

precious stones, built into the temple of the living God. Paul uses the same figure in Ephesians 2:19-22.

Verse 13 shows the privileges of the succeeding generations of God's people. They are to be "taught of the LORD." His Spirit will dwell in their hearts, to guide them into His truth and to illumine their minds (John 16:13-14). This promise is found at various points in the Old Testament; compare Jeremiah 31:33-34 and Ezekiel 36:25-27. Not only is God to teach them, but He is to implant His wonderful peace in their hearts; compare John 14:27.

Verse 14 promises the establishment of God's people in righteousness. In such passages the attempt is sometimes made to translate the word "righteousness" as "victory." Such a rendering, however, does violence to the Hebrew word. It always conveys the sense of conformity to what is right. God's people are to be firmly implanted in righteousness, and as a result are assured that no weapon will prosper against them. They will be, like the tree in the first Psalm, planted by the rivers of water of God's truth, and their works will prosper.

The following verses stress the fact that God will protect His people from destruction. The Babylonian exile was part of His Purpose, and He will deliver His people. He stresses the fact that all the forces of iniquity can do nothing without His permission (v. 16). Even the enemies of God are part of His creation, and they can go only as far as He permits.

Verse 17 is the climax of this passage. It adds the thought that even those who attempt to speak in judgment against God's people will be condemned. Jesus promised His followers that when they would be called before magistrates on account of preaching the Gospel they would be given the proper words to say (Matt. 10:18-20).

Christianity has a reply to every attack. Much time and study may sometimes be required, but God assures us that there is a satisfactory answer to every attack against His Word. Two duties which should be performed by God's people are often neglected. One is to study diligently to find the true answer to each attack of unbelief. The other is to use every possible means to spread the knowledge of these answers. It would be well for each Christian to ask himself what he ought to do to further these vital tasks.