



I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation. (Isaiah 28:16)

This ancient hymn of Trinity was translated from a seventh century Latin hymn whose author is unknown. But it obviously contains enough Scripture to be the inspired work of God. John Mason Neale translated the hymn from Latin to English in 1851. Two popular tunes are *Regent Square* (#384 in 1940 Hymnal) by Henry Thomas Smart (1867); and *Westminster Abbey* by Henry Purcell in 1680. Though both tunes are beautiful, I prefer *Westminster Abbey* and it is also the one to which the hymn is sung in the 1940 Hymnal (#780).

Christ is Made the Sure Foundation

Christ is made the sure Foundation,
Christ the Head and Cornerstone;
Chosen of the Lord and precious,
Binding all the Church in one;
Holy Zion's Help forever,
And her Confidence alone.

All that dedicated city,
Dearly loved of God on high,
In exultant jubilation,
Pours perpetual melody,
God the One in Three adoring,
In glad hymns eternally.

To this temple, where we call Thee,
Come, O Lord of Hosts, today!
With Thy wonted lovingkindness
Hear Thy servants as they pray.
And Thy fullest benediction
Shed within its walls away.

Here vouchsafe to all Thy servants
What they ask of Thee to gain;
What they gain from Thee forever
Those good things their prayers obtain,
And hereafter in Thy glory
Evermore with Thee to reign.

Laud and honor to the Father,
Laud and honor to the Son,
Laud and honor to the Spirit,
Ever Three and ever One;
Consubstantial, co-eternal,
While unending ages run.

Christ is made the sure Foundation, Christ the Head and Cornerstone; Chosen of the Lord and precious, Binding all the Church in one; Holy Zion's Help forever, And her Confidence alone. I love the profound biblical proofs of Christ as our Sure Foundation revealed in this hymns. *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* (Eph 2:19-22) Our Lord Jesus Christ is at once the Sure Foundation Stone and, as well, the Chief Cornerstone of the building – that upon which the building is secured; and that into which the super structure meets and adheres together. The True Church will know Christ and His Word as the Foundation, and Christ as the Head Cornerstone as well.

All that dedicated city, Dearly loved of God on high, In exultant jubilation, Pours perpetual melody, God the One in Three adoring, In glad hymns eternally. The City of God is still a' building as new souls are added moment by moment. Is God in the midst of our churches today? What evidence do you present to support the claim? Is Christ the Central Head of all that the Church is about, or is it business, commerce, social prestige, wealth and size? *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.* (Psalm 46:4-5) Are the modern congregations in our churches a part of that River of Life? Have you noticed the great joy that seems to appear out of thin air when we sing the great hymns of the Church either in public worship or private devotions? The glad hymns of the Church draw us to the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

To this temple, where we call Thee, Come, O Lord of Hosts, today! With Thy wonted lovingkindness Hear Thy servants as they pray. And Thy fullest benediction Shed within its walls alway. This Temple? Is that in old Jerusalem, or the Wilderness Tabernacle? No, it is to the Temple of God which Temple ye are! *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.* (1 Cor 3:16-17) God does hear His servants when they pray, but those who pray out of a sinful heart, or a wrong spirit God will not hear. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* (Psalm 66:18) and *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.* (James 4:3) The beautiful benediction the Lord offered at His Ascension is most precious: *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* Amen. (Matt 28:20) Armed and strengthened with that glowing promise, we can go forth as soldiers certain of the victory. Isn't it amazingly wonderful how the old, classic hymns reinforce doctrine and biblical truth!

Here vouchsafe to all Thy servants What they ask of Thee to gain; What they gain from Thee forever Those good things their prayers obtain, And hereafter in Thy glory Evermore with Thee to reign. The final clause in this stanza sums up the whole of all that we ask of the Lord – that we may be and live with Him forevermore. What are those good things, and only things, our prayers obtain? They are those things only that are asked out of a harmonious will entwined with the Will of God and not out of our own selfish and fleshly wills. When we are One with Christ, our wills also are conjoined to His perfect will. God will always grant all things that are in accord with His own will to grant. If not, the petition is not granted.

For some reason, this last stanza is omitted from the 1940 Hymnal. I know not why for it is the most beautiful of expressions of the beauty of the Trinity: *Laud and honor to the Father, Laud and honor to the Son, Laud and honor to the Spirit, Ever Three and ever One; Consubstantial, co-eternal, While unending ages run.* This will serve as a perfect benediction to our hymn and all truth presented therein. We cannot honor our Lord without honoring the Father and the Holy Ghost; and neither of those two without honoring our Lord. Those unending ages speak to the Eternal Age to come which has no end. I will add here the benediction of the beloved Apostle, John: *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen* (1 John 5:18-21)