

PSALM 128

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 128

A Song of degrees.

This psalm very probably was written by the same hand as the former, and seems to have some connection with it; as that shows that all things depend on the providence and goodness of God; and that all blessings, particularly children, are the gift of God; this points out the blessings, civil and religious, that belong to good men; and, among the rest, a numerous offspring. According to the Syriac version,

“it is said concerning Zerubbabel, prince of Judah; and the care of the building: and it intimates in it the calling of Gentiles.”

Manythings in it may be applied Christ and his church.

Ver. 1. *Blessed [is] everyone that feareth the Lord*, etc.] Be he who he will; of whatsoever nation, Jew or Gentile; of whatsoever sex, age, or condition, high or low, rich or poor, (^{<4005>}Acts 10:35); such an one is blessed now, and will be hereafter; (see Gill on “^{<3800>}Psalm 112:1”);

that walketh in his ways: which God has prescribed and directed his people to walk in, his ordinances and commands; which, to walk in, is both pleasant and profitable: it supposes life, requires strength and wisdom; and is expressive of progression, or going on and continuance in them: and where the true fear of God is, which includes every grace, and the whole of religious worship, there will be a conscientious regard to the ways of God: such avoid evil, and do good, because of the fear of God, (^{<3800>}Job 1:1 ^{<405>}Nehemiah 5:15).

Ver. 2. *For thou shall eat the labour of thine hands*, etc.] That is, thou that fearest the Lord, and walkest in his ways. It is an apostrophe, or address to such, even to everyone of them; instancing in one part of the blessedness that belongs to them, enjoyment of what their hands have laboured for; which may be understood both in a literal and spiritual sense: man must labour and get his bread with the sweat of his brow; he that will

not work should not eat, he that does should; and a good man may have a comfortable enjoyment of the good of his labour; than which, as to temporal blessings, there is nothing better under the sun, (²⁰⁵⁸Ecclesiastes 5:18); and, in a spiritual sense, good men labour in prayers at the throne of grace, there lifting up holy hands to God, wrestling with him for a blessing, which they enjoy; they labour in attendance on the word and ordinances, for the meat which endures to everlasting life; and they find the word and eat it, and Christ in it, whose flesh is meat indeed; and feed by faith on it, to the joy and comfort of their souls;

happy [shall] thou [be], and [it shall be] well with thee; or, to thy soul, as the Syriac version; happy as to temporal things, and well as to spiritual ones: such having an apparent special interest in the love, grace, mercy, and delight of God; in his providence, protection, and care; in the supplies of his grace, and in his provisions for his people, in time and eternity. It is well with such that felt God, in life and at death, at judgment and for ever: and the Targum is,

“thou art blessed in this world, and it shall be well with thee in the world to come;”

and so Arama.

Ver. 3. *Thy wife [shall be] as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house,* etc.] The vine being a weak and tender tree, which needs propping and supporting; and often is fastened to the sides of a house, to which the allusion here is; whereunto it cleaves, and on which it runs up, and bears very agreeable fruit; it is properly used to express the weakness and tenderness of the female sex, their fruitfulness in bearing children, and their care of domestic affairs, being keepers at home; (see ¹⁰⁰¹1 Peter 3:7 ¹⁰⁵⁴1 Thessalonians 5:14 ¹⁰¹⁵Titus 2:5). Kimchi observes, that the vine is the only tree men plant within doors; which, when it is grown up, they bring out at a hole or window of the house without, to have the sun and air; and so its root is within the house, and the branches without: and he observes, that a modest woman is within the house, and does not go without, and is only seen by her husband; but her children, like the branches of the vine, go out to work. This may be applied to Christ and his church; to him the other characters agree: he, as man, is one that feared the Lord; the grace of fear was in him; the spirit of fear rested on him; and he was in the exercise of it, and walked in all the ways of the Lord, (²³⁰¹Isaiah 11:1-3 ³⁸⁰⁷Hebrews 5:7); he now sees and enjoys the travail or labour of his soul to satisfaction, and

is made most blessed for evermore, (^{<2531>}Isaiah 53:11 ^{<4276>}Psalms 21:6). The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife, the spouse of Christ; and may be compared to a vine for her weakness in herself, her fruitfulness in grace and good works, and in bringing forth souls to Christ, through the ministry of the word; all which is pleasant and grateful to him; (see ^{<5804>}Psalms 80:14 ^{<2125>}Song of Solomon 2:15 7:12);

thy children like olive plants round about thy table; a numerous offspring was always accounted a very great blessing; and it must be very pleasant to a parent to see his children round about his table, placed in their proper order according to their age, partaking of what it is furnished with: Job, in his time of prosperity, had many children; and, next to the presence of the Almighty with him, he mentions this of his children being about him; (see ^{<8002>}Job 1:2 29:6). This may be applied to the spiritual seed and offspring of Christ, which are like to olive trees or olive plants; to which David is compared, (^{<4518>}Psalms 52:8); the two anointed ones in (^{<3911>}Zechariah 4:11,14); the two witnesses in (^{<6104>}Revelation 11:4); and all true believers in Christ may; because of their excellency, these being choice plants; because of their fruitfulness and beauty; because of their fatness, and having oil in them; and because of their perpetuity, being ever green; (see ^{<24116>}Jeremiah 11:16 ^{<3846>}Hosea 14:6). Now Christ has a table, which he has well furnished, at which he himself sits, and places these his children all around; and whom he welcomes to the entertainment he makes, and takes delight and pleasure in them, (^{<2112>}Song of Solomon 1:12 5:1). Kimchi observes, the olive trees do not admit of a graft from other trees; (see ^{<6124>}Romans 11:24); and so this denotes the legitimacy of those children, being free from all suspicion of being spurious, being born of such a wife as before described; and being green and moist all the year long, denotes their continuance in good works.

Ver. 4. *Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.*]

In the manner before described, and in the instances already given, as well as in the following; this is said to raise attention, and fix a sense of the blessedness of such persons; and who are further addressed, and pronounced happy, in the next verses.

Ver. 5. *The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion*, etc.] The church of God, where he dwells, out of which he shines, even the Word of the Lord, as the Targum in the king's Bible; and where he commands his blessings of grace to descend on his people, even life for evermore, (^{<4938>}Psalms 133:3). Here

he blesses them with his word and ordinances, which are the goodness and fatness of his house, and with his presence in them; so that the man that fears God is blessed, not only in his person, and in his family, but in the house of God; (see ^{<4936>}Psalm 118:26,27);

and thou shall see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life; the goodness of God in Jerusalem, which is another name for the church of God; the beauty of the Lord in his house and ordinances; his power and his glory in the sanctuary: or should see the church of God in prosperous circumstances all his days; true religion flourish, the power of godliness in the professors of it; the word and ordinances blessed to the edification of saints, and many sinners converted and gathered in. This may be applied to Christ, (^{<2531>}Isaiah 53:11).

Ver. 6. *Yea, thou shall see thy children's children*, etc.] A numerous race of descendants from him, which are the crown and glory of old men, (^{<3076>}Proverbs 17:6); this is also true of Christ's spiritual children by his church in successive ages, (^{<2592>}Isaiah 59:21);

[and] peace upon Israel: all kind of prosperity, temporal and spiritual; peace, and abundance of it; as will be in the latter day, in the spiritual reign of Christ, (^{<4978>}Psalm 72:8). It may be considered as a wish or prayer, with which the psalm is concluded; let "peace be upon Israel"^{f1773}, as in (^{<4956>}Psalm 125:5); (see ^{<4066>}Galatians 6:16).