

STUDIES IN PSALMS

for use. The whole of the psalm may well have been composed by David; though probably the third stanza was written before the second, as suggested in the above exposition. After being used on some fitting occasion of solemn procession to the temporary tent, it can have scarcely failed to be employed on the dedication of Solomon's temple; and must have been thrice welcome to Hezekiah when he cleansed and reopened the house of Jehovah. It has been a fountain of inspiration for analogous occasions ever since; and yet, possibly, only in the future manifestation of the promised Kingdom of the Messiah, will its sublime capabilities for leading the praises of adoring multitudes be fully realised.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Please consider the possibilities of allowing psalms 22, 23 and 24 to be progressive in meaning—The Suffering Saviour—The Good Shepherd—The Coronated King. Discuss.
2. Discuss the progressive nature of this psalm—i.e. how stanzas two and three depend on stanza one.
3. How do we obtain clean hands? A pure heart? How do we keep clean and pure?
4. How can we poor, dirty, impure, deceitful, sinners worship God?
5. Has the Suffering Servant—The Good Shepherd—entered the city to be crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

PSALM 25

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

An Alphabetical Psalm of Supplication.

ANALYSIS

Seven lines of Direct Address to Jehovah, vers. 1-7; three lines in Praise of Jehovah, vers. 8-10; one line of Direct Address, ver. 11; three lines Descriptive of him who Revereth Jehovah, vers. 12-14; one line Concerning the Psalmist, ver. 15; six lines of Direct Address, vers. 16-21; and one line of *Refrain*, ver. 22.

PSALM TWENTY-FIVE

(Lm.) By David.

- 1 Unto thee Jehovah my soul do I lift—
oh let me not be put to shame.¹
- 2 In thee my God² have I trusted—
let not my foes exult over me.
- 3 Yea let none who wait for thee be put to shame—
let them be put to shame who act covertly without cause.³
- 4 Thy ways Jehovah let me know—
thy paths teach thou me.
- 5 Guide me into thy truth and teach me—
for thou art my saving⁴ God.⁵
- 6 Remember thy compassions Jehovah and thy kindness—
for from age-past times have they been.
- 7 The sins of my youth⁶ do not remember—
according to thy kindness remember thou me.
- 8 Good and upright is Jehovah—
therefore will he direct⁷ in the way.
- 9 He will guide humble ones to vindication—
that he may teach humble ones his way.
- 10 All the paths of Jehovah are kindness and faithfulness—⁸
to such as keep his covenant.⁹
- 11 For the sake of thy name Jehovah—
therefore wilt thou pardon mine iniquity though it is great.
- 12 Who then is the man that revereth Jehovah?
he will direct him in the way he chooseth.
- 13 His soul with prosperity shall tarry—¹⁰
and his seed shall possess the land.
- 14 The intimacy of Jehovah have they who revere him—
even his covenant to let them know.

1. So (w. Br.) transposed from ver. 2. The redistribution of clauses speaks for itself.

2. So *Gt.*, by simple transposition bringing *beth* to beginning of line.

3. "Traacherously without effect"—Br.

4. Or: "delivering."

5. M.T. adds: "for thee have I wanted all the day." Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.) prefix *waw*="and" (Gn.). Perh. relics of an original *waw* () stanza.

6. M.T. adds: "and my transgressions."

7. M.T. adds: "sinners"; but redundant in measure, and morally improbable.

8. Or: "truth."

9. M.T. adds: "and his testimonies."

10. Or: "be a guest."

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- 15 Mine eyes are continually unto Jehovah—
for he bringeth forth out of the net¹ my soul.
- 16 Turn unto me and be gracious unto me—
for lonely and humbled am I.
- 17 The distresses of my heart oh relieve—
and out of my straits bring me forth.
- 18 Come to the relief² of my humiliation and my travail—
and take away³ all my sins.
- 19 See my foes for they have multiplied—
and with the hatred of violence do they hate me.
- 20 Oh keep my soul and rescue me—
let me not be put to shame for I take refuge in thee.
- 21 Let blamelessness⁴ and uprightness⁵ rescue⁶ me—
for O Jehovah I have waited for thee.
- 22 Ransom Israel O God out of all his distresses.⁷

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 25

To You, O Lord, I pray!

