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A Song of Ascents.

PSALM 125: 1 Those who trust in the LORD are as Mount Zion, which can't be moved, but remains forever.

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The safety of those who trust in God, Psa 125:1, Psa 125:2. God's protecting providence in behalf of his followers, Psa 125:3. A prayer for the godly, Psa 125:4. The evil lot of the wicked, Psa 125:5.

This Psalm is without a title: it belongs most probably to the times after the captivity; and has been applied, with apparent propriety, to the opposition which Sanballat the Horonite, Geshem the Arabian, and Tobiah the Ammonite, gave to the Jews while employed in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and restoring the temple.

Verse 1

They that trust in the Lord - Every faithful Jew who confides in Jehovah shall stand, in those open and secret attacks of the enemies of God and truth, as unshaken as Mount Zion; and shall not be moved by the power of any adversary.

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PSALM 125: 2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people from this time forward and forever more.

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Verse 2

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem - Jerusalem, according to Sandys, was situated on a rocky mountain every way to be ascended, except a little on the north, with steep ascents and deep valleys, naturally fortified. It is surrounded with other mountains, at no great distance, as if placed in the midst of an amphitheatre; for on the east is Mount Olivet, separated from the city by the valley of Jehoshaphat, which also encompasses a part of the north; on the south, the mountain of Offiner interposed with the valley of Gehinnom; and on the west it was formerly fenced with the valley of Gihon, and the mountains adjoining. The situation was such as to be easily rendered impregnable.

The Lord is round about his people - He is above, beneath, around them; and while they keep within it, their fortress is impregnable, and they can suffer no evil.

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PSALM 125: 3 For the sceptre of wickedness won't remain over the allotment of the righteous; so that the righteous won't use their hands to do evil.

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Verse 3

For the rod of the worked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous - Rod, here. may be taken for persecution, or for rule; and then it may be thus interpreted: "The wicked shall not be permitted to persecute always, nor to have a permanent rule." In our liturgic version this clause is thus rendered: "The rod of the ungodly cometh not into the lot of the righteous." "This," said one of our forefathers,

"is neither truth nor scripture. First, it is not truth; for the rod of the wicked doth come into the inheritance of the righteous, and that often. Secondly, it is not scripture, for the text saith, 'The rod of the wicked shall not rest there.' It may come, and stay for a time; but it shall not be permitted to abide." This is only one, and not the worst, of the many sad blemishes which deform the Version in our national Prayer-book. In short, the Version of the Psalms in that book is wholly unworthy of regard; and should be thrown aside, and that in the authorized Version in the Bible substituted for it. The people of God are misled by it; and they are confounded with the great and glaring differences they find between it and what they find in their Bibles, where they have a version of a much better character, delivered to them by the authority of Church and state. Why do not our present excellent and learned prelates lay this to heart, and take away this sore stumbling-block out of the way of the people? I have referred to this subject in the introduction to the Book of Psalms.

Lest the righteous put forth - Were the wicked to bear rule in the Lord's vineyard, religion would soon become extinct; for the great mass of the people would conform to their rulers. Fear not your enemies, while ye fear God. Neither Sanballat, nor Tobiah, nor Geshem, nor any of God's foes, shall be able to set up their rod, their power and authority, here. While you are faithful, the Lord will laugh them to scorn.

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PSALM 125: 4 Do good, LORD, to those who are good, to those who are upright in their hearts.

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Verse 4

Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good - Let the upright ever find thee his sure defense! Increase the goodness which thou hast already bestowed upon them; and let all who are upright in heart find thee to be their stay and their support!

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PSALM 125: 5 But as for those who turn aside to their crooked ways, The LORD will lead them away with the workers of iniquity. Peace be on Israel.

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Verse 5

As for such as turn aside - Who are not faithful; who give way to sin; who backslide, and walk in a crooked way, widely different from the straight way of the upright, ישרים yesharim, the straight in heart; they shall be led forth to punishment with the common workers of iniquity. Thus thy Church will be purified, and thy peace rest upon thy true Israel. Let him that readeth understand.