

V. 5. *I acknowledged my sin*; literally, "I began to make known". We seem to see the penitent coming to God and beginning to speak. *Iniquity...not hid*. At last the deceit passed from his spirit. *I said, I will confess*; as the Prodigal in the far country said, "I will arise and go to my father" (see Luke 15: 11-24). The completeness of the confession is expressed by the use of the three words, "acknowledge", "not hid", "confess". *Thou forgavest*. He had recognized that his suffering was punishment for his sin, and lo! the wonder of it,—his sickness was over, his sin was pardoned.

### III. The Freeness of Forgiveness, 6-11.

Vs. 6, 7. *For this*; because the frank and honest confession by this penitent of his sin has brought to him from God instant and full forgiveness. *Shall every one that is godly pray*. The "godly" ones are those who belong in a special sense to Jehovah, and are thus entitled to His kindness. *In a time...be found*. Compare "in an acceptable time" (Ps. 69: 13), and read also 2 Cor. 6: 2. The time to find God is always now. *Floods of great waters*. In the Old Testament, great distress is compared to a sudden flood, the overwhelming torrent of water that pours down a narrow Palestinian wadi (or valley) after a heavy rain, Ps. 18: 4; 69: 15. If a man only prays to Jehovah he will be safe; the waters *shall not come nigh unto him*. He has only to take refuge in Jehovah, who is his hiding place, like some strong fortress on a lofty height inaccessible to all foes. *Preserve me from trouble*; not always by removing, but often by permitting it to come and then overruling it for good, Rom. 8: 28. *Compass...with songs of deliverance*. Wherever he turns, he finds occasions of gladness. Or, perhaps, he refers to the glad shouts of the godly who, like himself, have been pardoned.

Vs. 8, 9. *I will instruct thee and teach thee*. The psalmist has declared his trust in God. Now God answers with His promise of guidance and teaching. *Counsel thee with mine eye upon thee* (Rev. Ver.). What a blessed companionship—God at our side, giving wise direction, and keeping ceaseless watch, lest we go astray! *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule*. To resist God's will,

to neglect His instruction, is to act like the stupid, unreasoning animals. *Bit and bridle*. These are needed for the brutes, but men should be controlled by reason and conscience and God's Word. *Else they will not come near* (Rev. Ver.); cannot be controlled or directed by their masters.

Vs. 10, 11. *Many sorrows...to the wicked*. They need these, as the animals need the "bit and bridle", and even the sharp whip, to bring them back from their sin. *He that trusteth...mercy shall compass him about*. Like a strong wall, God's mercy stands between the believing man and every foe. *Be glad...rejoice...shout for joy*. There is no song so sweet as that of the forgiven sinner. God's lovingkindness is around him on all sides, as the circumference of a sphere is about the centre, so that in no direction can harm come to him.

### Light from the East

MULE—Has always been much used in the East, although the breeding of it was forbidden by the Mosaic law. Pictures of mules are found on the monuments of Egypt and Assyria. Their surefootedness, hardiness, and power of endurance commended them, not only as beasts of burden, but also as saddle beasts for the wealthy. Some of those bred to-day from full-blooded Arabian mares are most beautiful animals and are extremely valuable. Not only are they hardy and patient, but they usually live twice as long as the horse, and will carry a heavier burden.

BRIDLE—The original bridle was only a halter, although sometimes a muzzle was attached to keep a refractory beast from biting its driver or its yokefellow. The Assyrian horses had a bridle like ours, with an iron bit, and a side piece at each end to keep it from slipping through the mouth. The side straps were covered with rosettes, an arched crest rose between the ears, a short plume projected from the forehead, and a long tassel was hung round the neck. A bridle or muzzle was often fixed on refractory slaves and prisoners of war. When Cambyses conquered Egypt, the king's son and ten thousand others were conducted to execution with ropes round their necks and bits in their mouths.