath not spared” forms an adverbial limitation of the previous statement, “unsparingly.” The *Qeri* *וְלֹא*, instead of *לֹא*, is an unnecessary and unpoetic emendation. *כָּל־נְאוֹת*, all the pastures of Jacob. According to its etymology, *נֹה* means a place where shepherds or nomads rest, or stay, or live; here, it is not to be understood specially of the dwellings as contrasted with, or distinguished from the pasture-grounds, but denotes, in contrast with the fortresses (*מִבְצָרִים*), the open, unfortified places of the country in which men and cattle enjoy food and rest. “The strongholds of the daughter of Judah” are not merely the fortifications of Jerusalem, but the fortresses generally of the country and kingdom of Judah; cf. Jer. 5:17; 34:7. *הִגִּיעַ לְאָרֶץ*, “to cast down to the ground” (used of the pulling down of walls, cf. Isa. 25:12), is an epexegetis of *הָרַס*, as in Ex. 13:14, and is not to be joined (in opposition to the accents) with what succeeds, and taken figuratively. For

neither does *הָלַל* need any strengthening, nor does *הִגִּיעַ לְאָרֶץ* suitably apply to the kingdom and its princes. The desecration of the kingdom consisted in its being dishonoured by the disgraceful conduct of its rulers; cf. Ps. 89:40.

Lamentations 2:3, 4. In vv. 3 and 4, the writer describes the hostile conduct of the Lord towards Israel, by which the kingdom of Judah was destroyed. Thenius utterly mistakes the poetic character of the description given, and evidently finds in it the several events that occurred up to the taking of the city, all mentioned in their natural order; according to this, the perfects would require to be translated as preterites. But this view can be made out only by giving an arbitrary meaning to the several figures used; e.g., it is alleged that “every horn” means the frontier fortresses, that the expression “before the enemy” refers to the time when the latter turned his face against Jerusalem, and so on. The three members of v. 3 contain a climax: deprivation of the power to resist; the withdrawal of aid; the necessary consequence of which was the burning like a flame of fire. “To cut down the horn” means to take away offensive and defensive power; see on Jer. 48:25. “Every horn” is not the same as “all horns,” but means all that was a horn of Israel (Gerlach). This included not merely the fortresses of Judah, but every means of defence and offence belonging to the kingdom, including men fit for war, who are neither to be excluded nor (with Le Clerc) to be all that is understood by “every horn.” In the expression *הָשִׁיב ... הָשִׁיב*, the suffix, as in *קָשְׁתוֹ*, v. 4, refers to Jahveh, because the suffix joined to *יָד* always points back to the subject of the verb *הָשִׁיב*; cf. Ps. 74:11. God drew back His hand before the enemy, i.e., He withdrew from the people His assistance in the struggle against the enemy. Such is the meaning given long ago by the Chaldee: *nec auxiliatus est populo suo coram hoste*. *וַיִּבְעַר בְּיַעֲקֹב* does not mean “He consumed Jacob;” but He burned (i.e., made a conflagration) in Jacob; for, in every passage in

which **יָבֵעַר** is construed with **בְּ**, it does not mean to “burn something,” but to burn in or among, or to kindle a fire (cf. Job 1:16, where the burning up is only expressed by **וַתֵּאֲכַלֵם**, Num. 11:3, Ps. 106:18), or to set something on fire, Isa. 42:25. The burning represents devastation; hence the comparison of **יָבֵעַר** with “like fire of flame (= flaming, brightly blazing fire, cf. Isa. 4:5, Ps. 105:32) that devours round about.” The subject of **יָבֵעַר** is Jahveh, not *ira Jovae* (Rosenmüller), or **לְהִבָּה** (Neumann), or the enemy (Gerlach). The transition from the perfect with **ו** consec. does not cause any change of the subject; this is shown by vv. 4 and 5, where also the second clause is connected with the first by means of **ו** consec. But the statement of Gerlach—that if Jahveh and not the enemy be the subject, then the consecutive sentence (the burning among Jacob as the result of the withdrawal of Jahveh’s hand before the enemy) would be inexplicable—gives no evidence of its truth. The kindling or making of the fire in Jacob is, of course, represented as a result of what is previously stated, yet not as the consequence merely of the withdrawal of his hand, but also of the cutting off of every horn. In both of these ways, God has kindled in Jacob a fire which grows into a destructive conflagration.—In v. 4 the idea is still further developed: God not merely delivered up His people to the enemy, leaving them defenceless and helpless, but also came forward Himself to fight against them as an enemy. He bent His bow like a warrior, showing Himself, in reference to His claims, as an adversary or oppressor. The specification “His right hand” is added, not so much for the purpose of defining more exactly the activity of the right hand (using it to shoot the arrows or wield the sword; cf. Deut. 32:41ff., Ps. 7:13f.), as rather with the view of expressing more precisely the hostile attitude of God, since the right hand of God is at other times represented as the instrument of help. The expression “and He slew,” which follows, does not require us to think of a sword in the right hand of God, since

we can also kill with arrows. God slew as an enemy; He destroyed everything that was precious in men’s sight, i.e., to merely *omnes homines aetate, specie, dignitate conspicuos* (C. B. Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Thenius); for, in Ps. 78:47, **הָרַג** is also used with reference to the effect of hail on the vine; and the arrows shot from the bow are merely named by synecdoche, and by way of specification, as instruments of war for destruction. Still less can **מִן־מְדֵי־עֵץ** signify *omnia ea templi ornamenta, quibus merito gloriabatur populus* (Kalkschmidt), since it is not till v. 6ff. that the temple is spoken of. “The word is to be taken in its widest generality, which is indicated by ‘all;’ accordingly, it comprehends everything that can be looked upon as dear,” including children (cf. Ezek. 24:25) and the sanctuary, though all these do not exhaust the meaning of the word (Gerlach). Upon the tent of the daughter of Zion He poured out His fury in fire. The daughter of Zion means the inhabitants of Jerusalem: her tent is not the temple (Kalkschmidt, Ewald), which is never called the tent of the daughter of Zion, but only that of Jahveh (1 Kings 2:28, etc.); but her house, i.e., the city as a collection of dwellings. The figure of the outpouring of wrath is often used, not only in Jer. 6:11; 10:25; 42:18, etc., but also in Hos. 5:10, Zeph. 3:8, Ps. 69:25; 76:6, etc.

Lamentations 2:5. The Lord has become like an enemy. **כְּאֹיֵב** is not separated from **הָיָה** by the accents (Pesik and Mahpak before, and Kadma after); so that there appears to be nothing to justify the remark of Gerlach, that, “as if the prophet were hesitating whether he should state explicitly that the Lord had become an enemy, he breaks off the sentence he had begun, ‘The Lord hath become ...,’ and continues, ‘He hath destroyed like a mighty one.’” As to **בָּלַעַת**, cf. v. 2. “Israel” is the name of Judah viewed as the covenant people. The swallowing or destruction of Israel is explained in the clauses which follow as a destruction of the palaces and fortresses. The mention of the palaces points to the destruction of Jerusalem,

while the “fortresses” similarly indicate the destruction of the strong cities in the country. The interchange of the suffixes הַיִּזְ- and הַיִּזְ- is accounted for on the ground that, when the writer was thinking of the citadels, the city hovered before his mind; and when he regarded the fortresses, the people of Israel similarly presented themselves. The same interchange is found in Hos. 8:14; the assumption of a textual error, therefore, together with the conjectures based on that assumption, is shown to be untenable. On the expression, “He hath destroyed his strongholds,” cf. Jer. 47:18; on תְּאַנִּיָּה וְאַנִּיָּה, Isa. 29:2: in this latter case, two word-forms derived from the same stem are combined for the sake of emphasis. “Daughter of Judah,” as in v. 2, cf. 1:15.

Lamentations 2:6, 7. In vv. 6 and 7, mention is made of the destruction of the temple and the cessation of public worship. “He treated violently (cruelly),” i.e., laid waste, “like a garden, His enclosure.” שָׁח (from שָׁחַ = שָׁחַ, to intertwine, hedge round) signifies a hedge or enclosure. The context unmistakably shows that by this we are to understand the temple, or the holy place of the temple; hence שָׁח is not the hedging, but what is hedged in. But the comparison גַּן has perplexed expositors, and given occasion for all kinds of artificial and untenable explanations. We must not, of course, seek for the point of the comparison in the ease with which a garden or garden-fence may be destroyed, for this does not accord with the employment of the verb שָׁחַ; but the garden is viewed as a pleasure-ground, which its owner, if it does not suit its purpose, destroys or gives up again, without much hesitation. The emphasis lies on the suffix in שָׁחַ, “His own enclosure,” God’s enclosure = the sacred enclosure (Gerlach), the sanctuary protected by Himself, protected by laws intended to keep the sanctity of the temple from profanation. The second clause states the same thing, and merely brings into prominence another aspect of the

sanctity of the temple by the employment of the word מוֹעֵד. This noun, as here used, does not mean the “time,” but the “place of meeting;” this is not, however, the place where the people assemble, but the place of meeting of the Lord with His people, where He shows Himself present, and grants His favour to the congregation appearing before Him. Thus, like מוֹעֵד אֱהָלֵךְ, the word signifies the place where God reveals His gracious presence to His people; cf. Ex. 25:22, and the explanation of מוֹעֵדֵי given in that passage. In the first member of the verse, the temple is viewed as a place sacred to God; in the second, as the place where He specially manifests His gracious presence in Israel. With the destruction of the temple, Jahveh (the covenant God) caused feast and Sabbath, i.e., all public festivals and divine service, to be forgotten. The destruction of the sacred spots set apart for the worship of the Lord was attended with the cessation of the sacred festivals. Thereby it became evident that the Lord, in His fierce anger, had rejected king and priest. The singulars, festival, Sabbath, king, and priest, are used in unrestricted generality. King and priest are regarded as the divinely chosen media of the covenant graces. The abolition of public worship practically involved that of the priesthood, for the service of the priests was connected with the temple. Expositors are much divided in their views regarding the object for which the king is here mentioned in connection with the priest. There is no special need for refuting the opinion of Thenius, that king and priest are named as the two main factors in the worship of God, because the seat of the king was upon Zion as well as that of the priesthood; for the seat of the priests was as little on Mount Zion as the king’s palace was on the temple mount. Moreover, the words do not treat of the destruction of the royal palace and the dwellings of the priests, but declare that royalty and the priesthood will be rejected. The mention of the king in connection with the priests implies a close connection also of royalty with the temple. Nägelsbach, accordingly, is of opinion that the kings also

belong to the number of those summoned to celebrate the feasts, and were not merely Jehovah's substitutes before the people, but also "representatives of the people before God;" for he adopts the remark of Oehler (in Herzog's *Real Enc.* viii. S. 12), that "the Israelitish kingdom (especially in David and Solomon) bears a certain sacerdotal character, inasmuch as the king, at the head of the people and in their name, pays homage to God, and brings back again to the people the blessing of God (2 Sam. 6:17ff.; 1 Kings 3:4; 8:14ff., 55ff., 62ff., 9:25; 1 Chron. 29:10ff.; 2 Chron. 1:6, compared with Ezek. 46:1ff.)." This sacerdotal character of royalty, however, was but the outcome of the sacerdotal character of the people of Israel. In view of this, the king, because of his position as the head of the people in civil matters (for he was *praecipuum ecclesiae membrum*), fully brought out the relation of the people to the Lord, without, however, discharging any peculiarly sacerdotal function. The complaint in the present verse,—that, with the destruction of the temple, and the abolition of the service connected with it, Jahveh had rejected king and priest,—implies that royalty in Israel stood in as intimate connection with the temple as the priesthood did. This connection, however, is not to be sought for so much in the fact that it was the incumbent duty of the theocratic king, in the name and at the head of the people, to pay homage to God, and to see that the public worship of Jahve was upheld; we must rather seek for it in the intimate relation instituted by God between the maintenance of the Davidic monarchy and the building of the house of God. This connection is exhibited in the promise made by God to David, when the latter had resolved to build a house for the Lord to dwell in: He (Jahveh) shall build a house to him (David), viz., raise up his seed after him, and establish his kingdom for ever; and this seed of David shall build a house to His name (2 Sam. 7:12ff.). This promise, in virtue of which Solomon built the temple as a dwelling for the name of Jahveh, connected the building of the temple so closely with the kingdom of David, that this continued existence of the temple

might be taken as a pledge of the continuance of David's house; while the destruction of the temple, together with the abolition of the public ministrations, might, on the other hand, serve as a sign of the rejection of the Davidic monarchy. Viewing the matter in this light, Jeremiah laments that, with the destruction of the temple and the abolition of the public festivals, Jahveh has rejected king and priest, i.e., the royal family of David as well as the Levitical priesthood.

In v. 7, special mention is further made of the rejection of the altar, and of the sanctuary as the centre of divine worship. The verbs נָזַח and נָזַר are used in Ps. 89:39, 40, in connection with the rejection of the Davidic monarchy. "The sanctuary," mentioned in connection with "the altar," does not mean the temple in general, but its inner sanctuary,—the holy place and the most holy place, as the places of worship corresponding to the altar of the fore-court. The temple-building is designated by "the walls of her palaces." For, that by אֲרָמְנוֹתֶיהָ we are to understand, not the palaces of the city of David, the royal palaces, but the towering pile of the temple, is unmistakeably evident from the fact that, both before and after, it is the temple that is spoken of,—not its fortifications, the castles specially built for its defence (Thenius); because אֲרָמֹן does not mean a fortified building, but (as derived from אָרַם, to be high) merely a lofty pile. Such were the buildings of the temple in consequence of their lofty situation on Moriah. In the house of Jahveh, the enemy raises a loud cry (נָתַן קוֹל, cf. Jer. 22:20), as on a feast-day. The cry is therefore not a war-cry (Pareau, Rosenmüller), but one of jubilee and triumph, as if they had come into the temple to a festival: in Ps. 74:4, the word used is שָׁאָג, to roar [as a lion].

Lamentations 2:8, 9. The lament over the destruction of the kingdom concludes, in vv. 8, 9, by mentioning that the walls of Jerusalem are destroyed; with this the Chaldeans ended the work of demolition. The expression קָשַׁב יְהוּה

represents this as the execution of a divine decree,—a turn which forms an appropriate introduction to the close of the work of destruction. “Raschi makes the following remark concerning this: *a longo inde tempore, in animum induxerat, hanc urbem vastare secundum illud quod Jer. 32:31 dixit*. This intention He has now carried out. The words, “He stretched out the measuring-line,” are more exactly determined by what follows, “He withdrew not His hand from destroying;” this shows the extent to which the destruction was carried out. The measuring-line was drawn out for the purpose of determining the situation and direction of buildings (Job 38:5; Zech. 1:15); but Jahveh applies it also for the purpose of pulling down buildings (2 Kings 21:13; Isa. 34:11; Amos 7:7), in order to indicate that He carried out the destruction with the same precision as that of the builder in finishing his work. The rampart and the wall sorrow over this. הַל (from חוֹל) is the rampart, i.e., the low wall with the ditch, surrounding the fortress outside the city wall; cf. 2 Sam. 20:15, Isa. 26:1. The gates of the daughter of Zion (i.e., of Jerusalem) are sunk into the earth, i.e., have been completely buried under rubbish by the demolition, as if they had sunk into the ground. The subject to אָבַד וְשָׁבַר is Jahveh. The bars of the daughter of Zion are those with which the city gates were closed, for the protection of the inhabitants. With the destruction of Jerusalem the kingdom of God is destroyed. King and princes are among the heathen,—carried away into exile. It must, indeed, be allowed that אֵין תּוֹרָה is connected by the accents with what precedes; and Gerlach defends the construction, “they are among the heathen without law,”—not only agreeing with Kalkschmidt in taking אֵין תּוֹרָה as a designation of the גּוֹיִם as *ethnici*,—*ad gentes, quibus divina nulla erat revelatio*,—but also with Luther, who translates: “her king and her princes are among the heathen, because they cannot administer the law,” or generally, have it not. But, on the other hand, the accents merely indicate the

stichometrical arrangement, not the relation of the words according to their sense; and the remark, “that v. 9bc sets forth the fate of the persons who stood to the city in the relation of helpers and counsellors or comforters (her king, her prophets), of whose help (counsel, or comfort) the city was deprived, as well as of the external means of defending her” (first member), proves nothing at all, for the simple reason that the priests also belonged to the number of the helpers, counsellors, and comforters of the city; hence, if this were the meaning, and the two halves of the verse were meant to stand in this relation, then the priests would certainly have been mentioned also. The second half of the verse is not connected with the first in the manner supposed by Gerlach; but, from the whole preceding description of the way in which the divine wrath has been manifested against Jerusalem, it draws this conclusion: “Judah has lost its king and its princes, who have been carried away among the heathen: it has also lost the law and prophecy.” “Law” and “vision” are mentioned as both media of divine revelation. the law is the summary of the rule of life given by God to His people: this exists no more for Judah, because, with the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, the divinely appointed constitution of Israel was abolished and destroyed. Prophecy was the constant witness to the presence of God among His people; by this means the Lord sought to conduct Israel to the object of their election and calling, and to fit them for becoming a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. The perf. קִצְאוּ is not a preterite, but the expression of an accomplished fact. The prophets of the daughter of Zion no longer obtain any vision or revelation from Jahveh: the revelation of God by prophets has ceased for Zion. The words imply that there are still prophets, and merely affirm that they do not receive any revelation from God. This is not opposed to the fact that Jeremiah, some months after the destruction of Jerusalem, again received a revelation; cf. Jer. 42:4 with v. 7. The meaning of the complaint is simply that Jahveh no longer owns His people, no longer gives

them a token of His gracious presence, just as it is said in Ps. 74:9, "There is no more any prophet." But it is not thereby declared that prophecy has altogether and for ever been silenced, but merely that, when Jerusalem was destroyed, Israel received no prophetic communication,—that God the Lord did not then send them a message to comfort and sustain them. The revelation which Jeremiah (Jer. 42:7) received regarding the determination of the people who sought to flee to Egypt, has no connection with this at all, for it does not contain a word as to the future destiny of Jerusalem. Hence it cannot be inferred, with Thenius, from the words now before us, that the present poem was composed before that revelation given in Jer. 42:7ff.; nor yet, with Nägelsbach, that the writer had here before his mind the condition of the great mass of the people who had been carried away into exile. Neither, indeed, were the people in exile without prophetic communications; for, even so early as six years before the overthrow of Jerusalem, God had raised up to the exiles a prophet in the person of Ezekiel.

Lamentations 2:10. The whole of the people have sunk into deep sorrow over this misfortune. The elders, as the counsellors of the city, sit on the ground in silence, from deep sorrow; cf. Job 2:8, 13, and regarding the tokens of sorrow, Job 2:12, Jer. 4:8; 6:26, etc. the virgins of Jerusalem have renounced their gaiety and bowed their head, sorrowing, to the ground; cf. 1:4.

