

PSALM CXXII.

TITLE AND SUBJECT.—*This brief but spirited Psalm is entitled "A Song of Degrees of David," and thus we are informed as to its author, and the occasion for which it was designed: David wrote it for the people to sing at the time of their goings up to the holy feasts at Jerusalem. It comes third in the series, and appears to be suitable to be sung when the people had entered the gates, and their feet stood within the city. It was most natural that they should sing of Jerusalem itself, and invoke peace and prosperity upon the Holy City, for it was the centre of their worship, and the place where the Lord revealed himself above the mercy-seat. Possibly the city was not all built in David's day, but he wrote under the spirit of prophecy, and spoke of it as it would be in the age of Solomon: a poet has license to speak of things, not only as they are, but as they will be when they come to their perfection. Jerusalem, or the Habitation of Peace, is used as the key-word of this Psalm, wherein we have in the original many happy allusions to the salem, or peace, which they implored upon Jerusalem. When they stood within the triple walls, all things around the pilgrims helped to explain the words which they sang within her ramparts of strength. One voice led the Psalm with its personal "I," but ten thousand brethren and companions united with the first musician and swelled the chorus of the strain.*

EXPOSITION.

I WAS glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.

2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:

4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.

5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.

1. "*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.*" Good children are pleased to go home, and glad to hear their brothers and sisters call them thither. David's heart was in the worship of God, and he was delighted when he found others inviting him to go where his desires had already gone: it helps the ardour of the most ardent to hear others inviting them to a holy duty. The word was not "go," but "let us go"; hence the ear of the Psalmist found a double joy in it. He was glad *for the sake of others*: glad that they wished to go themselves, glad that they had the courage and liberality to invite others. He knew that it would do them good; nothing better can happen to men and their friends than to love the place where God's honour dwelleth. What a glorious day shall that be when many people shall go and say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." But David was glad *for his own sake*: he loved the invitation to the holy place, he delighted in being called to go to worship in company, and, moreover, he rejoiced that good people thought enough of him to extend their invitation to him. Some men would have been offended, and would have said, "Mind your own business. Let my religion alone;" but not so King David, though he had more dignity than any of us, and less need to be reminded of his duty. He was not teased but pleased by being pressed to attend holy services. He was glad to go into the house of the Lord, glad to go in holy company, glad

to find good men and women willing to have him in their society. He may have been sad before, but this happy suggestion cheered him up: he pricked up his ears, as the proverb puts it, at the very mention of his Father's house. Is it so with us? Are we glad when others invite us to public worship, or to church fellowship? Then we shall be glad when the spirits above shall call us to the house of the Lord not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

"Hark! they whisper: angels say,
Sister spirit, come away."

If we are glad to be called by others to our Father's house, how much more glad shall we be actually to go there. We love our Lord, and therefore we love his house, and pangs of strong desire are upon us that we may soon reach the eternal abode of his glory. An aged saint, when dying, cheered herself with this evidence of grace, for she cried, "I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth," and therefore she begged that she might join the holy congregation of those who for ever behold the King in his beauty. Our gladness at the bare thought of being in God's house is detective as to our character, and prophetic of our being one day happy in the Father's house on high. What a sweet Sabbath Psalm is this! In prospect of the Lord's day, and all its hallowed associations, our soul rejoices. How well, also, may it refer to the church! We are happy when we see numerous bands ready to unite themselves with the people of God. The pastor is specially glad when many come forward and ask of him assistance in entering into fellowship with the church. No language is more cheering to him than the humble request, "Let us go into the house of the Lord."

2. "*Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem;*" or, better, "our feet are standing." The words imply present and joyous standing within the walls of the city of peace; or perhaps the pilgrims felt so sure of getting there that they antedated the joy, and spoke as if they were already there, though they were as yet only on the road. If we are within the church we may well triumph in the fact. While our feet are standing in Jerusalem our lips may well be singing. Outside the gates all is danger, and one day all will be destruction; but within the gates all is safety, seclusion, serenity, salvation, and glory. The gates are opened that we may pass in, and they are only shut that our enemies may not follow us. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, and so do we when we are enclosed within them. What a choice favour, to be a citizen of the New Jerusalem! Why are we so greatly favoured? Many feet are running the downward road, or kicking against the pricks, or held by snares, or sliding to an awful fall; but our feet, through grace divine, are "standing"—an honourable posture, "within thy gates, O Jerusalem"—an honourable position, and there shall they stand for ever—an honourable future.

3. "*Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.*" David saw in vision the city built; no more a waste, or a mere collection of tents, or a city upon paper, commenced but not completed. God's mercy to the Israelitish nation allowed of peace and plenty, sufficient for the uprising and perfecting of its capital: that city flourished in happy times, even as the church is only built up when all the people of God are prospering. Thanks be to God, Jerusalem is builded: the Lord by his glorious appearing has built up Zion. Furthermore, it is not erected as a set of booths, or a conglomeration of hovels, but as a city, substantial, architectural, designed, arranged, and defended. The church is a permanent and important institution, founded on a rock, builded with art, and arranged with wisdom. The city of God had this peculiarity about it, that it was not a long, straggling street, or a city of magnificent distances (as some mere skeleton places have been styled), but the allotted space was filled, the buildings were a solid block, a massive unity: this struck the dwellers in villages, and conveyed to them the idea of close neighbourhood, sure standing, and strong defence. No quarter could be surprised and sacked while other portions of the town were unaware of the assault: the ramparts surrounded every part of the metropolis, which was singularly one and indivisible. There was no flaw in this diamond of the world, this pearl of cities. In a church one of the most delightful conditions is the compactness of unity: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." A church should be one in creed and one in heart, one in testimony and one in service, one in aspiration and one in sympathy. They greatly injure our Jerusalem who would build dividing walls within her; she needs compacting, not dividing. There is no joy in going up to a church which is rent with internal dissension: the gladness of holy men is aroused by the adhesiveness

of love, the unity of life ; it would be their sadness if they saw the church to be a house divided against itself. Some bodies of Christians appear to be periodically blown to fragments, and no gracious man is glad to be in the way when the explosions take place : thither the tribes do not go up, for strife and contention are not attractive forces.

