

## Sabbath School Lessons.

### May, 1. THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT.

Lesson Ps. 51: 1-13.  
Memory vs. 10-13.

Golden Text, Ps. 51: 10.  
Catechism Q. 73-74.

The common belief among Christians in all ages, has been that this Psalm was written by David, after his great fall, probably about 1034 B.C., about the middle of his 40 years reign. He made his confession and penitence as widely known as his sin and fall had been, for as the inscription tells us, it was for the chief musician, the leader of the great temple choir, for use in the service of the sanctuary. And it was fitting that he should do so. He had sinned publicly against the nation and against God, and now he wishes his penitence to be as public as the sin.

I. The prayer of confession, vs. 1-5.

II. The prayer for heart cleansing, vs. 6-10.

III. The prayer for restored favor, vs. 11-13.

I. vs. 1-5. *Have Mercy*; This is the only plea he can offer. It is one which the vilest can make. It is the only plea that God delights to hear. *Thy loving kindness*; Not according to my deserts, for I deserve nought but wrath, but according to Thy loving kindness, which is so great. *Thoroughly*; How he now hated the sin, a mark of true penitence. *Acknowledge*; He has no excuse to offer. *Ever before me*; He may get forgiveness, but the memory of that sin still haunts him. Sin bears bitter fruit even to the forgiven one. *Against thee only*; Great as had been his sin against his fellow-men, it was far greater against God. *Shapen in iniquity*; He does not claim that this was a sudden blast of temptation and that he was after all not so bad at heart. No, I am all bad, to the very core. All he can plead is mercy.

II. vs. 6-10. *Thou desirest*; What a contrast between what he is and what God desires. *Shalt make me to know*; Though I am so unworthy, thou canst make me better. I am vile but thou canst cleanse me. *Purge me*; Do thou undertake this cleansing. I have no power. *Hyssop*; used by the priests in sprinkling one who was to be pronounced clean from leprosy, Lev. 14: 4-7. *Wash me*; Of two Hebrew words for washing, this one is that describes which the washing of clothes, through and through. *Whiter than snow*; A strong figure to denote the thorough cleansing which would be given. *Joy and gladness*; Of sin forgiven. *Bones broken*; A figure of deep heart-sorrow for sin. No mere surface bruising. *Hide*; I will keep my sin before me to keep me humble, but do thou hide thy face from it. *Create*; Nothing short of a new creation will do. "Except a man be borne again he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

III. vs. 11-13. *Cast me not*; Unworthy though I be. *Holy Spirit*; So long as He remains to strive, to lead, it is well, but if He leave me, I am undone. *Restore joy*; This joy of forgiveness had been taken away by sin, and He longs for its return. It is easier to lose the joy of the Christian life, than to get it back again. *Free spirit*; Make my spirit willing so that I may serve thee gladly and freely. *Then will I teach*; When I, so great a transgressor have been forgiven, I will teach other transgressors Thy way. I will tell them how kind thou art, and they too thus encouraged, will turn to Thee and find mercy as I have done.

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

### May 8. DELIGHT IN GOD'S LOVE.

Lesson, Ps. 84: 1-12.  
Memory vs. 9-12.

Golden Text, Ps. 84: 4.  
Catechism Q. 75.

This Psalm is inscribed "to the Chief Musician, upon, or, set to, Gittith," which is supposed by many to have been a peculiar form of musical instrument brought by David from Gath, when he returned from his exile there. The Psalm was evidently written when he was away from God's house and unable to get there. In this lesson, as in the last, we have a leading trait of Christian character. There, it was sorrow for sin, here, it is love for God's house. The singer tells

I. His longing for God's house, vs. 1-4.

II. The joy of travelling thitherward, vs. 5-8.

III. The happiness of dwelling there, vs. 9-12.

*How amiable*; How lovely, how dear to me. *Tabernacles*; God's dwelling places. *Longeth*; Hath grown pale. *For the Courts*; To be near to Thee. *Cry out*; My heart, flesh, my whole being, has but one longing, i.e. for more of Thee. How faint and cold is the Christian love that cares little for God's house or His presence. *The Sparrow*; Even the little birds have a home near to thy house, while I am far off in exile. How gladly would I be where there are. They so near and yet not knowing how to prize thy house; I so far off and longing for it. *Blessed they that dwell*; From the sparrows that dwell there his thoughts turn to the other dwellers, the servants, the Levites, etc. Blessed are they, they will be ever, always, praising Thee. Thus he pours out the longing of his soul for the house of God. Then comes a pause in the singing, marked by *Selah*, while the musical instruments go on playing.

II. vs. 5-8. *Blessed*; From the appointed dwellers in the temple, the prophet turns in fancy to the people gathering to some great festival. *In whose heart*; Who has in mind to go up to Zion. *Valley of Baca*, or weeping. So glad at heart are they that the most dreary parts of their journey will be lighted up with gladness. So do the joys of the heavenly Jerusalem light up with gladness the darkest hours of those who are journeying thither. *Strength to Strength*; or, from stage to stage, of their journey, and as in the spiritual journey, each stage finds them stronger instead of more worn and weary. *Before God in Zion*; This was the goal of their journey. This the goal of our life journey.

III. vs. 9-12. From the pilgrim toward Zion, he again turns to the dweller there. *Behold—Shield*; Our defence, our shelter. *Look upon*; with favor. *Thine anointed*; He ever realized that he was King by Divine right. *Better than a thousand—elsewhere*. How much men miss who give up God for other things. *Doorkeeper*; The humblest position with God, is far better than the highest without him. *Sun and Shield*; He will give light, life, protection. *No good thing*; Nothing that His wisdom sees to be good. No wonder that from such a thought he bursts out with the joyous exclamation "Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

O Greatly blessed the people are

The joyful sound that know,  
In brightness of Thy face, O Lord  
They ever on shall go.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed in Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.

I will arise and go to my Father.