Lamentations 2:11–16. The impotence of human comfort, and the mockery of enemies. V. 11f. The misery that has befallen the people is so fearful, that sorrow over it wears out one's life. "Mine eyes pine away because of tears," is the complaint of the prophet, not merely for himself personally, but in the name of all the godly ones. "Mine eyes pine" is the expression used in Ps. 69:4. On *חִמְרֵי מַעֵי*, cf. 1:20. The expression, "my liver is poured out on the earth," occurs nowhere else, and is variously explained. That the liver is *fons sanguinis*, and thus the seat of the animal life (Rosenmüller,

Thenius), cannot be made out from Prov. 7:23. This passage rather forms a proof that among the Hebrews, according to a view widely prevalent in ancient times, the liver was considered the seat of sensual desire and lust (cf. Delitzsch's *Bib. Psychology*, Clark's translation, p. 316). But this view is insufficient as an explanation of the passage now before us. Besides, there are no proofs to show that "liver" is used for "heart," or even for "gall," although Job 16:13 is unwarrantably adduced in support of this position. A closely related expression, certainly, is found in Job 30:16, Ps. 42:5, where the soul is said to be poured out; but the liver is different from *נֶפֶשׁ*, the principle of the corporeal life. If the liver was called *כֶּבֶד* because, according to Galen, *de usu partium*, vi. 17 (in Gesen. *Thes.* p. 655), *omnium viscerum et densissimum et gravissimum est*, then it may be regarded, instead of *מַעֵי*, as the chief bodily organ through which not merely lust, but also pain, is felt; and the pouring out of the liver on the earth may thus mean that the inner man is dissolved in pain and sorrow,—perishes, as it were, through pain. For it is evident from the context, and universally admitted, that it is the effect of pain in consuming the bodily organs that is here meant to be expressed. *שָׁבַר בַּת עֵמִי* is a genuine Jeremianic expression (cf. Jer. 6:14; 8:11, 21, etc.), which again occurs in v. 13, 3:47, 48, and 4:10. In what follows, some harrowing details are given regarding the destruction of the daughter of Zion. *בְּהֶעֱטָךָ* for *בִּבְעֵטְךָ*, while (or because) children and sucklings were pining away on the streets of the city. This figure of heartrending misery is further carried out in v. 12, for the purpose of vividly setting forth the terrible distress. Gerlach is wrong in thinking that the writer brings forward such sad scenes as would be likely to present themselves in the period immediately after the destruction of the city. For, the fact that, in v. 10, the eye of the mourner is directed to the present, is far from being a proof that vv. 11c and 12 also treat of the present; and the imperfect *יֹאמְרוּ*, v. 12, is not parallel in time with *יִשְׁבוּ*, v. 12, but

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designates the repetition of the action in past time. "The children say to their mothers, Where is corn and wine?" i.e., Give us bread and wine, or, Where can we eat and drink? Corn and must (as in Jer. 31:12, etc.) are mentioned as the usual means of nourishment of the Israelites. קֶמַח, "corn," is used poetically for bread (cf. Ps. 78:24),—not pounded or roasted grain, which was used without further preparation (Thenius), and which is called קֶמֶלֶךְ, Lev. 23:14, 1 Sam. 17:17, 2 Sam. 17:28. The sucklings poured out their soul, i.e., breathed out their life, into the bosom of their mothers, i.e., hugging their mothers, although these could not give them nourishment; cf. 4:4.

Lamentations 2:13. Against such terrible misery, human power can give neither comfort nor help. "What shall I testify to you?" the *Kethib* אָעוּדָךְ is a mistake in transcription for אָעִידָךְ (*Qeri*), because עוּד is not commonly used in the Kal. הָעֵיד, to bear witness, is mostly construed with כִּי, against or for any one, but also with acc., 1 Kings 21:10, 13, *in malam*, and Job 29:11, *in bonam partem*. Here it is used in the latter sense: "give testimony to thee" for the purpose of instruction and comfort,—not of a calamity that has happened elsewhere, as Calvin and Thenius explain, though against the construction of the verb with the accus.; still less "to make one swear" (Gesenius, Ewald). That the prophetic witness is meant here in the sense of encouragement by instruction, warning, and comfort, is evident from the mention of the testimony of the false prophets in v. 14. "What shall I compare to thee?" i.e., what kind of misfortune shall I mention as similar to yours? This is required by the principle derived from experience: *solamen miseris socios habuisse malorum*. אֲנִי־נִחַמְתִּיךָ, "that I may comfort thee." The reason assigned, viz., "for thy destruction is great, like the sea" (i.e., immense), follows the answer, understood though not expressed, "I can compare nothing to thee." The answer to the last question, "Who can heal thee?" (אֲנִי־רֹפֵא with לְ) is, "no man;" cf. Jer.

30:12ff. Reasons are assigned for this in vv. 14–16.

Lamentations 2:14. From her prophets, Jerusalem can expect neither comfort nor healing. For they have brought this calamity upon her through their careless and foolish prophesying. Those meant are the false prophets, whose conduct Jeremiah frequently denounced; cf. Jer. 2:8; 5:12; 6:13f., 8:10; 14:14f., 23:17, 32; 27:10, 15. They prophesied vanity,—peace when there was no peace,—and תִּפְלוּל, "absurdity," = תִּפְלוּלָה, Jer. 23:13. They did not expose the sin and guilt of the people with the view of their amendment and improvement, and thereby removing the misery into which they had fallen by their sin; nor did they endeavour to restore the people to their right relation towards the Lord, upon which their welfare depended, or to avert their being driven into exile. On הָשִׁיב שְׁבוּת, cf. Jer. 32:44. The meaning of this expression, as there unfolded, applies also to the passage now before us; and the translation, *captivitatem avertere* (Michaelis, Nägelsbach), or to "ward off thy captivity" (Luther, Thenius), is neither capable of vindication nor required by the context. Instead of healing the injuries of the people by discovering their sins, they have seen (prophesied) for them מְשָׂאוֹת, "burdens," i.e., utterances of threatening import (not *effata*; see on Jer. 23:33), which contained שִׁוְיָ, "emptiness," and מְדוּחָיִם, "rejection." The combination of "emptiness" with "burdens" does not prevent the latter word from being applied to threatening oracles; for the threats of the false prophets did not refer to Judah, but were directed against the enemies of Israel. For instance, that they might promise the people speedy deliverance from exile, they placed the downfall of the Chaldean power in immediate prospect; cf. Jer. 28:2–4, 11. מְדוּחָיִם, is ἄπ. λεγ. as a noun, and is also dependent on "burdens" (cf. Ewald, § 289, c): it signifies ejection from the land, not "persecution" (Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Ewald, etc.), for Jeremiah uses נָדַח (in Niph. and

Hiph.) always in the sense of rejection, expulsion from the country; and the word has here an unmistakable reference to Jer. 27:10, 15: "They prophesy lies to you, that they may eject you from your country."

Lamentations 2:15f. Strangers and enemies have, for the misfortune of Jerusalem, only expressions of scorn and delight over her loss. "Those who pass by the way" are strangers who travel past Jerusalem. To clap the hands together is not here a gesture betokening anger and disinclination (Num. 24:10), but of delight over the injury of others, as in Job 27:23. שָׂרַק, to hiss, is an expression of scorn; see on Jer. 19:8. The same is true as regards the shaking of the head; cf. Ps. 22:8; 109:25, etc.: the expression for this, in Jer. 18:16, is הִגִּיד בְּרֹאשׁוֹ. The exclamation, "Is this the city which they call 'perfect in beauty'?" is an expression of scornful astonishment. כְּלִילֵת יָפִי is substantially the same as מְקַלְל יָפִי, Ps. 50:2, where the expression is applied to Zion; in Ezek. 27:3 the same is said of Tyre. That Jeremiah had Ps. 50:2 in his mind is shown by the apposition, "a joy of the whole earth," which is taken from Ps. 48:3.

Lamentations 2:16. The enemy in triumph express their joy over the fall of Jerusalem. The opening of the mouth (as in Ps. 35:21, Job 16:10), taken in connection with what follows, is also a gesture peculiar to scornful speech. The gnashing of the teeth (Ps. 35:16; 37:12; Job 16:9) is here an expression of rage that has burst out. The object of "we have swallowed" is to be derived from the context ("against thee"), viz., the city of Jerusalem. Surely this" is a strong asseveration—"this is the very day." The asyndetic collection of the three verbs accords with the impassioned character of the enemy's speech. "To see" is here equivalent to living to see.

Lamentations 2:17–19. In this calamity, which Jahveh has ordained, it is only He who can bring comfort and help; [and this He will do], if earnest and incessant complaint be made to Him regarding the misery. In order to turn the thoughts of the people in this direction, the

prophet lays emphasis on the fact that God has now executed this destruction which He has threatened long before, and has prepared for the triumph of the enemy. "Jahveh hath done what He hath purposed," has now performed the word which He has commanded all along from the days of yore. Zechariah (Zech. 1:6) also lays this truth before the heart of his contemporaries. בָּצַע, to cut off, is used metaphorically in the sense of finishing, completing, as in Isa. 10:12, Zech. 4:9. To fulfil a word that has been ordered, signifies to execute it. צִוָּה does not mean to announce, but to command, order; the word has been chosen, not merely with reference to the fact that the threatened rejection of Israel was announced in the law, but also with regard to the circumstance that the threat of punishment for sins is an evidence of the moral government of the world, and the holiness of the Lord and Ruler of the world demands the punishment of every act of rebellion against the government and decrees of God. "The days of old" are the times of Moses; for Jeremiah has before his mind the threatenings of the law, Lev. 26:23ff., Deut. 28:15ff. "Without sparing," as Jeremiah (Jer. 4:28) has announced to the people. In the following clause, "He hath made thine enemy rejoice over thee," thoughts are reproduced from Ps. 89:43. To "exalt the horn" means to grant power and victory; cf. 1 Sam. 21:1, Ps. 75:5.

Lamentations 2:18. When it is seen that the Lord has appointed the terrible calamity, the people are driven to pray for mercy. Hence v. 18 follows, yet not at once with the summons to prayer, but with the assertion of the fact that this actually takes place: "their heart cries out unto the Lord;" and it is not till after this that there follows the summons to entreat Him incessantly with tears. The perfect צָעַק represents the crying as already begun, and reaching on to the present (cf. Ewald, § 135, *b*), for which we use the present in German [and in English]. That the suffix in "their heart" does not point to the enemies mentioned at the close of v. 17, but to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, is

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indubitably evident from what is substantially stated in the clause, viz., that crying to the Lord merely indicates the crying to God for help in distress. There is no sufficient reason for Ewald's change of צַעַק לְבָב into צַעַקֵי לִבָּב, "outcries of thine heart," i.e., let the cry of thine heart sound forth; still less ground is there for the conjecture of Thenius, that לְבָב should be changed into חֶזֶק, because this is opposed to the following summons to implore help: other more unnatural changes in the text it were needless to mention. The following clauses, "O wall of the daughter of Zion," etc., do not state how her heart has cried and still cries to the Lord, but bid her constantly go on imploring. Several expositors have taken objection to the direct address, "O wall of the daughter of Zion," and have sought to remove the difficulty by making conjectures. Hence, e.g., Thenius still holds that there is good ground for the objection, saying that there is a wide difference between the poetic expression, "the wall mourns" (v. 8), and the summons, "O wall, let tears run down." This difference cannot be denied, yet such personification is not without analogy. A similar summons is found in Isa. 14:31: "Howl, O gate" (*porta*). It is self-evident that it is not the wall simply as such that is considered, but everything besides connected with it, so that the wall is named instead of the city with its inhabitants, just as in Isa. 14:31 gate and city are synonymous. Hence, also, all the faculties of those residing within the wall (eyes, heart, hands) may be ascribed to it, inasmuch as the idea of the wall easily and naturally glides over into that of the daughter of Zion. The expression, "Let tears run down like a stream," is a hyperbole used to indicate the exceeding greatness of the grief. "By day and night" is intensified by the clauses which follow: "give not," i.e., grant not. פָּגַת לִי, "torpidity (stagnation) to thyself." The noun פָּגַת is ἄπ. λεγ., like הַפְּגִיחַ, 3:49; the verb פָּגַת, however, occurs in Gen. 25:26 and Ps. 77:3, where it is used of the torpidity of the vital spirits, stagnation of the heart. The expression in the

text is a poetic one for פָּגַתֶּךָ: "do not permit thy numbness," i.e., let not thy flood of tears dry up; cf. Ewald, § 289, *b*. בַּת עֵינַי is the eyeball, not the tears (Pareau); cf. Ps. 17:8. תָּדַם comes from דָּמַם, to be still, as in Jer. 47:6. On the thought here presented, cf. Jer. 14:17.

Lamentations 2:19. רָנַן (prop. to raise a whining cry, but commonly "to shout for joy") here means to weep aloud, lament. לְרֹאשׁ אֲשַׁמְרוֹת, at the beginning of the night-watches (cf. Judg. 7:19); not "in the first night-watch" (Kalkschmidt, following Bochart and Nägelsbach), but at the beginning of each night-watch, i.e., throughout the night; cf. Ps. 63:7. "Pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord," i.e., utter the sorrow of thine heart in tears to the Lord. The uplifting of the hands is a gesture indicative of prayer and entreaty (cf. Ps. 28:2; 63:5, etc.), not "of the deepest distress" (Thenius). עַל-נַפְשׁ עוֹלָלֶיךָ does not mean *pro vita parvulorum tuorum*, that God may at least preserve them (Rosenmüller, Gerlach), but "on account of the soul of thy children," which is more distinctly stated, in the following relative sentence, to mean that they have breathed out their soul through hunger. On this matter, cf. v. 11 and the exposition of that verse. Ewald has placed the last member of the verse within parentheses, as an interpolation, on the ground that a fourth member offends against the law observed in these verses; on the other hand, Thenius is of opinion that the words do not form a member of the verse by themselves, but are a mere prolongation of the third, "because the conclusion of the prophet's address, begun in v. 19, was certainly intended to be a complete finish." But the deviation from the rule is not thereby accounted for. Inasmuch as the words are essential to the expression of the thought, we must simply acknowledge the irregularity, and not arbitrarily cast suspicion on the genuineness of the words.

Lamentations 2:20-22. In v. 20 follows the prayer which the city has been commanded to make. The prayer sets before the mind of the

Lord the terrible misery under which Jerusalem suffers. The question, "To whom hast Thou acted thus?" does not mean, "What innocent and godly ones are being sacrificed?" (Thenius), but "to what nation?"—not a heathen one, but the people of thy choice, to whom all Thy blessed promises have been given (Nägelsbach). This is clear from the reasons given in the question, in which the murder of the priests and prophets in the sanctuary of the Lord is brought forward. But first there is mentioned a case of inhuman conduct, prompted by necessity, viz., that women, in the extreme destitution of hunger, have been constrained to eat the fruit of their body, their beloved children. אָם ... אָם does not, in this case, introduce a disjunctive question, but merely an indirect question in two parts. In view of such inhuman cruelties and such desecration of His sanctuary, God cannot remain inactive. The meaning of the question is not: *estne hoc unquam fando auditum, quod apud nos factum est, or, quod matres fame eo adactae fuerint, ut suos faetus comederent* (C. B. Michaelis, Rosenmüller). For in this case, not the imperfect, but the perfect, would be used. It is merely asked whether something could happen in a certain way, while it is implied that it has actually occurred already. פָּרַץ has the masc. instead of the fem. suffix, as pretty frequently happens. The fruit of their bodies is meant, as the LXX have rightly rendered; but there is no reason for making this the ground of alterations in the text. The expression "their fruit," indefinite in itself, is immediately rendered definite by עֲלֵי טַפָּחִים. The last word is a verbal noun from טָפַח (v. 22), which again is a denominative from טָפַח, and means to bear on the hands, to care for tenderly. Both words occur only in this passage. The Israelites, moreover, had been threatened with this inhuman outrage as the most extreme form of divine chastisement, Lev. 26:26, Deut. 28:56; cf. Jer. 19:9. While this abomination is opposed to the moral order of the world instituted by God, the other case (the murder of the priests and

prophets in the sanctuary) is a violation of the covenant-order which the Lord had given His people. Neither of these arrangements can God consent to abolish. Therein is implicitly contained the request that He would put an end to the misery into which His people have fallen. This request, however, is not expressly stated; there is merely complaint made to God regarding the terrible misery. From the massacre in the temple, the lamentation passes to the bloodshed on the streets of the city, in which neither age nor sex was spared; cf. Jer. 6:11. חוּצוֹת is a local accus., "through the streets," along the streets.

Lamentations 2:22. The imperf. תִּקְרָא has perhaps been chosen merely for the sake of the alphabetic arrangement, because the description is still continued, and the idea of custom (wont) or repetition is not very suitable in the present instance. "Thou summonest, as for a feast-day (viz., for the enemy, cf. 1:15), all my terrors round about." מְגוֹרֵי מִסְבִּיב is to be explained in conformity with the formula מְגוֹר מִסְבִּיב, so frequent in Jeremiah (Jer. 6:25; 20:4, 10, etc.): מְגוֹרֵי is therefore to be derived from מְגוֹר, but not to be confined in its reference to the enemy (as in the Vulgate, *qui terrent*); it is rather to be understood as applying to all the terrible powers that had come upon Judah,—sword, famine, plagues (cf. 1:20). On the ground that מְגוֹרֵי elsewhere means wandering, pilgrimage, and that, moreover, the sing. מְגוֹר in Ps. 55:16 signifies a dwelling, Ewald translates the expression in the text, "my hamlets round about," understanding by that the inhabitants of the defenceless country towns and villages, which stand to the capital that gave them its protection in the relation of settlers in its neighbourhood (LXX παροικιοι). According to this view, the verse alludes to an important event which took place in those days of the siege, when all the inhabitants of the country towns fled to the capital, thinking that a great festival was going to be held there, as on former occasions; but this became at last for them the

great festival of death, when the city was taken. But the translation of the LXX is of no authority, since they have given a false rendering of מְגוּרִים also; and the whole explanation is so artificial and unnatural, that it needs no further refutation. Raschi, indeed, had previously explained מְגוּרִים to mean שְׂכֵנֵי, *vicinos meos*, but added *improbos, ut sese congregarent adversus me ad perdendum*. Notwithstanding this, מְגוּרִים, “wandering” and “place of sojourn,” cannot denote the country towns as distinguished from the capital; nor can the flight of the inhabitants of the low-lying regions into the capital be fitly called a summoning together of them by the Lord. The combination פְּלִיט וְשָׂרִיד is used as in Jer. 42:17; 44:14. For טָפַח, see on v. 20. With the complaint that no one could escape the judgment,—that the enemy dared to murder even the children whom she [Jerusalem] had carefully nourished and brought up,—the poem concludes, like the first, with deep sorrow, regarding which all attempts at comfort are quite unavailing (Gerlach).

Lamentations 3

The Suffering and the Consolation of the Gospel

- 1 I [am] the man [that] have seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.
- 2 Me hath He led, and brought [through] darkness, and not light.
- 3 Only against me He repeatedly turneth His hand all the day.
- 4 He has wasted away my flesh and my skin; He hath broken my bones.
- 5 He buildeth up round about me poison and toil.
- 6 He maketh me sit down in dark places, like those for ever dead.
- 7 He hath hedged me about, so that I cannot get out; He hath made heavy my chain.
- 8 Moreover, when I cry and shout, He obstructeth my prayer.
- 9 He hath walled round my ways with hewn stone, He hath subverted my paths.

- 10 He is to me [like] a bear lying in wait, a lion in secret places.
- 11 He removeth my ways, and teareth me in pieces; He maketh me desolate.
- 12 He bendeth His bow, and setteth me up as the mark for the arrow.
- 13 He causeth the sons of His quiver to go into my reins.
- 14 I am become a derision to all my people, their [subject of] satire all the day.
- 15 He filleth me with bitterness, maketh me drink wormwood.
- 16 And He grindeth my teeth on gravel, He covereth me with ashes.
- 17 And my soul hath become despised by prosperity; I have forgotten [what] good [is].
- 18 And I said, My vital power is gone, and my hope from Jahveh.
- 19 Remember my misery and my persecution, wormwood and poison.
- 20 My soul remembereth [them] indeed, and sinketh down in me.
- 21 This I bring back to my mind, therefore have I hope.
- 22 [It is a sign of] the mercies of Jahveh that we are not consumed, for His compassions fail not;
- 23 [They are] new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness.
- 24 Jahveh [is] my portion, saith my soul; therefore I hope in Him.
- 25 Jahveh is good unto those who wait for Him, to a soul [that] seeketh Him.
- 26 It is good that [one] should wait, and that in silence, for the salvation of Jahveh.
- 27 It is good for man that he should bear a yoke in his youth.
- 28 Let him sit solitary and be silent, for [God] hath laid [the burden] on him.
- 29 Let him put his mouth in the dust; perhaps there is [still] hope.
- 30 Let him give [his] cheek to him that smites him, let him be filled with reproach.
- 31 Because the Lord will not cast off for ever:
- 32 For, though He causeth grief, He also pities, according to the multitude of His mercies.
- 33 For He doth not afflict from His heart, and grieve the children of men.