4. "*Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD.*" When there is unity within there will be gatherings from without : the tribes go up to a compact centre. Note that Israel was one people, but yet it was in a sense divided by the mere surface distinction of tribes ; and this may be a lesson to us that all Christendom is essentially one, though from various causes we are divided into tribes. Let us as much as possible sink the tribal individuality in the national unity, so that the church may be many waves, but one sea ; many branches, but one tree ; many members, but one body. Observe that the tribes were all of them the Lord's ; whether Judah or Benjamin, Manasseh or Ephraim, they were all the Lord's. Oh that all the régiments of the Christian army may be all and equally the Lord's own, alike chosen, redeemed, accepted, and upheld by Jehovah. "*Unto the testimony of Israel.*" They went up to the holy city to hear and to bear testimony. Everything in the temple was a testimony unto the Lord, and the annual journeys of the tribes to the hallowed shrine partook of the same testifying character, for these journeys were Israel's open avowal that Jehovah was their God, and that he was the one only living and true God. When we assemble on the Sabbath a large part of our business is giving out and receiving testimony : we are God's witnesses ; all the tribes of the one church of Jesus Christ bear witness unto the Lord. "*To give thanks unto the name of the LORD.*" Another part of our delightful duty is to praise the Lord. Sacred praise is a chief design of the assembling of ourselves together. All Israel had been fed by the fruit of the field, and they went up to give thanks unto the name of their great Husbandman : we, too, have countless mercies, and it becomes us unitedly in our solemn gatherings to magnify the name of our loving Lord. Testimony should be mingled with thanks, and thanks with testimony, for in combination they bless both God and man, and tend to spread themselves over the hearts of our companions ; who, seeing our joyful gratitude, are the more inclined to hearken to our witness-bearing.

Here, then, was part of the cause of the gladness of the pious Israelite when he had an invitation to join the caravan which was going to Zion : he would there meet with representatives of all the clans of his nation, and aid them in the double object of their holy assemblies, namely, testimony and thanksgiving. The very anticipation of such delightful engagements filled him to overflowing with sacred gladness.

5. "*For there are set thrones of judgment.*" If discontented with the petty judgments of their village lords, the people could bring their hard matters to the royal seat, and the beloved King would be sure to decide aright ; for the judgment-thrones were "*The thrones of the house of David.*" We who come to the church and its public worship are charmed to come to the throne of God, and to the throne of the reigning Saviour.

"He reigns ! Ye saints, exalt your strains :
Your God is King, your Father reigns :
And he is at the Father's side,
The Man of love, the Crucified."

To a true saint the throne is never more amiable than in its judicial capacity : righteous men love judgment, and are glad that right will be rewarded and iniquity will be punished. To see God reigning in the Son of David and evermore avenging the just cause is a thing which is good for weeping eyes, and cheering for disconsolate hearts. They sang of old as they went towards the throne, and so do we. "*The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.*" The throne of judgment is not removed, but firmly "*set,*" and there it shall remain till the work of justice is accomplished, and truth and right are set on the throne with their King. Happy people to be under so glorious a rule.

6. "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*" Peace was her name, pray that her condition may verify her title. Abode of Peace, peace be to thee. Here was a most sufficient reason for rejoicing at the thought of going up to the house of the Lord, since that sacred shrine stood in the centre of an area of peace : well might Israel pray that such peace should be continued. In a church peace is to be desired,

expected, promoted, and enjoyed. If we may not say "Peace at any price," yet we may certainly cry "Peace at the highest price." Those who are daily fluttered by rude alarms are charmed to reach their nest in a holy fellowship, and abide in it. In a church one of the main ingredients of success is internal peace: strife, suspicion, party-spirit, division,—these are deadly things. Those who break the peace of the church deserve to suffer, and those who sustain it win a great blessing. Peace in the church should be our daily prayer, and in so praying we shall bring down peace upon ourselves; for the Psalmist goes on to say, "*They shall prosper that love thee.*" Whether the passage be regarded as a promise or as a prayer matters not, for prayer pleads the promise, and the promise is the ground of prayer. Prosperity of soul is already enjoyed by those who take a deep interest in the church and cause of God: they are men of peace, and find peace in their holy endeavours: God's people pray for them, and God himself delights in them. Prosperity of worldly condition often comes to the lovers of the church if they are able to bear it: many a time the house of Obed-edom is blessed because of the ark of the Lord. Because the Egyptian midwives feared the Lord, therefore the Lord made them houses. No man shall ever be a permanent loser by the house of the Lord: in peace of heart alone, if in nothing else, we find recompense enough for all that we can do in promoting the interests of Zion.

