

PSALM XLVIII.

TITLE.—A Song and Psalm for the Sons of Korah.—A song for joyfulness and a Psalm for reverence. *Alas ! every song is not a Psalm, for poets are not all heaven-born, and every Psalm is not a song, for in coming before God we have to utter mournful confessions as well as exulting praises. The Sons of Korah were happy in having so large a selection of song ; the worship where such a variety of music was used could not become monotonous, but must have given scope for all the sacred passions of gracious souls.*

SUBJECT AND DIVISIONS.—*It would be idle dogmatically to attribute this song to any one event of Jewish history. Its author and date are unknown. It records the withdrawal of certain confederate kings from Jerusalem, their courage failing them before striking a blow. The mention of the ships of Tarshish may allow us to conjecture that the Psalm was written in connection with the overthrow of Ammon, Moab, and Edom in the reign of Jehoshaphat ; and if the reader will turn to 2 Chron. xx., and note especially verses 19, 25, and 36, he will probably accept the suggestion. Verses 1, 2, 3, are in honour of the Lord and the city dedicated to his worship. From 4—8 the song records the confusion of Zion's foes, ascribing all the praise to God ; 9, 10, 11 extolling Zion, and avowing Jehovah to be her God for evermore.*

EXPOSITION.

GREAT is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

1. "*Great is the Lord.*" How great Jehovah is essentially none can conceive ; but we can all see that he is great in the deliverance of his people, great in their esteem who are delivered, and great in the hearts of those enemies whom he scatters by their own fears. Instead of the mad cry of Ephesus, "Great is Diana," we bear the reasonable, demonstrable, self-evident testimony, "Great is Jehovah." There is none great in the church but the Lord. Jesus is "the great Shepherd," he is "a Saviour, and a great one," our great God and Saviour, our great High Priest ; his Father has divided him a portion with the great, and his name shall be great unto the ends of the earth. "*And greatly to be praised.*" According to his nature should his worship be ; it cannot be too constant, too laudatory, too earnest, too reverential, too sublime. There is none like the Lord, and there should be no praises like his praises. "*In the city of our God.*" He is great there, and should be greatly praised there. If all the world beside renounced Jehovah's worship, the chosen people in his favoured city should continue to adore him, for in their midst and on their behalf his glorious power has been so manifestly revealed. In the church the Lord is to be extolled though all the nations rage against him. Jerusalem was the peculiar abode of the God of Israel, the seat of the theocratic government, and the centre of prescribed worship, and even thus is the church the place of divine manifestation. "*In the mountain of his holiness.*" Where his holy temple, his holy priests, and his holy sacrifices might continually be seen. Zion was a mount, and as it was the most renowned part of the city, it is mentioned as a synonym for the city itself. The church of God is a mount for elevation and for conspicuousness, and it should be adorned with holiness, her sons being partakers of the holiness of God. Only by holy men can the Lord be fittingly praised, and they should be incessantly occupied with his worship.

2. "*Beautiful for situation.*" Jerusalem was so naturally, she was styled the Queen of the East ; the church is so spiritually, being placed near God's heart, within the mountains of his power, upon the hills of his faithfulness, in the centre of providential operations. The elevation of the church is her beauty. The more she is above the world the fairer she is. "*The joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion.*" Jerusalem was the world's star ; whatever light lingered on earth was borrowed from the oracles preserved by Israel. An ardent Israelite would esteem the holy

city as the eye of the nations, the most precious pearl of all lands. Certainly the church of God, though despised of men, is the true joy and hope of the world. "*On the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*" Either meaning that Jerusalem was in the northern extremity of Judah, or it may denote that part of the city which lay to the north of Mount Zion. It was the glory of Jerusalem to be God's city, the place of his regal dwelling, and it is the joy of the church that God is in her midst. The great God is the great King of the church, and for her sake he rules all the nations. The people among whom the Lord deigns to dwell are privileged above all others; the lines have fallen unto them in pleasant places, and they have a goodly heritage. We who dwell in Great Britain in the sides of the north, have this for our chief glory, that the Lord is known in our land, and the abode of his love is among us.

3. "*God is known in her palaces for a refuge.*" We worship no unknown god. We know him as our refuge in distress, we delight in him as such, and run to him in every time of need. We know nothing else as our refuge. Though we are made kings, and our houses are palaces, yet we have no confidence in ourselves, but trust in the Lord Protector, whose well-known power is our bulwark.

4 For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.

5 They saw it, *and* so they marvelled; they were troubled, *and* hasted away.

6 Fear took hold upon them there, *and* pain, as of a woman in travail.

7 Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.

8 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.

4. "*The kings were assembled, they passed by together.*" They came and they went. No sooner together than scattered. They came one way and fled twenty ways. Boastful the gathering hosts with their royal leaders, despairing the fugitive bands, with their astonished captains. They came like foam on the angry sea, like foam they melted away. This was so remarkable that the Psalmist puts in a note of exclamation, "*Lo!*" What! have they so suddenly fled! Even thus shall the haters of the church vanish from the field, Papists, Ritualists, Arians, Sceptics, they shall each have their day, and shall pass on to the limbo of forgetfulness.

5. "*They saw it, and so they marvelled.*" They came, they saw, but they did not conquer. There was no *veni, vidi, vici* for them. No sooner did they perceive that the Lord was in the Holy City, than they took to their heels. Before the Lord came to blows with them, they were faint-hearted, and beat a retreat. "*They were troubled and hasted away.*" The troublers were troubled. Their haste in coming was nothing to their hurry in going. Panic seized them, horses were not fleet enough; they would have borrowed the wings of the wind. They fled ignominiously, like children in a fright. Glory be to God, it shall be even thus with the foes of his church; when the Lord cometh to our help, our enemies shall be as nothing. Could they foresee their ignominious defeat, they would not advance to the attack.

6. "*Fear took hold upon them there.*" They were in Giant Despair's grip. Where they hoped to triumph, there they quivered with dismay. They did not take the city, but fear took hold on them. "*And pain, as of a woman in travail.*" They were as much overcome as a woman whose fright causes premature delivery; or as full of pain as a poor mother in her pangs—a strong expression, commonly employed by Orientals to set forth the extremity of anguish. When the Lord arises for the help of his church, the proudest of his foes shall be as trembling women, and their dismay shall be but the beginning of eternal defeat.

7. "*Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.*" As easily as vessels are driven to shipwreck, dost thou overturn the most powerful adversaries; or it may mean the strength of some nations lies in their ships, whose wooden walls are soon broken; but our strength is in our God, and therefore, it fails not; or there may be another meaning, though thou art our defence, yet thou takest vengeance on our inventions, and while thou dost preserve us, yet our ships, our comforts, our earthly ambitions, are taken from us that we may look alone to thee. God is seen at sea, but he is equally present on land. Speculative heresies, pretending to bring us wealth from afar, are constantly assailing the church, but the

breath of the Lord soon drives them to destruction. The church too often relies on the wisdom of men, and these human helps are soon shipwrecked; yet the church itself is safe beneath the care of her God and King.

8. "*As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God.*" Our fathers' stories are reproduced before our very eyes. We heard the promise, and we have seen the fulfilment. The records of Zion, wonderful as they are, are proved to be truthful, because present facts are in perfect harmony therewith. Note how the Lord is first spoken of as *Lord of hosts*, a name of power and sovereignty, and then as *our God*, a name of covenant relation and condescension. No wonder that since the Lord bears both titles, we find him dealing with us after the precedents of his lovingkindness, and the faithfulness of his promises. "*God will establish it for ever.*" The true church can never be disestablished. That which kings establish can last for time only, that which God establishes endures to all eternity. "*Selah.*" Here is a fit place to pause, viewing the past with admiration, and the future with confidence.

9 We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

10 According to thy name, O God, so *is* thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.

11 Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.

9. "*We have thought.*" Holy men are thoughtful men; they do not suffer God's wonders to pass before their eyes and melt into forgetfulness, but they meditate deeply upon them. "*Of thy lovingkindness, O God.*" What a delightful subject! Devout minds never tire of so divine a theme. It is well to think of past lovingkindness in times of trial, and equally profitable to remember it in seasons of prosperity. Grateful memories sweeten sorrows and sober joys. "*In the midst of thy temple.*" Fit place for so devout a meditation. Where God is most seen he is best loved. The assembled saints constitute a living temple, and our deepest musings when so gathered together should have regard to the lovingkindness of the Lord, exhibited in the varied experiences of each of the living stones. Memories of mercy should be associated with continuance of praise. Hard by the table of shew-bread commemorating his bounty, should stand the altar of incense denoting our praise.

10. "*According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth.*" Great fame is due to his great name. The glory of Jehovah's exploits overleaps the boundaries of earth; angels behold with wonder, and from every star delighted intelligences proclaim his fame beyond the ends of the earth. What if men are silent, yet the woods, and seas, and mountains, with all their countless tribes, and all the unseen spirits that walk them, are full of the divine praise. As in a shell we listen to the murmurs of the sea, so in the convolutions of creation we hear the praises of God. "*Thy right hand is full of righteousness.*" Thy sceptre and thy sword, thy government and thy vengeance, are altogether just. Thy hand is never empty, but full of energy, of bounty, and of equity. Neither saint nor sinner shall find the Lord to be an empty-handed God; he will in both cases deal out righteousness to the full: to the one, through Jesus, he will be just to forgive, to the other just to condemn.

11. "*Let mount Zion rejoice.*" As the first of the cities of Judah, and the main object of the enemies' attack, let her lead the song. "*Let the daughters of Judah be glad,*" let the smaller towns join the chorus, for they join in the common victory. Let the women, who fare worst in the havoc of war, be among the gladdest of the glad, now that the spoilers have fled. All the church, and each individual member, should rejoice in the Lord, and magnify his name. "*Because of thy judgments.*" The righteous acts of the Lord are legitimate subjects for joyful praise. However it may appear on earth, yet in heaven the eternal ruin of the wicked will be the theme of adoring song. Rev. xix. 1, 3: "*Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God. For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia, and her smoke rose up for ever and ever.*" Justice which to our poor optics now seems severe, will then be perceived to be perfectly consistent with God's name of love, and to be one of the brightest jewels of his crown.

12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her : tell the towers thereof.

13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces ; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

14 For this God *is* our God for ever and ever : he will be our guide *even* unto death.

12. "*Walk about Zion ;*" often beat her bounds, even as Israel marched around Jericho. With leisurely and careful inspection survey her. "*And go round about her.*" Encircle her again and again with loving perambulations. We cannot too frequently or too deeply consider the origin, privileges, history, security, and glory of the church. Some subjects deserve but a passing thought ; this is worthy of the most patient consideration. "*Tell the towers thereof.*" See if any of them have crumbled, or have been demolished. Is the church of God what she was in doctrine, in strength and in beauty ? Her foes counted her towers in envy first, and then in terror, let us count them with sacred exultation. The city of Lucerne, encircled by its ancient walls, adorned with a succession of towers, is a visible illustration of this figure ; and as we have gone around it, and paused at each picturesque tower, we have realised the loving, lingering inspection which the metaphor implies.

13. "*Mark ye well her bulwarks.*" Consider most attentively how strong are her ramparts, how safely her inhabitants are entrenched behind successive lines of defence. The security of the people of God is not a doctrine to be kept in the background, it may be safely taught, and frequently pondered ; only to base hearts will that glorious truth prove harmful ; the sons of perdition make a stumbling stone even of the Lord Jesus himself, it is little wonder, that they pervert the truth of God concerning the final perseverance of the saints. We are not to turn away from inspecting Zion's ramparts, because idlers skulk behind them. "*Consider her palaces.*" Examine with care the fair dwellings of the city. Let the royal promises which afford quiet resting places for believers be attentively inspected. See how sound are the defences, and how fair are the pleasaunces of "that ancient citie," of which you are citizens. A man should be best acquainted with his own home ; and the church is our dear and blest abode. Would to God professors were more considerate of the condition of the church ; so far from telling the towers, some of them scarcely know what or where they are ; they are too busy counting their money, and considering their ledgers. Freehold and copyhold, and leasehold, men measure to an inch, but heavenhold and gracehold are too often taken at peradventure, and neglected in sheer heedlessness. "*That ye may tell it to the generation following.*" An excellent reason for studious observation. We have received and we must transmit. We must be students that we may be teachers. The debt we owe to the past we must endeavour to repay by handing down the truth to the future.