34 To the crushing all the prisoners of the earth under one's feet,
 35 To the setting aside of a man's rights before the face of the Most High,
 36 To the overthrowing of a man in his cause:— doth not the Lord look [to such doings as these]?
 37 Who hath spoken, and it was done, [which] the Lord commanded not?
 38 Doth not evil and good come out of the mouth of Jahveh?
 39 Why doth a man complain [because] he liveth? [Let every] man [rather lament] because of his sins.
 40 Let us search and examine our ways, and let us return to Jahveh.
 41 Let us lift up our heart to [our] hands towards God in the heavens.
 42 We have transgressed and rebelled, Thou hast not pardoned.
 43 Thou didst cover [Thyself] with anger, and didst persecute us; Thou hast slain, Thou hast not pitied.
 44 Thou didst cover Thyself with a cloud, so that prayer could not pass through.
 45 Thou didst make us [like] offscourings and refuse in the midst of the nations.
 46 All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.
 47 Terror and a snare are ours, destruction and ruin.
 48 Mine eye runneth down [with] streams of water, because of the ruin of the daughter of my people.
 49 Mine eye poureth itself forth, and ceaseth not, so that there are no stoppings,
 50 Until Jahveh shall look down and behold from heaven.
 51 Mine eye causeth pain to my soul, because of all the daughters of my city.
 52 Mine enemies closely pursued me, like a bird, without cause.
 53 They were for destroying my life in the pit, and cast a stone on me.
 54 Waters overflowed over my head; I said, I am cut off.
 55 I called on Thy name, O Jahveh, out of the lowest dungeon.
 56 Thou hast heard my voice; hide not Thine ear at my sighing, at my cry.

57 Thou art near in the day [when] I call on Thee; Thou sayest, Fear not.
 58 Thou hast defended, O Lord, my soul; Thou hast redeemed my life.
 59 Thou hast seen, O Jahveh, mine oppression; judge my cause.
 60 Thou hast seen all their vengeance, all their projects against me.
 61 Thou hast heard their reproach, O Jahveh, all their projects against me;
 62 The lips of those who rise up against me, and their meditation against me all the day.
 63 Behold their sitting down and their rising up: I am their satire.
 64 Thou shalt return a recompense to them, O Jahveh, according to the work of their hands.
 65 Thou shalt give to them blindness of heart,— Thy curse to them.
 66 Thou shalt pursue [them] in anger, and destroy them from under the heavens of Jahveh.

Lamentations 3:1–66. The two preceding poems ended with sorrowful complaint. This third poem begins with the complaint of a man over grievous personal suffering. Regarding the contents of this poem, and its relation to the two which precede, Ewald makes the following excellent remarks: "In consequence of experiences most peculiarly his own, the individual may indeed at first make complaint, in such a way that, as here, still deeper despair for the third time begins (vv. 1–18); but, by the deepest meditation for himself on the eternal relation of God to men, he may also very readily come to the due acknowledgment of his own sins and the necessity for repentance, and thereby also to believing prayer. Who is this individual that complains, and thinks, and entreats in this fashion, whose *I* passes unobserved, but quite appropriately, into *we*? O man, it is the very image of thyself! Every one must now speak and think as he does. Thus it is just by this address, which commences in the most doleful tones, that sorrow for the first time, and imperceptibly, has passed into true prayer." This remark contains both the deepest truth and the key to the proper understanding of the contents of this poem, and its position in

the middle of the Lamentations. Both of these points have been mistaken by expositors, who (e.g., C. B. Michaelis, Pareau, Maurer, Kalkschmidt, and Bleek in his *Introduction*) are of opinion that the writer here makes his personal sufferings the subject of complaint. This cannot be made out, either from v. 14 or from the description given in v. 53ff.: the reverse rather is shown by the fact that, in vv. 22 and 40–47, *we* is used instead of *I*; from which it is evident that the prophet, in the remainder of the poem, is not speaking of himself, or bewailing his own personal sufferings. The confession found in v. 42, “We have transgressed and rebelled, Thou hast not pardoned,” etc., necessarily presupposes not only that the dealing of God towards the sinful and apostate nation, as described in v. 42ff., stands in the closest connection with the sufferings of which the prophet complains in vv. 1–18, but also that the chastisement, by means of God’s wrath, which was experienced by the man who utters his complaint in vv. 1–18, is identical with the anger which, according to v. 43, discharged itself on the people; hence the suffering of the individual, which is described in vv. 1–18, is to be regarded as the reflex of but a special instance of the suffering endured by the whole community. Perhaps this was the view of Aben Ezra, when he says that, in this lamentation, it is individual Israelites who speak; and most expositors acknowledge that the prophet pours forth his lamentations and his prayers in the name of the godly. The poem begins by setting forth the grievous soul-sufferings of the godly in their cheerless and hopeless misery (vv. 1–18); then it ascends, through meditation upon the compassion and almighty providence of God, to hope (vv. 19–39), and thus attains to the recognition of God’s justice in sending the punishment, which, however, is so intensified through the malice of enemies, that the Lord cannot pass by the attempt to crush His people (vv. 40–54). This reliance on the justice of God impels to prayer, in which there is manifested confidence that God will send help, and take vengeance on the enemy (vv. 55–66).

Lamentations 3:1–18. Lamentation over grievous sufferings. The author of these sufferings is not, indeed, expressly named in the whole section, but it is unmistakably signified that God is meant; moreover, at the end of v. 18 the name יהוה is mentioned. The view thus given of the sufferings shows, not merely that he who utters the complaint perceives in these sufferings a chastisement by God, but also that this chastisement has become for him a soul-struggle, in which he may not take the name of God into his mouth; and only after he has given vent in lamentations to the deep sorrow of his soul, does his spirit get peace to mention the name of the Lord, and make complaint to Him of his need. Nothing certain can be inferred from the lamentations themselves regarding the person who makes complaint. It does not follow from vv. 1–3 that he was burdened with sorrows more than every one else; nor from v. 14 that he was a personage well known to all the people, so that one could recognise the prophet in him. As little are they sufferings which Jeremiah has endured alone, and for his own sake, but sufferings such as many godly people of his time have undergone and struggled through. Against the Jeremianic authorship of the poem, therefore, no argument can be drawn from the fact that the personality of him who utters the complaint is concealed.

Lamentations 3:1ff. In the complaint, “I am the man that saw (i.e., lived to see) misery,” the misery is not specified; and we cannot, with Rosenmüller, refer עָנִי (without the article) to the misery announced by the prophet long before. “The rod of His wrath,” as in Prov. 22:8, is the rod of God’s anger; cf. Job 21:9; 9:34, Isa. 10:5, etc. The suffix in עֲבֵרְתוֹ is not to be referred, with Aben Ezra, to the enemy.

Lamentations 3:2. “Me hath He (God) led and brought through darkness (חֹשֶׁךְ, local accus.), and not light,” is a combination like that in Job 12:25 and Amos 5:18. The path of Jeremiah’s life certainly lay through darkness, but was not wholly devoid of light, because God had promised him His protection for the discharge

of his official functions. The complaint applies to all the godly, to whom, at the fall of Jerusalem, no light appeared to cheer the darkness of life's pathway.

Lamentations 3:3. "Only upon (against) me does He repeatedly turn His hand." יְשׁוּבֵי is subordinated to the idea of יְהַפֵּךְ in an adverbial sense; cf. Gesenius, § 142, 3, *b*. "His hand" is the smiting hand of God. אֶס, "only upon me," expresses the feeling which makes him on whom grievous sufferings have fallen to regard himself as one smitten in a special manner by God. "The whole day," i.e., continually; cf. 1:13.—From v. 4 onwards this divine chastisement is more minutely set forth under various figures, and first of all as a wasting away of the vital force. בָּלָה means to wear out by rubbing, cause to fall away, from בָּלָה, to be worn out, which is applied to clothes, and then transferred to bodies, Job 13:28, Ps. 49:15. "Flesh and skin" are the exterior and soft constituents of the body, while the bones are the firmer parts. Skin, flesh, and bones together, make up the substance of the human body. Prov. 5:11 forms the foundation of the first clause. "He hath broken my bones" is a reminiscence from the lamentation of Hezekiah in Isa. 38:13; cf. Ps. 51:10, Job 30:17. The meaning is thus excellently given by Pareau: *indicantur animi, fortius irae divinae malorumque sensu conquassati, angores*.—The figure in v. 5, "He builds round about and encircles me," is derived from the enclosing of a city by besieging it. עָלִי is to be repeated after וַיִּקְרָה. The besieging forces, which encompass him so that he cannot go out and in, are רָאשׁ וּתְלָאָה. That the former of these two words cannot mean κεφαλήν μου (LXX), is abundantly evident. רָאשׁ or רוֹשׁ is a plant with a very bitter taste, hence a poisonous plant; see on Jer. 8:14. As in that passage כִּי רָאשׁ, so here the simple רָאשׁ is an emblem of bitter suffering. The combination with תְּלָאָה, "toil," is remarkable, as

a case in which a figurative is joined with a literal expression; this, however, does not justify the change of תְּלָאָה into לַעֲנָה (Castell, Schleussner, etc.). The combination is to be explained on the ground that רָאשׁ had become so common a symbol of bitter suffering, that the figure was quite lost sight of behind the thing signified.

Lamentations 3:6. Ver. 6 is a *verbatim* reminiscence from Ps. 143:3c. מְחֹשְׁבִים is the darkness of the grave and of Sheol; cf. Ps. 88:7. מְתֵי עוֹלָם does not mean "the dead of antiquity" (Rosenmüller, Maurer, Ewald, Thenius, etc.), but, as in Ps. 143:3, those eternally dead, who lie in the long night of death, from which there is no return into this life. In opposition to the explanation *dudum mortui*, Gerlach fittingly remarks, that "it makes no difference whether they have been dead long ago or only recently, inasmuch as those dead and buried a short time ago lie in darkness equally with those who have long been dead;" while it avails nothing to point to Ps. 88:5–7, as Nägelsbach does, since the special subject there treated of is not those who have *long* been dead.

Lamentations 3:7. God has hedged him round like a prisoner, cut off all communication from without, so that he cannot escape, and He has loaded him with heavy chains. This figure is based on Job 19:8 and Hos. 2:8. נָדַר בְּעֵדַי, "He hath made an hedge round me," does not suggest prison walls, but merely seclusion within a confined space, where he is deprived of free exit. "I cannot go out," as in Ps. 88:9. The seclusion is increased by fetters which are placed on the prisoner. נְחֹשֶׁת, "brass," for fetters, as in German [and English], "irons," for iron chains.

Lamentations 3:8. This distress presses upon him all the more heavily, because, in addition to this, the Lord does not listen to his prayer and cries, but has rather closed His ear; cf. Jer. 7:16, Ps. 18:42, etc. שָׁתָם for סָתָם (only written here with שׁ), to stop the prayer; i.e., not to prevent the prayer from issuing out of the breast, to

restrain supplication, but to prevent the prayer from reaching His ear; cf. v. 44 and Prov. 1:28.

Lamentations 3:9. In v. 9, the idea of prevention from freedom of action is further carried out on a new side. "He hath walled in my paths with hewn stones." אֲבָנֵי גְזִית = גְּזִית, 1 Kings 5:31, are hewn stones of considerable size, employed for making a very strong wall. The meaning is: He has raised up insurmountable obstacles in the pathway of my life. "My paths hath He turned," i.e., rendered such that I cannot walk in them. עָוָה is to turn, in the sense of destroying, as in Isa. 24:1, not *contortas fecit* (Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Kalkschmidt), nor *per viam tortuosam ire cogor* (Raschi); for the prophet does not mean to say (as Nägelsbach imagines), "that he has been compelled to walk in wrong and tortuous ways," but he means that God has rendered it impossible for him to proceed further in his path; cf. Job 30:13. But we are not in this to think of the levelling of a raised road, as Thenius does; for נְתִיבָה does not mean a road formed by the deposition of rubbish, like a mound, but a footpath, formed by constant treading (Gerlach).

Lamentations 3:10. Not merely, however, has God cut off every way of escape for him who here utters the complaint, but He pursues him in every possible way, that He may utterly destroy him. On the figure of a bear lying in wait, cf. Hos. 13:8, Amos 5:19. It is more usual to find enemies compared to lions in ambush; cf. Ps. 10:19; 17:12. The last-named passage seems to have been present to the writer's mind. The prophets frequently compare enemies to lions, e.g., Jer. 5:6; 4:7; 49:19; 50:44.—In v. 11 the figure of the lion is discontinued; for דָּרְכֵי סוּרָר cannot be said of a beast. The verb here is not to be derived from סָרַר, to be refractory, but is the Pilel of סוּר, to go aside, deviate, make to draw back. To "make ways turn aside" may signify to make a person lose the right road, but not to drag back from the road (Thenius); it rather means to mislead, or even *facere ut deficiant viae*, to take away the

road, so that one cannot escape. פֶּשַׁח is ἄπ. λεγ. in Hebrew; in Aramean it means to cut or tear in pieces: cf. [the Targum on] 1 Sam. 15:33, "Samuel פֶּשַׁח Agag," hewed him in pieces; and on Ps. 7:3, where the word is used for the Heb. פָּרַק, to tear in pieces (of a lion); here it signifies to tear away (limbs from the body, boughs from trees). This meaning is required by the context; for the following expression, שָׁמְנֵי שׁוּמָם, does not lead us to think of tearing in pieces, lacerating, but *discerpere*, plucking or pulling to pieces. For שׁוּמָם, see on 1:13, 16.

Lamentations 3:12. "He hath bent His bow," as in 2:4. The second member, "He hath made me the mark for His arrows," is taken almost *verbatim* from Job 16:12. The arrows are the ills and sorrows appointed by God; cf. Deut. 32:23, Ps. 38:3, Job 6:4.

Lamentations 3:14. "Abused in this way, he is the object of scoffing and mockery" (Gerlach). In the first clause, the complaint of Jeremiah in 20:7 is reproduced. Rosenmüller, Ewald, and Thenius are inclined to take עָמִי as an abbreviated form of the plur. עַמִּים, presuming that the subject of the complaint is the people of Israel. But in none of the three passages in which Ewald (*Gram.* § 177, a), following the Masoretes, is ready to recognise such a plural-ending, does there seem any need or real foundation for the assumption. Besides this passage, the others are 2 Sam. 22:44 and Ps. 144:2. In these last two cases עָמִי gives a suitable enough meaning as a singular (see the expositions of these passages); and in this verse, as Gerlach has already remarked, against Rosenmüller, neither the conjoined כֹּל nor the plural suffix of נְגִינָתָם requires us to take עָמִי as a plural, the former objection being removed on a comparison of Gen. 41:10, and the latter when we consider the possibility of a *constructio ad sensum* in the case of the collective עָם. But the assumption that here the people are speaking, or that the poet (prophet) is complaining of the sufferings of the people in their name, is

opposed by the fact that הַגִּבֹּר stands at the beginning of this lamentation, v. 1. If, however, the prophet complained in the name of each individual among God's people, he could not set up כָּל־עַמִּי in opposition to them, because by that very expression the scoffing is limited to the great body of the people. The Chaldee, accordingly, is substantially correct in its paraphrase, *omnibus protervis populi mei* (following Dan. 11:14). But that the mass of the people were not subdued by suffering, and that there was a great number of those who would not recognise the chastening hand of God in the fall of the kingdom, and who scoffed at the warnings of the prophets, is evinced, not merely by the history of the period immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem (Jer. 41ff.), and by the conduct of Ishmael and his followers (Jer. 41:2ff.), and of the insolent men who marched to Egypt in spite of Jeremiah's warning (Lam. 43:2), but also by the spirit that prevailed among the exiles, and against which Ezekiel had to contend; cf. e.g., Ezek. 12:22. נִגְיֹנְתָם is a reminiscence from Job 30:9; cf. Ps. 69:13.

Lamentations 3:15. "He fills me with bitternesses" is a reminiscence from Job 9:18, only מְרוֹרִים being exchanged for מְרוֹרִים. Of these two forms, the first occurs only in Job, *l.c.*; the latter denotes, in Ex. 12:8 and Num. 9:11, "bitter herbs," but here "bitternesses." The reality (*viz.*, bitter sorrow) is what Jeremiah threatens the people with in 9:14; 23:15. The figure employed in v. 16 is still stronger. "He made my teeth be ground down on gravel." הִצֵּץ means a gravel stone, gravel, Prov. 20:17. גָּרֶס (which occurs only in Ps. 119:20 as well as here, and is allied to גָּרַשׁ, from which comes גָּרַשׁ, something crushed, Lev. 2:14, 16) signifies to be ground down, and in Hiphil to grind down, *not* to cause to grind; hence הִצֵּץ cannot be taken as a second object, "He made my teeth grind gravel" (Ewald); but the words simply mean, "He ground my teeth on the gravel," *i.e.*, He made them grind away on the gravel. As

regards the application of the words, we cannot follow the older expositors in thinking of bread mixed with stones, but must view the giving of stones for bread as referring to cruel treatment. The LXX have rendered הַכְּפִישָׁנִי by ἐψώμισέν με σποδόν, the Vulgate by *cibavit me cinere*. This translation has not been lexically established, but is a mere conjecture from Ps. 102:10. The ἄπ. λεγ. שִׁפְשִׁיף is allied with שִׁבֵּב, *subigere*, and means in Rabbinic, *deprimere*; cf. Buxtorf, *Lex. Rabb. s.v.* Similarly, the Chaldee had previously explained the words to mean *humiliavit* (כִּנֵּעַ) *me in cinere*; and Raschi, כִּפְפָה *inclinavit s. subegit me*. Luther follows these in his rendering, "He rolls me in the ashes," which is a figure signifying the deepest disgrace and humiliation, or a hyperbolic expression for sprinkling with ashes (Ezek. 27:30), as a token of descent into the depths of sorrow.

