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# Teacher Training Course

Presbyterian Church in Canada

*Under the Direction of the General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee*

**DEPARTMENT OF SCRIPTURE—I. The Books of the Old Testament; II. Old Testament Geography and Institutions.**

N.B.—It is recommended that the Revised Version be consulted in these studies.

## LESSON XIII.

### THE PSALMS

**CONTENTS**—The Book of Psalms is a collection of 150 sacred songs or hymns for use in the temple and synagogue service of praise. Many of them, as in all similar collections, are really prayers, and a few of them meditations. More than any other part of the Bible, they embody the inward spiritual life and the pious aspirations of the people of God.

Each psalm is a complete whole, and has a separate theme, but there are certain themes which appear again and again in different forms. The most frequent are: (1) Praise of God's glory as seen in creation and providence; (2) Praise of God's faithfulness to His covenant people; (3) Praise of God's anointed King; (4) Praise of God's law; (5) Thanksgiving for national victory; (6) Thanksgiving for deliverance from trouble; (7) Confession of sin and prayer for pardon; (8) Prayer for deliverance from persecution and denunciation of persecutors; (9) Prayer for restoration from national disaster; (10) Prayer for restoration to the privileges of God's house. These themes are not always kept separate, but are frequently found combined in the same psalm. The transitions are sometimes obscure, and occasionally they are regulated by the artificial acrostic form, rather than by any logical connection of thought.

**DIVISIONS**—As is plainly seen in the Revised Version, the collection is divided into five books as follows: (1) Psalms 1 to 21; (2) Psalms 42 to 72; (3) Psalms 73 to 89; (4) Psalms 90 to 106; (5) Psalms 107 to 150. Each of these books ends with a doxology which has no special connection with the

last psalm in it. In the case of the last book the doxology becomes a whole psalm. The Jewish tradition is, that this division was made to correspond to the five books of the Law of Moses. But it is more likely that it represents successive stages in the compilation of the collection at different periods. At the end of the second book, after the doxology, there is a note stating that the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended, which indicates that at one time this was the end of the collection.

**AUTHORSHIP**—The authorship of the Psalms is commonly attributed to David. But he certainly did not write them all. Many of them have short notes at the beginning as to their authorship, the circumstances that gave rise to them, or their proper musical rendering. These are not as old as the psalms themselves, being perhaps prefixed when they were placed in the collection, and representing the current tradition at that time. In these notes 73 are ascribed to David and 28 to others. Some of them were certainly written as late as the captivity and after. But there can be no doubt that David gave the chief influence to this form of composition.

## LESSON XIV.

### PROVERBS

**CONTENTS**—The Book of Proverbs is a collection of short poems and still shorter detached sayings commending wisdom or advising as to the wise conduct of life. Beyond the general statement that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, there is almost nothing in the book relating to religion, as distinguished from morality. The moral reflections are keen and pointed, but there is no motive appealed to but that