7. "*Peace be within thy walls.*" See how the poet personifies the church, and speaks to it; his heart is with Zion, and therefore his conversation runs in that direction. A second time is the sweet favour of peace earnestly sought after: "There is none like it, give it me." Walls were needed to keep out the foe, but it was asked of the Lord that those walls might prove sufficient for her security. May the munitions of rock so securely defend the city of God that no intruder may ever enter within her enclosure. May her ramparts repose in safety. Three walls environed her, and thus she had a trinity of security. "*And prosperity within thy palaces,*" or "*Repose within thy palaces.*" Peace is prosperity; there can be no prosperity which is not based on peace, nor can there long be peace if prosperity be gone, for decline of grace breeds decay of love. We wish for the church rest from internal dissension and external assault: war is not her element, but we read of old, "Then had the churches rest; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." The bird of Paradise is not a stormy petrel: her element is not the hurricane of debate, but the calm of communion.

Observe that our Jerusalem is a city of palaces: kings dwell within her walls, and God himself is there. The smallest church is worthy of higher honour than the greatest confederacies of nobles. The order of the New Jerusalem is of more repute in heaven than the knights of the Golden Fleece. For the sake of all the saintly spirits which inhabit the city of God we may well entreat for her the boons of lasting peace and abounding prosperity.

8. "*For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.*" It is to the advantage of all Israel that there should be peace in Jerusalem. It is for the good of every Christian, yea, of every man, that there should be peace and prosperity in the church. Here our humanity and our common philanthropy assist our religious prayer. By a flourishing church our children, our neighbours, our fellow-countrymen are likely to be blest. Moreover, we cannot but pray for a cause with which our dearest relatives and choicest friends are associated: if they labour for it, we must and will pray for it. Here peace is mentioned for the third time. Are not these frequent threes some hint of the Trinity? It would be hard to believe that the triple form of so many parts of the Old Testament is merely accidental. At least, the repetition of the desire displays the writer's high valuation of the blessing mentioned; he would not again and again have invoked peace had he not perceived its extreme desirableness.

9. "*Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.*" He prays for Jerusalem because of Zion. How the church salts and savours all around it. The presence of Jehovah, our God, endears to us every place wherein he reveals his glory. Well may we seek her good within whose walls there dwells God who alone is good. We are to live for God's cause, and to be ready to die for it. First we love it (verse 6) and then we labour for it, as in this passage: we see its good, and then seek its good. If we can do nothing else we can intercede for it. Our covenant relation to Jehovah as our God binds us to pray for his people,—they are "the house of the Lord our God." If we honour our God we desire the prosperity of the church which he has chosen for his indwelling.

Thus is the poet glad of an invitation to join with others in the Lord's service. He goes with them and rejoices, and then he turns his delight into devotion, and intercedes for the city of the great King. O church of the living God, we hail thine assemblies, and on bended knee we pray that thou mayest have peace and felicity. May our Jehovah so send it. Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—Foxye, in his "Acts and Monuments," relates of Wolfgang Schuch, the martyr, of Lothareng in Germany, that upon hearing the sentence that he was to be burned pronounced upon him, he began to sing the hundred and twenty-second Psalm, *Lætus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi*, etc.

Whole Psalm.—An introduction of two verses stands instead of a *Tille*, announcing the object of the Psalm. The preceding Psalm was intended to be sung in sight of Jerusalem, and this one at the gates of the city, where the pilgrim train had halted for the purpose of arranging the solemn procession to the sanctuary.—E. W. Hengstenberg.

Verse 1.—"I was glad when they said unto me," etc. Gregory Nazianzen writeth that his father being a heathen, and often besought by his wife to become a Christian, had this verse suggested unto him in a dream, and was much wrought upon thereby.—John Trapp.

Verse 1.—"I was glad when they said," etc. These words seem to be very simple, and to contain in them no great matter; but if you look into the same with spiritual eyes, there appeareth a wonderful great majesty in them; which because our Papists cannot see, they do so coldly and negligently pray, read, and sing this Psalm and others, that a man would think there were no tale so foolish or vain, which they would not either recite or hear with more courage and delight. These words, therefore, must be unfolded and laid before the eyes of the faithful: for when he saith, "*We will go into the house of the LORD*," what notable thing can we see in these words, if we only behold the stones, timber, gold, and other ornaments of the material temple? But to go into the house of the Lord signifieth another manner of thing; namely, to come together where we may have God present with us, hear his word, call upon his holy name, and receive help and succour in our necessity. Therefore it is a false definition of the temple which the Papists make; that it is a house built with stones and timber to the honour of God. What this temple is they themselves know not; for the temple of Solomon was not therefore beautiful because it was adorned with gold and silver, and other precious ornaments; but the true beauty of the temple was, because in that place the people heard the word of the Lord, called upon his name, found him merciful, giving peace and remission of sins, etc. This is rightly to behold the temple, and not as the visored bishops behold their idolatrous temple when they consecrate it.—Martin Luther.

Verse 1.—"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us (or, We will) go," etc. You have here, I. David's delight. II. The object or reason of it. I. In the object there are circumstances enough to raise his joy to the highest note. First, *A company*, either a tribe or many of, or all, the people: "They said unto me." So, in another place, he speaketh of "walking to the house of God in company:" Ps. lv. 14. A glorious sight, a representation of heaven itself, of all the angels crying aloud, the Seraphim to the Cherubim, and the Cherubim echoing back again to the Seraphim, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth." Secondly, *Their resolution* to serve the Lord: *Dixerunt*, "They said it:" and "to say it" in Scripture is to resolve. "We will go," is either a lie, or a resolution. Thirdly, *Their agreement* and joint consent: "We." This is as a circle, and taketh in all within its compass. If there be any dissenting, unwilling person, he is not within this circumference, he is none of the "We." A Turk, a Jew, and a Christian cannot say, "We will serve the Lord;" and the schismatic or separatist shutteth himself out of the house of the Lord. "We" is a bond of peace, keepeth us at unity, and maketh many as one. Fourthly, *Their cheerfulness* and alacrity. They speak like men going out of a

dungeon into the light, as those who had been long absent from what they loved, and were now approaching unto it, and in fair hope to enjoy what they most earnestly desired: "We will go;" we will make haste, and delay no longer. *Ipsa festinatio tarda est*; "Speed itself is but slow paced." We cannot be there soon enough. Fifthly and lastly: *The place where they will serve God*: not one of their own choosing; not the groves, or hills, or high places; no oratory which pride, or malice, or faction had erected; but a place appointed and set apart by God himself. *Servient Domino in domo sua*: "They will serve the Lord in his own house." They said unto me, "We will go into the house of the Lord."—*Anthony Farindon*.