Lamentations 3:17, 18. In vv. 17 and 18 the speaker, in his lamentation, gives expression to that disposition of his heart which has been produced by the misery that has befallen him to so fearful an extent. He has quite given up hopes of attaining safety and prosperity, and his hope in the Lord is gone. In v. 17 it is a question whether תִּזְנֶה is second or third pers. of the imperf. Following the LXX, who give the rendering ἀπόσατο ἐξ εἰρήνης ψυχῆν μου, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, De Wette, and Nägelsbach consider זָנָה transitive, as in 2:7, and take תִּזְנֶה as of the second pers.: "Thou didst reject my soul (me) from peace." But to this view of the words there is the decided objection, that neither before nor after is there any direct address to Jahveh, and that the verbs which immediately follow stand in the first person, and succeed the first clause appropriately enough, provided we take נִפְשִׁי as the subject to תִּזְנֶה (third pers.). זָנָה has both a transitive and an intransitive meaning in Kal; cf. Hos. 8:3 (trans.) and 8:5 (intrans.). Nägelsbach has no ground for casting doubt on the intrans. meaning in Hos. 8:5. Moreover, the objection that the passage now before us is a quotation

from Ps. 88:15 (Nägelsbach) does not prove that תִּזְנֶה נַפְשִׁי is to be taken in the same sense here as in that passage: "O Jahveh, Thou despisest my soul." By adding מְשֻׁלֹם, Jeremiah has made an independent reproduction of that passage in the Psalms, if he had it before his mind. This addition does not permit of our attaching a transitive sense to תִּזְנֶה, for the verb means to despise, not to reject; hence we cannot render the words, "Thou didst reject my soul from peace." The meaning of the clause is not "my soul loathes prosperity," as it is rendered by Thenius, who further gives the sense as follows: "I had such a thorough disgust for life, that I had no longer the least desire for prosperity." As Gerlach has already remarked, this explanation neither harmonizes with the meaning of שְׁלֹם, not with the expression of doubt in the following verse, which implies a very lively "sense of the prosperous;" moreover, it has no good lexical basis. The fundamental meaning of זָנָה is to stink, be rancid, from which comes the metaphorical one of instilling disgust,—*not*, feeling disgust (Hos. 8:5),—and further, that of despising. The meaning "to instil disgust" does not suit this passage, but only that of being despised. "My soul is despised of prosperity," i.e., so that it shares not in prosperity; with this accords the intransitive use of the Hiphil הִזְנִיחַ with מָן, 2 Chron. 11:14. The Vulgate, which does not catch the idea of זָנָה so exactly, renders the passage by *expulsa est a pace anima mea*. To this there are appropriately joined the words, "I have forgotten good" (good fortune), because I constantly experience nothing but misfortune; and not less appropriate is the expression of doubt, "I say (i.e., I think) my strength and my hope from Jahveh is gone (vanished)," i.e., my strength is worn out through suffering, and I have nothing more to hope for from Jahveh. Starting from the fundamental idea of stability, permanence, נִצְחָה, according to the traditional explanation, means *vigor*, strength; then, by a metaphor, *vis vitalis*, Isa. 63:3, 6, —*not* trust

(Rosenmüller, Thenius, Nägelsbach, etc.), in support of which we are pointed to 1 Sam. 15:29, but without sufficient reason; see Delitzsch on Isaiah, *l.c.* The complaint here attains its deepest and worst. The complainant in his thoughts has gone far from God, and is on the very verge of despair. But here also begins the turning-point. When for the first time he utters the name of God in the expression "my hope from Jahveh," he shows that Jahveh is to him also still the ground of hope and trust. Hence also he not merely complains, "my strength is gone," etc., but introduces this thought with the words וְאָמַר, "I said," sc. in my heart, i.e., I thought, "my strength is gone, and my hope from Jahveh lost," i.e., vanished. The mention of the name *Jahveh*, i.e., the Covenant-God, keeps him from sinking into despair, and urges him not to let go his trust on the Lord, so that he can now (in what follows) complain to the Lord of his state of distress, and beseech His help.

Lamentations 3:19–39. Consideration of God's compassion and His omnipotence as displayed at critical junctures in the affairs of men. C. B. Michaelis has correctly perceived, and thus set forth, the transition from the complaint, bordering on despair, to hope, as given in v. 19: *luctatur hic contra desperationis adfectum, quo tentatus fuerat, ver. 18, mix inde per fidem emersurus*. In like manner it is said in the *Berleburger Bibel*, "In v. 19 he struggles with despair, to which he had been tempted, and in the following verse soars up once more into the region of faith." By the resumption of עָנִי from v. 1, and of לְעֵנָה and רָאשׁ from vv. 15 and 5, the contents of the whole preceding lamentation are given in a summary, and by זָכַר are presented to God in prayer. "Mine affliction" is intensified by the addition of "my persecution" (see on 1:7), and the contents of the lamentation thereby more plainly pointed out. This connection of the verse has been misunderstood in many ways. An old interpretation of the words, still maintained by Böttcher and Thenius, makes זָכַר an infinitive;

according to this view, v. 19 would require to be conjoined with the preceding, and the inf. without לֵּ would stand for the ground, *recordando*, “while I think of,”—which is grammatically impossible. The same remark applies to the assumption that תִּזְכֹּר is an infinitive which is resumed in v. 20: “it thinks of my misery ... yes, my soul thinks thereon” (Böttcher, Thenius). Gerlach very properly remarks concerning this view that such a construction is unexampled, and, as regards the change in the form of the infinitive (constr. and abs.), would be unintelligible. The objection of Thenius, however, that the imperative meaning usually attached to תִּזְכֹּר is against the whole context, and quite inappropriate here, is connected with the erroneous assumption that vv. 19 and 20 form a continuation of what precedes, and that the idea of the speaker’s being completely overwhelmed by the thought of all that he had suffered and still suffers, forms the proper conclusion of the first part, after which, from v. 21 onwards, there follows relief. Gerlach has rightly opposed to these arguments the following considerations: (1) That, after the outburst of despair in v. 18, “my strength is gone, and my hope from Jahveh,” the words “my soul is bowed down in me” form far too feeble a conclusion; (2) That it is undoubtedly more correct to make the relief begin with a prayer breathed out through sighs (v. 19), than with such a reflection as is expressed in v. 21ff. Ewald also is right in taking תִּזְכֹּר as an imperative, but is mistaken in the notion that the speaker addresses any one who is ready to hear him; this view is shown to be erroneous by the simple fact that, in what precedes and succeeds, the thoughts of the speaker are directed to God only.

Lamentations 3:20. The view taken of this verse will depend on the answer to the question whether תִּזְכֹּר is second or third pers. fem. Following in the wake of Luther (“Thou wilt assuredly think thereon”), C. B. Michaelis, Pareau, Rosenmüller, and Kalkschmidt take it as second pers.: “Think, yea, think wilt Thou,

that my soul is bowed down in me,” or “that my soul is at rest within me” (Nägelsbach). But it is impossible to maintain either of these views in the face of the language employed. To take the ל before תִּזְכֹּר in the meaning of *quod* is characterized by Nägelsbach as an arbitrary procedure, unwarranted either by Gen. 30:27 or Ezek. 13:11; but neither can the meaning of resting, being at ease, which is attributed to שָׁחָה or שָׁחָה by that writer, be established. The verb means to sink down, Prov. 2:18, and metaphorically, to be bowed down, Ps. 44:26. The latter meaning is required in the present passage, from the simple fact that the sentence undeniably refers to Ps. 42:6. שָׁחָה expresses the consequence of תִּזְכֹּר, which therefore can only be the third pers., and “my soul” the subject of both clauses; for there is no logical consecution of the meaning given by such a rendering as, “If Thou wilt remember, my soul shall be bowed within me.” The expression, “If my soul duly meditates thereon (on the deep suffering), it becomes depressed within me,” forms the foundation of the request that God would think of his distress, his misery; and v. 21, “I will lay this to heart,” connects itself with the leading thought set forth in v. 19, the reason for which is given in v. 20, viz., that my soul is only bowed down within me over the thought of my distress, and must complain of it to God, that He may think of it and alleviate it: This will I lay to heart and set my hope upon. עַל-לִבִּי is a strong inferential expression: “therefore,” because God alone can help, will I hope. This self-encouragement begins with v. 22, inasmuch as the prophet strengthens his hope by a consideration of the infinite compassion of the Lord. (It is) הַסְדֵּי יְהוָה, “the mercies of God,” i.e., proofs of His mercy (cf. Ps. 89:2; 107:43; Isa. 63:7), “that we are not utterly consumed,” as Luther [and similarly our English translators] have excellently rendered תִּמְנוּ. This form stands for תִּמְנוּ, as in Jer. 44:18, Num. 17:28, not for תִּמְנֵי, third pers., as Pareau, Thenius,

Vaihinger, and Ewald, referring to his *Grammar*, § 84, *b*, would take it. The proofs of the grace of God have their foundation in His compassion, from which they flow. In v. 23 we take חֲסִדֵי יְיָ as the subject of הַדְּשִׁים; it is the proofs of the grace of God that are new every morning, not “His compassions,” although the idea remains the same. לְבַקְרִים, every morning, as in Isa. 33:2, Ps. 73:14. *Ubi sol et dies oritur, simul et radii hujus inexhaustae bonitatis erumpunt* (Tarnovius in Rosenmüller). The consciousness of this constant renewal of the divine favour impels to the prayerful exclamation, “great is Thy faithfulness;” cf. Ps. 36:6.

Lamentations 3:24. “My portion is Jahveh:” this is a reminiscence from Ps. 16:5; 73:26; 142:6; cf. Ps. 119:57, where the expression found here is repeated almost *verbatim*. The expression is based on Num. 18:20, where the Lord says to Aaron, “I am thy portion and thine inheritance;” i.e., Jahveh will be to the tribe of Levi what the other tribes receive in their territorial possessions in Canaan; Levi shall have his possession and enjoyment in Jahveh. The last clause, “therefore will I hope,” etc., is a repetition of what is in v. 21*b*, as if by way of refrain.

This hope cannot be frustrated, v. 25. The fundamental idea of the section contained in vv. 25–33 is thus stated by Nägelsbach: “The Lord is well disposed towards the children of men under all circumstances; for even when He smites them, He seeks their highest interest: they ought so to conduct themselves in adversity, that it is possible for Him to carry out His designs.” On v. 25, cf. Ps. 34:9; 86:5; and on the general meaning, also Ps. 25:3; 69:7. If the Lord is kind to those who hope in Him, then it is good for man to wait patiently for His help in suffering. Such is the mode in which v. 26 is attached to v. 25. טוֹב, vv. 26 and 27, followed by לְ *dat.*, means to be good for one, i.e., beneficial. Some expositors (Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Maurer, Nägelsbach) take יְהִיל as a noun-form, substantive or adjective; דְּוִמָם is then also taken

in the same way, and ו—ו as correlative: “it is good both to wait and be silent.” But although there are analogous cases to support the view that יְהִיל is a noun-form, the constant employment of דְּוִמָם as an adverb quite prevents us from taking it as an adjective. Moreover, “to be silent for the help of the Lord,” would be a strange expression, and we would rather expect “to be silent and wait for;” and finally, waiting and silence are so closely allied, that the disjunctive ו—ו *et—et* appears remarkable. We prefer, then, with Ewald (*Gram.* § 235, *a*) and others, to take יְהִיל as a verbal form, and that, too, in spite of the *i* in the jussive form of the Hiphil for יְהִיל, from חוּל, in the meaning of יְהִיל, to wait, tarry. “It is good that he (man) should wait, and in silence too (i.e., without complaining), for the help of the Lord.” On the thought presented here, cf. Ps. 38:7 and Isa. 30:15. Hence it is also good for man to bear a yoke in youth (v. 27), that he may exercise himself in calm waiting on the help of the Lord. In the present context the yoke is that of sufferings, and the time of youth is mentioned as the time of freshness and vigour, which render the bearing of burdens more easy. He who has learned in youth to bear sufferings, will not sink into despair should they come on him in old age. Instead of בְּנַעֲרָיו, Theodotion has ἐκ νεότητος αὐτοῦ, which is also the reading of the Aldine edition of the LXX; and some codices have מְנַעֲרָיו. But this reading is evidently a correction, prompted by the thought that Jeremiah, who composed the Lamentations in his old age, had much suffering to endure from the time of his call to the prophetic office, in the earlier portion of his old age; nor is it much better than the inference of J. D. Michaelis, that Jeremiah composed this poem when a youth, on the occasion of King Josiah’s death.—In vv. 28–30, the effect of experience by suffering is set forth, yet not in such a way that the verses are to be taken as still dependent on כִּי in v. 27 (Luther, Pareau, De Wette, Maurer, and Thenius): “that he should

sit alone and be silent," etc. Such a combination is opposed to the independent character of each separate alphabetic strophe. Rather, the result of early experience in suffering and patience is developed in a cohortative form. The connection of thought is simply as follows: Since it is good for man that he should learn to endure suffering, let him sit still and bear it patiently, when God puts such a burden on him. Let him sit solitary, as becomes those in sorrow (see on 1:1), and be silent, without murmuring (cf. v. 26), when He lays a burden on him. There is no object to **יָשָׁב** expressly mentioned, but it is easily understood from the notion of the verb (if He lays anything on him), or from **עָל** in v. 27 (if He lays a yoke on him). We are forbidden to consider the verbs as indicatives ("he sits alone and is silent;" Gerlach, Nägelsbach) by the apocopated form **יָשָׁב** in vv. 29, 30, which shows that **יָשָׁב** and **יָדָם** are also cohortatives.

Lamentations 3:29. "Let him put his mouth in the dust," i.e., humbly bow beneath the mighty hand of God. The expression is derived from the Oriental custom of throwing oneself in the most reverential manner on the ground, and involves the idea of humble silence, because the mouth, placed in the dust, cannot speak. The clause, "perhaps there is hope," indicates the frame of mind to be observed in the submission. While the man is to show such resignation, he is not to give up the hope that God will deliver him from trouble; cf. Job 11:18, Jer. 31:17.

Lamentations 3:30. Let him also learn patiently to bear abuse and reviling from men. Let him present his cheek to him who smites him, as was done by Job (Job 16:10) and the servant of Jahveh (Isa. 50:6); cf. Matt. 5:39. On v. 30b, cf. Ps. 88:4; 123:3, etc. There is a certain gradation in the three verses that it quite unmistakable. The sitting alone and in silence is comparatively the easiest; it is harder to place the mouth in the dust, and yet cling to hope; it is most difficult of all to give the cheek to the smiter, and to satiate oneself with dishonour (Nägelsbach). In vv. 31–33 follow the grounds of comfort. The first is in v. 31: the

sorrow will come to an end; the Lord does not cast off for ever; cf. Jer. 3:5, 12. The second is in v. 32: when He has caused sorrow, He shows pity once more, according to the fulness of His grace. Compassion outweighs sorrow. On this subject, cf. Ps. 30:6, Job 5:18, Isa. 54:8. The third ground of comfort is in v. 33: God does not send affliction willingly, as if it brought Him joy (cf. Jer. 32:41), but merely because chastisement is necessary to sinful man for the increase of his spiritual prosperity; cf. Acts 14:22, 2 Cor. 4:17. **וַיִּגְהַה** is for **וַיִּגְהַה**: cf. Ewald, § 232, f; Gesenius, § 69, 3, Rem. 6.

That he may bring home to the hearts of God's people the exhortation to bear suffering with patience and resignation, and that he may lead them to see that the weight of sorrow under which they are sighing has been sent from the Lord as a chastisement for their sins, the prophet carries out the thought, in vv. 34–39, that every wrong committed upon earth is under the divine control (vv. 34–36), and generally that nothing happens without God's permission; hence man ought not to mourn over the suffering that befalls him, but rather over his sins (vv. 37–39).—Verses 34–36 form one connected sentence: while the subject and predicate for the three infinitival clauses do not follow till the words **לֹא רָצָה**, the infinitives with their objects depend on **רָצָה**. If there were any foundation for the assertion of Böttcher in his *Aehrenlese*, that **רָצָה** never occurs in construction with **ל**, we could take the infinitives with **ל** as the objects of **רָצָה**, in the sense, "As to the crushing of all the prisoners," etc. But the assertion is devoid of truth, and disproved by 1 Sam. 16:7, **הַאֲדָם יִרְאָה לְעֵינַיִם וַיהוָה**, **יִרְאָה לְלֵבָב**. In the three infinitival clauses three modes of unjust dealing are set forth. The treading down to the earth of all prisoners under his (the treacher's) feet, refers to cruel treatment of the Jews by the Chaldeans at the taking of Jerusalem and Judah, and generally to deeds of violence perpetrated by victors in war. This explains **בְּלֹא אֶסְרִי אֶרְצָךְ**, which Kalkschmidt

and Thenius incorrectly render “all captives of the land (country).” Those intended are prisoners generally, who in time of war are trodden down to the earth, i.e., cruelly treated. The other two crimes mentioned, vv. 35 and 36, are among the sins of which Judah and Israel have been guilty,—the former being an offence against the proper administration of justice, and the latter falling under the category of unjust practices in the intercourse of ordinary life. “To pervert the right of a man before the face of the Most High” does not mean, in general, *proterve, et sine ullâ numinis inspectantis reverentiâ* (C. B. Michaelis, Rosenmüller); but just as *הַטּוֹת מִשְׁפָּט* is taken from the law (Ex. 23:6; Num. 16:19, etc.), so also is *פָּנֵי עֲלִיּוֹן נִגְדָה* to be explained in accordance with the directions given in the law (Ex. 22:7, 9), that certain clauses were to be brought before *הַאֲלֹהִים*, where this word means the judge or judges pronouncing sentence in the name of God; cf. Ps. 82:6, where the judges, as God’s representatives, are called *אֱלֹהִים* and *בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים*. “Before the face of the Most High” thus means, before the tribunal which is held in the name of the Most High. “To turn aside a man in his cause” means to pervert his right in a dispute (cf. Job 8:3; 34:12, etc.), which may also be done in contested matters that do not come before the public tribunal. The meaning of the three verses depends on the explanation given of *לֹא רָאָה לֹא רָאָה*, which is a disputed point. *רָאָה* with *לֹא*, “to look on something,” may mean to care for it, be concerned about it, but not to select, choose, or to resolve upon, approve (Michaelis, Ewald, Thenius). Nor can the prophet mean to say, “The Lord does not look upon the treading down of the prisoners, the perversion of justice.” If any one be still inclined, with Rosenmüller and others, to view the words as the expression of a fact, then he must consider them as an exception taken by those who murmur against God, but repelled in v. 37. Moreover, he must, in some such way as the following, show the connection between vv. 33 and 34, by carrying out the idea presented in

the exhortation to hope for compassion: “But will any one say that the Lord knows nothing of this—does not trouble Himself about such sufferings?” Whereupon, in v. 37, the answer follows: “On the contrary, nothing happens without the will of God” (Gerlach). But there is no point of attachment that can possibly be found in the words of the text for showing such a connection; we must therefore reject this view as being artificial, and forced upon the text. The difficulty is solved in a simple manner, by taking the words *לֹא רָאָה לֹא רָאָה* as a question, just as has been already done in the Chaldee paraphrase: *fierine potest ut in conspectu Jovae non reveletur?* The absence of the interrogative particle forms no objection to this, inasmuch as a question is pretty often indicated merely by the tone. V. 38 must also be taken interrogatively. Böttcher and Thenius, indeed, think that the perfect *רָאָה* is incompatible with this; but the objection merely tells against the rendering, “Should not the Lord see it?” (De Wette, Maurer, Kalkschmidt), which of course would require *יִרְאָה*. But the idea rather is, “Hath not the Lord looked upon this?” The various acts of injustice mentioned in the three verses are not set forth merely as possible events, but as facts that have actually occurred.

