

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.

PSALM TWENTY-FOUR
ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1, 2, Jehovah's Ownership of the World the Ground for Worshipping him. Stanza II., vers. 3-6, Worshippers seek and obtain Admission into the Presence of Earth's King: first, Asking Who may Enter; second, Getting an Answer by Description of Character; third, Claiming to be the Class Described. Stanza III., vers. 7-10, Prior Admission demanded for Jehovah Himself as the King of Glory.

(Lm.) By David—Psalm.

- 1 To Jehovah belongeth the earth and the fulness thereof,
the world and they who dwell therein;
- 2 For he upon seas founded it,
and upon streams maketh it firm.¹
- 3 Who may ascend the mountain of Jehovah?
and who may stand in his holy place?
- 4 The clean of hands and pure of heart,
who hath not uplifted to unreality his desire,²
neither hath sworn to deceit
- 5 Shall bear away a blessing from Jehovah,
and vindication from his delivering God.³
- 6 This is the class of those who are seeking after him,
who are seeking the face⁴ of the God⁵ of Jacob.
- 7 Lift up ye gates your heads,
and lift yourselves up ye ancient⁶ doors,—
That the king of glory may come in.
- 8 Who' then is the king of glory?
Jehovah strong and mighty,
Jehovah mighty in battle.
- 9 Lift up ye gates your heads,
and lift yourselves up ye ancient doors,—
That the king of glory may come in.
Who then is' the king of glory?
- 10 Jehovah God of hosts,
He is the king of Glory.

(Nm.)

1. See Intro., Chap. III., "earth."
2. U.: "soul."
3. Ml. "his God of safety" or "salvation."
4. So Sep.
5. So it shd. be (w. Sep. and Syr.)—Gn.
6. Or, "age-abiding."

STUDIES IN PSALMS
PARAPHRASE
PSALM 24

The earth belongs to God! Everything in all the world is His?

2 He is the One who pushed the oceans back to let dry land appear.¹

3 Who may climb the mountain of the Lord and enter where He lives? Who may stand before the Lord?

4 Only those with pure hands and hearts, who do not practice dishonesty and lying.

5 They will receive God's own goodness² as their blessing from Him, planted in their lives by God Himself, their Savior.

6 These are the ones who are allowed to stand before the Lord and worship the God of Jacob.

7 Open up, O ancient gates, and let the King of Glory in.

8 Who is this King of Glory, The Lord, strong and mighty, invincible in battle.

9 Yes, open wide the gates and let the King of Glory in.

10 Who is this King of Glory? The Commander of all of heaven's armies!

EXPOSITION

The peculiarity in the structure of this psalm, as revealed by the analysis prefixed to it, is so thoroughly sustained by internal evidence as to need little more than reaffirmation here. The first stanza is in any case introductory to the other two, and no one will seriously question its fitness to serve that purpose. The second stanza, representing worshippers asking who may ascend the holy mountain, necessarily presupposes that Jehovah's residence has already been fixed there; for surely they would not ask for admittance into his presence before he had taken up his abode in the tabernacle prepared for him. Consequently, the third stanza must have come from an earlier time; because it represents Jehovah himself as demanding admission into his new abode. The psalm may easily have been so constructed. David himself may have indited both parts, at times only a little distant from each other. First, in view of the up-bringing of the ark, he may have written expressly for that

1. Literally, "He has founded it upon the seas."

2. Literally, "righteousness," right standing with God.

PSALM TWENTY-FOUR

occasion—the third stanza, as an independent psalm to be sung among others; or as a fragment of a larger psalm meant for that occasion only. Then, later on, either for habitual use in connection with the tent when set up and honoured by the symbolic Divine Presence; or, for use in the Temple which Solomon was about to build, the first and second stanzas may have been prefixed to make the psalm as a whole suitable for general use, which the third stanza alone would scarcely have been.

Passing on to survey the psalm as we have it on its merits, we observe the admirable fitness of the introductory stanza to serve its purpose, because it lays a solid foundation for all worship. The earth, with its contents, the world, with its inhabitants,—these all belong to Jehovah, because he made them; and therefore it is meet that he should be adored, thanked and praised for what he has done. Jehovah, the God of grace, is at the same time the God of nature: had he not created us such as we are, we could not have desired to worship him; we could not have known him and realised a need and a desire to know him better.

