

## EARLY PIETY—A Sermon to the Young.

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"And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."  
—ZECHARIAH VIII. 5.

The city here spoken of is Jerusalem, where Solomon built the temple, and the scene of the Jewish solemnities before and after his day. Solomon, who was the wisest of men, had the honour of building the most beautiful church that the world ever saw; and what rendered this edifice all the more attractive and wonderful was the fact, that God's presence dwelt there between the cherubims in the Holy Place, so that when the adoring worshipper repaired thither he met God, and God blessed him. The Temple stood a long time, even from the days of Solomon that wise king, until after the death of our Lord and some of his apostles, a period of upwards of a thousand years. It had been often destroyed and as often rebuilt, until at length it was completely razed from the foundations by the Roman Emperor, and the Roman eagle, called "the abomination of desolation," was seen waving in the Holy Place. In what state is the Temple now? History replies that it is in ruins, and a mosque or Turkish church stands there. Turks and pagans inhabit Jerusalem, and at present it is in the possession, not of the friends, but of the enemies of the Saviour. Travellers who visit Jerusalem and pitch their tents along the grassy sod that clothes the sloping ascents of Mount Zion, have to carry fire-arms along with them for defence against the marauding Arabs, the supposed descendants of Ishmael, who are a race of robbers, and live by plunder. At the present moment it would be very unsafe for Christian boys and girls to play there, for these desperate robbers would either kill them or sell them as slaves. We believe, however, that the day is not far distant when the scene of the text will be fully

realized. The Jews are not now inhabiting their own land, but are scattered all over the world: yet when the Lord's time for gathering them arrives, he will honour them as missionaries in all nations for gathering the Gentiles, thus making the conversion of the nations and the restoration of the Jews to their own land prominent features of the latter-day glory. We do not think, however, that Jerusalem will ever assume the position of the metropolis of the world, or that Christ will ever reign personally there, but that Jerusalem will be only a city of equal importance to the great body of Christ's people with that of any other city where Christ is honoured, but a city possessing peculiar attractions to the minds of the expatriated Jews, leading them to return to their own land, and there worship their long-expected Messiah.

But in a higher and more exalted sense, you are to understand the scene of the text as describing the Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all. Were I to ask any of you what is your father's or your mother's name, you would tell me. Who nursed you? prays with and for you? trains and forms your manner? chooses your playthings, and looks with an interested eye to see that your amusements are harmless? The answer to all these questions is—your mother. This city, then, on the streets of which boys and girls are seen playing, is your mother; for, being born from above, nourished and trained from above, Jerusalem is the mother of you all.

I. Boys and girls may be in the city of God.

II. Those boys and girls who are in the city of God are very happy.

III. Boys and girls who are God's chil-