Lamentations 3:37. Ver. 37 brings the answer to this question in a lively manner, and likewise in an interrogative form: “Who hath spoken, and it came to pass, which the Lord hath not commanded?” The thought here presented reminds us of the word of the Creator in Gen. 1:3ff. The form of the expression is an imitation of Ps. 33:9. Rosenmüller gives the incorrect rendering, *Quis est qui dixit: factum est* (i.e., *quis audeat dicere fieri quicquam*), *non praecipiente Deo*; although the similar but more free translation of Luther, “Who dares to say that such a thing happens without the command of the Lord?” gives the sense in a general way. The meaning is as follows: Nothing takes place on the earth which the Lord has not appointed; no man can give and execute a command against the will of God. From this it further follows (v. 38), that evil and good will proceed from the

mouth of the Lord, i.e., be wrought by Him; on this point, cf. Isa. 45:7, Amos 3:6. אֲלֵהֶם gives no adequate meaning unless it be taken interrogatively, and as indicating what is usual—wont to be. And then there is established from this, in v. 39, the application of the general principle to the particular case in question, viz., the grievous suffering of individuals at the downfall of the kingdom of Judah. “Why does a man sigh as long as he lives? Let every one [sigh] for his sins.” Man is not to sigh over suffering and sorrow, but only over his sin. אֲלֵהֶם occurs only here and in Num. 11:1, and signifies to sigh, with the accessory notion of murmuring, complaining. אֲלֵהֶם appended to אֲלֵהֶם is more of a predicate than a simple attributive: man, as long as he lives, i.e., while he is in this life. The verse is viewed in a different light by Pareau, Ewald, Neumann, and Gerlach, who combine both members into one sentence, and render it thus: “Why doth a man complain, so long as he lives,—a man over the punishment of his sins?” [Similar is the rendering of our “Authorized” Version.] Neumann translates: “A man in the face of [Ger. *bei*] his sins.” But this latter rendering is lexically inadmissible, because אֲלֵהֶם in this connection cannot mean “in view of.” The other meaning assigned is improbable, though there is nothing against it, lexically considered. For though אֲלֵהֶם, sin, may also signify the punishment of sin, the latter meaning does not suit the present context, because in what precedes it is not said that the people suffer for their sins, but merely that their suffering has been appointed by God. If, then, in what follows, there is an exhortation to return to the Lord (v. 40f.), and in v. 42 a confession of sins made; if, moreover, v. 39 forms the transition from vv. 33–38 to the exhortation that succeeds (v. 40ff.); then it is not abstinence from murmuring or sighing over the punishment of sins that forms the true connecting link of the two lines of thought, but merely the refraining from complaint over sufferings, coupled with the exhortation to sigh over their won sins. Tarnov

also has viewed the verse in this way, when he deduces from it the advice to every soul labouring under a weight of sorrows: *est igitur optimus ex malis emergendi modus Deum excusare et se ipsum accusare.*

Lamentations 3:40–54. Confession of sins, and complaint against the cruelty of enemies, as well as over the deep misery into which all the people have sunk. Vv. 40–42. The acknowledgment of guilt implies to prayer, to which also there is a summons in vv. 40, 41. The transitional idea is not, “Instead of grumbling in a sinful spirit, let us rather examine our conduct” (Thenius); for the summons to examine one’s conduct is thereby placed in contrast with v. 39, and the thought, “let every one mourn over his own sins,” transformed into a prohibition of sinful complaint. The real transition link is given by Rosenmüller: *quum mala nostra a peccatis nostris orientur, culpas nostras et scrutemur et corrigamus.* The searching of our ways, i.e., of our conduct, if it be entered on in an earnest spirit, must end in a return to the Lord, from whom we have departed. It is self-evident that אֲלֵהֶם does not stand for אֲלֵהֶם, but means as far as (even to) Jahveh, and indicates thorough conversion—no standing half-way. The lifting up of the heart to the hands, also,—not merely of the hands to God,—expresses earnest prayer, that comes from the heart. אֲלֵהֶם, to the hands (that are raised towards heaven). “To God in heaven,” where His almighty throne is placed (Ps. 2:4), that He may look down from thence (v. 59) and send help. With v. 42 begins the prayer, as is shown by the direct address to God in the second member. There is no need, however, on this account, for supplying אֲלֵהֶם before the first member; the command to pray is immediately followed by prayer, beginning with the confession of sins, and the recognition of God’s chastisement; cf. Ps. 106:6, Dan. 9:5. אֲלֵהֶם is contrasted with אֲלֵהֶם. “Thou hast not pardoned,” because Thy justice must inflict punishment.

Lamentations 3:43–45. God has not pardoned, but positively punished, the people for their misdeeds. “Thou hast covered with anger,” v. 43, corresponds to “Thou hast covered with a cloud,” v. 44; hence “Thou hast covered” is plainly used both times in the same meaning, in spite of the fact that כָּסֶה is wanting in v. 43. כָּסֶה means to “cover,” here to “make a cover.” “Thou didst make a cover with anger,” i.e., Thou didst hide Thyself in wrath; there is no necessity for taking כָּסֶה as in itself reflexive. This mode of viewing it agrees also with what follows. The objection of J. D. Michaelis, *qui se obtegit non persequitur alios, ut statim additur*, which Böttcher and Thenius have repeated, does not hold good in every respect, but chiefly applies to material covering. And the explanation of Thenius, “Thou hast covered us with wrath, and persecuted us,” is shown to be wrong by the fact that כָּסֶה signifies to cover for protection, concealment, etc., but not to cover in the sense of heaping upon, pouring upon (as Luther translates it); nor, again, can the word be taken here in a sense different from that assigned to it in v. 44. “The covering of wrath, which the Lord draws around Him, conceals under it the lightnings of His wrath, which are spoken of immediately afterwards” (Nägelsbach). The anger vents itself in the persecution of the people, in killing them unsparingly. For, that these two are connected, is shown not merely in v. 66, but still more plainly by the threatening in Jer. 29:18: “I will pursue them with sword, and famine, and pestilence, and give them for maltreatment to all the kingdoms of the earth.” On “Thou hast slain, Thou hast not spared,” cf. 2:21. In v. 44, כָּסֶה is further appended to כִּבְרוֹתָ : “Thou makest a cover with clouds for Thyself,” round about Thee, so that no prayer can penetrate to Thee; cf. Ps. 55:2. These words form the expression of the painful conclusion drawn by God’s people from their experience, that God answered no cry for help that came to Him, i.e., granted no help. Israel was thereby given up, in a defenceless state, to the foe, so that they could treat them like dirt and abuse

them. קָחַי (from קָחַהּ , Ezek. 26:4), found only here as a noun, signifies “sweepings;” and סִוְמוֹס is a noun, “disesteem, aversion.” The words of v. 45, indeed, imply the dispersion of Israel among the nations, but are not to be limited to the maltreatment of the Jews in exile; moreover, they rather apply to the conduct of their foes when Judah was conquered and Jerusalem destroyed. Such treatment, especially the rejection, is further depicted in v. 46. The verse is almost a *verbatim* repetition of 2:16, and is quite in the style of Jeremiah as regards the reproduction of particular thoughts; while Thenius, from the repetition, is inclined to infer that chs. 2 and 3 had different authors: cf. Gerlach on the other side. The very next verse might have been sufficient to keep Thenius from such a precipitate conclusion, inasmuch as it contains expressions and figures that are still more clearly peculiar to Jeremiah. On פָּחַד וּפְחַת , cf. Jer. 48:43; הַשִּׁבְרָה is also one of the favourite expressions of the prophet. הַשְּׂמַת is certainly *ἄπ. λεγ.*, but reminds one of בְּנֵי שֵׁת , Num. 24:17, for which in Jer. 48:45 there stands בְּנֵי שָׂאוֹן . It comes from הַשָּׂאָה , to make a noise, roar, fall into ruins with a loud noise, i.e., be laid waste (cf. Isa. 6:11); and, as Raschi has already observed, it has the same meaning as הַשְּׂמַת , “devastation,” Isa. 24:12. It is incorrect to derive the word from the Hiphil of נָשָׂא (J. D. Michaelis and Ewald), according to which it ought to mean “disappointment,” for the ה does not form an essential portion of the word, but is the article, as הַשִּׁבְרָה shows. Still more erroneous are the renderings *ἔπαρσις* (LXX, from נָשָׂא) and *vaticinatio* (Jerome, who has confounded הַשְּׂמַת with מִשָּׂא).

Over this terrible calamity, rivers of tears must be shed, until the Lord looks down from heaven on it, vv. 48–51. The prophet once more utters this complaint in the first person, because he who has risked his life in his endeavour to keep the people in the service of God must feel the

deepest sympathy for them in their misfortunes. "Rivers of water" is stronger than "water," 1:16, and "tears like a stream," 2:18; but the mode of expression is in the main like that in those passages, and used again in Ps. 119:136, but in a different connection. The second member of the verse is the same as in 2:11.

Lamentations 3:49. נָגַר means to be poured out, empty self; cf. 2 Sam. 14:14, Mic. 1:4. "And is not silent" = and rests not, i.e., incessantly; cf. Jer. 14:17. מֵאֵין הַפְּגוֹת does not mean, *eo quod non sint intermissiones miseriarum vel fletus* (C. B. Michaelis and Rosenmüller, following the Chaldee), but "so that there is no intermission or drying up." As to הַפְּגוֹת, which means the same as פּוֹנָה, see on 2:18. "Until the Lord look down from heaven and examine," in order to put an end to the distress, or to take compassion on His people. On יִשְׁקִי, cf. Ps. 14:2; 102:20.

Lamentations 3:51. Ver. 51, taken literally, runs thus: "Mine eye does evil to my soul" (עוֹלֵל) with לֵ signifies to inflict an injury on one, cause suffering, as in 1:2, 22; 2:20), i.e., it causes pain to the soul, as the Chaldee has already paraphrased it. The expression does not merely signify "causes me grief" (Thenius, Gerlach); but the eye, weakened through incessant weeping, causes pain to the soul, inasmuch as the pain in the eye increases the pain in the soul, i.e., heightens the pain of the soul through the superaddition of physical pain (Nägelsbach). Ewald has quite missed the meaning of the verse in his translation, "Tears assail my soul," and in his explanatory remark that עוֹלֵל is used in a bad sense, like the Latin *afficit*; for, if עוֹלֵל had this meaning, עֵינַי could not stand for tears, because it is not the tears, but only the eyes weakened by weeping, that affect the soul with pain. Ewald is also wrong in seeking, with Grotius, to understand "the daughters of my city" as signifying the country towns, and to explain the phrase by referring to 2:22. For,

apart from the consideration that the appeal to 2:22 rests on a false conception of that passage, the meaning attributed to the present verse is shown to be untenable by the very fact that the expression "daughters of my city" is never used for the daughter-towns of Jerusalem; and such a designation, however possible it might be in itself, would yet be quite incomprehensible in this present connection, where there is no other subject of lamentation, either before or after, than Jerusalem in its ruined condition, and the remnant of its inhabitants (Gerlach). "The daughters of my city" are the daughters of Jerusalem, the female portion of the inhabitants of the city before and after its destruction. Nor will what is added, "because of the daughters of my city," seem strange, if we consider that, even in 1:4, 18 and 2:20, 21, the fate and the wretched condition of the virgins of the city are mentioned as peculiarly deplorable, and that, in fact, the defenceless virgins were most to be pitied when the city fell; cf. 5:11. But the objection of Böttcher and Thenius, that מְבַלָּבֹת עֵינַי forms a harsh construction, whether we view it grammatically or in the light of the circumstances, inasmuch as מֵן, after "mine eye pains me," is unsuitable, whether taken in a causal or a comparative meaning:—this objection, certainly, has some truth in its favour, and tells against any attempt to take the words as indicating a comparison. but there is nothing against the causal meaning, if "mine eyes causes pain to my soul" merely signifies "my eye pains me," because the pain of the eye is the result of the profuse weeping. If those words, however, possess the meaning we have given above (the pain in the eyes increases the smart in the soul), then there is nothing strange at all in the thought, "The evil condition of the daughters of my city is so deplorable, that mine eyes fail through weeping, and the sorrow of my soul is thereby intensified." Gerlach has already refuted, though more fully than was necessary, the conjecture of Böttcher, that בְּנוֹת should be changed into בְּבוֹת (from all the weeping of my city).

Lamentations 3:52–54. His pain and sorrow over the sad condition of the people recall to his memory the persecutions and sufferings which the godly have endured. The figure, “They who without cause are mine enemies have hunted me like a bird,” is an imitation of Ps. 11:1. אֲיִבֵי הַנֶּחֱם reminds one of שְׂנְאֵי הַנֶּחֱם, Ps. 35:19 and 69:5. But the prophet prefers אֲיִבֵי to שְׂנְאֵי, lest any one should restrict the words to persecutions which arose out of personal hatred.

Lamentations 3:53. צָמַתוּ is here used transitively in Kal, as the Piel is elsewhere, Ps. 119:139, and the Pilpel, Ps. 88:17. צָמַתוּ בְבוֹר, “they were destroying (cutting off) my life down into the pit,” is a pregnant construction, and must be understood *de conatu*: “they sought to destroy my life when they hurled me down into the pit, and cast stones on me,” i.e., not “they covered the pit with a stone” (Pareau, De Wette, Neumann). The verb יָדָה construed with בָּ does not take this meaning, for יָדָה merely signifies to cast, e.g., lots (Josh. 4:3, etc.), arrows (Jer. 50:14), or to throw down = destroy, annihilate, Zech. 2:4; and בִּי does not mean “in the pit in which I was,” but “upon (or against) me.” The sing. אָבֵן is to be understood in accordance with the expression רָגַם אָבֵן, to cast stones = stone (1 Kings 12:18; Lev. 20:2, 27). As to וַיִּדֹד for וַיִּדֹדוּ, see on וַיִּגָּה in v. 33. “Waters flowed over my head” is a figurative expression, denoting such misery and distress as endanger life; cf. Ps. 59:2, 3, 15f., 124:4f., 42:8. ‘I said (thought), I am cut off (from God’s eyes or hand),” Ps. 31:23; 88:6, is a reminiscence from these Psalms, and does not essentially differ from “cut off out of the land of the living,” Isa. 43:8. For, that we must thereby think of death, or sinking down into Sheol, is shown by מְבוֹר תְּהִתִּיחַ, v. 55. The complaint in these verses (52–54) is regarded by some expositors as a description of the personal sufferings of Jeremiah; and the casting into the pit is referred to the incident mentioned in Jer. 38:6ff. Such is the view, for instance, taken by

Vaihinger and Nägelsbach, who point for proof to these considerations especially: (1) That the Chaldeans certainly could not, without good cause (v. 53), be understood as the “enemies;” (2) that Jeremiah could not represent the people, speaking as if they were righteous and innocent; and (3) that the writer already speaks of his deliverance from their power, and contents himself with merely calling down on them the vengeance of God (vv. 55–66). But not one of these reasons is decisive. For, in the first place, the contents of v. 52 do not harmonize with the known hostility which Jeremiah had to endure from his personal enemies. That is to say, there is nothing mentioned or known of his enemies having stoned him, or having covered him over with a stone, after they had cast him into the miry pit (Jer. 38:6ff.). The figurative character of the whole account thus shows itself in the very fact that the separate portions of it are taken from reminiscences of passages in the Psalms, whose figurative character is universally acknowledged. Moreover, in the expression אֲיִבֵי הַנֶּחֱם, even when we understand thereby the Chaldeans, it is not at all implied that he who complains of these enemies considers himself righteous and innocent, but simply that he has not given them any good ground for their hostile conduct towards him. And the assertion, that the writer is already speaking of his deliverance from their power, rests on the erroneous notion that, in vv. 55–66, he is treating of past events; whereas, the interchange of the perfects with imperatives of itself shows that the deliverance of which he there speaks is not an accomplished or bygone fact, but rather the object of that assured faith which contemplates the non-existent as existent. Lastly, the contrast between personal suffering and the suffering of the people, on which the whole reasoning rests, is quite beside the mark. Moreover, if we take the lamentations to be merely symbolical, then the sufferings and persecutions of which the prophet here complains are not those of the people generally, but of the godly Israelites, on whom they were inflicted when the kingdom was destroyed, not merely by the Chaldeans, but also by their

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godless fellow-countrymen. Hence we cannot, of course, say that Jeremiah here speaks from personal experience; however, he complains not merely of the persecutions that befall him personally, but also of the sufferings that had come on him and all godly ones. The same remark applies to the conclusion of this lamentation,—the prayer, vv. 55–66, in which he entreats the Lord for deliverance, and in the spirit of faith views this deliverance as already accomplished.

Lamentations 3:55–66. Prayer for deliverance, and confident trust in its realization. V. 55. “Out of the lowest pit I call, O Lord, on Thy name;” cf. Ps. 88:7, 14; 130:1. The perfect *קָרָאתִי* is not a preterite, but expresses what has already happened, and still happens. This is evident from the fact that the corresponding perfect, *שָׁמַעְתָּ*, v. 56, is continued by the optative *אֶל־תַּעֲלֶם בּוֹר תַּחְתִּיּוֹת*. *אֶל־תַּעֲלֶם בּוֹר תַּחְתִּיּוֹת* is taken from Ps. 88:7: “pit of the lower regions of the earth,”—the *תַּחְתִּיּוֹת אֶרֶץ*, Ps. 63:10, Ezek. 32:18, 24, i.e., Sheol, essentially the same with *מַחְשָׁבִים*, v. 6, which is thereby connected with Ps. 88:7,—the dark regions of the depth, whose open mouth is the grave for every one (see Delitzsch on Psalms, *l.c.*), hence the symbol of mortal danger.

Lamentations 3:56. “Thou hast heard my voice” expresses the full assurance of faith from which the request comes: “Cover not Thine ear from my sighing.” *רִוְחָה*, “breathing out again;” in Ezek. 8:11, mitigation of oppression, yet not here *respiratio, relaxatio* (C. B. Michaelis, Rosenmüller, etc.),—since the asyndetic *לְשׁוֹעָתִי* does not accord with such an interpretation,—but a relieving of oneself by means of deeply-drawn sighs, as in Job 32:20; hence “sighing,” as Luther has already rendered it, following the Vulgate: *ne avertas aurem tuam a singultu meo* (Thenius, Gerlach, etc.).—In vv. 57 and 58, the writer still more fully expresses his confidence that the Lord will accept him. “Thou art near on the day when I call on Thee” is a sentence found in Ps. 145:18, and uttered as the experience of

all believers. “Thou sayest, Fear not,” i.e., Thou assurest me of Thine assistance; cf. Jer. 1:8, 17, etc. “Thou dost conduct the causes (Ger. *Streitsachen*) of my soul” (*רִיבֵי נַפְשִׁי*), i.e., not merely “my lawsuits,” but *causas quae vitam et salutem meam concernunt* (C. B. Michaelis). This is shown by the parallel member, “Thou redeemest my life,” sc. from the destruction which threatens it; cf. 53f., Ps. 103:4. With this is connected the request in v. 59, “Thou dost certainly see my oppression” (*עֲוֹתָהּ* from *עָוָה*, to bend, oppress), the oppression which I suffer; “judge my cause,” i.e., help me in my cause, cf. Jer. 5:28. The suppliant bases this request, vv. 60–62, on the recollection that God, as the Omniscient One, knows the plans and intentions of his opponents. “Thou seest all their plans for revenge.” *נִקְמָה* is not here the outcome of revenge, but the thought of revenge cherished in the heart; it does not, however, mean desire of revenge, or revengeful disposition, but simply the thinking and meditating on revenge, which certainly has the spirit of revenge for its basis, but is not identical with this. Their thoughts are the plans of vengeance. *לִי*, *dat. incomm.*, “to my hurt;” the reading *עָלֵי* of some codices is simply a correction after v. 61. This revenge they express in reproaches and invectives. *שִׁפְתָי*, “lips,” for utterances of the lips; and *קָמִי* as in Ps. 18:40, 49 = *קָמִים עָלַי*, Ps. 4:3, etc. *שִׁפְתֵי קָמִי* corresponds to *חֲרָפְתָם*, and *חֲגִיוֹנָם* to *מַחְשָׁבֹתָם*, v. 61; and the whole of v. 62 still depends on “Thou hearest,” without any need for supplying *הִי*, as Rosenmüller does. Thenius and Nägelsbach would combine v. 62 with 63, and make the former dependent on *הִבִּיטָהּ*; but this is unsuitable, nor do they consider that utterances or words are not seen (*הִבִּיט*), but heard (*שָׁמַע*). With this proposed combination there falls to the ground the further remark of Thenius, that “by lips, devising, sitting, rising up, are meant the conversation and consultation of the enemies one with another.”

