

STUDIES IN PSALMS

iquities? It is only as the poet suns himself in the conception of *ransoming being at home with Jehovah*, that he rises to the crowning thought that *Jehovah himself* will ransom Israel from all his iniquities; and, if from his iniquities,—then why not also from his shame before the nations, his long, long exile from his own land?

Of the two great Old Testament words for redeeming, one (*ga'al*) “implies relationship” (O.G. 145), and the other (*pa dhah'*, that used here) carries with it the “underlying thought of payment” (O.G. 804). Jehovah is Israel's Kinsman-Redeemer; and he who of old gave Egypt for Israel's ransom (Isa. 43:3) will be able to find if he has not already “found a ransom” of such abiding worth that—in view of it, as a public justification —“Israel shall be saved in Jehovah with salvation to the ages” (Isa. 45:17, 25).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why include this psalm of repentance at this juncture?
2. This psalm implies much more than it says—give two examples.
3. How is both the individual and national need preserved and answered?
4. Why is the term “revered” used?
5. What is the climax and close of the psalm—how related to us?

PSALM 131

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

The Sinking of Self in Seeking Israel's Welfare.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., ver. 1, Direct Protestation of Humility. Stanza II., ver. 2, The Weaning from Selfishness. Stanza III., ver. 3, Israel again Encouraged to Hope.

(Lm.) Song of the Steps—By David.

1. Jehovah! not haughty is my heart—
nor lofty are mine eyes;

PSALM 131

Neither have I moved among great things—
or among things too wonderful for me.

- 2 Surely I have soothed¹ and stilled² my soul—
like a weaned child concerning his mother:
Like the weaned child concerning myself is my soul.³
- 3 Hope O Israel for Jehovah—
from henceforth and unto the ages.⁴

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 131

Lord, I am not proud and haughty. I don't think myself better than others. I don't pretend to "know it all."

2. I am quiet now before the Lord, just as a child who is weaned from the breast. Yes, my begging has been stilled.

3 O Israel, you too should quietly trust in the Lord—now, and always.

EXPOSITION

The conclusion has everything in its favour, that David began this psalm, and Hezekiah finished it. The first stanza strongly commends itself as probably reflecting the feeling of David in view of the unlooked-for honour conferred on him when taken from the humble occupation of tending his father's sheep to be king over Israel. He had had no thought, no ambition, for such *great things*: they would have appeared *too wonderful for him*. So, we may well believe, David subsequently wrote—and sang; though how his little song originally ended we cannot know. Hezekiah, it would seem, discovered the unconsidered trifle, and added to it an adaptation which made it suit his own case with exquisite precision. If he had never felt the stirrings of personal ambition before, he was certainly lifted off his feet when he showed the messengers from Babylon all his treasures. He was sternly rebuked, prospectively punished,

1. Ml.: "smoothed."

2. Some cod. (w. Sep. and Vul.): "uplifted" (weRomamti instead of weDomamti)—Gn. True in itself and tempting; but, in view of context, not so likely.

3. "Like a weaned upon his mother, my soul is upon me as a weaned child"—Dr. So, in effect, Del., Per., Kp.; but Br.: "so is bountiful dealing upon my soul."

4. U.: "and unto times age-abiding."

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and—he humbled himself; but not without a struggle: he had to be weaned from Self, and has here described the process, with unsurpassable insight and delicacy. He had had to smooth and soothe his ruffled soul; and wean himself from any longer drawing sweet satisfaction from what Self could afford. Henceforth he must take a manlier part than nestle on the soft bosom of Self. He was weaned. And now he would wean Israel. Trouble awaited her in the future—this also now he knew. But, having in his previous song sung of ransom from iniquities, and of Jehovah himself as Ransomer, he must needs now again urge Israel, with tenderer pathos and with longer outlook than before, to *hope for Jehovah, from henceforth and unto the ages*. This loving call still woos Israel to hear.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How was this psalm composed?
2. David was “surprised by joy”—how?
3. There is a marvelous lesson of the life of Hezekiah described—what is it? Discuss.

PSALM 132

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

The Davidic Dynasty Humbled and Exalted.

ANALYSIS

Stanza, vers. 1-10, Prayer by the Typical Messiah. Anti-Stanza, vers. 11-18, Promise for the Antitypical Messiah.

(Lm.) Song of the Steps.

- 1 Remember O Jehovah unto David—
all his humiliations:—
- 2 What he sware unto Jehovah—
vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob:
- 3 “Verily I will not enter into the tent of my house—
I will not go up on the couch of my bed,
- 4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes—
nor to mine eyelids slumber: