

PSALM SIXTY-ONE AND SIXTY-TWO

tower"; (4) "a refuge in the covert of thy wings"; (5) "I shall dwell in Thy tent". Discuss these figures as they relate to us.

3. There is a prophecy in verses six through eight—what is it?

PSALM 62

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Restful Resolution, Exposing the Treacherous and Encouraging the Timorous, traces both Power and Kindness to God the Judge of All.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-4, Counselling himself to be Patient, the Psalmist Remonstrates with False Friends. Stanza II., vers. 5-8, Again (by *Refrain*) Counseling Himself to be Patient, he seeks to Restore the Confidence of the People. Stanza III., vers. 9-12, exposing False Grounds of Confidence, he traces all Power and Kindness to the Supreme Judge.

(Lm.) A Psalm—By David.

- 1 Surely¹ unto God be thou still² my soul,
for³ from him is my salvation:
- 2 Surely he is my rock and my salvation my lofty retreat,
I shall not be greatly shaken.⁴
- 3 How long keep ye rushing at a man,
continue crushing all of you,—⁵
as at a leaning wall as at a bulging fence?
- 4 Surely from his dignity have they counselled to thrust him
out,
they delight in falsehood:
With his mouth doth each of them bless,
but inwardly they curse.
- 5 Surely unto God be thou still my soul,
for from him is mine expectation:

1. Or "only"; and so in vers. 2, 4, 5, 6, 9.

2. M.T.: "silence (is) my soul."

3. So some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.); cp. ver. 5—Gn.

4. "Be shaken"—Br.

5. According to another vocalisation: "All of you shall be crushed."

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- 6 Surely he is my rock and my salvation my lofty retreat,
I shall not be shaken.
- 7 On God depend my safety¹ and mine honour,
my rock of strength and my refuge are in God.²
- 8 Trust in him all ye congregation³ of the people,
pour out before him your heart,—
God is a refuge for us.
- 9 Surely mere breath⁴ are men of low degree,
falsehood men of high degree:
in balances going up they are of breath⁵ altogether.
- 10 Do not trust in extortion nor on robbery set vain hope,
as for wealth when it beareth fruit do not regard (it).
- 11 One thing hath God spoken,
Two things (there are) which I have heard:—
that power belongeth unto God,
12 and thine Sovereign Lord is kindness;
for thou repayest each one according to his doing.⁶

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

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I stand silently before the Lord, waiting for Him to rescue me. For salvation comes from Him alone.

2 Yes, He alone is my Rock, my rescuer, defense and fortress. Why then should I be tense with fear when troubles come?

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3, 4 But what is this? They pick on me at a time when my throne¹ is tottering; they plot my death and use lies and deceit to try to force me from the throne.⁷ They are so friendly to my face while cursing in their hearts!

5 But I stand silent before the Lord, waiting for Him to rescue me. For salvation comes from Him alone.

6 Yes, He alone is my rock, my rescuer, defense and fortress—why then should I be tense with fear when troubles come?

1. Or "salvation."

2. Or (taking *beth* as *beth-essential*): "is God."

3. So it shd. be (w. Sep., Vul.)—Gn.

4. Or: "a mere vapour."

5. Or: "of vapour."

6. Cp. Job 34:11, Prov. 24:12, Jer. 32:19, Eze. 7:27, Mt. 16:27, Ro. 2:6, 2 Cor. 5:10, Eph. 6:8, Col. 3:25, 1 P. 1:17, Rev. 22:12.

7. Implied.

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7 My protection and success² come from God alone. He is my refuge, a Rock where no enemy can reach me.

8 O my people, trust Him all the time. Pour out your longings before Him, for He can help!

9 The greatest of men, or the lowest—both alike are nothing in His sight. They weigh less than air on scales!

10, 11 Don't become rich by extortion and robbery. And don't let the rich men be proud.