Sitting and rising up have nothing in common with speaking about any subject, but merely form a circumlocution for action generally: cf. Ps. 139:2; Deut. 6:7; 11:19; Isa. 37:28. The form מְגִינָה for נְגִינָה occurs nowhere else: Ewald considers it a form that has been lengthened for the purpose of designating a mocking song—“Sing-song.” This supposition has at least more to recommend it than the ingenious but worthless idea of Böttcher, that מְגִינָה is contracted from מַה־נְגִינָה, “what a stringed instrument am I to them;” but it also is improbable. נְגִינָה is the subject of the מְגִינָה, as words formed with מ often express merely the subject of the idea contained in a noun or verb; cf. Ewald, § 160, b, 3. After this statement of the hostile treatment which the speaker has to suffer, there follows the renewed and further extended request that God may reward the foes according to their deeds. תָּשִׁיב, “Thou shalt return,” is a confident expression of the request that God would do this; hence the optative תִּתֵּן follows in v. 65. In v. 64 is condensed the substance of what is contained in Ps. 28:4. מְגַנֶּת לֵב, covering (veil) of the heart,—an expression analogous to the κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν, 2 Cor. 3:15, —is not obduration, or hardening, but blinding of the heart, which casts into destruction; but it can scarcely signify “madness” (Delitzsch, *Bibl. Psychology*, Clark’s translation), since the Arabic *majannat*, *insania*, *furor*, has probably received this meaning from *jinn*, *genius*, *daemon*; cf. Gesenius, *Thes. s.v.*, and Rosenmüller, *ad h. l.* “Thy curse to them!” is not to be viewed as dependent on “give,” but to be explained in accordance with Ps. 3:9, “Thy blessing [be] upon Thy people!”—thus, “May Thy curse be their portion!” The curse of God is followed by destruction. “Destroy them from under Jahveh’s heaven!” i.e., not merely *ut non sint amplius sub caelis* (C. B. Michaelis), because יהוה is not considered in this latter rendering. The heaven of Jahveh is the whole world, over which Jahveh’s authority extends; the meaning therefore is, “Exterminate them wholly from

the sphere of Thy dominion in the world,” or, Thy kingdom.

Lamentations 4

Submission Under the Judgment of God, and Hope

- 1 How the gold becomes dim,—the fine gold changeth,— Sacred stones are scattered about at the top of every street!
- 2 The dear sons of Zion, who are precious as fine gold,— How they are esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of a potters hands!
- 3 Even the she-wolves reach the breast, they suckle their young ones; [But] the daughter of my people [hath become] cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness.
- 4 The tongue of the suckling cleaveth to his palate for thirst; Young children ask for bread, [but] there is none breaking [it] for them.
- 5 Those who ate dainties [before] are desolate in the streets; Those who were carried on scarlet embrace dunghills.
- 6 The iniquity of the daughter of my people became greater than the sin of Sodom, Which was overthrown as in a moment, though no hands were laid on her.
- 7 Her princes were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, They were redder in body than corals, their form was [that of] a sapphire.
- 8 Their form is darker than blackness,—they are not recognised in the streets; Their skin adhereth closely to their bones,—it hath become dry, like wood.
- 9 Better are those slain with the sword than those slain with hunger; For these pine away, pierced through from [want of] the fruits of the field.
- 10 The hands of women [who were once] tender-hearted, have boiled their own children; They became food to them in the destruction of the daughter of my people.
- 11 Jahveh accomplished His wrath: He poured out the burning of His anger; And kindled a fire in Zion, and it devoured her foundations.
- 12 Would the kings of the earth, all the inhabitants of the world; not believe That an adversary and an enemy would enter in at the gates of Jerusalem?

- 13 Because of the sins of her prophets, the iniquities of her priests, Who shed blood of righteous ones in her midst,
- 14 They wander [like] blind men in the streets; they are defiled with blood, So that [people] could not touch their clothes.
- 15 "Keep off! it is unclean!" they cried to them, "keep off! keep off! touch not!" When they fled, they also wandered; [People] say among the nations, "They must no longer sojourn [here]."
- 16 The face of Jahveh hath scattered them; no longer doth He look on them: They regard not the priests, they respect not old men.
- 17 Still do our eyes pine away, [looking] for our help, [which is] vanity: In our watching, we watched for a nation [that] will not help.
- 18 They hunt our steps, so that we cannot go in our streets; Our end is near, our days are full,—yea, our end is come.
- 19 Our persecutors were swifter than the eagles of heaven; They pursued us on the mountains, in the wilderness they laid wait for us.
- 20 The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of Jahveh, was caught in their pits, [Of] whom we thought, "In His shadow we shall live among the nations."
- 21 Be glad and rejoice, O daughter of Edom, dwelling in the land of Uz To thee also shall the cup pass; thou shalt be drunk, and make thyself naked.
- 22 Thy guilt is at an end, O daughter of Zion; He will no more carry thee captive: He visiteth thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; He discovereth thy sins.

Lamentations 4:1-22. The lamentation over the terrible calamity that has befallen Jerusalem is distinguished in this poem from the lamentations in Lam. 1 and 2, not merely by the fact that in it the fate of the several classes of the population is contemplated, but chiefly by the circumstance that the calamity is set forth as a well-merited punishment by God for the grievous sins of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This consideration forms the chief feature in the whole poem, from the beginning to the end of which there predominates the hope that Zion will not perish, but that the appointed punishment will terminate, and then fall on their now triumphant enemies. In this

fundamental idea of the poem, compared with the first two, there is plainly an advance towards the due recognition of the suffering as a punishment; from this point it is possible to advance, not merely to the hope regarding the future, with which the poem concludes, but also the prayer for deliverance in Lam. 5. The contents of the poem are the following: The princes and inhabitants of Zion are sunk into a terrible state of misery, because their guilt was greater than the sin of Sodom (vv. 1-11). Jerusalem has been delivered into the hands of her enemies on account of her prophets and priests, who have shed the blood of righteous ones (vv. 12-16), and because the people have placed their trust on the vain help of man (vv. 17-20). For this they must atone; for the present, however, the enemy may triumph; the guilt of the daughter of Zion will come to an end, and then the judgment will befall her enemies (vv. 21, 22).

Lamentations 4:1-11. The misery that has come on the inhabitants of Jerusalem is a punishment for their deep guilt. The description given of this misery is divided into two strophes: for, first (vv. 1-6), the sad lot of the several classes of the population is set forth; then (vv. 7-11) a conclusion is drawn therefrom regarding the greatness of their sin.

Lamentations 4:1-6. The first strophe. V. 1. The lamentation begins with a figurative account of the destruction of all that is precious and glorious in Israel: this is next established by the bringing forth of instances.

Lamentations 4:1, 2. Ver. 1, 2 contain, not a complaint regarding the desolation of the sanctuary and of Zion, as Maurer, Kalkschmidt, and Thenius, with the LXX, assume, but, as is unmistakably declared in v. 2, a lamentation over the fearful change that has taken place in the fate of the citizens of Zion. What is stated in v. 1 regarding the gold and the precious stones must be understood figuratively; and in the case of the "gold that has become dim," we can as little think of the blackening of the gilding in the temple fabric when it was burnt, as think of bricks (Thenius) when "the holy stones" are

spoken of. The בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן (inhabitants of Zion), v. 2, are likened to gold and sacred stones; here Thenius would arbitrarily change בְּנֵי into בְּתֵי (houses, palaces). This change not merely has no critical support, but is objectionable on the simple ground that there is not a single word to be found elsewhere, through all the chapter, concerning the destruction of the temple and the palaces; it is merely the fate of the men, not of the buildings, that is bewailed. "How is gold bedimmed!" עָמַם is the Hophal of עָמַם, to be dark, Ezek. 28:3, and to darken, Ezek. 31:8. The second clause, "how is fine gold changed!" expresses the same thing. שָׁנָה = שִׁנָּה, according to the Chaldaizing usage, means to change (oneself), Mal. 3:6. The growing dim and the changing refer to the colour, the loss of brilliancy; for gold does not alter in substance. B. C. Michaelis and Rosenmüller are too specific when they explain that the gold represents *populus Judaicus* (or the *potior populi Hebraei pars*), *qui (quae) quondam auri instar in sanctuario Dei fulgebat*, and when they see in אֲבָנֵי קֹדֶשׁ an allusion to the stones in the breast-plate of the high priest. Gold is generally an emblem of very worthy persons, and "holy stones" are precious stones, intended for a sacred purpose. Both expressions collectively form a figurative description of the people of Israel, as called to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. Analogous is the designation of the children of Israel as אֲבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, Zech. 9:16 (Gerlach). הִשְׁתַּפְּדוּ, to be poured out (at all the corners of the streets), is a figurative expression, signifying disgraceful treatment, as in 2:11. In v. 2 follows the application of the figure to the sons (i.e., the citizens) of Zion, not merely the chief nobles of Judah (Ewald), or the princes, nor children in the narrowest sense of the word (Gerlach); for in what follows mention is made not only of children (vv. 3, 4), but also of those who are grown up (v. 5), and princes are not mentioned till v. 7. As being members of the chosen people, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem have been held "dear," and "weighed out with gold," i.e., esteemed as of equal value

with gold (cf. Job 28:16, 19); but now, when Jerusalem is destroyed, they have become regarded as earthenware pots, i.e., treated as if they were utterly worthless, as "a work of the hands of the potter," whereas Israel was a work of the hands of God, Isa. 64:7. אֲלֵהָ = אֲלֵהָ, cf. Job 28:16, 19 [to weigh; Pual, be weighed out, as an equivalent].

Lamentations 4:3. This disregard or rejection of the citizens of Zion is evidence in v. 3 and onwards by many examples, beginning with children, ascending to adults (3–5), and ending with princes. The starvation to death of the children (vv. 3, 4) is mentioned first; and the frightful misery that has befallen Jerusalem is vividly set forth, by a comparison of the way in which wild animals act towards their young with the behaviour of the mothers of Jerusalem towards their children. Even jackals (תַּנִּינִים for תַּנִּים, see on Jer. 9:10) give their breasts to their young ones to suck. הִלְצוּ שָׂדַי, *extrahunt mammam* = they present their breast. As Junius has remarked, the expression is taken *a mulieribus lactantibus, quae laxata veste mammam lactanti praebent*; hence also we are not, for the sake of this expression, to understand תַּנִּינִים as meaning *cetus* (Bochart and Nägelsbach), regarding which animal Bochart remarks (*Hieroz.* iii. p. 777, ed. Rosenmüller), *ceti papillas non esse ἐπιφανείς, quippe in mammis receptae tanquam in vaginis conduntur*. Rosenmüller has already rejected this meaning as *minus apta* for the present passage. From the combination of jackals and ostriches as inhabiting desert places (Isa. 13:21f.; Job 30:29), we have no hesitation in fixing on "jackals" as the meaning here. "The daughter of my people" (cf. 2:11) here means the inhabitants of Zion or Jerusalem. לֹא אֶבְרָר, "has become cruel." The *Kethib* כִּי עֵינַי instead of כִּי עֵינַי (*Qeri*) may possibly have arisen from a purely accidental separation of the letters of the word in a MS, a reading which was afterwards painfully retained by the scribes. But in many codices noted by Kennicott and De Rossi, as

well as in several old editions, the word is found correctly joined, without any marginal note. **בַּת יַעֲנָה** means ostriches, usually **בַּת יַעֲנָה** (“daughter of crying,” or according to Gesenius, in his *Thesaurus*, and Ewald, following the Syriac, “the daughter of gluttony”), the female ostrich. The comparison with these animals is to be understood in accordance with Job 39:16: “she (the female ostrich) treats her young ones harshly, as if they were not her own.” This popular belief is founded on the fact that the animal lays her eggs in the ground,—after having done no more than slightly scratching up the soil,—and partly also, when the nest is full, on the surface of the ground; she then leaves them to be hatched, in course of time, by the heat of the sun: the eggs may thus be easily broken, see on Job 39:14–16.

Lamentations 4:4. Sucking infants and little children perish from thirst and hunger; cf. 2:11, 12. **פָּרַשׁ = פָּרַס**, as in Mic. 3:3, to break down into pieces, break bread = divide, Isa. 58:7, Jer. 16:7. In v. 5 it is not children, but adults, that are spoken of. **לְמַעַדְנִים** is variously rendered, since **אָכַל** occurs nowhere else in construction with **לְ**. Against the assumption that **לְ** is the Aramaic sign of the object, there stands the fact that **אָכַל** is not found thus construed with **לְ**, either in the Lamentations or elsewhere, though in Jer. 40:2 **לְ** is so used. Gerlach, accordingly, would take **לְמַעַדְנִים** adverbially, as meaning “after their heart’s desire,” prop. for pleasures (as to this meaning, cf. Prov. 29:17, 1 Sam. 15:32), in contrast with **אָכַל לְשִׂבְעָה**, to eat for satisfaction, Ex. 16:3, Lev. 25:19, etc. But “for pleasure” is not an appropriate antithesis to satisfaction. Hence we prefer, with Thenius, to take **אָכַל לְ** in the sense of nibbling round something, in which there is contained the notion of selection in the eating; we also take **מַעַדְנִים**, as in Gen. 49:20, to mean dainties. **נִשְׁמָו**, to be made desolate, as in 1:13, of the destruction of happiness in life; with **בְּחַוְצוֹת**, to sit in a troubled or gloomy state

of mind on the streets. **הַאֲמֻנִים**, those who (as children) were carried on purple (**עֹלָע** for **תּוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי**, cochineal, crimson), embrace (i.e., cling to) dung-heaps, seek them as places or rest.

Lamentations 4:6. The greatness of their guilt is seen in this misery. The **ו** consecutive joined with **יָגִדֵל** here marks the result, so far as this manifests itself: “thus the offence (guilt) of the daughter of my people has become greater than the sin of Sodom.” Most expositors take **עָוֹן** and **הַטָּאָת** here in the sense of punishment; but this meaning has not been established. The words simply mean “offence” and “sin,” sometimes including their consequences, but nowhere do they mean unceremonious castigation. But when Thenius is of opinion that the context demands the meaning “punishment” (not “sin”), he has inconsiderately omitted the **ו** *consec.*, and taken a wrong view of the context. **דָּהַפְדָּה** is the usual word employed in connection with the destruction of Sodom; cf. Gen. 19:21, 25, Deut. 29:22, etc. **וְלֹא הָלְוּ וְגוֹ** is translated by Thenius, *et non torquebatur in ea manus*, i.e., without any one wringing his hands. However, **חָוַל** (to go in a circle) means to writhe with pain, but does not agree with **יָדַיִם**, to wring the hands. In Hos. 11:6 **חָוַל** is used of the sword, which “circles” in the cities, i.e., cuts and kills all round in them. In like manner it is here used of the hands that went round in Sodom for the purpose of overthrowing (destroying) the city. Nägelsbach wrongly derives **חָלוּ** from **חָלָה**, to become slack, powerless. The words, “no hands went round (were at work) in her,” serve to explain the meaning of **כְּמוֹ רֵגַע**, “as in a moment,” without any need for the hands of men being engaged in it. By this additional remark, not merely is greater prominence given to the sudden destruction of Sodom by the hand of God; but it is also pointed out how far Jerusalem, in comparison with that judgment of God, suffers a greater punishment for her greater sins: for

her destruction by the hand of man brings her more enduring torments. "Sodom's suffering at death was brief; for there were no children dying of hunger, no mothers who boiled their children" (Nägelsbach). Sodom was spared this heartrending misery, inasmuch as it was destroyed by the hand of God in an instant.

Lamentations 4:7-11. The second strophe.— Vv. 7, 8. The picture of the misery that has befallen the princes. גְּזִירִים, princes, prop. *separati*, here *non voto* (Nazarites) *sed dignitate*, as Nolde appropriately remarks; see on Gen. 49:26. דָּבָר is used, Job 15:15; 25:5, of the brightness of the heaven and the stars; here it is used of female beauty. Thenius would refer "pure (or bright) as snow and milk" to the white clothing, "because the Orientals have not milk-white faces." But the second member irrefragably shows that the reference is to bodily form; and for the very reason adduced by Thenius, a comparatively whiter skin than is commonly met with is esteemed more beautiful. So also does Cant. 5:10, "My friend is white and red," show the high esteem in which beauty was held (Gerlach). אָדָם, to be reddish. עֲצָם, "bone," for the body (*pars pro toto*). פְּגִינִים, not (white) pearls, but (red) corals. "The white and the red are to be understood as mixed, and shading into one another, as our popular poetry speaks of cheeks which 'like milk and purple shine'" (Delitzsch on Job 28:18, Clark's translation). "Sapphire their form" (גְּזִירָה, prop. cut, *taille*, of the shape of the body). The point of the comparison is not the colour, but the luminosity, of this precious stone. Once on a time the princes glittered so; but (v. 8) now their form is dark as blackness, i.e., every trace of beauty and splendour has vanished. Through hunger and want their appearance is so disfigured, that they are no longer recognised in the streets (הוֹצוֹת, in contrast with "at home," in their own neighbourhood). "The skin sticks to the bones," so emaciated are they; cf. Ps. 102:4, Job 19:20. צָפַד, ἄπ. ληγ., to adhere firmly. The skin has become dry (יָבֵשׁ) like wood.

Lamentations 4:9. This pining away with hunger is much more horrible than a speedy death by the sword. שָׁהֶם, "for they" = *qui ipsi*; גְּזִירָה, prop. flow away, i.e., pine away as those pierced through (מְדַקְרִים, cf. Jer. 37:10; 51:4). שֵׁן does not mean "of the fruits," but מִן is a brief expression for "because there are no fruits," i.e., from want of the produce of the field; cf. בְּשָׂרִי כָחַשׁ מִשֶּׁמֶן, "my flesh wastes away from oil," i.e., because there is a want of oil, Ps. 109:24. There was thus no need for the conjecture מִתְלַאֲבוֹת, "from burning glow," from drought, which has been proposed by Ewald in order to obtain the following sense, after supplying יָ: "as if melting away through the drought of the field, emaciated by the glowing heat of the sun." The free rendering of the Vulgate, *consumpti a sterilitate terrae*, gives no support to the conjecture.

Lamentations 4:10. Still more horrible was the misery of the women. In order to keep themselves from dying of hunger, mothers boiled their children for food to themselves; cf. 2:20. By the predicate "compassionate," applied to hands, the contrast between this conduct and the nature, or the innate love, of mothers to their children, is made particularly prominent. בְּרוֹת is a noun = בְּרוֹת, Ps. 69:22. On "the destruction of the daughter of my people," cf. 2:11.

Lamentations 4:11. This fearful state of matters shows that the Lord has fully poured out His wrath upon Jerusalem and His people. בָּלָה, to complete, bring to an end. The kindling of the fire in Zion, which consumed the foundations, is not to be limited to the burning of Jerusalem, but is a symbol of the complete destruction of Zion by the wrath of God; cf. Deut. 32:32.