14. "*For this God is our God for ever and ever.*" A good reason for preserving a record of all that he has wrought. Israel will not change her God so as to wish to forget, nor will the Lord change so as to make the past mere history. He will be the covenant God of his people world without end. There is no other God, we wish for no other, we would have no other even if other there were. There are some who are so ready to comfort the wicked, that for the sake of ending their punishment they weaken the force of language, and make "*for ever and ever,*" mean but a time ; nevertheless, despite their interpretations we exult in the hope of an eternity of bliss, and to us "*everlasting,*" and "*for ever and ever*" mean what they say. "*He will be our guide even unto death.*" Throughout life, and to our dying couch, he will graciously conduct us, and even after death he will lead us to the living fountains of waters. We look to him for resurrection and eternal life. This consolation is clearly derivable from what has gone before ; hitherto our foes have been scattered, and our bulwarks have defied attack, for God has been in our midst, therefore all possible assaults in the future shall be equally futile.

" The church has all her foes defied
And laughed to scorn their rage ;
E'en thus for aye she shall abide
Secure from age to age."

Farewell, fear. Come hither, gratitude and faith, and sing right joyously.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

Title.—“*A Song and Psalm.*” Wherein both voice and instrument were used; the voice began first and the instrument after: and where the inscription is a Psalm and Song, there likely the instrument began and the voice followed.—*John Richardson.*

Whole Psalm.—According to Dr. Lightfoot, the constant and ordinary Psalm for the second day of the week was the forty-eighth.

Verse 1.—“*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God,*” etc. The prophet, being about to praise a certain edifice, commences by praising the architect, and says that in the holy city the wonderful skill and wisdom of God, who built it, is truly displayed. “*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;*” and so he is, whether we look at his essence, his power, his wisdom, his justice, or his mercy, for all are infinite, everlasting, and incomprehensible; and thus, so much is God *greatly to be praised*, that all the angels, all men, even all his own works would not suffice thereto; but of all things revealed, there is no one thing can give us a greater idea of his greatness, or for which we should praise and thank him more, than the establishment of his church; and, therefore, the prophet adds, “*in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness;*” that is to say, the greatness of God, and for which he deserves so much praise, is conspicuous in the foundation and construction of his church.”—*Robert Bellarmine (Cardinal).*

Verse 1.—“*Great is the Lord.*” Greater, Job xxxiii. 12. Greatest of all, Psalm xc. 3. Greatness itself, Psalm cxlv. 3. A degree he is above the superlative.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—“*Mountain of his holiness.*” The religion in it holy, the people in it a holy people.—*William Nicholson.*

Verse 2.—“*Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*” What is there, or was there, about Zion to justify the high eulogium of David? The situation is indeed eminently adapted to be the platform of a magnificent citadel. Rising high above the deep valley of Gihon and Hinnom, on the west and south, and the scarcely less deep one of the Cheesemongers on the east, it could only be assailed from the north-west; and then “*on the sides of the north*” it was magnificently beautiful, and fortified by walls, towers, and bulwarks, the wonder and terror of the nations: “*! or the kings were assembled, they passed by together. They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away.*” At the thought of it the royal Psalmist again bursts forth in triumph: “*Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.*” Alas! her towers have long since fallen to the ground, her bulwarks have been overthrown, her palaces have crumbled to dust, and we who now walk about Zion can tell no other story than this to the generation following.

There is another Zion, however, whose towers are still more glorious, and shall never be overthrown. “*God is known in her palaces for a refuge.*” And “*this God is our God for ever and ever.*” How often is this name synonymous with the church of the living God! and no other spot but one can divide with it the affection of his people—no other name but one can awaken such joyful hopes in the Christian’s heart. The temporal Zion is now in the dust, but the true Zion is rising and shaking herself from it, and putting on her beautiful garments to welcome her King when he comes to reign over the whole earth.—*W. M. Thomson, D.D.*

Verse 2.—When I stood that morning on the brow of Olivet, and looked down on the city crowning those battlemented heights, encircled by those deep and dark ravines, I involuntarily exclaimed, “*Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*” And as I gazed, the red rays of the rising sun shed a halo round the top of the castle of David; then they tipped with gold each tapering minaret, and gilded each dome of mosque and church, and at length, bathed in one flood of ruddy light the terraced roofs of the city, and the grass and foliage, the cupolas, pavements, and colossal walls of the Haram. No human being could be disappointed who first saw Jerusalem from Olivet.—*J. L. Porter.*

Verse 2 (first clause).—*Beautiful in climate*, that is, Mount Zion is situated in a fair and lovely climate. This is the view taken by Montanus and Ainsworth. Bate and Parkhurst read, "*Beautiful in extension, i.e., in the prospect which it extends to the eye.*"—*Editorial Note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 2.—"Beautiful for situation." This earth is, by sin, covered with deformity, and therefore justly might that spot of ground, which was thus beautified with holiness, be called "*the joy of the whole earth,*" i.e., what the whole earth had reason to rejoice in, because God would thus in very deed dwell with man upon the earth.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 2.—"Beautiful for situation."

