

## PSALM LXII.

**TITLE.**—To the Chief Musician, to Jeduthun.—*This is the second Psalm which is dedicated to Jeduthun or Ethan, the former one being the thirty-ninth, a Psalm which is almost a twin with this in many respects, containing in the original the word translated only four times as this does six. We shall meet with two other Psalms similarly appointed for Jeduthun: namely, Psalms LXXVII. and LXXXIX. The sons of Jeduthun were porters or doorkeepers, according to 1 Chron. xvi. 42. Those who serve well make the best of singers, and those who occupy the highest posts in the choir must not be ashamed to wait at the posts of the doors of the Lord's house.*

**A PSALM OF DAVID.**—*Even had not the signature of the royal poet been here placed, we should have been sure from internal evidence that he alone penned these stanzas; they are truly Davidic. From the sixfold use of the word, ac or only, we have been wont to call it THE ONLY PSALM.*

**DIVISION.**—*The Psalmist has marked his own pauses, by inserting SELAH at the end of verses 4 and 8. His true and sole confidence in God laughs to scorn all its enemies. When this Psalm was composed it was not necessary for us to know, since true faith is always in season, and is usually under trial. Moreover, the sentiments here uttered are suitable to occasions which are very frequent in a believer's life, and therefore no one historic incident is needful for their explanation.*

### EXPOSITION.

**T**RULY my soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation.

2 He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *he is* my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall *shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.*

4 They only consult to cast *him* down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.

1. "*Truly,*" or verily, or only. The last is probably the most prominent sense here. That faith alone is true which rests on God alone, that confidence which relies but partly on the Lord is vain confidence. If we Englished the word by our word "*verily,*" as some do, we should have here a striking reminder of our blessed Lord's frequent use of that adverb. "*My soul waiteth upon God.*" My inmost self draws near in reverent obedience to God. I am no hypocrite or mere posture maker. To wait upon God, and for God, is the habitual position of faith; to wait on him truly is sincerity; to wait on him only is spiritual chastity. The original is, "*only to God is my soul silence.*" The presence of God alone could awe his heart into quietude, submission, rest, and acquiescence; but when that was felt, not a rebellious word or thought broke the peaceful silence. The proverb that speech is silver but silence is gold, is more than true in this case. No eloquence in the world is half so full of meaning as the patient silence of a child of God. It is an eminent work of grace to bring down the will and subdue the affections to such a degree, that the whole mind lies before the Lord like the sea beneath the wind, ready to be moved by every breath of his mouth, but free from all inward and self-caused emotion, as also from all power to be moved by anything other than the divine will. We should be wax to the Lord, but adamant to every other force. "*From him cometh my salvation.*" The good man will, therefore, in patience possess his soul till deliverance comes: faith can hear the footsteps of coming salvation because she has learned to be silent. Our salvation in no measure or degree comes to us from any inferior source; let us, therefore, look alone to the true fountain, and avoid the detestable crime of ascribing to the creature what belongs alone to the Creator. If to wait on God be worship, to wait on the creature is idolatry;

if to wait on God alone be true faith, to associate an arm of flesh with him is audacious unbelief.

2. "*He only is my rock and my salvation.*" Sometimes a metaphor may be more full of meaning and more suggestive than literal speech; hence the use of the figure of a rock, the very mention of which would awaken grateful memories in the Psalmist's mind. David had often lain concealed in rocky caverns, and here he compares his God to such a secure refuge; and, indeed, declares him to be his only real protection, all-sufficient in himself and never failing. At the same time, as if to show us that what he wrote was not mere poetic sentiment, but blessed reality, the literal word "*salvation*" follows the figurative expression: that our God is our refuge is no fiction, nothing in the world is more a matter of fact. "*He is my defence,*" my height, my lofty rampart, my high-fort. Here we have another and bolder image; the tried believer not only abides in God as in a cavernous rock; but dwells in him as a warrior in some bravely defiant tower or lordly castle. "*I shall not be greatly moved.*" His personal weakness might cause him to be somewhat moved; but his faith would come in to prevent any very great disturbance: not much would he be tossed about. "*Moved,*" as one says, "but not removed." Moved like a ship at anchor which swings with the tide, but is not swept away by the tempest. When a man knows assuredly that the Lord is his salvation, he cannot be very much cast down: it would need more than all the devils in hell greatly to alarm a heart which knows God to be its salvation.

3. "*How long will ye imagine mischief against a man?*" It is always best to begin with God, and then may we confront our enemies. Make all sure with heaven, then may you grapple with earth and hell. David expostulates with his insensate foes; he marvels at their dogged perseverance in malice, after so many failures and with certain defeat before them. He tells them that their design was an imaginary one, which they never could accomplish however deeply they might plot. It is a marvel that men will readily enough continue in vain and sinful courses, and yet to persevere in grace is so great a difficulty as to be an impossibility, were it not for divine assistance. The persistency of those who oppose the people of God is so strange that we may well expostulate with them and say, "*How long will ye thus display your malice?*" A hint is given in the text as to the cowardliness of so many pressing upon one man; but none are less likely to act a fair and manly part than those who are opposed to God's people for righteousness' sake. Satan could not enter into combat with Job in fair duel, but must needs call in the Sabeans and Chaldeans, and even then must borrow the lightning and the wind before his first attack was complete. If there were any shame in him, or in his children, they would be ashamed of the dastardly manner in which they have waged war against the seed of the woman. Ten thousand to one has not seemed to them too mean an advantage; there is not a drop of chivalrous blood in all their veins. "*Ye shall be slain all of you.*" Your edged tools will cut your own fingers. Those who take the sword shall perish with the sword. However many or fierce the bands of the wicked may be, they shall not escape the just retribution of heaven; rigorously shall the great Lawgiver exact blood from men of blood, and award death to those who seek the death of others. "*As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.*" Boastful persecutors bulge and swell with pride, but they are only as a bulging wall ready to fall in a heap; they lean forward to seize their prey, but it is only as a tottering fence inclines to the earth upon which it will soon lie at length. They expect men to bow to them, and quake for fear in their presence; but men made bold by faith see nothing in them to honour, and very, very much to despise. It is never well on our part to think highly of ungodly persons; whatever their position, they are near their destruction, they totter to their fall; it will be our wisdom to keep our distance, for no one is advantaged by being near a falling wall; if it does not crush with its weight, it may stifle with its dust.

The passage is thought to be more correctly rendered as follows:—"How long will ye press on one man, that ye may crush him in a body, like a toppling wall, a sinking fence?"\* We have, however, kept to our own version as yielding a good and profitable meaning. Both senses may blend in our meditations; for if David's enemies battered him as though they could throw him down like a bulging wall, he, on the other hand, foresaw that they themselves would by retributive justice be overthrown like an old, crumbling, leaning, yielding fence.

\* So Dr. Kay, of Calcutta, translates it.

4. "*They only consult to cast him down from his excellency.*" The excellencies of the righteous are obnoxious to the wicked, and the main object of their fury. The elevation which God gives to the godly in Providence, or in repute, is also the envy of the baser sort, and they labour to pull them down to their own level. Observe the concentration of malice upon one point *only*, as here set in contrast with the sole reliance of the gracious one upon his Lord. If the wicked could but ruin the work of grace in us, they would be content; to crush our character, to overturn our influence, is the object of their consultation. "*They delight in lies;*" hence they hate the truth and the truthful, and by falsehood endeavour to compass their overthrow. To lie is bad enough, but to delight in it is one of the blackest marks of infamy. "*They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.*" Flattery has ever been a favourite weapon with the enemies of good men; they can curse bitterly enough when it serves their turn; meanwhile, since it answers their purpose, they mask their wrath, and with smooth words pretend to bless those whom they would willingly tear in pieces. It was fortunate for David that he was well practised in silence, for cozening deceivers there is no other safe reply. "*Selah.*" Here pause, and consider with astonishment the futile rancour of unholy men, and the perfect security of such as rest themselves upon the Lord.

5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from him.

6 He only *is* my rock and my salvation: *he is* my defence; I shall not be moved.

7 In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God.

8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God *is* a refuge for us. *Selah.*

"*My soul, wait thou only upon God.*" When we have already practised a virtue, it is yet needful that we bind ourselves to a continuance in it. The soul is apt to be dragged away from its anchorage, or is readily tempted to add a second confidence to the one sole and sure ground of reliance; we must, therefore, stir ourselves up to maintain the holy position which we were at first able to assume. Be still silent, O my soul! submit thyself completely, trust immovably, wait patiently. Let none of thy enemies' imaginings, consultings, flatteries, or maledictions cause thee to break the King's peace. Be like the sheep before her shearers, and like thy Lord, conquer by the passive resistance of victorious patience: thou canst only achieve this as thou shalt be inwardly persuaded of God's presence, and as thou waitest solely and alone on him. Unmingled faith is undismayed. Faith with a single eye sees herself secure, but if her eye be darkened by two confidences, she is blind and useless. "*For my expectation is from him.*" We expect from God because we believe in him. Expectation is the child of prayer and faith, and is owned of the Lord as an acceptable grace. We should desire nothing but what it would be right for God to give, then our expectation would be all from God; and concerning truly good things we should not look to second causes, but to the Lord alone, and so again our expectation would be all from him. The vain expectations of worldly men come not; they promise, but there is no performance; our expectations are on the way, and in due season will arrive to satisfy our hopes. Happy is the man who feels that all he has, all he wants, and all he expects are to be found in his God.

6. "*He only is my rock and my salvation.*" Alone, and without other help, God is the foundation and completion of my safety. We cannot too often hear the toll of that great bell *only*; let it ring the death-knell of all carnal reliances, and lead us to cast ourselves on the bare arm of God. "*He is my defence.*" Not my defender only, but my actual protection. I am secure, because he is faithful. "*I shall not be moved*"—not even in the least degree. See how his confidence grows. In the second verse an adverb qualified his quiet; here, however, it is absolute; he altogether defies the rage of his adversaries, he will not stir an inch, nor be made to fear even in the smallest degree. A living faith grows; experience develops the spiritual muscles of the saint, and gives a manly force which our religious childhood has not yet reached.

7. "*In God is my salvation and my glory.*" Wherein should we glory but in him who saves us? Our honour may well be left with him who secures our souls.

To find all in God, and to glory that it is so, is one of the sure marks of an enlightened soul. "*The rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God.*" He multiplies titles, for he would render much honour to the Lord, whom he had tried, and proved to be a faithful God under so many aspects. Ignorance needs but few words, but when experience brings a wealth of knowledge, we need varied expressions to serve as coffers for our treasure. God who is our rock when we flee for shelter, is also our *strong* rock when we stand firm and defy the foe; he is to be praised under both characters. Observe how the Psalmist brands his own initials upon every name which he rejoicingly gives to his God—*my* expectation, *my* rock, *my* salvation, *my* glory, *my* strength, *my* refuge; he is not content to know that the Lord is all these things; he acts faith towards him, and lays claim to him under every character. What are the mines of Peru or Golconda to me if I have no inheritance in them? It is the word *my* which puts the honey into the comb. If our experience has not yet enabled us to realise the Lord under any of these consoling titles, we must seek grace that we may yet be partakers of their sweetness. The bees in some way or other penetrate the flowers and collect their juices; it must be hard for them to enter the closed cups and mouthless bags of some of the favourites of the garden, yet the honey-gatherers find or make a passage; and in this they are our instructors, for into each delightful name, character, and office of our covenant God our persevering faith must find an entrance, and from each it must draw delight.