2 Don't fail me, Lord, for I am trusting You. Don't let my enemies succeed. Don't give them victory over me.

3 None who have faith in God will ever be disgraced for trusting Him. But all who harm the innocent shall be defeated.

4 Show me the path where I should go, O Lord; point out the right road for me to walk.

5 Lead me; teach me; for You are the God who gives me salvation. I have no hope except in You.

6, 7 Overlook my youthful sins, O Lord! Look at me instead through eyes of mercy and forgiveness, through eyes of everlasting love and kindness.

1. "Too specific"—Br. Yet well suited to David or Hezekiah.

2. So some critics (*kara'*): supplying the missing *koph*, and obviating the M.T.'s repetition of *resh*.

3. Or: "grant forgiveness of."

4. Or: "wholeheartedness," "integrity."

5. Or: "straightforwardness." "These two fundamental virtues he wishes to be his guardians on his way"—Del.

6. Prob. *nzl* as in prev. line, instead of *nzr* (in M.T.)

7. Cp. Ps. 34:22.

PSALM TWENTY-FIVE

8 The Lord is good and glad to teach the proper path to all who go astray;

9 He will teach the ways that are right and best to those who humbly turn to Him.

10 And when we obey Him, every path He guides us on is fragrant with His lovingkindness and His truth.

11 But Lord, my sins! How many they are. Oh, pardon them for the honor of Your name.

12 Where is the man who fears the Lord? God will teach him how to choose the best!

13 He shall live within God's circle of blessing, and his children shall inherit the earth!

14 Friendship with God is reserved for those who reverence Him. With them alone He shares the secrets of His promises.

15 My eyes are ever looking to the Lord for help, for He alone can rescue me.

16 Come, Lord, and show me Your mercy, for I am helpless, overwhelmed, in deep distress;

17 My problems go from bad to worse. Oh, save me from them all!

18 See my sorrows; feel my pain; forgive my sins.

19 See how many enemies I have and how viciously they hate me!

20 Save me from them! Deliver my life from their power! Oh, let it never be said that I trusted You in vain!

21 Assign me Godliness and Integrity as my bodyguards, for I expect You to protect me,

22 And to ransom Israel from all her troubles.

EXPOSITION

This psalm needs little expounding; but will repay devout meditation. It springs from a deep sense of need, and abounds in supplication. It is artificial in structure, and has many minute beauties. It was framed to help the memory when books were few. It suggests many literary and historical problems, some of which it helps to settle. Specially worthy of note is the fact that, although clearly alphabetical, one letter of the alphabet has been suppressed, presumably to make way for the refrain at the end, outside the acrostic arrangement, yet so as not to exceed the number twenty-two. Its companion psalm is the thirty-fourth: this being a psalm of petition—that of praise.

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The refrains to these psalms are specially noticeable. The psalms themselves are private and individual; but the refrains reach out to public events in which all Israel are interested. Thus viewed, the two psalms become intensely dramatic; and lend themselves to thrilling events in Israel's ancient history. Cp. Thirtle, O.T.P., 107-8.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The words of W. G. Scroggie help our understanding as to what is meant by "an alphabetical psalm"—: "Certain of the Psalms are in acrostic form, that is there is traceable in them an alphabetical succession in the initial letters of verses. As these Psalms have come down to us this arrangement is not always complete, but may have been so originally. The acrostic Psalms are 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145."
2. What is meant by the word "ashamed" in verses 2 and 3? Does this refer to embarrassment? Discuss.
3. How did David or Hezekiah or whoever wrote this psalm imagine the requests to be taught and led would be answered?
4. What are the sins of youth as compared with the sins of old age?
5. The positive advantages in following and loving God are often here emphasised.—how we need this emphasis! Obedience of God's law is the doorway into freedom of heart. How shall we convince men that this is true?
6. Follow through this psalm with a list of man's responsibilities resulting in a list of God's blessings—Discuss.

PSALM 26

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

An Ideal Levite's Prayer for Vindication by the
Prolongation of his Life.

ANALYSIS

An introductory Petition, ver. 1a, is sustained by six stanzas of protestations and prayers. Stanza I, vers. 1b, c, 2, A protest of blamelessness