————— Fair Jerusalem
The holy city, lifted high her towers,
And higher yet the glorious temple rear'd
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topt with golden spires.

John Milton in "Paradise Regained."

Verse 2.—"On the sides of the north." Jerusalem, that is the upper and best part of it, was built on the north side of Mount Zion.—*Hadrian Reland, 1676—1718.*

Verse 2.—Jerusalem lay to the north of Sion, and this circumstance is mentioned as a proof of Mount Zion's greater security, for it was almost inaccessible on any other side except the north, and there it was defended by Jerusalem, which was very strong.—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 2.—"The great King." God is named the *great King* in opposition to the kings in verse 4.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 4.—They were many and powerful: kings and a plurality of them. They were confederate kings. "*The kings were assembled.*" Forces united are the most powerful. But all the endeavours of these confederate kings came to nothing. "*They passed by together*"—together they came, and together they vanished.—*William Nicholson.*

Verses 5, 6.—The potentates of the world saw the miracles of the apostles, the courage and constancy of the martyrs, and the daily increase of the church, notwithstanding all their persecutions; they beheld with astonishment the rapid progress of the faith through the Roman empire; they called upon their gods, but their gods could not help themselves; idolatry expired at the foot of the victorious cross.—*George Horne.*

Verse 6.—"Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail." Nothing is more unaccountable than panic. No man, no body of men can adequately guard against such terror. He who made the ears can easily make them to tingle. He who holds the winds in his fist, can easily make them whisper alarm, or roar dismay. This is especially to be expected when men so act as to have their own conscience against them. Job xv. 21. But God can at any time so forsake men as that they shall be unmanned, and play the fool exceedingly. Lev. xxvi. 36. Men have fought bravely several battles, and then played the coward.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 7.—"Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind." It is only by her Lord that the church gains "the true riches;" when she enters into traffick with the world, she takes the means of the world for her resources; and when she trusts in her wealth, in her political power, in earthly cunning, to make merchandise, the instruments she adopts come to nothing in her hands, and leave her helpless and poor.—*From "A Plain Commentary on the Book of Psalms (The Prayer Book Version), chiefly founded on the Fathers," 1859.*

Verse 7.—"With an east wind," which, in Judea, is a very violent and destructive wind. Kennicot renders the verse thus, "*As the east wind dasheth in pieces the ships of Tharshish;*" founding his conjecture upon the similarity in form of two Hebrew letters, signifying the one *in*, the other *as*.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 9.—"We have thought." The Hebrew *דָּמָה* and *דָּמָה* and *דָּמָה* belong all to the same signification, of *quiet, rest, silence, patient expecting, thinking, considering,*

and must be determined to any of these senses by the context. And here that of *expecting* or *patient waiting*, with *affiance* in him, and without all *distrust* or *repining* at his *delays*, seems to be most proper for it. For coming to the sanctuary to pray for mercy, 'tis most agreeable to say *we wait for it there*, as in the place where he hath promised to afford it, in return to *prayers*.—*Henry Hammond*.

Verses 12, 13.—In a spiritual sense *the towers* and *bulwarks* of Zion are those doctrines of the true faith, which are the strength and glory of the church, which are to be maintained in their soundness and stability against the assaults of heretical teachers, so that they may be transmitted unimpaired to following generations.—*Origen and Theodoret, quoted by Wordsworth*.

Verse 13.—“*Mark ye well her bulwarks.*” Margin as in the Hebrew, “*Set your heart to her bulwarks.*” That is, pay close attention to them; make the investigation with care, not as one does whose heart is not in the thing, and who does it negligently. The word rendered “*bulwarks,*” *כַּיִן*, *khail*—means properly, a host or army, and then a fortification or entrenchment, especially the *ditch* or *trench*, with the low wall or breastwork which surrounds it. 2 Sam. xx. 15; Isaiah xxvi. 1. (Gesenius, *Lex.*)—*Albert Barnes*.

