

PSALM FOUR AND FIVE

2. The larger help to us will be in the application of the psalm to our lives: (1) In verse one: what confidence for answered prayer is here found? (2) In verse two: just what is "the glory" of God? Why do men turn His glory into a reproach or shame?
3. "The Redeemed" or "the Man of Kindness" has been particularly distinguished or set aside by God—how so? See verse three.
4. In verse four the power for overcoming sin is revealed—what is it?
5. According to verse five not all sacrifices to God are pleasing—how is this true of us?
6. Are we to be concerned about the attitude toward God held by the multitudes among whom we live? See verse six and give an answer.
7. A constant awareness of solid satisfaction in the life and work we do is the greatest of human possessions, and it can be ours—see verse seven.
8. Sleep is one thing—there are pills for this—sleep in peace is something else what shall we take to produce this?

PSALM 5

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Morning Prayer for Deliverance from Conspirators.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-3, Petitions Pleaded to which an Answer is Awaited.
Stanza II., vers. 4-6, Jehovah's Character Forbids the Success of the Rebels.
Stanza III., vers. 7-9, The Petitioner's Privileged Position made a Plea for Guidance through Present Perils. Stanza IV., vers. 10-12, The Punishment of the Wicked will Restore the Confidence of the Righteous.

(Lm.) Psalm—By David.

- 1 To mine utterances give ear O Jehovah,
understand thou my plaint:
- 2 Attend to the voice of my cry for help my King and my God,
for unto thee do I pray,

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 3 Jehovah in the morning shalt thou hear my voice,
in the morning will I set in order for thee and keep watch.
- 4 For not a GOD finding pleasure in lawlessness art thou,
there shall not sojourn with thee a doer of wrong:
- 5 Boasters shall not stand their ground before thine eyes,
thou hatest all workers of iniquity:¹
- 6 Thou wilt destroy the speakers of falsehood,
the man of bloodshed and deceit Jehovah abhorreth.
- 7 But I in the abounding of thy kindness may enter thy house,
I may bow down towards thy holy temple in reverence of
thee.
- 8 Jehovah! lead me with thy righteousness because of my
watching foes,
make even before me thy way.
- 9 For there is in his mouth nothing steadfast—within them is
a yawning gulf,
an opened grave is their throat—their tongue they smooth.
- 10 Hold them guilty O God, let them fall by their own counsels,
in the abounding of their transgressions thrust them out—
for they have defied thee:
- 11 That all may rejoice who take refuge in thee—to the ages
may ring out their joy,
And do thou overshadow them that they may exult—who
are lovers of thy name.
- 12 For thou thyself dost bless the righteous one,
O Jehovah! as with an all-covering shield with favour dost
thou encompass him.

(Lm.) To the Chief Musician. (CMm.) With stringed instruments.
Over the male choir.

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 5

O Lord, hear me praying; listen to my plea, O God my
King, for I will never pray to anyone but You.

2 ? ? ? ? ?

3 Each morning I will look to You in heaven and lay my
requests before You, praying earnestly.

4 I know You get no pleasure from wickedness and cannot
tolerate the slightest sin.

1. "Naughtiness"—Dr.

PSALM FIVE

5 Therefore proud sinners will not survive Your searching gaze; for how You hate their evil deeds.

6 You will destroy them for their lies; how You abhor all murder and deception.

7 But as for me, I will come into Your Temple protected by Your mercy and Your love; I will worship You with deepest awe.

8 Lord, lead me as You promised me You would; otherwise my enemies will conquer me. Tell me clearly what to do, which way to turn.

9 For they cannot speak one truthful word. Their hearts are filled to the brim with wickedness. Their suggestions are full of the stench of sin and death. Their tongues are filled with flatteries to gain their wicked ends.

10 O God, hold them responsible. Catch them in their own traps; let them fall beneath the weight of their own transgressions, for they rebel against You.

11 But make everyone rejoice who puts his trust in You. Keep them shouting for joy because You are defending them. Fill all who love You with Your happiness.

