

STUDIES IN PSALMS

of Hezekiah and his experiences during the Assyrian invasion. The first four verses reflect the desperate character of the situation, when there was no resource but Jehovah. David was enabled to effect many escapes; the great escape of Hezekiah is outlined in his remarkable story. That it was comparable to a bird securing its freedom after being imprisoned in a cage (ver. 7a) may be gathered from the boastful words of Sennacherib himself, as appearing in the well-known Taylor cylinder ('Records of the Past,' Second Series, vol. vi., pp. 90, 91): 'Hezekiah of Judah . . . I shut up like a caged bird in Jerusalem, his royal city . . . He was overwhelmed by the fear of the brightness of my lordship (lines 11-30)'—Thirtle, "Old Testament Problems," pp. 41, 42.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the three possible situations for the setting of this psalm?
2. Show how the first and second situations could not fit the psalm.
3. Even archeology confirms Rotherham's position on this psalm. Discuss.

PSALM 125

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Trust in Jehovah Encouraged in Presence of the Invader.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1, 2, Jerusalem Safe under Jehovah's Protection. Stanza II., ver. 3, The Sceptre of the Lawless One will be Removed. Stanza III., vers. 4, 5, Prayer for the Good, a Threatening for Such as Yield to the Enemy, and a Benediction on Israel.

(Lm.) Song of the Steps.

- 1 They who trust in Jehovah
are like Mount Zion which cannot be shaken.
- 2 To the ages sitteth Jerusalem enthroned—
mountains round about her;

PSALM 125

And Jehovah is round about his people—
from henceforth and to the ages.

- 3 Surely he will not let the sceptre of the lawless one¹ rest—
on the lot of the righteous,
To the end the righteous may not thrust forth
on perversity their hand.
- 4 Oh do good Jehovah unto such as are good—
even to such as are upright in their hearts;
- 5 But as for such as turn aside their crooked ways
Jehovah will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity!²
Peace upon Israel!

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 125

Those who trust in the Lord are steady as Mount Zion,
unmoved by any circumstance.

2 Just as the mountains surround and protect Jerusalem, so
the Lord surrounds and protects His people.

3 For the wicked shall not rule the godly, lest the godly
be forced to do wrong.

4 O Lord, do good to those who are good, whose hearts
are right with the Lord;

5 But lead evil men to execution. And let Israel have
quietness and peace.

EXPOSITION

Each stanza in this psalm bears witness to the presence of the Invader. The word for *trust* in ver. 1 is the same as that found in 2 Ch. 32:10. Ver. 3 assumes that the sceptre of the foreigner is at present resting on Israel's inheritance; but is a source of danger to the wavering. In ver. 5 we catch sight of those who are coquetting with the enemy and running into the danger of being involved in his ruin: as the Assyrians—such as are left—are about to be led away in shame to their own land, so let all renegades in Israel beware lest they too be *led forth* with the authors of all this *trouble*. *Mount Zion* itself stands firm amidst her surrounding *mountains*: so let

1. So some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: (changing a vowel-point): "lawlessness."

2. Or: "mischief" ("naughtiness"—Dr.)

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Jehovah's people rest trustful under Jehovah's strong protection. "The political situation was one which called for the encouragement ministered by the words; and the conduct of Hezekiah in the day of adversity shows the mighty influence of Isaiah's advice and the prevailing efficacy of his prayers"—Thirtle, O.T.P., 44.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Read II Chro. 32:10 and discuss its application to this psalm.
2. Even when Sennecharib was about to conquer Jerusalem there were those who were "coquetting with the enemy"—how do we know this?
3. How do the prayers of Isaiah relate to this psalm?

PSALM 126

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

The Invader Gone: the First Sowing Begun.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-3, The Deliverance of Zion calls forth the Jubilations of her People, and the Frank Acknowledgment of Neighbouring Nations. Stanza II., vers. 4-6, Prayer for the Renewed Culture of the Devastated Land.

(Lm.) Song of the Steps.

- 1 When Jehovah turned the fortunes¹ of Zion
we became like men dreaming:
- 2 Then was filled with laughter our mouth,
and our tongue with ringing cries.
Then said they among the nations—
"Great things hath Jehovah done with these!"
- 3 Great things hath Jehovah done with us—
we are full of joy!
- 4 Oh turn Jehovah our fortunes—
as channels in the south country.
- 5 They who are sowing with tears—
with ringing cries may they reap!

1. Or: (ml. though less prob.): "the captivity"—see Exposition.