Lamentations 4:12-20. This judgment of wrath is a consequence of the sins of the prophets and priests (vv. 12-16), as well as of their vain trust on the help of man (vv. 17-20). V. 12f. The capture of Jerusalem by enemies (an

event which none in all the world thought possible) has been brought on through the sins of the prophets and priests. The words, “the kings of the earth ... did not believe that an enemy would come in at the gates of Jerusalem,” are well explained by C. B. Michaelis, thus: *reputando fortitudinem urbis, quae munitissima erat, tum defensorem ejus Jehovam, qui ab hostibus, ad internecionem caesis, urbem aliquoties, mirifice liberaverat*, e.g., 2 Reg. 19:34. The words certainly form a somewhat overdrawn expression of deep subjective conviction; but they cannot properly be called a hyperbole, because the remark of Nägelsbach, that Jerusalem had been taken more than once before Nebuchadnezzar (1 Kings 14:26; 2 Kings 14:13f.; 2 Chron. 33:11; 2 Kings 23:33ff.), seems incorrect. For the occasions upon which Jerusalem was taken by Shishak and by Joash king of Israel (1 Kings 14 and 2 Kings 14) belong to those earlier times when Jerusalem was far from being so strongly fortified as it afterwards became, in the times of Uzziah, Jotham, and Manasseh (2 Chron. 26:9; 27:3; 33:14). In 2 Chron. 33:11, on the other hand, there is nothing said of Jerusalem being taken; and the capture by Pharaoh-Necho does not call for consideration, in so far as it forms the beginning of the catastrophe, whose commencement was thought impossible. Ewald wrongly connects v. 13 with v. 12 into one sentence, thus: “that an enemy would enter the gates of Jerusalem because of the sins of her prophets,” etc. The meaning of these verses is thereby not merely weakened, but also misrepresented; and there is ascribed to the kings and inhabitants of the world an opinion regarding the internal evils of Jerusalem, which they neither pronounced nor could have pronounced.

Lamentations 4:12. V. 12 contains an exclamation over the incredible event that has happened, and v. 13 assigns the cause of it: the mediating and combining thought, “this incredible thing has happened,” suggests itself. It has taken place on account of the sins of her prophets and priests, who have shed the blood of righteous men in Jerusalem. A historic proof

of this is furnished in Jer. 26:7ff., where priests and prophets indicted Jeremiah on a capital charge, because he had announced that Jerusalem and the temple would suffer the fate of Shiloh; from this, Nägelsbach rightly concludes that, in any case, the burden of the guilt of the martyr-blood that was shed falls on the priests and prophets. Besides this, cf. the denunciations of the conduct of the priests and prophets in Jer. 6:13–15; 23:11; 27:10, Ezek. 22:25f.—In vv. 14, 15, there is described the fate of these priests and prophets, but in such a way that Jeremiah has, throughout, mainly the priests before his mind. We may then, without further hesitation, think of the priests as the subject of וְנָא, inasmuch as they are mentioned last. Kalkschmidt wrongly combines vv. 13 and 14, thus: “because of the sins of the prophets ... they wander about,” etc.; in this way, the Israelites would be the subject to וְנָא, and in v. 14 the *calamitas ex sacerdotum prophetarumque sceleribus profecta* would be described. This, however, is contradicted, not merely by the undeniable retrospection of the expression, “they have polluted themselves with blood” (v. 14), to the shedding of blood mentioned in v. 13, but also by the whole contents of v. 14, especially the impossibility of touching their clothes, which does not well apply to the people of Israel (Judah), but only to the priests defiled with blood. Utterly erroneous is the opinion of Pareau, Ewald, and Thenius, that in vv. 14–16 there is “presented a fragment from the history of the last siege of Jerusalem,”—a rupture among the besieged, headed by the most eminent of the priests and prophets, who, filled with frenzy and passion against their fellow-citizens, because they would not believe in the speedy return of the exiles, became furious, and caused their opponents to be murdered. Regarding this, there is neither anything historical known, nor is there any trace of it to be discovered in these verses. The words, “prophets and priests hesitated (or wavered) like blind men on the streets, soiled with blood, so that none could touch their clothes,” merely state that these

men, smitten of God in consequence of their blood-guiltiness, wandered up and down in the streets of the city, going about like blind men. This description has been imitated from such passages as Deut. 28:28f., Jer. 23:12, Isa. 29:9, where the people, and especially their leaders, are threatened, as a punishment, with blind and helpless staggering; but it is not to be referred to the time of the last siege of Jerusalem. עֲוֵרִים does not mean *caedium perpetrandarum insatiabili cupiditate occaecati* (Rosenmüller), nor “as if intoxicated with blood that has been shed” (Nägelsbach), but as if struck with blindness by God, so that they could no longer walk with firm and steady step. “They are defiled with blood” is a reminiscence from Isa. 69:3. As to the form נִגְאָל, compounded of the Niphal and Pual, cf. Ewald, § 132, *b*, and Delitzsch on Isaiah, *l.c.* יִגְאָל יִזְכְּלוּ, without one being able, i.e., so that one could not. As to the construction of יִזְכְּלוּ with a finite verb following, instead of the infinitive with לְ, cf. Ewald, § 285, *c*, *c*, and Gesenius, § 142, 3, *b*.

Lamentations 4:15. “Yea, they (people) address to them the warning cry with which, according to Lev. 13:45, lepers were obliged to warn those whom they met not to come near.” Such is the language in which Gerlach has rightly stated the connection between v. 14 and v. 15a. קָרְאוּ לָמוֹ is rendered by many, “people shouted out regarding them,” *de iis*, because, according to Lev. 13:45, it was the lepers who were to shout “Unclean!” to those they met; the cry therefore was not addressed to the unclean, but to those who, being clean, were not to defile themselves by touching lepers. But though this meaning may be taken from the language used (cf. Gen. 20:13, Ps. 3:3), yet here, where the call is addressed to persons, it is neither probable nor necessary. For it does not follow from the allusion to the well-known direction given to lepers, that this prescription is transferred *verbatim* to the present case. The call is here addressed to the priests, who are staggering towards them with blood-stained garments. These must get out of the way, and not touch

those they meet. The sing. אֲמַטְּ is accounted for by the allusion to Lev. 13:45, and means, “Out of the way! there comes one who is unclean.” The second half of the verse is variously viewed. נִצְּוּ, as Milra, comes from נִצְּוּ, which in Niphal means to wrangle, in Hiphil to stir up strife. The Vulgate, accordingly, translates *jurgati quippe sunt*, and Ewald still renders, “yet they quarrelled, yet they staggered.” But this view is opposed by these considerations: (1.) כִּי ... גַּם can neither introduce an antithesis, nor mean “yet ... yet.” (2.) In view of the shedding of blood, wrangling is a matter of too little importance to deserve mention. Luther’s rendering, “because they feared and fled from them,” is a mere conjecture, and finds no support whatever from the words employed. Hence Gesenius, in his *Thesaurus*, has rightly explained נִצְּוּ, after אֲנַצְּ, Jer. 48:9, “to fly, flee, or take to flight.” Following him, the moderns translate: “because they had fled, they also staggered about.” It is better to render כִּי by *quum*, “when they fled,” sc. to other nations, not specially to the Chaldeans. נִצְּוּ is selected with reference to what precedes, but in the general meaning of roaming restlessly about. The idea is as follows: Not merely were they shunned at home, like lepers, by their fellow-countrymen, but also, when they wished to find a place of refuge beyond their native land, they were compelled to wander about without finding rest; for they said among the nations, “They shall no longer sojourn among us.” Thus the curse came on them, Deut. 28:65f.

Lamentations 4:16. This was the judgment of God. His face (i.e., in this connection, His angry look; cf. Lev. 17:10, Ps. 21:10) has scattered them (הִלְקָה as in Gen. 49:7). No longer does He (Jahveh) look on the, sc. graciously. The face of the priests is not regarded. נִשְׂא פָּנָיו, πρόσωπον λαμβάνειν, to regard the person of any one, i.e., to have respect to his position, dignity, and age: the expression is here synonymous with הִנֵּן, to show favour. The subject is indefinite, but the

enemy is meant. Thus the threatening in Deut. 28:50 is fulfilled on them. זְקֵנִים does not mean “elders,” but “old men,” for the words can be referred only to the priests and prophets formerly spoken of.

Lamentations 4:17–20. In spite of these facts, which show that God has poured out His fury on us, and that our prophets and priests have been smitten by God for their sins, we still wait, vainly relying on the help of man. In this way, v. 17 is attached to what precedes,—not merely to v. 16, but also the series of thoughts developed in vv. 12–16, viz., that in the capture of Jerusalem (which nobody thought possible) there is plainly made known the judgment of God upon the sins of His people and their leaders. It is with special emphasis that עוֹדִינָה stands at the beginning of the verse: “still do our eyes continue to waste away.” The form עוֹדִינָה (*Kethib*), in place of which the *Qeri* subtitles עוֹדִינּוּ, is abnormal, since עוֹד does not take plural forms of the suffix in any other instance, and יָנָה does not occur elsewhere as a noun-suffix. The form is evidently copied from תִּכְלֵינָה, and must be third fem. pl., as distinguished from the singular suffix עוֹדֵנָה, 1 Kings 1:22. The *Qeri* עוֹדִינּוּ, which is preferred by Michaelis, Pareau, Rosenmüller, and Thenius, has for its basis the idea “we still were;” this is shown by the translation εἶτι ὄντων ἡμῶν of the LXX, and *cum adhuc subsisteremus* of Jerome. But this view of the word, like most of the *Qeris*, is a useless attempt at explanation; for עוֹדִינּוּ alone cannot have the meaning attributed to it. and the supplements proposed, *in statu priori*, or “in the city,” are but arbitrary insertions into the text. The combination עוֹדִינּוּ תִכְלֵינָה, which is a rare one, evidently means, “our eyes are still pining (consuming) away,” so that the imperfect is used with the meaning of the participle; cf. Ewald, § 306, c, Rem. 2. The combination of כָּלָה with אֵל is pregnant: “they consume away (while looking out) for our

help;” cf. Deut. 28:28, Ps. 69:4. הֶבֶל is not an exclamation, “in vain!” (Thenius), but stands in apposition to “our help;” thus, “for our help, a help of vanity,” i.e., for a vain help; cf. Ewald, § 287, c. The vain help is more distinctly specified in the second member of the verse, as a looking out for a nation that will not help. צִפְפָּיָה does not mean “the watch-tower” (Chald., Syr., etc.),—because “on the watch-tower” would require to be expressed by עַל; cf. Isa. 21:8, 2 Chron. 20:24,—but “watching.” By the “nation that does not help,” expositors, following Jer. 37:7, think that Egypt is intended. But the words must by no means be referred to the event there described, inasmuch as we should then be obliged to take the verbs as preterites,—a course which would not accord with the interchange of the imperfect (תִּכְלֵינָה) with the perfect (צִפְפָּיָה). A strange confusion would also arise, such as is made out by Vaihinger: for we would find the prophet placing his readers, in v. 14, in the time of the siege of Jerusalem; then, in v. 15, into the conquered city; and in vv. 17 and 18, back once more into the beleaguered city, which we again, in v. 19, see conquered (Gerlach). According to vv. 18–20, Judah is completely in the power of the Chaldeans; hence the subject treated of in v. 17 is the looking out for the assistance of some nation, after the enemy had already taken Jerusalem and laid it in ashes. What the prophet denounces, then, is that help is still looked for from a nation which nevertheless will not help. In this, perhaps, he may have had Egypt before his mind; for, that the Jews, even after the destruction of Jerusalem, still looked for deliverance or help from Egypt, may be inferred partly from the fact that those who were left in the country fled thither for refuge, and partly from Ezek. 29:16. Only, the words are not to be restricted merely to this.

Lamentations 4:18–20. In order to show convincingly how vain it is to expect help from man, Jeremiah, in vv. 18–20, reminds his readers of the events immediately preceding the capture of the city, which have proved that nobody—not even the king himself—could

avoid falling into the hands of the Chaldeans. Gerlach has correctly given the sense of these verses thus: "They still cling to their hopes, and are nevertheless completely in the power of the enemy, from whom they cannot escape. All their movements are closely watched; it is impossible for any one to deceive himself any longer: it is all over with the nation, now that all attempts at flight have failed (v. 19), and that the king, 'the life's breath' of the nation, has fallen into the hands of the enemy." Gerlach and Nägelsbach have already very properly set aside the strange and fanciful idea of Ewald, that in v. 18 it is still Egypt that is regarded, and that the subject treated of is,—how Egypt, merely through fear of the Chaldeans, had at that time publicly forbidden the fugitives to go to Palestine for purposes of grace and traffic. These same writers have also refuted the arbitrary interpretation put upon *וְצִדְוֹ וְצִעְדֵינּוּ וְגֵר* by Thenius and Vaihinger, who imagine there is a reference to towers used in a siege, from which the besiegers could not merely perceive all that was going on within the city, but also shoot at persons who showed themselves in exposed places. In reply to this, Nägelsbach appropriately remarks that we must not judge of the siege-material of the ancients by the range of cannon. Moreover, *וְצִדְוֹ* does not mean to spy out, but to search out, pursue; and the figure is taken from the chase. The idea is simply this: The enemy (the Chaldeans) watch us in our every step, so that we can no longer move freely about. Our end is near, yea, it is already come; cf. Ezek. 7:2–6. A proof of this is given in the capture of King Zedekiah, after he had fled in the night, v. 19f. For an elucidation of the matters contained in these verses, cf. Jer. 39:4f., 52:7f. The comparison of the enemy to eagles is taken from Deut. 28:49, whence Jeremiah has already derived Jer. 4:13 and 48:40. *וְדָלַק*, *prop.* to burn, *metaph.* to pursue hotly, is here (poet.) construed with acc., but elsewhere with *וְאָחַז*; cf. Gen. 31:36, 1 Sam. 17:53. "On the hills and in the wilderness," i.e., on every side, even in inaccessible places. "In the wilderness" alludes to the capture of

Zedekiah; cf. Jer. 39:5. "The breath of our nostrils" is an expression founded on Gen. 2:7, and signifying "our life's breath." Such is the designation given to the king,—not Zedekiah in special, whose capture is here spoken of, because he *ex initio magnam de se spem concitaverat, fore ut post tristia Jojakimi et Jechoniae fata pacatior res publica esset* (Aben Ezra, Michaelis, Vaihinger), but the theocratic king, as the anointed of the Lord, and as the one who was the bearer of God's promise, 2 Sam. 7. In elucidation of the figurative expression, Pareau has appropriately reminded us of Seneca's words (*Clement. i. 4*): *ille (princeps) est spiritus vitalis, quem haec tot millia (civium) trahunt*. "What the breath is, in relation to the life and stability of the body, such is the king in relation to the life and stability of the nation" (Gerlach). "Of whom we said (thought), Under his shadow (i.e., protection and covering) we shall live among the nations." It is not implied in these words, as Nägelsbach thinks, that "they hoped to fall in with a friendly heathen nation, and there, clustering around their king, as their protector and the pledge of a better future, spend their days in freedom, if no more," but merely that, under the protection of their king, they hoped to live even among the heathen, i.e., to be able to continue their existence, and to prosper as a nation. For, so long as there remained to them the king whom God had given, together with the promises attached to the kingdom, they might cherish the hope that the Lord would still fulfil to them these promises also. But this hope seemed to be destroyed when the king was taken prisoner, deprived of sight, and carried away to Babylon into captivity. The words "taken in their pits" are figurative, and derived from the capture of wild animals. *וְשִׁחַת* as in Ps. 107:20. On the figure of the shadow, cf. Judg. 9:15, Ezek. 31:17. **Lamentations 4:21, 22.** However, it is not yet all over with Israel. Let the enemy triumph; the guilt of the daughter of Zion will come to an end, and then the guilt of the daughter of Edom will be punished. With this "Messianic hope," as Ewald rightly characterizes the contents of

these verses, the lamentation resolves itself into joyous faith and hope regarding the future of Israel. There is no external sign to mark the transition from the depths of lamentation over the hopeless condition of Judah, to new and hopeful confidence, just as in the Psalms there is frequently a sudden change from the deepest lamentation to joyful confidence of final victory. But these transitions have their origin in the firm conviction that Israel has most assuredly been chosen as the nation with whom the Lord has made His covenant, which He cannot break. This truth has already been clearly and distinctly expressed in the threatenings and promises of the law, Lev. 26 and Deut. 28, and is reiterated by all the prophets. The Lord will assuredly visit His ever-rebellious people with the heaviest punishments, until they come to acknowledge their sin and repent of their apostasy; but He will afterwards again take pity on the penitent remnant, gather them from among the heathen, and fulfil all His promises to them. The words "exult and rejoice" are ironical, and signify: "Rejoice as much as you please; you will not, for all that, escape the punishment for your sins." "The daughter of Edom," i.e., the people of Edom, is named as the representative of the enemies of God's people, on account of their implacable hatred against Israel; see on Jer. 49:7. From the designation, "dwelling in the land of Uz," it does not follow that the Edomite had at that time spread themselves widely over their original territory; for the land of Uz, according to Jer. 25:20, lay on the confines of Idumea. As to the form יושבתי, see on Jer. 10:17. גַּם עָלֶיךָ, "towards thee also (sc., as now to Judah) shall the cup pass." On this figure, cf. Jer. 25:15. הִתְעַרְרָה, to make oneself naked, or to become naked in consequence of drunkenness (Gen. 9:22), is a figurative expression indicative of the disgrace that will befall Edom; cf. 1:8, Nah. 3:5. תָּם עֲוֹנֶיךָ, "Thy guilt is ended." The perfect is prophetic. The guilt is ended when it is atoned for; the punishment for it has reached its end, or grace begins. That this will take place in the Messianic times (as was pointed out long ago in the Chaldee paraphrase,

et liberaberis per manum Messiae), is not indeed implied in the word עָרַר, but it is a necessary product of the Messianic hope of Israel; cf, for instance, Jer. 50:20. To this it cannot be objected (with Gerlach), that it is inadmissible to transfer into the Messianic time also the punishment of Edom threatened in the second member: for, according to the prophetic mode of viewing things, the judgment on the heathen world falls, as a matter of course, in the Messianic age; and to refer the words to the chastisement of the Edomites by Nebuchadnezzar is against the context of both verses. "To reveal (discover) sins" means to punish them; for God uncovers the sins in order to punish them, *quemadmodum Deus peccata tegere dicitur, cum eorum paenam remittit* (Rosenmüller); cf. Ps. 32:1, 5; 85:3, etc.

Lamentations 5

A Prayer to the Lord by the Church, Languishing in Misery, for the Restoration of Her Former State of Grace

- 1 Remember, O Jahveh, what hath happened to us; consider, and behold our reproach.
- 2 Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to foreigners.
- 3 We are orphans, without a father; our mothers are as widows.
- 4 Our own water we drink for money, our own wood cometh to us in return for payment.
- 5 On our necks are we persecuted; we are jaded,—there is no rest for us.
- 6 [Towards] Egypt we reach our hand,—[towards] Assyria, to satisfy ourselves [with] bread.
- 7 Our fathers sinned, they are not; we bear their iniquities.
- 8 Servants rule us; there is none to deliver us out of their hand.
- 9 At the risk of our life we bring in our bread, because of the sword of the wilderness.
- 10 Our skin gloweth with heat like a furnace, because of the fever-heat of hunger.
- 11 They have forced women in Zion, virgins in the cities of Judah.

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- 12 Princes are hung up by their hand; the face of the elders is not honoured.
- 13 Young men carry millstones, and lads stagger under [loads of] wood.
- 14 Elders cease from the gate, young men from their instrumental music.
- 15 The joy of our heart hath ceased, our dancing has turned into mourning.
- 16 The crown of our head is fallen; woe unto us, that we have sinned!
- 17 Because of this our heart became sick; because of these [things] our eyes became dark.
- 18 Upon Mount Zion, which is laid waste, jackals roam through it.
- 19 Thou, O Jahveh, dost sit [enthroned] for ever; Thy throne is for generation and generation.
- 20 Why dost thou forget us for ever, —forsake us for a length of days?
- 21 Lead us back, O Jahveh, to thyself, that we may return; renew our days, as of old.
- 22 Or, hast Thou indeed utterly rejected us? art thou very wroth against us?

Lamentations 5:1–22. This poem begins (v. 1) with the request addressed to the Lord, that He would be pleased to think of the disgrace that has befallen Judah, and concludes (vv. 19–22) with the request that the Lord may not forsake His people for ever, but once more receive them into favour. The main portion of this petition is formed by the description of the disgrace and misery under which the suppliants groan, together with the acknowledgment (vv. 7 and 16) that they are compelled to bear the sins of their fathers and their own sins. By this confession, the description given of their misery is divided into two strophes (vv. 2–7 and 8–16), which are followed by the request for deliverance (vv. 19–22), introduced by vv. 17 and 18. The author of this prayer speaks throughout in the name of the people, or, to speak more correctly, in the name of the congregation, laying their distress and their supplication before the Lord. The view of Thenius,—that this poem originated among a small company of Jews who had been dispersed, and who, in the mist of constant persecution, sought a place of refuge from the

oppression of the Chaldeans,—has been forced upon the text through the arbitrary interpretation of detached figurative expressions.

Lamentations 5:1–7. Supplication and statement regarding the distress. The quest made in v. 1 refers to the oppression depicted in what follows. The words, “Remember, O Lord, what hath happened (i.e., befallen) us,” are more fully explained in the second member, “Look and behold our disgrace.” It is quite arbitrary in Thenius to refer the first member to the past, the second to the present, described in what follows, vv. 12–16. The *Qeri* הַבֵּיטָה is an unnecessary alteration, after 1:11; 3:63.—With v. 2 begins the description of the disgrace that has befallen them. This consists, first of all, in the fact that their inheritance has become the possession of strangers. Rosenmüller rightly explains נְחֻלָּה to mean, *terra quae tuo nobis dono quandam est concessa*. בְּתֵיבוֹת is used of the transference of the property to others, as in Isa. 60:5. Many expositors would refer בְּתֵיבוֹת to the houses in Jerusalem which the Chaldeans had not destroyed, on the ground that it is stated, in 2 Kings 25:9 and Jer. 52:13, that the Chaldeans destroyed none but large houses. There is no foundation, however, for this restriction; moreover, it is opposed by the parallel נְחֻלְתֵּנוּ.

Just as by נְחֻלָּה we are to understand, not merely the possession of Jerusalem, but of the whole country, so also בְּתֵיבוֹת are the dwelling-houses of the country in towns and villages; in this case, the question whether any houses still remained standing in Jerusalem does not demand consideration at all. Nägelsbach is wrong in his remark that נְחֻלָּה and בְּתֵיבוֹת respectively mean immovable and portable property, for houses are certainly not moveable property.

Lamentations 5:3. Ver. 3 is very variously interpreted by modern expositors. Ewald and Vaihinger understand “father” as meaning the king, while Thenius refers it specially to Zedekiah; the “mothers,” according to Ewald

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and Vaihinger, are the cities of Judah, while Thenius thinks they are the women of Zedekiah's harem. But to call the women of the royal harem "mothers" of the nation, would be as unexampled as the attribution of the title to the cities of Judah. The second clause, "our mothers are like widows," contains a simile: they are not really widows, but like widows, because they have lost the protection which the mother of a family has in her husband. In like manner, the first clause also is to be understood as a comparison. "We are fatherless orphans," i.e., we are like such, as the Chaldee has paraphrased it. Accordingly, C. B. Michaelis, Pareau, Rosenmüller, Kalkschmidt, and Gerlach have rightly explained the words as referring to the custom of the Hebrews: *hominies omni modo derelictos omnibusque praesidiis destitutos, pupillos et viduas dicere*; cf. Ps. 94:6, Isa. 1:17, Jas. 1:27.

Lamentations 5:4. And not merely are the inhabitants of Judah without land and property, and deprived of all protection, like orphans and widows; they are also living in penury and want, and (v. 5) under severe oppression and persecution. Water and wood are mentioned in v. 4 as the greatest necessities of life, without which it is impossible to exist. Both of these they must buy for themselves, because the country, with its waters and forests, is in the possession of the enemy. The emphasis lies on "our water ... our wood." What they formerly had, as their own property, for nothing, they must now purchase. We must reject the historical interpretations of the words, and their application to the distress of the besieged (Michaelis); or to the exiles who complained of the dearness of water and wood in Egypt (Ewald); or to those who fled before the Chaldeans, and lived in waste places (Thenius); or to the multitudes of those taken prisoner after the capture of Jerusalem, who were so closely watched that they could not go where they liked to get water and wood, but were obliged to go to their keepers for permission, and pay dearly for their services (Nägelsbach). The purchase of water and wood can scarcely be taken literally, but must be understood as

signifying that the people had to pay heavy duties for the use of the water and the wood which the country afforded.

Lamentations 5:5. "On our necks we are persecuted," i.e., our persecutors are at our necks,—are always close behind us, to drive or hunt us on. It is inadmissible to supply any specific mention of the yoke (*imposito collo gravi servitutis jugo*, Raschi, Rosenmüller, Vaihinger, etc.); and we must utterly reject the proposal to connect "our neck" with v. 4b (LXX, Syriac, J. D. Michaelis), inasmuch as the symmetry of the verses is thereby destroyed, nor is any suitable meaning obtained. "We are jaded: no rest is granted us." הַנִּיחַ is Hophal of הִנִּיחַ, to give rest to. The *Qeri* וְלֹא instead of לֹא is quite as unnecessary as in the case of אֵינִי, v. 3, and אֶנְחֵנוּ and אֵינָם in v. 7. The meaning of the verse is not, "we are driven over neck and head," according to which the subject treated of would be the merciless treatment of the prisoners, through their being driven on (Nägelsbach); still less is it meant to be stated that the company to which the writer of the poem belonged was always tracked out, and hunted about in the waste places where they wished to hide themselves (Thenius). Neither of these interpretations suits the preceding and succeeding context. Nor does the mention of being "persecuted on the neck" necessarily involve a pursuit of fugitives: it merely indicates incessant oppression on the side of the enemy, partly through continually being goaded on to hard labour, partly through annoyances of different kinds, by which the victors made their supremacy and their pride felt by the vanquished nation. In רָדְרָה there is contained neither the notion of tracking fugitives nor that of driving on prisoners.

Lamentations 5:6. The meaning of נָתַן יָד is more exactly defined by the superadded לְשִׁבְעָה לֶחֶם, which belongs to both members of the verse. "In order to satisfy ourselves with bread (so as to prolong our lives), we give the hand to Egypt, to Assyria." מִצְרַיִם and אֲשׁוּר are local

accusatives. To give the hand is a sign of submission or subjection; see on Jer. 50:15. Pareau has correctly given the meaning thus: *si victum nobis comparare velimus, vel Judaea nobis relinquenda est atque Aegyptii sunt agnoscendi domini, vel si hic manemus, Chaldaeis victoribus nos subjiciamus necesse est; quocumque nos vertamus, nihil superest nisi tristissima servitus*. This complaint shows, moreover, that it is those in Judea who are speaking. נָתַנּוּ, “we give the hand,” shows that the assumption of Thenius,—that the writer here brings to remembrance the fate of two other companies of his fellow-countrymen who were not carried away into exile,—is an arbitrary insertion. *Asshur*, as the name of the great Asiatic empire, stands for Babylon, as in Ezra 6:22, cf. Jer. 2:18.

Lamentations 5:7. “We suffer more than we are guilty of; we are compelled to bear the iniquities of our fathers,” i.e., to atone for their guilt. There is a great truth contained in the words, “Our fathers have sinned; they are no more; we bear their iniquities (or guilt).” For the fall of the kingdom had not been brought about by the guilt of that generation merely, and of none before; it was due also to the sins of their fathers before them, in previous generations. The same truth is likewise expressed in Jer. 16:11; 32:18; and in 2 Kings 23:26 it is stated that God did not cease from His great wrath because of the sins of Manasseh. But this truth would be perverted into error, if we were to understand the words as intimating that the speakers had considered themselves innocent. This false view, however, they themselves opposed with the confession in v. 16, “for we have sinned;” thereby they point out their own sins as the cause of their misfortune. If we compare this confession with the verse now before us, this can only mean the following: “The misfortune we suffer has not been incurred by ourselves alone, but we are compelled to atone for the sins of our fathers also.” In the same way, too, Jeremiah (Jer. 16:11) threatens the infliction of a penal judgment, not merely “because your fathers

have forsaken me (the Lord),” but he also adds, “and ye do still worse than your fathers.” God does not punish the sins of the fathers in innocent children, but in children who continue the sins of the fathers; cf. Isa. 65:7, and the explanation given of Jer. 31:29 and Ezek. 18:2ff. The design with which the suffering for the sins of the fathers is brought forward so prominently, and with such feeling, is merely to excite the divine compassion for those who are thus chastised.

Lamentations 5:8–16. Further description of the miserable condition under which the congregation languishes. V. 8. “Servants rule over us,” etc. עֲבָדִים are not the Chaldean soldiers, who are in 2 Kings 24:10 designated the servants of Nebuchadnezzar (Pareau, Rosenmüller, Maurer); still less the Chaldeans, in so far as they, till shortly before, had been the subjects of the Assyrians (Kalkschmidt); nor the Chaldean satraps, as servants of the king of Babylon (Thenius, Ewald); nor even “slaves who had been employed as overseers and taskmasters of the captives while on the march” (Nägelsbach); but the Chaldeans. These are called servants, partly because of the despotic rule under which they were placed, partly in the sense already indicated by C. B. Michaelis, as being those *qui nobis potius, si pii fuisset, servire debuissent*, in accordance with the analogous designation of Jerusalem as a princess among the countries of the world, 1:1.

Lamentations 5:9. And in addition to this humiliation under dishonourable servitude, we can get our daily bread only at the risk of our life. Thus there is fulfilled to them the threatening in Deut. 28:28, “Ye shall be servants among your enemies, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and want of everything.” בְּנַפְשֵׁנוּ, “for the price of our soul,” i.e., with our life at stake, we bring in our bread. The danger is more exactly described by what is added: “before the sword of the wilderness.” By this expression are meant the predatory Bedouins of the desert, who, falling upon those that were bringing in the bread, plundered, and probably even killed them. The bringing of the bread is not, however,

to be referred (with Rosenmüller, Maurer, and Kalkschmidt) to the attempts made to procure bread from the neighbouring countries; still less is it to be referred (with Thenius, Ewald, and Nägelsbach) to the need for “wringing the bread from the desert and its plunderers;” but it refers to the ingathering of the scanty harvest in the country devastated by war and by the visitations of predatory Bedouins: הַבֵּיאַ is the word constantly employed in this connection; cf. 2 Sam. 9:10, Hag. 1:6.

Lamentations 5:10. The bread which we are thus obliged to struggle for, at the risk of our life, is not even sufficient to allay hunger, which consumes our bodies. נִבְמַר does not mean to be blackened (Chaldee, Kimchi, C. B. Michaelis, Maurer), but in Gen. 43:30, 1 Kings 3:26, and Hos. 11:8, to be stirred up (of the bowels, compassion), hence to kindle, glow. This last meaning is required by the comparison with תַּנּוּר, oven, furnace. This comparison does not mean *cutis nostra tanquam fornace adusta est* (Gesenius in *Thes.*, Kalkschmidt), still less “black as an oven” (Dietrich in *Ges. Lex.*), because תַּנּוּר does not mean the oven viewed in respect of its blackness, but (from נִוַר) in respect of the fire burning in it. The meaning is, “our skin glows like a baker’s oven” (Vaihinger, Thenius, Nägelsbach, Gerlach),—a strong expression for the fever-heat produced by hunger. As to וְלִעֲפוֹת, glowing heat, see on Ps. 11:6.

Lamentations 5:11ff. With this must further be considered the maltreatment which persons of every station, sex, and age have to endure. V. 11. Women and virgins are dishonoured in Jerusalem, and in the other cities of the land. V. 12. Princes are suspended by the hand of the enemy (Ewald, contrary to the use of language, renders “along with” them). To hang those who had been put to death was something superadded to the simple punishment by death (Deut. 21:22f.), and so far as a shameful kind of execution. “The old men are not honoured,” i.e., dishonoured; cf. 4:16, Lev. 29:32. The words are not to be restricted to the events mentioned

in Jer. 39:6, but also apply to the present condition of those who are complaining,

Lamentations 5:13. Youths and boys are forced to engage in heavy servile work. חָוֹן נְשָׂא does not mean “they take them for the mill,” *ad molendum sumpserunt* (Ewald, Rosenmüller). Apart from the consideration that there is no ground for it in the language employed, such a view of the words does not accord with the parallelism. נְשָׂא, construed with a simple infinitive or accusative (without לְ), does not mean “to take for something.” חָוֹן is a substantive, “the mill.” “To bear (carry) the mill” signifies to work at and with the mill. We must think of the hand-mill, which was found in every household, and which could thus be carried from one place to another. Grinding was the work of slaves; see on Judg. 16:21. The carrying of the mill (not merely of the upper millstone) is mentioned as the heaviest portion of the work in grinding. “Boys stagger (fall down) on the wood laid on them to be carried,” i.e., under the burden of it. לְכַשֵּׁל with אֵל means to stumble on something; here אֵל denotes the cause of the stumbling; cf. Jer. 6:21, Lev. 26:37f. It is arbitrary to understand עֵץ as meaning the wooden handle of the mill (Aben Ezra, and Bochart in *Hieroz.* i. 157, ed. Rosenmüller); the same must also be said regarding the opinion of Thenius and Nägelsbach, who refer the words to the dragging of the hand-mills, and of the wood necessary for baking bread for the comfort of the soldiers, on the march of the captives to Babylon.

Lamentations 5:15f. Under the pressure of such circumstances, all public meetings and amusements have ceased. “The elders cease from the fate.” The gate was the place of assembly for the people, not merely for deliberating upon public affairs (Ruth 4:15; Josh. 20:4), but also “for social entertainment (since there were no refreshment-rooms, coffeehouses, and public baths, such as are now to be found in the East), or even for quiet enjoyment in looking at the motley multitude of

passers-by; Gen. 19:1, 1 Sam. 4:18; 9:18, Job 29:7" (Winer's *Bibl. R.W.B. s.v. Thor*). That the gate is here to be regarded as a place of entertainment and amusement, is shown by the parallel member, "young men cease from their instrumental music;" cf. 1:4. On v. 15, cf. Jer. 7:34; 16:9, and 31:13; Ps. 30:12. Lastly, in v. 16, the writer sums up the whole of the misery in the complaint, "The crown of our head is fallen! woe unto us, for we have sinned," i.e., we suffer the punishment for our sins. "The *fallen crown* can only be a figurative expression for the honourable position of the people in its entirety, but which is now lost." Such is the view which Ewald rightly takes; on the other hand, the interpretation of Thenius, that "the 'crown of our head' is nothing else than Zion, together with its palaces, placed on Jerusalem, as it were on the head [of the country], and adorning it," deserves mention simply as a curious specimen of exegetical fancy.

Nägelsbach has gone too far in restricting the figurative expression to the crown of Jerusalem, which consists in her being mistress among the nations, a princess among the regions of the earth (Lam. 1:1), the perfection of beauty, and the joy of the whole earth (Lam. 2:15); for "our crown" is not equivalent to Jerusalem, or a crown on the head of Jerusalem.

Lamentations 5:17–22. The request that the judgment of wrath may be averted, and that the former gracious condition may be restored. Vv. 17 and 18 form the transition to the request in vv. 19–22. "Because of this" and "because of these [things]" refer mainly to what precedes, yet not in such a way as that the former must be referred to the fact that sin has been committed, and the latter to the suffering. The two halves of the verse are unmistakably parallel; the sickening of the heart is essentially similar to the dimness coming on the eyes, the former indicating the sorrow of the soul, while the latter is the expression of this sorrow in tears. "Because of this (viz., because of the misery hitherto complained of) the heart has become sick," and the grief of the heart finds vent in tears, in consequence of which the eyes have become dim; cf. 2:11. But this sorrow

culminates in the view taken of the desolation of Mount Zion, which receives consideration, not because of its splendid palaces (Thenius), but as the holy mountain on which the house of God stood, for "Zion" comprehended Moriah; see on Ps. 2:6; 9:12; 76:3. The glory formerly attaching to Mount Zion (Ps. 48:3; 50:2) is departed; the mountain has been so much laid waste, that jackals roam on it. שׂוּעָלִים are not properly foxes, but jackals (as in Ps. 63:11), which lodge among the ruins. הִלָּךְ is an intensive form, meaning to rove or roam about.

Lamentations 5:19ff. The glory of Zion, the earthly habitation of the Lord, is at an end, but the throne of the Lord endures eternally. Through this thought, the lamentation rises to the prayer that the Lord may not forsake His people for ever, but re-establish His kingdom on the earth. "Thou, O Jahveh, art enthroned eternally." This thought is expressed as the ground of hope, in nearly the same words as are found in Ps. 102:13. Jahveh is the God of salvation. Since His throne endures eternally in heaven, He cannot let His kingdom perish on the earth. On this is founded the request, "Why wilt Thou forget us for ever, forsake us for a length of days (i.e., through life, always, Ps. 23:6)?" This the Lord cannot do, because of His grace. From this is developed the further request (v. 21), "Lead us back to Thyself, that we may return." We must not restrict הָשִׁיב and שׁוּב to conversion to the Lord (Kalkschmidt, Ewald, Vaihinger, Gerlach); they signify the re-establishment of the gracious relation, which is, of course, impossible without repentance and conversion on the part of Israel. It is wrong to refer the words to the restoration of the people to their native land, or to the re-establishment of the theocracy (Dathe, Thenius), because it is not the exiles who address this petition to the Lord. The mode in which we are to understand the "bringing back to Jahveh" is shown in the second hemistich, "renew our days, as they were in former times," i.e., vouchsafe to us again the life (or state of grace) which we enjoyed in former times. In v. 22 this request is

based on an argument introduced in a negative form. **כי־אִם**, after a negative clause, signifies *nisi*, but (Ger. *sondern*). This meaning developed into that of a strong limitation (cf. Ewald, § 356), unless = provided that. Thus literally here: “unless Thou hast utterly rejected us,—art very wroth against us.” This case, however, is merely stated as a possibility, the actual occurrence of which is out of the question. The idea is the same as that expressed by Jeremiah (Jer. 14:19) in the form of a question, in order to give greater emphasis to his intercession for his nation. The Lord cannot have utterly rejected His people Israel, because He would thereby make His name to be despised in the eyes of the nations (Jer. 14:21). Thus terminates this lamentation, with a request for whose fulfilment faith can hope with confidence.

Lamentations 5:21, 22. In many Hebrew MSS v. 21 is found repeated after v. 22, to make the whole more suitable for public reading in the synagogue, that the poem may not end with the mention of the wrath of God, as is the case also

at the close of Isaiah, Malachi, and Ecclesiastes: the intention is, to conclude with words of comfort. But v. 22, rightly understood, did not require this repetition: for, as Rhabanas has already remarked in *Ghisleri commentar.* on v. 22: *non haec quasi desperando de salute populi sui locutus est, sed ut dolorem suum nimium de contritione et objectione diutina gentis suae manifestaret.* This conclusion entirely agrees with the character of the Lamentations, in which complaint and supplication should continue to the end,—not, however, without an element of hope, although the latter may not rise to the heights of joyful victory, but, as Gerlach expresses himself, “merely glimmers from afar, like the morning star through the clouds, which does not indeed itself dispel the shadows of the night, though it announces that the rising of the sun is near, and that it shall obtain the victory.”