

The House Established and Blessed

“Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table. Behold thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the Lord. The Lord bless you out of Zion, And may you see the good of Jerusalem All the days of your life. Yes, may you see your children’s children. Peace be upon Israel!” (Psalm 128:3-6) NKJV

Progression from the eighth is noted in this ninth psalm of degrees. From vain labor in building the house, to the house established in fear and devotion to the Lord. But our attention is now particularly called to the *wife*, who is present in Psalm 127 (because of the children), but is not mentioned. The house cannot begin to be established without the woman. The Authorized Version poorly translates “thy wife as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house”. In the first place, grape vines were not planted by the sides of houses in Palestine. In the second place, the wife is not something tacked on to the side of the house. She is the very heart and soul of the house! A house without a woman is an empty house. Fill it with whatever else you will, it is cold, sterile and lifeless. Put a godly woman in it and she will immediately put her stamp on everything in it, brimming with warmth, love, beauty, and order.

Note the sharp contrast between the harsh picture of woman given in Genesis 3 to the one given here and in Ephesians 5. The one in Genesis is the woman in Adam, in the Fall, and the wrong view of the woman in Christ under the New Covenant. That view is properly represented here, in Galatians 3:28 and in Ephesians. Her priceless honor, glory, respect and beauty is extolled in Proverbs 31. Children here, are pictured in their setting in family life, round about the table of communion, the common meeting place of the home. The simile of olive plants envision the scene in the orchard where seeds from the parent tree, dropping to the ground, take root and spring up with a life of their own, independent of, but continuing the life of the parent. The adage “The apple does not fall too far from the tree” is intended to call attention of similarities between the parent and child. “Children’s children” call attention to endless perpetuity of this godly life.

One now may immediately see a flaw in the figure. Godly children do not necessarily proceed from godly parents. That is not what we are expected to believe. The closing phrase “Peace be upon Israel” tells us that the simile reaches far beyond the blessedness of a single godly family. What is envisioned here is Zion, spiritual Israel, the “whole family of God in heaven and in earth” (Eph. 3:15). Sin, sorrow, death and ruin, afflicts the best of natural families on this earth, but that is utterly banished from this Blessed Family. The Source of this blessedness is God Himself. “The Lord bless you out of Zion”. The channel flows out of Zion, the church, the blessedness of God’s house on His house. This flow of God’s goodness never ceases, fails or ebbs, but perpetually grows wider and deeper and fuller forever and ever!

- C. M.