

SHORT COMMENTS ON THE PSALMS

PSALM V. Title 7.—*The leader of the Music for wind instruments*.—A Psalm of David.

1. Give ear to my word, O Lord, I consider my meditation.

The words employed in prayer are too often utterly vain, as expressing neither any well ordered thoughts, nor earnest feelings. It is otherwise with the true believer when he feels the urgency of his necessities—his petitions are then distinct and earnest.

NOTE.—Instead of "my meditation," the *Septuagint* and *vulgate* have "my cry." The derivation of *hagis* by Gesenius, will justify this rendering.

2. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.

The earnestness of the true supplicant is often indicated by the vehemence of his cry. And, while he formally pleads for a favorable answer, addresses God by such titles, as warrant the confidence, that it shall be obtained.

3. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

In ordinary circumstances, the first exercise of the believer, every returning morning, is to call upon God: and he will do this, not in a careless way, as do those who have the reigning views of the presence and character of Jehovah, but with composure of spirit. And his anxiety for a gracious answer will lead him to watch for tokens that God has accepted and heard him.

NOTE.—"I will look up," may be better rendered "I will watch."

4. For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee.

The Psalmist had evidently a strong confidence that his cause was the cause of God himself, when he could take encouragement that his prayer would be heard, because of the very holiness of Jehovah, and his unchangeable opposition to the wicked.

NOTE.—The principal ancient versions, and some modern ones, take the word for "evil" as a concrete. "Nor shall an evil man dwell with thee."

5. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

How solemn the thought, that while God looks with complacency on the contrite in heart, he will have no fellowship with the proud, and such as practice sin of any kind: yea, that he is to all these "a consuming fire."

NOTE.—The word for "fools," is well rendered by the *Syriac*, proud or boastful.

6. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

Jehovah is the God of Truth, and in his righteous government, all those who practise lying and deceit, must be finally destroyed. He is also the giver and the preserver of life, and must treat as eminently wicked, those who make little account of human life, and are ready at the promptings of envy, avarice, or any other depraved affection to take life away.

7. But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

Grace opens the way for sinful men, even into

God's own dwelling place. "But he who enters therein, goes with conviction and holy fear."

8. Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness: because of mine enemies, make thy way straight before my face.

When beset with enemies, our greatest danger is from our own treacherous hearts. We'll, therefore, in such a case, may we pray that God would guide us in his righteous ways, and enable us to walk in them, notwithstanding the allurements or the violence that may be employed to withdraw us from them.

NOTE.—To make one's way or path plain or level, in Hebrew phrase, is equivalent to the prospering one's course.

9. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre: they flatter with their tongue.

When our enemies are the enemies of God, as were those of David here described, then it may be some comfort to think that we are no losers by the want of their friendship, for favours from them would only tend to deceive and ensnare. But let us not forget that this description of the Psalmist's enemies is applied by another inspired writer (Rom. vi. 13.) to natural man in general. And how sad the picture! "The heart only wickedness—and what can be expected of the issues from it?" No truth in the mouth: corruption, like the exhalations from an open grave, passing through the throat, and flatteries to deceive uttered by the tongue.

10. Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.

A holy jealousy for the glory of God will lead the believer to pray "Arise, Lord, let thine enemies be scattered"; and it was thus that the Psalmist here prayed that God would condemn those who set themselves in opposition to His Government, and that he would infuse their counsels, and visit a just retribution upon them.

11. But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name, be joyful in thee.

The condition of the wicked, and that of the people of God, present themselves to the mind of the thoughtful believer in contrast the one to the other. So the Psalmist, whilst appealing to God against the wicked, prays for blessings on the Godly, even that all who trust in the Lord and love His name, may ever rejoice in Him, and give the fullest utterance to their joy, and that because of their experience of His gracious protection.

12. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

The righteous are those who are made partakers of the righteousness of God—yea, and are born of God; and they are blessed and shall be blessed for ever. The divine favour, like an all-protecting shield, shall be around them throughout the progress of their never ending being.

PSALM VI. To the Leader of the Music. With stringed instruments, on the octave.

1. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me with thy hot displeasure.

A deep conviction of sin in men may at any

time prompt this cry; especially when they are smitten under affliction, and are brought to regard it as the fruit of sin. God's fatherly chastisement may be felt by His people to be very painful. Who can conceive the anguish that His enemies shall have to endure from the strokes of his avenging justice!

2. Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak. O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.

How natural to cry for healing, when disease and pain enfeeble and waste the bodily frame. Yet the believer well knows that if he would obtain this from Him who cures, it must be as the boon of unmerited mercy.

3. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?

Spiritual trouble is often induced by the reflection which bodily suffering suggests. Who has not reason to deprecate the exercise of Jehovah's wrath, and to plead, with the Psalmist, "enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord." And even when his chastenings are felt to be those of the Father, how natural for the sufferer to expostulate, in the words of the Psalmist, "O Lord, how long?"

4. Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.

When afflictions are long continued, God's people may be tempted to think that they have been forgotten by Him. They may then, like David, wish God to return and visit them. And whether it be a deliverance from bodily or mental distress which they seek from him, their appeal must still be made to his mercy.

5. For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

It would seem, that believers under the Old Testament dispensation, regarded death as a state of silence and unconsciousness; though they, no doubt, anticipated an ultimate deliverance from it. Hence, they have a peculiar reason for shrinking from death, and for desiring length of days on earth. But, the Adorable Redeemer has "brought life and immortality to light," and has accomplished a deliverance for those who otherwise, "through fear of death, would have been all their life-time subject to bondage," so that now, in the estimate of enlightened faith, "to die is gain." And the Christian may, like Paul, desire "to depart and be with Christ," as the far preferable condition of existence. Not but that there are circumstances in which in submission to the will of his Lord and Redeemer, and in order to his glory, he may desire and pray to have his days on earth lengthened out.

6. I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.

Groans and tears as being the natural expression of extreme sorrow, tend to alleviate it. Yet an immoderate indulgence in these as in the Psalmist's case, aggravates the feebleness and exhaustion of the sufferer.

7. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

The opposition of enemies was one of the sources of the Psalmist's sufferings. We know that he was a type of Christ; and in reading such effusions of grief, we naturally think of him who was eminently "a man of sorrows and acquainted