

priest, the sacrament, must come in between, and only through the medium of these can the sinner receive salvation.

4. Verse 8. Do you want to know how many are going to heaven? See Romans 8: 9, 14.

5. Verse 10. *All suffering* is the result, direct or indirect, of sin.

6. Verse 11. When the poet Carpani inquired of his friend Hayden, how it happened that his church music was so cheerful, the great composer made a most beautiful reply. "I cannot," he said, "make it otherwise, I write according to the thoughts I feel: when I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen; and, since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve Him with a cheerful spirit."—*John Whitcrist's Anecdotes (from Spurgeon)*.

"The rest, just that can give
Sweetest pleasures while we live,
"The religion must supply
Build comfort when we die."

March 16.—Delight in God's House.—

Psalm 84: 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Blessed are they that do dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. V. 4.

INTRODUCTION.

We are not told when, or by whom this psalm was written. It is generally ascribed to David, though it occurs in the third book of the psalms, which is said to have been compiled in the days of Hezekiah. "Some think it was written by some pious Levite, in the days of Hezekiah, when kept from the temple by the Assyrian army,"—*Scott*. The psalm naturally divides into three stanzas of four verses each, the termination of the first and second being marked by the word *Selah*. The first stanza refers to the *dwellers* in the tabernacles, the second to the *travellers* thither, and the third, to God as the light and joy of that holy place. In the inscription, the word *Githith* signifies a musical instrument, supposed to have been introduced by David from Gath. The sons of Korah probably had charge of the musical rendering of this psalm in the temple. Ten other psalms are inscribed to them in the same way, all of them "full of pleasant and cheerful subjects." These descendants of a wicked ancestor are not shut out from God's house for his sin. The son shall not die for the father's sin. See Ezek. 18: 14-20.

EXPOSITION.

Verse 1. How amiable. "How lovely, how worthy of being loved! But the Hebrew is more personal; *how dear to my heart!*"—*Comio*. They tabernacles. The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands. His ear is ever open to the cry of His children, whether they lift up their voices in secret and alone, or in the company of others. But still there are blessings to be found in the tabernacles of God which cannot be obtained elsewhere. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." Ps. 77: 2. And the blessings of the tabernacle are not confined to any particular edifice or locality. "Neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem," must we assemble in order to obtain them; but wherever the "true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth," there will the Lord be in the midst of them. O Lord of Hosts. Observe the manner in which God is addressed in this psalm. Four times He is addressed as Jehovah of hosts. The psalmist delights in his house, not only because it is the house of the God of love, but because the great God, omnipotent, terrible, dwells there. All of God's attributes are sources of blessing and joy to His people. His mighty power, which crushes His enemies

is the defence and support of His children. "O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people." Ps. 68: 35.

Verse 2. Longeth, fainteth. Expressions of intense, languishing desires.—"Come, My heart and my flesh. His whole being was, as it were, consuming in the flames of holy desire. For the living God. It was not for the empty courts of the Lord's house that the psalmist longed, not for any of the symbols of God's presence, not for the company of God's people, but for the living God himself, the only satisfier of souls.

Verse 3. The Sparrow. The English tree sparrow is very common in Palestine, and seen in numbers on Mount Olivet and around the Mosque of Omer. The Swallow. Many species of swallows are found in Palestine. Thine altars, or rather, in the place of sacrifice, that is, the sacred enclosure generally. In the East, a bird that builds its nest around the habitations of men, is held in great respect, and is regarded as under Divine protection. It is said that the Athenians put a man to death for molesting a sparrow in the temple of *Ascalopus*. No doubt the Israelites shared in the Eastern veneration for such birds. The psalmist envies these little creatures, that were at home and dwelt securely within the sacred precincts. O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God. These solemn names are not thrown in here merely for the sake of the rhythm. This great God despises not the little birds. The shelter of His tabernacle is thrown over them. "God fails not to find a house for the most worthless, and a nest for the most restless of birds," some one says. The psalmist longs to be at home with God, to abide in His presence.

