

PSALM 131

This psalm is David's profession of humility, humbly made, with thankfulness to God for his grace, and not in vain-glory. It is probable enough that (as most interpreters suggest) David made this protestation in answer to the calumnies of Saul and his courtiers, who represented David as an ambitious aspiring man, who, under pretence of a divine appointment, sought the kingdom, in the pride of his heart. But he appeals to God, that, on the contrary,

I. He aimed at nothing high nor great (v. 1).

II. He was very easy in every condition which God allotted him (v. 2); and therefore,

III. He encourages all good people to trust in God as he did (v. 3). Some have made it an objection against singing David's psalms that there are many who cannot say, "My heart is not haughty," etc. It is true there are; but we may sing it for the same purpose that we read it, to teach and admonish ourselves, and one another, what we ought to be, with repentance that we have come short of being so, and humble prayer to God for his grace to make us so.

PSALM 131:1-3

HUMBLE CONFIDENCE

A song of degrees of David.

Here are two things which will be comforts to us: —

I. Consciousness of our integrity. This was David's rejoicing, that his heart could witness for him that he had walked humbly with his God, notwithstanding the censures he was under and the temptations he was in.

1. He aimed not at a high condition, nor was he desirous of making a figure in the world, but, if God had so ordered, could have been well content to spend all his days, as he did in the beginning of them, in the sheep-folds. His own brother, in a passion, charged him with pride (^{MTS}1

Samuel 17:28), but the charge was groundless and unjust. God, who searches the heart, knew,

(1.) That he had no conceited opinion of himself, or his own merits: *Lord, my heart is not haughty*. Humble saints cannot think so well of themselves as others think of them, are not in love with their own shadow, nor do they magnify their own attainments or achievements. The love of God reigning in the heart will subdue all inordinate self-love.

(2.) That he had neither a scornful nor an aspiring look: “*My eyes are not lofty*, either to look with envy upon those that are above me or to look with disdain upon those that are below me.” Where there is a proud heart there is commonly a proud look (²⁰⁶⁷Proverbs 6:17), but the humble publican will not so much as lift up his eyes.

(3.) That he did not employ himself in things above his station, *in things too great or too high for him*. He did not employ himself in studies too high; he made God's word his meditation, and did not amuse himself with matters of nice speculation or doubtful disputation, or covet to be wise above what is written. To know God and our duty is learning sufficiently high for us. He did not employ himself in affairs too great; he followed his ewes, and never set up for a politician; no, nor for a soldier; for, when his brethren went to the wars, he staid at home to keep the sheep. It is our wisdom, and will be our praise, to keep within our sphere, and not to intrude into things which we have not seen, or meddle with that which does not belong to us. Princes and scholars must not exercise themselves in matters too great, too high, for men: and those in a low station, and of ordinary capacities, must not pretend to that which is out of their reach, and which they were not cut out for. Those will fall under due shame that affect undue honours.

2. He was well reconciled to every condition that God placed him in (v. 2): *I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother*. As he had not proudly aimed at the kingdom, so, since God had appointed him to it, he had not behaved insolently towards any, nor been restless in his attempts to get the crown before the time set; but,

(1.) He had been as humble as a little child about the age of a weanling, as manageable and governable, and as far from aiming at high things; as entirely at God's disposal as the child at the disposal of the mother or nurse; as far from taking state upon him, though anointed to be king, or

valuing himself upon the prospect of his future advancement, as a child in the arms. Our Saviour has taught us humility by this comparison (~~488~~ Matthew 18:3); we must *become as little children*.

(2.) He had been as indifferent to the wealth and honour of this world as a child is to the breast when it is thoroughly weaned from it. *I have levelled and quieted myself* (so Dr. Hammond reads it) *as a child that is weaned*. This intimates that our hearts are naturally as desirous of worldly things as the babe is of the breast, and in like manner relish them, cry for them, are fond of them, play with them, and cannot live without them. But, by the grace of God, a soul that is sanctified, is weaned from those things. Providence puts wormwood upon the breast, and that helps to wean us. The child is perhaps cross and fretful while it is in the weaning and thinks itself undone when it has lost the breast. But in a day or two it is forgotten; the fret is over, and it accommodates itself well enough to a new way of feeding, cares no longer for milk, but can bear strong meat. Thus does a gracious soul quiet itself under the loss of that which it loved and disappointment in that which it hoped for, and is easy whatever happens, lives, and lives comfortably, upon God and the covenant-grace, when creatures prove dry breasts. When our condition is not to our mind we must bring our mind to our condition; and then we are easy to ourselves and all about us; then our souls are *as a weaned child*.

II. Confidence in God; and this David recommends to all Israel of God, no doubt from his own experience of the benefit of it (v. 3): *Let Israel hope in the Lord*, and let them continue to do so *henceforth and for ever*. Though David could himself wait patiently and quietly for the crown designed him, yet perhaps Israel, the people whose darling he was, would be ready to attempt something in favour of him before the time; and therefore endeavours to quiet them too, and bids them *hope in the Lord* that they should see a happy change of the face of affairs in due time. *Thus it is good to hope and quietly to wait for the salvation of the Lord*.