Verse 13.—“*Mark ye well:*” *set your heart*, mind earnestly, set your affections on.—*Henry Ainsworth*.

Verse 13.—“*Her bulwarks.*” I. The designation and constitution of Jesus Christ to be King of the church, King of Zion, is the great bulwark of Zion. II. The second bulwark of Zion is the promises of God, which are innumerable. III. The watchful providence of God over the church. IV. Another bulwark is God's special presence. God is in an especial manner present in his church. V. The last bulwark unto which all others may be reduced, is the covenant of God: “*For this God is our God.*”—*John Owen*.

Verse 14.—“*This God is our God for ever and ever.*” What a portion then is that of the believer! The landlord cannot say of his fields, these are mine, for ever and ever. The king cannot say of his crown, this is mine for ever and ever. These possessions shall soon change masters; these possessors shall soon mingle with the dust, and even the graves they shall occupy may not long be theirs; but it is the singular, the supreme happiness of every Christian to say, or to have a right to say, “*This glorious God with all his divine perfections is my God, for ever and ever, and even death itself shall not separate me from his love.*”—*George Burder*.

Verse 14.—“*This God is our God.*” The people of God are sometime represented as so taken with this apprehension of their peculiar relation to God, that they cannot be content to know, but they proclaim it; nor was it enough the present age should know, but they must have it told the following generation: “*Let Mount Zion rejoice,*” etc. Mark, “*That ye may tell the generation following,*” “*For this is our God.*” See their ostentation of him! This God; *q.d.*, Behold what a God have we! view him well, and take notice how glorious a God he is. And as they glory in the greatness of the God to whom they were related, so they do in the eternity of the relation. “*This God is our God for ever and ever.*”—*John Howe*.

Verse 14.—God is not only a satisfying portion, filling every crevice of thy soul with the light of joy and comfort; and a sanctifying portion, elevating thy soul to its primitive and original perfection; and a universal portion; not health, or wealth, or friends, or honours, or liberty, or life, or house, or wife, or child, or pardon, or peace, or grace, or glory, or earth, or heaven, but all these, and infinitely more, but also he is an eternal portion. This God would be thy God “*for ever and ever.*” Oh, sweet word *ever!* thou art the crown of the saints' crown, and the glory of their glory. Their portion is so full that they desire no more; they enjoy variety and plenty of delights above what they are able to ask or think, and want nothing but to have it fixed. May they but possess it in peace without interruption or cessation they will trample all kingdoms of the earth as dirt under their feet; and lo! thou art the welcome dove to bring this olive branch in thy mouth. “*This God is our God for ever and ever.*” All the arithmetical figures of days, and months, and years, and ages, are nothing to this infinite cipher *ever*, which, though it stand for nothing in the vulgar account, yet contains all our millions; yea, our millions and millions of millions are less than drops to this ocean *ever*.—*George Swinnoek*.

Verse 14.—Some expositors have strangely found a difficulty in the last verse,

deeming such a profession of personal faith an inappropriate termination for a national song. Even Dr. Delitzsch, a wise and devout interpreter, shares in this notion; going, indeed, so far as to throw out the surmise, that some word must have been lost from the Hebrew text. To me it seems that the verse, as it stands, is admirably in harmony with the song, and is its crowning beauty. When the Lord does great things for church or nation, he means that all the faithful, however humble their station, should take courage from it, should repose in him fresh confidence, and cling to him with a firmer hope, and say, "*This God shall be our God for ever; he will guide us even unto death.*"—William Binnie.

Verse 14.—"*Unto death,*" or as some explain it, *at death, i.e., he will save us from it; others, over death,* beyond it. But the most obvious explanation, and the one most agreeable to usage, is that which makes the phrase mean even to the end of life, or as long as we live. The idea of a future state, though not expressed, is not excluded.—J. A. Alexander.