Verse 1.—"Let us go into the house of the Lord." "Let us go," spoken by one hundred men in any city to those over whom they have influence, would raise a monster meeting. . . . But who among those who thus single out the working classes, have gone to them and said, "Let us go—let us go together into the house of the Lord"? The religious adviser, standing at a distance from the multitude, has advised, and warned, and pleaded, saying "Go, or you will not escape perdition;" "Why don't you go?" The Christian visitor has likewise used this kind of influence; but how few have taken the working man by the hand, and said, "Let us go together"? You can bring multitudes whom you never can send. Many who would never come alone would come most willingly under the shadow of your company. Then, brethren, to your non-attending neighbours say, "Let us go"; to reluctant members of your own family say, "Let us go"; to those who once went to the house of God in your company, but who have backslidden from worship say, "Let us go"; to all whose ear, and mind, and heart, you can command for such a purpose say, "Let us go—let us go together into the house of the Lord."—*Samuel Martin* (1817—1878), in a Sermon entitled "*Gladness in the Prospect of Public Worship*."

Verse 1.—"I was glad when they said unto me," etc. Such in kind, but far greater in degree, is the gladness, which the pious soul experiences when she is called hence; when descending angels say unto her, Thy labour and sorrow are at an end, and the hour of thy enlargement is come; put off immortality and misery at once; quit thy house of bondage, and the land of thy captivity; fly forth, and "let us go together into the house of the Lord, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."—*George Horne*.

Verses 1, 2.—This is a mutual exhortation. The members of the church invite each other: "Let us go into the house of the Lord." It is not enough to say, Go you to church, and I shall stop at home. That will never do. We must invite by example as well as by precept. Mark the plural forms: "Let us go into the house of God. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." We are to speak as Moses did to Hobab, his brother-in-law, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." The same duty is binding upon us, with regard to those who make no profession of religion, and whose feet never stand in the house of God. Zechariah, in an animated picture of the future glories of the church, describes the new-born zeal of the converts as taking this direction. They cannot but speak of what they have seen and heard, and others must share in their joy. "And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also."—*N. M'Michael*.

Verse 2.—With what a blessed hope do they, while they are here in this mortal life, lift up their affections, desires, and thoughts to the heavenly country, because they are able to say with the prophet, "*Our feet stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem*." Like those who haste to any place, they are said to be always thinking as if they were already there, and in reality they are there in mind though not in body, and are able greatly to comfort others. What wonder, if a righteous man, wishing to comfort others, should thus speak, "*Our feet stand*," i.e., our desires, our contemplations, shall be fixed and stable in thy courts, O Jerusalem; i.e., in the mansions of the heavenly kingdom, so that our conversation shall be in heaven, and all our works be done in relation to eternal life, for which we long with greatest intensity of desire. This is not that Jerusalem which killed the prophets and stoned those that were sent unto her, but that where the perfect vision of peace reigns.—*Paulus Palanterius*.

Verse 2.—"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." Dr. Clarke, in his travels, speaking of the companies that were travelling from the East to Jerusalem,

represents the procession as being very long, and, after climbing over the extended and heavy ranges of hills that bounded the way, some of the foremost at length reached the top of the last hill, and, stretching up their hands in gestures of joy, cried out, "The Holy City! The Holy City!"—and fell down and worshipped; while those who were behind pressed forward to see. So the dying Christian, when he gets on the last summit of life, and stretches his vision to catch a glimpse of the heavenly city, may cry out of its glories, and incite those who are behind to press forward to the sight.—*Edward Payson, 1783—1827.*

Verse 2.—"O Jerusalem." The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odours are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of Righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached, and now he fills the whole hemisphere; pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun; exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on this excessive brightness, and wondering, with unutterable wonder, why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm.—*Edward Payson's dying experience.*

Verse 2.—"O Jerusalem"—

Lo, towered Jerusalem salutes the eyes!
A thousand pointing fingers tell the tale;
"Jerusalem!" a thousand voices cry,
"All hail, Jerusalem!" hill, down, and dale
Catch the glad sounds, and shout "Jerusalem, all hail."

Torquato Tasso, 1544—1595.