8. "*Trust in him at all times.*" Faith is an abiding duty, a perpetual privilege. We should trust when we can see, as well as when we are utterly in the dark. Adversity is a fit season for faith; but prosperity is not less so. God at all times deserves our confidence. We at all times need to place our confidence in him. A day without trust in God is a day of wrath, even if it be a day of mirth. Lean ever, ye saints, on him, on whom the world leans. "*Ye people, pour out your heart before him.*" Ye to whom his love is revealed, reveal yourselves to him. His heart is set on you, lay bare your hearts to him. Turn the vessel of your soul upside down in his secret presence, and let your inmost thoughts, desires, sorrows, and sins be poured out like water. Hide nothing from him, for you *can* hide nothing. To the Lord unburden your soul: let him be your only father-confessor, for he only can absolve you when he has heard your confession. To keep our griefs to ourselves is to hoard up wretchedness. The stream will swell and rage if you dam it up: give it a clear course, and it leaps along and creates no alarm. Sympathy we need, and if we unload our hearts at Jesus' feet, we shall obtain a sympathy as practical as it is sincere, as consolatory as it is ennobling. The writer in the *Westminster Assembly's Annotations* well observes that it is the tendency of our wicked nature to bite on the bridle, and hide our grief in sullenness; but the gracious soul will overcome this propensity, and utter its sorrow before the Lord. "*God is a refuge for us.*" Whatever he may be to others, his own people have a peculiar heritage in him; "*for us*" he is undoubtedly a refuge; here then is the best of reasons for resorting to him whenever sorrows weigh upon our bosoms. Prayer is peculiarly the duty of those to whom the Lord has specially revealed himself as their defence.

"*SELAH.*" Precious pause! Timely silence! Sheep may well lie down when such pasture is before them.

9 Surely men of low degree *are* vanity, and men of high degree *are* a lie: to be laid in the balance, they *are* altogether *lighter* than vanity.

10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart *upon* them.

11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power *belongeth* unto God.

12 Also unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth* mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

9. "*Surely men of low degree are vanity.*" Here the word is *only* again; men of low degree are only vanity, nothing more. They are many and enthusiastic, but they are not to be depended on; they are mobile as the waves of the sea, ready to be driven to and fro by any and every wind; they cry "*Hosanna*" to-day, and "*Crucify him*" to-morrow. The instability of popular applause is a proverb;

as well build a house with smoke as find comfort in the adulation of the multitude. As the first son of Adam was called Abel or vanity, so here we are taught that all the sons of Adam are Abels: it were well if they were all so in character as well as in name; but alas! in this respect, too many of them are Cains. "*And men of high degree are a lie.*" That is worse. We gain little by putting our trust in the aristocracy, they are not one whit better than the democracy; nay, they are even worse, for we expect something from them, but get nothing. May we not trust the *élite*? Surely reliance may be placed in the educated, the chivalrous, the intelligent? For this reason are they a lie; because they promise so much, and in the end, when relied upon, yield nothing but disappointment. How wretched is that poor man who puts his trust in princes. The more we rely upon God, the more shall we perceive the utter hollowness of every other confidence. "*To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.*" Take a true estimate of them; judge them neither by quantity nor by appearance, but by weight, and they will no longer deceive you. Calmly deliberate, quietly ponder, and your verdict will be that which inspiration here records. Vainer than vanity itself are all human confidences: the great and the mean, alike, are unworthy of our trust. A feather has some weight in the scale, vanity has none, and creature confidence has less than that: yet such is the universal infatuation, that mankind prefer an arm of flesh to the power of the invisible but almighty Creator; and even God's own children are too apt to be bitten with this madness.

10. "*Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery.*" Wealth ill-gotten is the trust only of fools, for the deadly pest lies in it; it is full of canker, it reeks with God's curse. To tread down the poor and silence their cries for justice, is the delight of many a braggart bully, who in his arrogance imagines that he may defy both God and man; but he is warned in these words, and it will be well for him if he takes the warning, for the Judge of all the earth will surely visit upon men the oppression of the innocent, and the robbery of the poor: both of these may be effected legally in the courts of man, but no twistings of the law, no tricks and evasions will avail with the Court of Heaven. "*If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.*" If they grow in an honest, providential manner, as the result of industry or commercial success, do not make much account of the circumstance; be not unduly elated, do not fix your love upon your money-bags. To bow an immortal spirit to the constant contemplation of fading possessions is extreme folly. Shall those who call the Lord their glory, glory in yellow earth? Shall the image and superscription of Caesar deprive them of communion with him who is the image of the invisible God? As we must not rest in men, so neither must we repose in money. Gain and fame are only so much foam of the sea. All the wealth and honour the whole world can afford would be too slender a thread to bear up the happiness of an immortal soul.