12 He is loving and ~~kind and rewards~~ each one of us according to the work we do for Him.

EXPOSITION

Successfully to adjust this unique psalm to the life of David requires some alertness of apprehension in regard to psychological possibilities. If, however, we assume that the great sin of his life is in the past; that the sore smiting has been borne; that the deep repentance has been felt; that assured pardon has come; and that, in the strength of renewed spiritual health, the mind of this man of God has now become attuned to public duty: if we then further assume that the first consternation on discovery of Absalom's unfaithfulness, has driven the King to his God, with strong crying and tears, and that thus the monarch's soul has been calmed to face the situation as best he may;—we can possibly *then* bring, into the realm of the conceivable, the peculiar emotions evident in this psalm. The psalmist is being schooled to calm trust. He has poured out his complaint, wrestled with his fears, and he has tested the sweetness of fellowship with God in his present and prospective troubles; yet not so assuredly, but that he feels the need of again and again girding up the loins of his mind, and fully settling it that now, at length, there is no becoming attitude of mind Godward other than one of *silence*, the *silence* that is resolved to distrust no longer—so that instead of repeating petitions identical with those already offered, he is determined calmly to await the issue. This resolve is what we see crystallising itself into the remarkable introductory refrain to this psalm. The piling up of epithets—*my rock, my salvation, my lofty retreat*—shows the mind actively at work upbuilding its confidence; needless to say, these epithets are strikingly Davidic. But duty has to be faced; and, to this end,

2. Literally, "glory."

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is confidence carefully husbanded. The king must make no mistakes about the real situation: his own position has for some time appeared weak in the eyes of his faltering friends,—a little more, and the *leaning wall* will sway over and go down; and there are those who are ready to give a concerted *rush* at it and overthrow it. It is *his dignity* from which they would *thrust* him, that they may set up another in his place. In some given conclave, he learns that he has not a true friend left. Some, in that conclave, who still maintain the appearance of friendliness, are showing treachery in act: *With his mouth doth each of them bless, but inwardly they curse.* So ends the first stanza.

But there is another danger: the *people* are wavering! The first need is to let them see that *the king* does not waver; and therefore, after repeating his self-assuring refrain with its inspiring array of Divine epithets, he deliberately declares his *expectation* to be firm as a rock. Would *the congregation of the people* share this *trust*? let them seek it as the psalmist has done, by *pouring out their heart* before *God* so as to find in him a *refuge*. It will be noticed that the prelude to this stanza is made stronger than when it was set before the first: *then* the psalmist was sure he should not be *greatly shaken*, *now* he is confident that he shall not be *shaken!* This is, at least, very life-like!

Finally, the writer of this psalm strongly asserts the stability of Divine order in contrast with human rebellion against it. What is man in opposition to God. *Mere breath* or worse; Whether of *low degree* or of *high degree* in these *balances* he kicks the beam. And man is mere man when he resorts to *extortion* and *robbery*; moreover David by this time was *wealthy*; and though we have no reason to think that he unworthily *regarded* his riches, yet can it easily be conceived that base promises were being quietly circulated, as to the gains to be secured by a transfer of allegiance from David to Absalom. There may be some flavour of Wisdom Literature in the noble moralising with which this psalm is concluded; but that literature did not grow up in a day, and David may well have been a link in the chain of writers that, starting from Samuel, gave it birth; as we were reminded by certain sententious sayings in Ps. 18. Certainly, nothing could seem to be more fitting for imparting a strong finish to this psalm, than to be oracularly reminded that *power belongeth unto God*, to bestow as he pleases. David had

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not sought power; through prophetic channels it had sought him (1 Sam. 16) and been confirmed to him (2 Sam. 7). It is especially life-like, as if with a bright gleam of Davidic inspiration, that the thought of *power* bestowed should be coupled with an appreciation of the *kindness* that moved to the gift (cp. 2 Sam. 7:15 w. Isa. 55:3); and, if any little stroke were wanting to make it seem the more natural, it might be found in the irregularity of suddenly passing from speaking *of* God to the speaking *to* God; *and thine, Sovereign Lord, is kindness!* It appears to come warm from a heart accustomed to sun itself in "the kindness of God" (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kindness") Remarkable, too, it is, that *judgment* should be logically linked with *kindness*—of course it is "vindicatory righteousness" (cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Righteousness") which is chiefly prominent in such cases. Still, it is a precious association of ideas; and it is extremely satisfactory that it is, as clothed with such an association, that the closing words of this psalm meet with such an extended response, as our numerous references reveal, throughout the Bible.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Once again read the historical setting of David's experience in exile—II Sam. 18:1-33. How shall we relate this psalm to this period of time.
2. Who is pictured as a "leaning wall" or a "tottering fence?"
3. David is waiting in silent exile while God works out His will through the rebellion of David's beloved son Absalom. What quality of character would be developed by this experience?
4. Anxiety and worry are the root of many ills—name several. The antidote is found in this psalm—apply it!
5. Men trust in so many false gods—name several as noticed in verses nine and ten.

PSALM 63

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Banished Soul, Athirst for God, Anticipates
Satisfaction and Vindication.