Verse 3.—"Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together." The deep depressions which secured the city must have always acted as its natural defence. But they also determined its natural boundaries. The city, wherever else it spread, could never overleap the valley of the Kedron or of Hinnom; and those two fosses, so to speak, became accordingly, as in the analogous case of the ancient towns of Etruria, the Necropolis of Jerusalem. . . . The compression between these valleys probably occasioned the words of the Psalmist: "*Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself.*" It is an expression not inapplicable even to the modern city, as seen from the east. But it was still more appropriate to the original city, if, as seems probable, the valley of Tyropœon formed in earlier times a fosse within a fosse, shutting in Zion and Moriah into one compact mass not more than half a mile in breadth.—*Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815—1881), in "Sinai and Palestine."*

Verse 3.—"Jerusalem." It matters not how wicked or degraded a place may have been in former times, when it is sanctified to the use and service of God it becomes honourable. Jerusalem was formerly Jebus—a place where the Jebusites committed their abominations, and where were all the miseries of those who hasten after another God. But now, since it is devoted to God's service, it is a city—"compact together," "*the joy of the whole earth.*"—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 3.—"Compact." Jerusalem was compactly built; every roof of ground, every foot of frontage, was valuable; house was joined to house; those who had gardens had them beyond the city walls, among the "paradises" of the valley of Jehoshaphat.—*Samuel Cox.*

Verse 3.—"Compact together." Methinks Philadelphia, the name of one of the seven golden candlesticks (Rev. i.), is a very proper fitting name for a church, which signifies brotherly love; and every congregation ought to be in a good sense the family of love. Breaches and divisions, distractions and heart-burnings, may happen in other kingdoms which are without God in the world and strangers to the covenant of grace; yet let Jerusalem, the Church of God, be always like a city which is at unity within itself.—*John Pigot, 1643.*

Verse 3.—"As a city that is compact together." Can we say of the great universal church throughout the world, what the pilgrims said of Jerusalem when gazing on its splendour, from the surrounding hills, that it is built "*as a city that is compact together*"? A stately capital, throned on a base of rock, its spacious streets and noble edifices, beautiful in themselves, deriving added splendour from the taste and regularity of their arrangement, appears, both to the scoffing unbeliever and

grieving Christian, a singularly inappropriate emblem of the divided and distracted, the jarring and warring church. If the church may be compared to a city in respect of magnitude, it is one in which every one builds on his own plan; in which the various masses which should embellish and support each other are studiously kept apart, suggesting less the idea of a compact and united capital than of detached and isolated forts, held by persons who keep themselves jealously aloof from each other, save when mutual hatred and heart-burnings bring them together for conflict. There is some truth in the picture; alas! for the proud, foolish builders who give occasion to it, and who, instead of praying for and seeking the peace of Jerusalem, rejoice in exhibiting, perpetuating, and fomenting strife! But, blessed be God, there is yet more of falsehood than truth in it. With all our divisions the Christian Jerusalem is compact in itself together. What occupies the hearts and tongues of the myriads of worshippers that assemble themselves weekly in the sanctuaries of our beloved land, and of the millions that assemble beyond the Atlantic billows, but the one glorious gospel of the grace of God? Leave out from the computation the priest with his mass-book, the cold Socinian without his Saviour, and the deluded orthodox professor who holds the truth in unrighteousness; still yonder and yonder and yonder, whatever their name, their place, or their outward worship, are myriads of true hearts, beating with one pulse, gazing on one hope, possessed of one conviction, and praying and pressing forward to one blessed home.—*Robert Nisbet*.

Verses 3, 4.—He commendeth Jerusalem, the figure of the church of God and of the corporation of his people. First, as a city for a community. Secondly, as the place of God's public assemblies for religious worship. Thirdly, as the place of public judicature, for governing the Lord's people under David, the type of Christ. Whence we learn, 1. The church of God is not without cause compared to a city, and especially to Jerusalem, because of the union, concord, community of laws, mutual commodities, and conjunction of strength which should be among God's people: "*Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.*" 2. That which commendeth a place most of anything is the erecting of the Lord's banner of love in it, and making it a place for his people to meet together for his worship: "*Jerusalem is a city whither the tribes go up.*" 3. Whatsoever civil distinction God's children have among themselves, and howsoever they dwell scattered in several places of the earth, yet as they are the Lord's people, they should entertain a communion and conjunction among themselves as members of one universal church, as the signification of the peoples meeting thrice in the year at Jerusalem did reach: "*Whither the tribes did go up, the tribes of the Lord.*" 4. As the tribes, so all particular churches, how far soever scattered, have one Lord, one covenant, one law and Scripture, signified by the tribes going up to "*the testimony of Israel,*" or to the Ark of the Covenant or testimony where the whole ordinances of God were to be exercised. 5. The end of the ordinances of God, of holy covenanting and communion, and joining in public worship, is to acknowledge the grace and goodness of God, and to glorify him; for the tribes did go up "*to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.*"—*David Dickson*.

Verse 4.—"*The tribes*" are "*the tribes of the Lord,*" as being the keepers of his commandments.—*H. T. Armfield*.

Verse 4.—"*Unto the testimony of Israel, and to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.*" These two mean nothing else than that in Jerusalem was the appointed place where the word was to be taught and prayer offered. But these ought to be written in golden letters, because David says nothing about the other services, but only of these two. He does not say that the Temple was divinely appointed, that there the victims should be sacrificed; that there incense should be offered; that oblations and sacrifices should be brought; that each one should by his gifts show his gratitude. He says nothing about these things, although only in the Temple were they commanded to be done. He makes mention only of prayer and of thanksgiving.—*Martin Luther*.

Verse 4.—"*The testimony of Israel.*" The object which is represented in the Psalm as having power to attract all hearts, and command the ready attendance of the tribes, is "*the testimony of Israel,*" the revelation, in other words, which God made to that people of his character, feelings, and purposes, as most holy, yet ready to forgive, a just God and the Saviour. This discovery of the nature of that great Being before whom all must appear, is justly regarded as a ground of joy.—*Robert Nisbet*.