Verse 14 (last clause).—The last clause is much misunderstood. It is not, "Our guide *unto death,*" for the words are *נָשָׂאנוּ לְמוֹת*, "shall lead us *over death.*" Surely it means, "It is he who leads *over death to resurrection*"—over Jordan to Canaan. The *לְ* is used in Levit. xv. 25, for "*beyond,*" in regard to time, and is not this the sense here? "*Beyond the time of death*"? Till death is to us over? Till we have *stood upon the grave of death*? Yes; he it is who leads us on to this last victory; he swallows up death in victory, and leads us to *trample on death.* And so viewed, we easily discern the beautiful link of thought that joins this Psalm to that which follows. Such is the celebration of *The Mighty One become the glory of Jerusalem.*—Andrew A. Bonar.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

[All the suggestions under this Psalm, except those otherwise designated, are by our beloved friend, Rev. George Rogers, Tutor of The Pastor's College.]

Verse 1.—I. What the church is to God. 1. His "*city:*" not a lawless rabble, but a well organised community. 2. A mountain of holiness, for the display of justifying righteousness, of sanctifying grace. II. What God is to the church. 1. Its inhabitant. It is *his city,* his mountain. There he is great. There was no room for the whole of God in Paradise, there is no room for him in his law, no room for him in the heaven of angels: in the church only is there room for all his perfections, for a triune Jehovah. Great everywhere, he is peculiarly great here. 2. The object of its praises. As he is greatest here, so are his praises, and through the universe on this account.

Verse 2.—I. Was the ancient Zion beautiful for situation? So is the New Testament church founded upon a rock, upon eternal purpose and grace. II. Was it the joy of the whole earth? So the New Testament church will become. III. Was it the special joy of the tribes of Israel that were almost entirely to the north of Jerusalem? So the church is to the saints. IV. Was it a royal as well as holy city? So is the church. "Yet have I set," etc.

Verse 3.—I. God is a refuge in his church. The church is a city of refuge, but the refuge is not in its church, but its God. 1. For sinners from wrath. 2. For saints from trials and fears. II. God is there known as such, known to thousands, not known as such elsewhere. "They that know thy name," etc.

Verses 4—7.—I. The opposition of worldly powers to the church. "The kings," etc. II. The manner in which they are subdued—by their own fears; conscience has persecuted those who have persecuted the church of God. They who have seized the ark of God have been glad to return it with an offering. III. The completeness of their overthrow. As a fleet of ships of Tarshish, dispersed, broken and engulfed by the east wind.

Verse 8.—I. God has ever been to his people what he now is; the same "*heard*" as "*seen.*" II. He is now what he ever has been: the same "*seen*" as "*heard.*" III. He will ever be what he now is. "Will establish it for ever."

Verse 9.—I. What are the lovingkindnesses of God? Pity to the wretched

pardon to the penitent, help to the prayerful, comfort to the afflicted, etc. II. Where are they to be found? "In the midst of," etc. 1. Here they are revealed. 2. Here they are dispensed. 3. Here they are sought. 4. Here they are enjoyed.

Verse 10.—As the name of God, so his praises are—I. Supreme. II. Unqualified. III. Universal. IV. Everlasting.

Verse 10.—"Thy right hand," etc. I. The justice of omnipotence. II. Omnipotence controlled by justice. III. The omnipotence of justice.

Verse 11.—I. The subjects of his peoples' joy. Not mercies merely, but judgments. II. Reasons: 1. Because they are holy—needful to the purity of moral government. 2. Just—needful to vindicate law. 3. Good—needful for the greatest amount of good.

Verse 12.—I. What is to be understood by the preservation and protection of the church? II. What is meant by searching into, and considering of, these causes and means of the church's preservation? III. What are those causes and means of the church's preservation, those towers and bulwarks which will not fail? IV. What reason is there why we should thus search into and consider these causes of the church's preservation and protection? V. What is the testimony which we have to give concerning this matter to the ensuing generation?—*John Owen's Sermon.*

Verse 14 (*first clause*).—This is the language of a *proprietary* in God: 1. Of an *assured* proprietary—"This God is *our* God." 2. Of a *permanent* proprietary—"for ever and ever." 3. Of an *exulting* proprietary.—*W. Jay.*

Verse 14.—I. The language of discrimination. *This* God. *This* God in Christ, in the church. II. The language of Faith—*our* God. III. Of Hope—"For ever and ever." IV. Of Resignation—"He will be our guide," etc.

