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2 CHRONICLES 30 21 עו ליהוה בקלי

A PERFECT TEXT

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EVER since Bertheau, some fifty years ago, suggested that the seemingly dubious עו בקלי 2 Chr. 30 21 be emended to read בקלעו and that either the ליהוה following be omitted or the ליהוה of the preceding וקהללים ליהוה יום ביום¹, commentary after commentary has unreservedly accepted the emendation, and editor after editor has adopted it in the Hebrew Dictionary. Yet עו בקלי ליהוה is a perfect text. It requires no emendation whatever.

The difficulty which the text is thought to present arises primarily from the fact that קלי־שיר is generally taken to mean only "musical instrument," while in reality it occurs repeatedly also with the meaning "song," "melody." Of the passages in which it is found with this meaning, 2 Chr. 7 8 is to be mentioned first of all: וְהַלְלוּ בְּקַל־שִׁיר אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ לַיהוָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם תְּסֻדוּ בְּהַלֵּל דָּוִד בְּיָדָם. It will be noted that קלי־שיר ליהוה is used synonymously with דָּוִד בְּיָדָם, בְּהַלֵּל דָּוִד בְּיָדָם, "with David's paean of praise in their hands," so that it is clear beyond doubt that קלי־שיר must mean "song." Also in השִׁיר בְּקַל־הַשִּׁיר "the singers," 2 Chr. 23 13 it is shown both by השִׁיר "the singers," and by מוֹדִיעִים לְהַלֵּל "leading the song of praise," that קלי־שיר is used with the meaning "song." Another passage in Chronicles where it has this meaning is 2 Chr. 5 13 וּבְקָרְיָם קוֹל

¹ *Die Bücher der Chronik*² (1873), p. 365.

בְּחֲצֹצְרוֹת וּבִמְנַלְתִּים וּבְכָלִי הַשָּׁר וּבְהַלֵּל לַיהוָה כִּי מִזֶּבֶךְ כִּי לְעֹלָם חָסִידוֹ, for it is evident that the writer would not have followed the mention of the specific instruments, "the trumpets and cymbals," with "and instruments of music." The RV. had the right feeling in this case, and therefore gave as an alternative the marginal translation "and instruments for song." But this is a mere makeshift, as is also Kautzsch's translation "Und die übrigen Musikinstrumente."² Had this been the writer's meaning, he would have said וּבְכָלִי שִׁיר. As soon as שִׁיר is rendered correctly "song," another difficulty is removed, namely, the difficulty which וּבְהַלֵּל presents in consequence of the wrong translation of שִׁיר. The RV. in violation of every rule translates וּבְהַלֵּל "And praised." The correct translation of וּבְהַלֵּל is "with the song and paeon of praise"—Kautzsch, in fact, translates וּבְהַלֵּל this way, "Lobgesang."³ As to the translation of what follows, לַיהוָה כִּי מִזֶּבֶךְ נִי, I shall come back to this point in a moment.

Finally, כְּלִי־שִׁיר has the meaning "melody" in Am. 6 5 הַפְּרָסִים. עַל־שֵׁי הַנְּבֵל כְּדוֹד חֲשָׁבוּ לָהֶם כְּלִי־שִׁיר. It is generally recognized that the parallelism הַנְּבֵל עַל־שֵׁי הַפְּרָסִים "who improvise to the flute," as well as the expression חֲשָׁבוּ לָהֶם exclude the probability that כְּלִי־שִׁיר could mean here "musical instruments." But instead of drawing from this fact the obvious inference that חֲשָׁבוּ לָהֶם כְּלִי־שִׁיר must mean "like David they compose melodies," Biblical scholars have in this case, too, resorted to arbitrary and farfetched emendations. Since, then, the meaning "song" is established for כְּלִי־שִׁיר and, of course, for the ellipsis וְיַעֲמִדוּ הַלְלוּם בְּכָלִי יְהוָה וְהַכֹּהֲנִים which occurs again 2 Chr. 29 26 בְּחֲצֹצְרוֹת, and also 1 Chr. 23 5, the rest is very simple: עו לַיהוָה are the opening words of the song, just as are אֵילַת הַשָּׁחַר of Ps. 22, and אֵילַת הַשָּׁחַר, "to the tune of אֵילַת הַשָּׁחַר," in the heading of Ps. 56, and probably also מִזֶּבֶךְ לְבָנִים in the heading of Ps. 9. Similarly כִּי מִזֶּבֶךְ כִּי לְעֹלָם חָסִידוֹ of 2 Chr. 5 13, which I discussed a moment ago, is the opening line of the song; the line originally read וְהוֹדוּ לַיהוָה

² *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments*.

³ *Op. cit.*

הודו **לְעוֹלָם** חֲסִדוֹ **כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ**, as may be seen from 6, Ἐξομολογήσθε τῷ κυρίῳ ὅτι κτλ., which shows that the Hebrew copy of the Alexandrian translators read הודו ליהוה; and also from the recurrence of the quotation in its complete form Jer. 33 11, which likewise begins הודו, reading, with but a slight variation (הודו אֶת־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם: (לְיְהוָה): אֶת־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת) חֲסִדוֹ. The hymn cited 2 Chr. 5 13 is, of course, Ps. 136.

The use of the plural כָּלִי in this example as also in the other examples from Chronicles has its parallel in the plural מַעֲשֵׂי of Ps. 45 2 אָמַר אֲנִי מַעֲשֵׂי לְמֶלֶךְ "I address my poem to the king," not "my poems," for the word applies to Psalm 45 only, written for the express purpose of celebrating the king's wedding. The plurals מַעֲשֵׂי and כָּלִי find their explanation in the fact that שֵׁר, as its *nomen unitatis* שֵׁרָה⁴ shows, is a collective.

⁴ שֵׁרָה is plural of שֵׁרָה, not of שֵׁר; cf. מְלִים: מְלָה (from שֵׁרָה): שֵׁרָה, דְּבוּרָה (from דְּבוּר, cf. 1 Sam. 14 26 6): דְּבוּרִים.