Verses 4, 5.—Observe what a goodly sight it was to see "*the testimony of Israel*"

and the "*thrones of judgment*" such near neighbours; and they are good neighbours, which may greatly befriend one another. Let "*the testimony of Israel*" direct the "*thrones of judgment*;" and the "*thrones of judgment*" protect "*the testimony of Israel*."—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 5.—"Thrones of judgment." On a throne of ivory, brought from Africa or India, the throne of many an Arabian legend, the kings of Judah were solemnly seated on the day of their accession. From its lofty seat, and under that high gateway, Solomon and his successors after him delivered their solemn judgments. That "porch" or "gate of justice," still kept alive the likeness of the old patriarchal custom of sitting in judgment at the gate; exactly as the Gate of Justice still recalls it to us at Granada, and the Sublime Porte—"the Lofty Gate" at Constantinople. He sate on the back of a golden bull, its head turned over its shoulder, probably the ox or bull of Ephraim; under his feet, on each side of the steps, were six golden lions, probably the lions of Judah. This was "the seat of judgment." This was the throne of the house of David.—*Arthur Penrhyn Stanley*, in "*Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church*."

Verse 5.—It was a worthy commendation that David uttered in the praise of Jerusalem when he said, "*There is the seat for judgment*;" the which appointing of that seat for judgment was an argument that they loved justice. And first, the place wherein it was set assureth us hereof, for it was set in the gate, where-through men might have passage to and from the judgment seat. Secondly, the manner of framing the seat in the gate, namely, that the judges of force must sit with their faces towards the rising of the sun, in token that then judgment should be as pure from corruption, as the sun was clear in his chiefest brightness. Oh happy house of David, whose seat was set so conveniently, whose causes were heard so carefully, and matters judged so justly!—*Henry Smith*, 1560—1591.

Verse 6.—"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." By praying for Jerusalem's peace is meant such serene times wherein the people of God might enjoy his pure worship without disturbance. The Church has always had her vicissitudes, sometimes fair, and sometimes foul weather; but her winter commonly longer than her summer; yea, at the same time that the Sun of peace brings day to one part of it, another is wrapped up in the night of persecution. Universal peace over all the churches is a great rarity.—*William Gurnall*.

Verse 6.—"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." When the Wesleyan Methodists opened a chapel at Painswick, near his own meeting, the late excellent Cornelius Winter prayed three times publicly the preceding Sabbath for their encouragement and success. When Mr. Hoskins, of Bristol, the Independent minister of Castle-green, opened a meeting in Temple Street; what did the incomparable Easterbrooke, the Vicar of the parish? The morning it was opened, he was almost the first that entered it. He seated himself near the pulpit. When the service was over, he met the preacher at the foot of the stairs, and shaking him with both hands, said aloud: "I thank you cordially, my dear brother, for coming to my help—here is room enough for us both; and work enough for us both; and much more than we can both accomplish: and I hope the Lord will bless our co-operation in this good cause."—*William Jay*.

Verse 6.—"Pray (with this princely prophet) for the peace of Jerusalem." I wish I could express the incomparable sweetness of this little *hemistichium*. I guess, the Holy Ghost was pleased to let the Psalmist play the poet here: the Psalms are holy poetry. The original words have such elegance here, as (I think) all the Scripture cannot parallel this verse. It is in English unexpressible. For the point in hand only, he bids us pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Peace denominates Jerusalem, 'tis the etymon of the word, it means the *vision of peace*. David by that term most sweetly alludes to the name of the city, yet conceals his wit; which could have been made more open: he said, *שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם*, "*Pray for the peace of Salem*." For so it was called too, called first so, called still so (Ps. lxxvi.): "At Salem is his tabernacle." That word merely sounds peace: God would have his Church the house of peace; and his temple there David might not build because he was a man of war; but Solomon his son, who had his name of peace, must build it. Christ, whose the church is, she his spouse, would not be born in Julius Caesar's reign; he was a warrior too: but in Augustus's days, who reigned in peace. And this may be a reason too,

if you please, why David bids pray but for peace only, an earthly blessing. That word most fitted his art here, and sounded best. But under that word, by poetical *synecdoche*, lie couched all heavenly blessings.—*Richard Clerke*, 1634.

Verse 6.—"Pray," etc. Our praying for the church giveth us a share in all the church's prayers; we have a venture in every ship of prayer that maketh a voyage for heaven, if our hearts be willing to pray for the church; and if not, we have no share in it.

Let no man flatter himself: they that *pray not* for the church of God *love not* the church of God. "*Let them prosper that love thee*"; that is, that *pray* for thee, the one is the counterpart of the other. If we do not love it, we will not pray for it; and if we do not pray for it, we do not love it. Yea, if we pray not for the church, *we lose* our share in the prayers of the church. You will say that man hath a great estate that hath a part in every ship at sea; and yet to have an adventure in all the prayers that are made to heaven is better than all the world. All the church's prayers are for all the living members of it, viz.—the blessings will be to them, for a man to have a venture in every ship of prayer of all the churches throughout all the world. I would not (for my part) leave my share in it for all the world; and that man hath no share in it that will not afford a prayer for the church.—*John Stoughton*, 1640.

Verse 6.—"They shall prosper that love thee." The word "*prosper*" conveys an idea which is not in the original. The Hebrew word means *to be secure, tranquil, at rest*, spoken especially of one who enjoys quiet prosperity: Job iii. 26; xii. 6. The essential idea is that of quietness or rest; and the meaning here is, that those who love Zion *will have peace*; or, that the tendency of that love is to produce peace. See Rom. v. 1. The prayer was for "*peace*"; the thought in connexion with that was naturally that those who loved Zion *would have peace*. It is indeed true, in general, that they who love Zion, or who serve God, *will "prosper"*; but that is not the truth taught here. The idea is that they will have *peace*:—peace with God; peace in their own consciences; peace in the prospect of death and of the future world; peace amidst the storms and tempests of life; peace in death, in the grave, and for ever.—*Albert Barnes*.

