

to sing together their familiar sacred songs. This psalm, doubtless much used on such occasions, recalls in the opening verse the joy of the pilgrims as they started out upon the march. *Let us go into the house of the Lord; the Temple of God, the centre of religious worship and the glory of the nation, because God manifested Himself in it* (1 Kings, 8: 10, 11).

II. In the City, 2-5.

V. 2. *Our feet are standing.* (Rev. Ver.) The long journey is at an end; and there is a feeling of intense satisfaction "as the pilgrim finds the feet which have traversed many a mile planted at last within the city." He is glad as he mingles with the worshippers, takes part in the solemn services, and shares in the religious privileges of Zion.

V. 3. *Jerusalem.* The psalmist now describes the city that had so gladdened the hearts of the pilgrims. *As a city that is compact together.* Its walls were strongly built for defence; and the houses were not scattered as were the houses of country villages but crowded on the narrow rocky site of the city. If the psalm, as some think, belongs to the period of the return from the exile, the psalmist may here refer to the building of the city and its wall upon the ruins of many years.

V. 4. *Whither the tribes go up.* It was divinely appointed that the twelve tribes should worship at Jerusalem (Ex. 23: 17). But this unity of worship was destroyed by the revolt of the ten tribes and the subsequent action of Jeroboam (1 Kings 12: 26-29). If the tribes were still one kingdom when the psalm was written, it would show that it is of an early date, probably composed by David or by Solomon. Hebrew tenses are indefinite, and Dr. Alexander McLaren here translates "Whither went up the tribes," representing the psalmist (perhaps at the time of the return of the exiles) as looking back upon the vanished glory of the past. *For a testimony unto Israel;* which may mean a law enjoined upon Israel; that is, they were acting in accordance with divine command (Ex. 23: 17). Or it may mean the testimony to God

borne to the whole nation by those going up to worship. *To give thanks unto the name of the Lord.* Thanksgiving is an element of all true worship (Phil. 4: 6). The devout Jew was conscious of his guilt and unworthiness, but was also conscious that all the favors he enjoyed politically and religiously were from God; and for these he gave thanks.

V. 5. *For there; in Jerusalem.* *Thrones of judgment;* for the administration of justice. Jerusalem was the centre of the civil as well as the religious life of the nation. There, in the days of the monarchy, all controversies were settled by the king (1 Kings 7: 7). In accordance with the view stated in v. 4, Dr. McLaren translates the verb by a past tense, making the sense "there thrones of judgment were set" in the good days gone by.

III. A Prayer for Peace, 6-9.

V. 6. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.* The word "peace" is used in a broad sense as implying all the blessings of life. There is a fine play on the word. The psalmist calls upon the pilgrims to pray for the peace of the "City of Peace" which is the meaning of the word Jerusalem. The Psalmist's beautiful prayer is a prayer that the hope that moved in the hearts that had so long ago, and in the midst of wars, given so fair a designation to their abode, may be fulfilled now at last. *They shall prosper that love thee.* To love Jerusalem was to love all that Jerusalem stood for, the name, the house, the worship and the rule of God. And to love God was, and is, to realize the highest good in life (Ps. 1: 2, 3; Matt. 6: 33).

V. 7. *Peace be within thy walls;* upon all those who loved Jerusalem and shared in her privileges. *Prosperity within thy palaces;* within the homes of the people, many of which were doubtless splendid in appearance, for the nobles were rich.

V. 8. *For my brethren and companions' sakes.* The psalmist was not actuated by selfish motives. He had at heart the interest of his brethren, who shared in a common faith and worship.

V. 9. *Because of the house of the Lord our God.* "The glory of the city was the Temple, and the glory of the Temple was God. That