Knowing him—knowing these fundamental things about him—and desiring to worship him; we next need to know where he may be found; and we learn that he dwelleth in yon holy place, on yonder holy mountain of Zion. This may not be all the truth: it may be but a stepping-stone to higher truth. His local earthly presence may be only introductory to his local heavenly presence; and even his local heavenly presence may ultimately be found to be only introductory to his universal presence. Nevertheless, this is the way in which he is leading us; and we had better accept our lessons as he gives them. Even though means of an earthly symbolic presence, we may learn invaluable lessons; and one such lesson is given us here. Who may enter yonder sacred spot, who stand with acceptance in yonder hallowed shrine? The answer comes in the form of a *description of character*: nothing else is named. Nationality is ignored: tribe, clan, family, age, social standing—these are all brushed aside; everything gives place to character. Character is to be triumphant. He that possesses these sterling characteristics shall bear away in triumph a blessing from Jehovah, a vindication from his delivering God. Are there only a comparatively few who possess such a character? Then let all seek

STUDIES IN PSALMS

to belong to the comparatively few? Do any protest that they are not saints but sinners; that their characters have become broken and damaged and unrepresentable before this holy God? Then, this conviction may prepare them for the next lesson: it may put them on the track of salvation. But meantime this first lesson must be strongly enforced: that salvation is salvation into character: character becomes an abiding reality. Only the pure in heart can see God. The craving to worship is a craving to see God. But this earthly presence speaks of a heavenly presence; and the ultimate lesson is that a holy character is essential to the heavenly presence of Jehovah. But the heavenly presence is coming down to earth. God is coming down to lift us up. The tent of God—his eternal tent—his eternal near and intimate dwelling—is coming down to be with men. Then men should arise and prepare to meet their God.

Advancing to the third stanza for general lessons, we mark the character in which Jehovah himself demands admission into his earthly temple: it is as "King of Glory." Twice the demand for admission is made; twice it is as the "King of Glory." When identification is sought as to Who the King of Glory is, and the answer has been by name and attribute and relationship given, the answer is crowned by a third employment of this descriptive title: "He is the King of Glory." What is the NAME of "the King of Glory"? His name is "Jehovah." What are his attributes? "Strong"—"mighty"—"mighty in battle": these are his attributes—all chosen as if to support the claim to be King, as much as to say—"Beware! for none can successfully resist him." Certainly, then, the Kingship of Jehovah is made especially prominent: by the threefold repetition of the title; by the attributes selected to enforce it; and, we may add, by the claim here made, that he has "ARMIES" at his command; for such is evidently the force of the word "hosts," "Jehovah of hosts," "Jehovah of armies in battle array." It is asked who are these, Jehovah's hosts? First and foremost, in the merely typical application, to the time and circumstances then present, David and his men; successors of Joshua and his men; the hosts of Isarel, who are now completing their conquest of Canaan, the hosts of Israel with Jehovah, the King of Glory, at their head. This is the lowest application. We need not stop there. As the kingship is lifted up and the claim for submission is widened, —the "hosts," the "armies," will multiply, until they include

PSALM TWENTY-FOUR

the heavenly hosts themselves. The one point on which we would concentrate attention is the Kingship of Jehovah. And let it be remembered that "the King of Glory" is another way of saying, "Glorious King." As King he will enter: as King he will be enthroned: as King he will be worshipped. The Creator of the beginning of the psalm, is the Glorious King of the close of the psalm.

Is all this a Type? From early times—from the times of the early "Fathers"—and we are willing to think from the very times of the Apostles, when Christ's early disciples realised that their Risen Lord had gone up into heaven, Christians have felt they were getting near—if they had not altogether reached—the Antitype of that Type—that magnificent Type from one point of view—that feeble type from another. It is doubtless the Antitype that dwarfs the Type. Let it be remembered that it is the type of David's time which just now sets us on the right road of application. The Type had in it these elements: That it was the Earth—not heaven—to which claim was laid; that Jerusalem was regarded as the Governmental Centre of the Earth; that visible and effectively enforced Kingship claimed to be acknowledged at that centre: Jehovah of armies—he is the Glorious King of Earth! Christ's ascension is only a part of the fulfillment; for—in a sense much needed and most true for the safe development of this theme—Christ's ascension is not yet complete. Christ the Head of the Church has ascended; but the Corporate Christ has not yet been "taken up in glory" (1 Tim. 3:16): *that* complementary ascension awaits the time when by "preaching Christ among the Gentiles," and his being "believed on in the world," the number required to complete his body will be made sufficiently large to suit the purposes of the Father's love. Then and thereafter will the Type be carried forward into a yet wider, deeper, higher fulfillment. We are but learners on this theme. This psalm does not stand alone, as though it were the only Ascension Psalm: there are others, and notably among them the 47th, in view of which we may shadow forth a legitimate surmise—provided we call it no more—that in the Coming Kingdom, Ascension and Descension may be repeated until at length the tent of God shall be with men, and He will dwell among them as their God.

Due consideration of the structure and contents of this psalm will easily adjust the questions of authorship and fit occasions

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.