Verse 6.—"They shall prosper that love thee." Seeing they prosper that love and bear affection to Jerusalem, let men learn to show good will unto Christ's church, though as yet they be no ripe scholars themselves in Christ's school: though they be not grown to perfection let them express a good affection. A good will and inclination, where strength yet faileth, is accepted, and a ready disposition is not rejected: though thou be not yet of the saints, yet love the saints. If thou likest and lovest that thou wouldst be, thou must be that hereafter which yet thou art not. The little bird before she flieth fluttereth with her wings in the nest: the child creepeth before he goeth: so religion beginneth with affection, and devotion proceedeth from desire. A man must first love that he would be, before he can be that which he loveth. It is a good sign when a man affecteth that which he expecteth, and doth favour that which he would more fully favour. He that loveth Zion shall prosper: he that loveth virtue shall increase and prosper in it. The day of small things shall not be despised (Zech. iv. 10), neither shall the smoking flax be quenched (Matt. xii. 20); but the smoke shall bring forth fire, and fire shall break forth into a flame.—*Andrew Willett* (1562—1621), in "*Certaine Fruitfull Meditations upon the 122. Psalme.*"

Verse 6.—"They shall prosper that love thee." The reverse is also true. "None ever took a stone out of the Temple, but the dust did fly into his eyes."—*Jewish Proverb*.

Verses 6—9.—In this cordial and even impassioned invocation, it is curious to find one of those puns, or plays on words, which are characteristic of Hebrew poetry. The leading words of the strophe are "*peace*" and "*prosperity*." Now the Hebrew word for "*peace*" is *shālōm*, and the Hebrew word for "*prosperity*" is *shalvah*, while the Hebrew form of "*Jerusalem*," which means "*City of Peace*," is *Yeru-shalaim*. So that, in effect, the poet wishes *shālōm* and *shalvah* on *shalaim*—"peace" and "*prosperity*" on "*the City of Peace*." Such an use of words may not strike us as indicating any very subtle or profound sense of humour, or any remarkable artistic skill. But we must always remember that it is always difficult for one race to appreciate the humour, or wit, of another race. We must also remember that this art of playing on words and the sound of words—an art of which we are growing weary—was very novel and surprising to men not surfeited with it as we are, and

who were themselves for the most part quite incapable of the simplest dexterities of speech.—*Samuel Cox*

Verse 7.—"Peace be within thy walls." The Church is a war-town, and a walled-town, which is situated among enemies, and may not trust them who are without, but must be upon its keeping, as the type thereof, Jerusalem, with her walls and towers, did shadow forth.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 7.—"Within thy walls." Or, *To thy outward wall.* Josephus tells us (Book V.) that there were at Jerusalem three ranges or rows of walls. The sense here is, Let no enemy approach so much as to thy out-works to disturb thee.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 8.—"For my brethren and companions' sakes." Because they dwell there or, because they go up there to worship; or, because they love thee, and find their happiness in thee; or, because they are unconverted, and all my hope of their salvation is to be derived from thee,—from the church, from the influence of religion.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 8.—"My brethren." On another occasion, an elderly native, formerly a cannibal, addressing the Church members, said, "Brethren!" and, pausing for a moment, continued, "Ah! that is a new name; we did not know the true meaning of that word in our heathenism. It is the 'Evangelia a Jesu' that has taught us the meaning of 'brethren.'"—*William Gill, in "Gems from the Coral Islands," 1869.*

Verse 9.—"Because of the house of the Lord." The city that was the scene of so immense assemblies had necessarily a peculiar character of its own. It existed for them, it lived by them. There were priests needed for the conduct of the worship, twenty-four courses of them and 20,000 men. There were Levites, their servants, in immense numbers, needed to watch, maintain, clean the temple—to do the menial and ministering work necessary to its elaborate service and stupendous acts of worship. There were scribes needed for the interpretation of the law, men skilled in the Scriptures and tradition, with names like Gamaliel, so famed for wisdom as to draw young men like Saul from distant Tarsus, or Apollos from rich Alexandria. There were synagogues, 480 of them at least, where the rabbis read and the people heard the word which God had in past times spoken unto the fathers by the prophets. The city was indeed in a sense the religion of Israel, incorporated and localized, and the man who loved the one turned daily his face toward the other, saying, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of Jahveh."—*A. M. Fairbairn, in "Studies in the Life of Christ," 1881.*

Verse 9.—"I will seek thy good." It is not a cold wish; it is not a careless, loose seeking after it, that is the phrase in my text—"I will seek thy good." It is not a careless, loose seeking after it, almost as indifferently as a woman seeks after a pin which she has dropped; no, no; effort is implied. "I will seek"; I will throw my energies into it; my powers, my faculties, my property, my time, my influence, my connections, my family, my house, all that I have under my command shall, as far as I have power to command, and as far as God gives me ability to turn them to such a use, be employed in an effort to promote the interests of Zion.—*Joseph Irons, 1786—1852.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Whole Psalm.—Observe, I. The joy with which they were to go up to Jerusalem: verses 1, 2. II. The great esteem they were to have of Jerusalem: verses 3—5. III. The great concern they were to have for Jerusalem, and the prayers they were to put up for its welfare.—*M. Henry.*

Verse 1.—I. David was glad to go to the house of the Lord. It was the house of the Lord, therefore he desired to go. He preferred it to his own house. II. He was glad when others said to him, "Let us go." The distance may be great, the weather may be rough, still, "Let us go." III. He was glad to say it to others, "Let us go," and to persuade others to accompany him.—*G. R.*