Verse 4. That dwell in thy house. "This is true, blessedly true, of all who trust in Jesus now. But though God's children are all priests by birth, as were the sons of Aaron, they are not all, as many priests by consecration. Completely few are their priestly place at the golden altar. Many of them are doubting as to whether their sins, root and branch, were all consumed under the camp; and, consequently, such are afraid to come within the court; and, as to being assured of their full justification and sanctification in the risen One, they gravely doubt and fear that such blessedness can ever be their happy lot. Hence, that state of soul which answers to priestly consecration at the laver, and happy worship at the golden altar, is unknown and unenjoyed. They are not priests by consecration." (See Ex. xxix.)—*Things New and Old*. They will be still praising thee. Those who understand their right to dwell in God's house, who sun themselves continually in His smile, these have cast away their fears and doubts. They are occupied now with His praise.

Verse 5. Beginning of second stanza. In whose hearts are the ways of them. That is, who love the paths leading to the tabernacle.

Verse 6. Valley of Baca. The valley of mulberry trees, dry and sandy, or the valley of weeping. (Bochim Judges 2: 1.) Make it a well, etc. "That which seemed an impediment turns to a furtherance; at least, no misery can be so great, no estate so barren, but a godly heart can make it a well, out of which to draw forth life and comfort."—*Sir R. Baker*. Little as there may be of water, that little suffices on their way. It is a well to them.—*A. Bonar*.

Verse 7. From strength to strength. The pilgrims, setting out for the holy feasts at Jerusalem, were a great distance, would be few in number. But every place they passed through would add recruits to their number, so that at each halting place they found themselves stronger than at the last. In the Christian pilgrimage, no one perishes on the road. Every one of them in Zion appears before God.

Verse 8. In this prayer, we have God represented first, as the great Lord of all, and secondly as the God of Hosts, the God of men, the God of Jacob, the God of Bethel.

Verse 9. Beginning of third stanza. Our Shield. This explains the delight in God as the Lord of Hosts. The Omnipotent God is our shield. His strength is exercised for us, if we are on His side. Thine Anointed. Thy Christ. "We cannot always say, 'Look on us'; but we can always say 'Look on Him.' . . . True faith can only rest on God's estimate of Christ, not on inward thoughts and feelings."—*Things New and Old*. "Look upon Him as our Representative, and look upon us in Him."—*Rogers*.

Verse 10. A day in thy courts, &c. One day of such pleasure as God gives is better than a thousand of the best we can have away from Him. A doorkeeper. Rather, one who sits on the threshold, a beggar. Better to take the meanest and most despised position, if it will only secure us a share in the blessings of the sanctuary than to be an inmate in the house where God is forgotten.

Verse 11. A Sun. A wonderful comparison, and yet inadequate to represent what God is to us. "What the earth would be without the sun, dark, cold, dead—unanimous chaos, such is the soul, upon which the light of the Sun of Righteousness hath not shined. All the life, the light, the warmth, the force, the motion of the earth, is drawn from the sun. So from God we derive every good thing we possess—every good thing He possesses which we are capable of receiving. Grace and glory. Grace here, glory hereafter. "Heaven in the heart now, the heart in heaven by-and-by," as a French writer says. No good thing will He withhold. Whatever is withheld, then, however good in itself, is not good for us. Uprightly. This wonderful assurance is given only to those who walk uprightly. It is not strange that those who walk in His ways should so love Him and the tabernacle where He is worshipped.

Verse 12. The psalmist, after dwelling upon his deep delight in God and in His house, fittingly closes his psalm with the exclamation, Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee. Even while still only seeing through a glass dimly, knowing only in part, he can say from his own experience, "Blessed is the man." And truly any man is blessed who can feel that the relationship between God and himself is that described in the 11th verse.

REMARKS.

1. In this psalm, the delight in God's house is not referred to the social religious pleasure of the assembly, but to God's own peculiar presence there. Do we look forward eagerly to meeting with God, when we go to church, or prayer meeting?

2. A fiftal religious life is generally a life of much doubt and murmuring. If we would live a joyful, grateful life, let us dwell with God, make Him our hearty love.

3. It is a marvellous privilege to be allowed to lead a soul out of darkness into the light; out of the gloom of sin, into the blessedness of those who trust in the Lord. It is not only our privilege, it is our solemn duty to point out clearly to those young minds, whose teaching has been confined to us, the way to attain that blessedness.

March 23.—The All-Seeing God.—

Ps. 139: 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou God seeest me.—Gen. 16: 15.

INTRODUCTION.

"It is probable that David wrote this psalm, when accused of traitorous designs against Saul, as a solemn appeal to God, that he was, in