

## PSALM TWENTY-TWO AND TWENTY-THREE

that the chief part of the present conclusion of the psalm was penned by Hezekiah. Recalling the almost certain fact, that the bitterest ingredient in Hezekiah's cup was the reflection that by his death his race would be extinguished, and the Royal Line of David would be buried with him, we feel that a new and thrilling interest invests the joyful exclamation which now crowns the last stanza but one of the psalm,—

Yea my own soul to him doth live—my seed shall serve him.  
This from the man who just before was rapidly *descending to dust*; whose *own soul*, instead of *living*, was on the point of dying; and who had no *seed* to succeed him!

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Rotherham does a beautiful job of relating this psalm to the crucifixion without at first mentioning the crucifixion—notice the several minute circumstances. List the details of the crucifixion here either stated or implied;—do this to get the impact of fulfilled prophecy.
2. What is the *primary cause* of the suffering?
3. Why refer to the one suffering as mysterious?
4. List the characteristics of the enemies of the mysterious sufferer as they also describe the enemies at the cross.
5. There is a sudden break in thought in this psalm—Where is it? What does it mean? Discuss.

## PSALM 23

### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

The All-Sufficiency of Jehovah.

### ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-3a, As Shepherd; Stanza II., vers. 3b, 4, as Guide; Stanza III., vers. 5, 6, As Host.

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(Lm.) Psalm—By David.

- 1 Jehovah is my shepherd—I have no want:
- 2 in pastures of tender grass he maketh me lie down,  
unto waters of quietness he leadeth me;

## STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 3 my soul he refresheth<sup>1</sup> continually.<sup>2</sup>  
He guideth me in right tracks—for the sake of his name:  
4 yea when I walk in a gloomy ravine<sup>3</sup>  
I fear no harm—for thou art with me,  
thy club and thy staff<sup>4</sup> they comfort me.  
5 Thou spreadest before me a table—in the presence of mine  
adversaries,  
thou hast anointed with oil my head—my cup giveth cheer:—  
6 Surely goodness and kindness will run after me<sup>5</sup> all the days  
of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah evermore.<sup>6</sup>

### PARAPHRASE

#### PSALM 23

Because the Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need!  
2, 3 He lets me rest in the meadow grass and leads me beside  
the quiet streams. He restores my failing health. He helps me  
do what honors Him the most.

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4 Even when walking through the Dark Valley of death I  
will not be afraid, for You are close beside me, guarding, guiding  
all the way.<sup>7</sup>

5 You provide delicious food for me in the presence of my  
enemies. You have welcomed me as Your guest,<sup>8</sup> blessings  
overflow!

6 Your goodness and unfailing kindness shall be with me all  
of my life, and afterwards I will live with You forever in Your  
home.

### EXPOSITION

The beauty of this little psalm consists, *first*, in its calm  
assurance of Jehovah's all-sufficiency; and, *second*, in the sim-

1. "To restore the senses of life."—Dr. Par. Psalter.

2. So Br., resolving the Heb. letters into finite verb, followed by infinitive absolute, which then yield above meaning.

3. So most moderns, after older commentators. Cp. O.G. 853.

4. "The nail-knobbed club, for purposes of defence, and the staff with a bent handle, for help in walking, still used by shepherds in the East"—Dr.

5. As the alert servants of my host.

6. Ml. "to length of days." N.B.: Br. finds in stanza one 3 beats, in stanza two 4 beats, and in stanza three 5 beats.

7. Literally, "Your rod and Your staff comfort me."

8. Literally, "You have anointed my head with oil, my cup runs over."

## PSALM TWENTY-THREE

plicity, variety, and fullness with which this assurance is set forth. How much the essential theme contributes to the reader's satisfaction, may be gathered from the undoubted fact that the majority of readers never reflect on the change of figures which takes place before the psalm is ended. The essential thought is felt to be one from beginning to end, and that thought is sweet. The infinite God is mine, and cares for me, provides for me, is with me—this is the charm of it. There may be need and danger, discipline and even hostility on the background; but there they remain throughout: the things that come to the front are—the supply for the need, the deliverance from the danger, the use of the discipline, and the powerlessness of the hostility. Quite simply all these blessings come from One Person, whose loving activity is noted throughout. Every blessing named appears as a personal gift. It is this intense personality which so greatly endears the psalm. Practically, there are but two persons in the psalm—Jehovah and I. And then there is a satisfying conclusion: it is a consummation, which delights, because of the feeling of home-longing to which it appeals, and which it assures of satisfaction. There are figures in the psalm, but they are transparent throughout. The One Personality shines through all. Jehovah begins by being my shepherd; soon and imperceptibly he becomes everything. This, then, is the first and chief element in the preciousness of this psalm. The *second*—which is worthy of it—consists in the simplicity, variety and fullness with which the assurance of the psalm is set forth: Shepherd, Guide, Host—relation to whom as sheep, traveller, guest, is easily imagined by every quickened soul. Little is said of each relation; but what is said is fundamental, and each detail speaks a volume. It is better to regard the relation of Shepherd as completed by three clauses, which are congruous and complete: the shepherd secures for his sheep—food, with rest; drink, with rest; and the consequent reinvigoration of life. This rounds off the first figure. Letting this figure go, the next brings an advance of ideas. As a sheep, Jehovah led me; and, with renovated life, all was well.

Now, as a traveller, I have tracks to find; and he guideth me to the right tracks for conducting me safely home. Over the hills, the tracks may be few, faint, and divergent: for the sake of his own name and honour he guideth to those that are right. Down among the valleys, I may come to a dark and fearsome ravine. Still he is with me, my companion as well as my guide.

## STUDIES IN PSALMS

I hear his voice, as he cheerily beguiles me along. I know he has a *club* for defence against assailants, and is well able to wield it. His *staff* he lends me to lean on in my weariness. And so *both his rod and his staff they comfort me*. The idea of guidance is complete. It wants no addition.

Once more the scene changes. I am welcomed to a mansion. A spread table awaits me. Enemies who may witness my admission, dare not come near to molest me; for they know that the power and honour of my host are pledged to my defence. I am his privileged guest. I have been to the bath, and now with his own hand he anoints my head with fragrant oil. My cup is well filled and gives me good cheer. In the hall of my host are attendants. Upon me two of them wait. Their names are Goodness and Kindness; and these follow me with alacrity whithersoever I please to go, anticipating my every want. And so it is to be as long as I live; for finally I discover that here, in this mansion, at last I am at home! No need for another word.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The beauty of this psalm is seen from two thoughts—What are they? How do they relate to us?
2. Who are the participants in this psalm? Discuss the fact that essentially this is all there ever is—all there need be anytime.
3. Do you agree that the figure of a shepherd and sheep follow throughout the psalm or is there a change? Discuss.
4. Suppose we approach the psalm with the thought of our Lord being a shepherd—a guide to the traveler and a host. What does He provide for the sheep?
5. What does He provide for the traveler?
6. What does He provide as the Host?

## PSALM 24

### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

The Admission of Worshippers into the Presence  
of the Previously Admitted King.