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THE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION IN THE
ACROSTIC SCRIPTURES

IN THE Book of the Psalms there are seven psalms which in the Hebrew are acrostic; that is to say, the first verse or clause begins with *Aleph*, and each succeeding verse or clause begins with the letter next in order in the alphabet.

If these scriptures are carefully studied many interesting facts emerge, but the predominant impressions are: (1) the grandeur of design in the original Scriptures; (2) the " scarlet thread" underlying Holy Writ, viz. emphasis on blood-redemption. The seven psalms are xxv, xxxiv, xxxvii, cxi, cxii, cxix, cxlv.

The 119th psalm has eight verses to each letter of the alphabet, so with the other six psalms running through it once we have the alphabet traversed fourteen times in the seven psalms. Without delving into Panin-ism, this is an evidence of design.

When we examine Psalms xxv and xxxiv we find that an extra verse beginning with *Pe* is added to the end, in each case the extra verse begins with the redemption verb *padah* (cf. Exod. xiii. 13); in Psalm xxv a prayer, " Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles ", and in Psalm xxxiv, " Jehovah redeemeth the soul of His servants, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate ". In the Hebrew the verb comes first. " Trust in the Redeemer " in the Old Testament is an adumbration of " faith in His blood " in the New Testament (Rom. iii. 25).

Fuller light is thrown on this truth when we consider the *Pe* verse in these psalms in their proper sequence.

Here again a word of the same root is used in each psalm: in Psalm xxv. 16, " Turn unto me " (or " Face unto me ", as the verb really means) and in Psalm xxxiv. 16 the noun from the same root is used, " The face of Jehovah is against them that do evil ". So in each case the truth is emphasised; the only way one can enjoy Peniel, the face of God (cf. Gen. xxxii. 30), is—as shown in the final extra verse—by redemption: " When I see the blood, I will hover over you " (Exod. xii. 13)—if there is no blood, His face is against the sinner.

When we go outside the Psalms we find a similar design and the same truth. In the Book of Lamentations we find four acrostic chapters. The first two traverse the alphabet once in each case, but the third chapter with its sixty-six verses has a

triple frame for the " man of sorrows " it depicts—three consecu-
tive *Alephs*, *Beths*, etc., three consecutive occurrences for each
of the twenty-two letters. When we come to the fourth chapter
we find the twenty-two letters occurring once each in the right
order. This makes the sixth time the alphabet was run through.
But when we come to examine the fifth chapter, there is no
acrostic, no alphabetic order—it is broken up, surely, to show the
broken condition of Zion and Israel.

Nevertheless the present writer felt somewhere in Holy
Writ should be the seventh acrostic chapter and he can still
remember the thrill when, while a missionary in North Africa,
he found one day in his studies that the tenth verse in the thirty-
first chapter of Proverbs begins an acrostic. There the Perfect
Bride is depicted in the next twenty-two verses and surely the
triply-framed Man of Sorrows in Lamentations iii is to be joined
to the Bride of Proverbs xxxi.

In one case the perfect Man of Sorrows is foreshadowed and
in the other His perfect Bride—the Church purchased with His
blood who " clothes her household with scarlet " (*verse* 21).

> Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness
> My beauty are, my glorious dress;
> Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
> With joy shall I lift up my head.

Brockenhurst,   F. A. RAYNER.
  Hants.