12 For You bless the godly man, O Lord; You protect him with Your shield of love.

EXPOSITION

This psalm is attributed to David; and its contents well sustain the inscription—especially if we date its origin at the time when the rebellion of Absalom was being fomented by men who were yet maintaining the appearance of loyalty to the king, though really plotting against him.

The danger prompting the prayer was evidently most serious. It seems to have been caused by one chief offender, aided by associates: hence the alternation of the language between the leader and his followers—*his mouth, their tongue*, and the like. The character of these workers of mischief is described in unsparing terms. They are *lawless* men, patrons of *wrong*, guilty of *defying* Jehovah: *boastful*, yet *deceitful*; their language is fair, for *they smooth their tongue*, but their principles are foul: their transgressions abound, and at least one of their number is *a man of bloodshed and deceit*. They are plotters; with nefarious designs not yet avowed. Probably the perfidy of Ahithophel is already evident to the king, although he does not yet point to him so plainly as in later psalms.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

It is perfectly clear that the psalmist perceives himself to be aimed at by the conspirators: hence his prayer for Divine guidance *because of his watchful foes*.

It is further clear that the psalmist perceives the very government of Jehovah in Israel to be at stake, so that deliverance vouchsafed to the petitioner by bringing him out of this crisis will cause great joy to the godly men of the nation.

It is no objection to the Davidic authorship of this psalm that the writer appears to be animated by the Levitical spirit of consecration—so much so that we are tempted to ask whether he was not himself a Priest with the ordering of the sacrifices on the altar under his own charge. But this spirit and this lively interest in the Divinely appointed ritual, as we know, had found a remarkable embodiment in David himself, as the history indicates, and as these psalms are themselves beginning to reveal. Hence it is perfectly natural that the king should seem to count on his psalm being used in the next morning's worship, and that he should liken his prayer itself to an ordered sacrifice, promising himself that he will watch for a divine response.

The yet deeper element of instruction to be discovered in this psalm, is, the evidence it affords of spiritual restoration on the part of the king. If we are right in dating this psalm at the time when the fire of rebellion was already glowing in secret, then we know where we are, with reference to the antecedent event of David's deplorable fall. He is no longer under the spell of that spiritual paralysis which followed his transgression: he has humbled himself in the dust, has sought and found forgiveness, is once more in fellowship with his forgiving God. Hence, now again, Jehovah's cause is his own; and the spiritual well-being of those who love Him is near to his heart. Restored to fellowship with his holy God, he realises his covenant relation to Him who is carrying forward his vast plans for Redemption; and therefore anticipates abiding gladness to all who love Jehovah's name.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. If we like David considered prayer as the first work of the day—how very different would be some of our days.
2. Discuss the practice and value of daily devotions. If possible commit the students to this holy practice.

PSALM FIVE AND SIX

3. Does God indeed hate the evil deeds of sinners? How is this hatred expressed?
4. Did David believe he was going to receive some special treatment from Jehovah? What was it—how or why was it given?
5. Discuss the principle of self-destruction implicit within all steadfast sinning. Give examples—not the least of which is Absalom.

PSALM 6

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Prayer for Deliverance from Sickness and Death.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-3, Prayer for Favour instead of Anger. Stanza II., vers. 4-7, For Life instead of Death. Stanza III., vers. 8-10, In the Strength of a Divine Answer, Mischief-makers are Dismissed.

(Lm.) Psalm—by David.

- 1 Jehovah! do not in thine anger correct me,
nor in thy wrath chastise me;
- 2 Be gracious unto me Jehovah! for languishing am I,
heal me Jehovah! for dismayed are my bones,—
- 3 yea my soul¹ is dismayed exceedingly;
And thou Jehovah how long?
- 4 Oh return Jehovah rescue my soul,
save me for Thy kindness' sake;
- 5 For in death there is no memorial of thee,
in hades who can give thanks² unto thee?
- 6 I am weary with my sighing,
I soak every night my couch,
with my tears my bed I drench:
- 7 Shrivelled from vexation is mine eye,
it hath aged, because of all mine adversaries.

1. The sphere in which various emotions . . . come into consciousness"
—Dr. P. B. V. Glos. I. "Soul."

2. "Own or acknowledge publicly and openly"—Dr.