Verse 1.—I. Joy in prospect of religious worship. 1. Because of the instruction we receive. 2. Because of the exercises in which we engage. 3. Because of the society in which we mingle. 4. Because of the sacred interests we promote. II. Joy in the invitation to religious worship. 1. Because it shows others are interested in the service of God. 2. Because it shows their interest in us. 3. Because it furthers the interests of Zion.—*F. J. B.*

Verse 1.—Gladness of God's house. Are you "glad when," etc.? Why glad? I. That I have a house of the Lord to which I may go. II. That any feel enough interest in me to say, "Let us go," etc. III. That I am able to go to God's house. IV. That I am disposed to go.—*J. G. Butler, in "The Preacher's Monthly," 1882.*

Verse 1.—"I was glad," etc. So says, I. *The devout worshipper*, who is glad to be invited to God's earthly house. It is his home, his school, his hospital, his bank. II. *The adhesive Christian, who is glad to be invited to God's spiritual house.* Church is builded together, etc. There would he find a settled rest. Has no sympathies with religious gypsies, or no-church people. III. *The dying saint, who is glad to be invited to God's heavenly house.* Simeon—Stephen—Peter—Paul.—*W. J.*

Verse 1.—1. The duty of attending the services of God's house. 2. The duty of exciting one another to go. 3. The benefit of being thus excited.—*F. J. B.*

Verse 2.—Here is, I. Personal attendance: "My feet shall stand," etc. II. Personal security: "My feet shall stand." III. Personal fellowship: "O Jerusalem."—*G. R.*

Verse 2.—The inside of the church. The honour, privilege, joy, and fellowship of standing there.

Verse 3.—I. A type of the New Jerusalem. 1. As chosen by God. 2. As founded upon a rock. 3. As taken from an enemy. II. A type of its prosperity: "Builded as a city." III. A type of its perfection: "Compact together."—*G. R.*

Verse 3.—The unity of the church. 1. Implied in all covenant dealings. 2. Suggested by all Scriptural metaphors. 3. Prayed for by our Lord. 4. Promoted by the gifts of the Spirit. 5. To be maintained by us all.

Verses 3, 4.—The united church the growing church.

Verse 4.—I. The duty of public worship. 1. In one place: "Whither the tribes go up." 2. In one company, though of many tribes: "Whither the tribes go up." II. The design. 1. For instruction: "Unto the testimony of Israel." 2. For praise: "To give thanks unto the name of the Lord."—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—I. There are thrones of judgment in the sanctuary. Men are judged there. 1. By the law. 2. By their own consciences. 3. By the gospel. II. There are thrones of grace: "Of the house of David." 1. Of David's Son in the hearts of his people. 2. Of his people in David's Son.—*G. R.*

Verse 6.—I. The prayer. 1. "For Jerusalem;" not for ourselves merely, or for the world; but for the church. For the babes in grace; for the young men, and for the fathers. For the pastors, with the deacons and elders. 2. For the "peace" of Jerusalem. Inward peace and outward peace. II. The promise. 1. To whom given: "They that love thee." 2. The promise itself: "They shall prosper"—individually and collectively. Or, I. Love to Jerusalem is the effect of true piety. II. Prayer for Jerusalem is the effect of that love. III. The peace of Jerusalem is the effect of that prayer; and, IV. The prosperity of Jerusalem is the effect of that peace.—*G. R.*

Verse 6.—God has connected giving and receiving, scattering and increasing, sowing and reaping, praying and prospering. I. What we must do if we would prosper—"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." 1. Comprehensively: "Peace"—spiritual, social, ecclesiastical, national. 2. Supremely: "Prefer Jerusalem above," etc. 3. Practically: "Let peace rule in your hearts." "Seek peace and pursue it." II. What we shall gain if we pray thus—"Prosperity." 1. Temporal prosperity may thus come. God turned again the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends. 2. Spiritual prosperity shall thus come. Affairs of soul—holy exercises and services. 3. Numerical prosperity will thus come. "Increased with men as a flock."—*W. J.*

Verses 6—9.—I. The blessings desired for the church. 1. Peace. 2. Prosperity. Notice the order and connection of these two. II. The way to secure them. 1. Prayer: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." 2. Delight in the service of God: "I was glad," etc. 3. Practical effort: "I will seek thy good." III. Reasons for seeking them. 1. For our own sake: "They shall prosper," etc. 2. For our "companions'" sake. 3. For the sake of the "house of the Lord."—*F. J. B.*

Verse 7.—I. Where peace is most desirable: "Within thy walls." Within town walls, within house walls, but principally within temple walls. II. Where prosperity is most desirable. 1. In the closet. 2. In the church. These are the palaces of the Great King; "The ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad."—*G. R.*

Verse 7.—The connection between peace and prosperity.

Verse 7.—"Thy walls." 1. Enquire why the church needs walls. 2. Enquire what are the walls of a church. 3. Enquire on which side of them we are.

Verse 7.—The church a palace. 1. Intended for the great King. 2. Inhabited by the royal family. 3. Adorned with regal splendour. 4. Guarded by special power. 5. Known as the court of the blessed and only potentate.

Verses 8, 9.—Two great principles are here laid down why we should pray for the church,—I. Love to the brethren: "For my brethren and companions' sakes." II. Love to God: "Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good."—*N. M' Michael.*

Verse 9.—"I will seek thy good." 1. By prayer for the church. 2. By service in the church. 3. By bringing others to attend. 4. By keeping the peace. 5. By living so as to commend religion.