11. "*God hath spoken once.*" So immutable is God that he need not speak twice, as though he had changed; so infallible, that one utterance suffices, for he cannot err; so omnipotent, that his solitary word achieves all his designs. We speak often and say nothing; God speaks once and utters eternal verities. All our speaking may yet end in sound; but he speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast. "*Twice have I heard this.*" Our meditative soul should hear the echo of God's voice again and again. What he speaks once in revelation, we should be always hearing. Creation and providence are evermore echoing the voice of God; "*He that hath hears to hear, let him hear.*" We have two ears, that we may hear attentively, and the spiritual have inner ears with which they hear indeed. He hears twice in the best sense who hears with his heart as well as his ears. "*That power belongeth unto God.*" He is the source of it, and in him it actually abides. This one voice of God we ought always to hear, so as to be preserved from putting our trust in creatures in whom there can be no power, since all power is in God. What reason for faith is here! It can never be unwise to rest upon the almighty arm. Out of all troubles he can release us, under all burdens sustain us, while men must fail us at the last, and may deceive us even now. May our souls hear the thunder of Jehovah's voice as he claims all power, and henceforth may we wait only upon God!

12. "*Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.*" This tender attribute sweetens the grand thought of his power: the divine strength will not crush us, but will be used for our good; God is so full of mercy that it belongs to him, as if all the mercy in the universe came from God, and still was claimed by him as his possession.

His mercy, like his power, endureth for ever, and is ever present in him, ready to be revealed, "*For thou renderest to every man according to his work,*" This looks rather like justice than mercy; but if we understand it to mean that God graciously rewards the poor, imperfect works of his people, we see in it a clear display of mercy. May it not also mean that according to the work he allots us is the strength which he renders to us? he is not a hard master; he does not bid us make bricks without straw, but he metes out to us strength equal to our day. In either meaning we have power and mercy blended, and have a double reason for waiting only upon God. Man neither helps us nor rewards us; God will do both. In him power and grace are eternally resident; our faith should therefore patiently hope and quietly wait, for we shall surely see the salvation of God. *Deo soli gloria.* All glory be to God only.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Psalms lxii. and lxiii. compared.*—ONLY AND EARLY.—There is a sweet and profitable lesson taught us in Psalms lxii. and lxiii. The heart is ever prone to divide its confidence between God and the creature. This will never do. We must "wait only upon God." "He only" must be our "rock," our "salvation," and our "defence." Then we are frequently tempted to look to an arm of flesh first, and when that fails us, we look to God. This will never do either. He must be our first as well as our only resource. "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee." This is the way in which the heart should ever treat the blessed God. This is the lesson of Psalm lxiii. When we have learnt the blessedness of seeking God "only," we shall be sure to seek him "early."—*Charles Mackintosh, in "Things New and Old,"* 1858.

*Whole Psalm.*—There is in it throughout not one single word (and this is a rare occurrence), in which the prophet expresses *fear* or *dejection*; and there is also no prayer in it, although, on other occasions, when in danger, he never omits to pray. . . . The prophet found himself remarkably well furnished in reference to that part of piety which consists in *πληροφορία*, the full assurance and perfection of faith; and therefore he designed to rear a monument of this his state of mind, for the purpose of stimulating the reader to the same attainment.—*Moses Amyraut, 1596—1664.*

*Whole Psalm.*—Athanasius says of this Psalm: "Against all attempts upon thy body, thy state, thy soul, thy fame, temptations, tribulations, machinations, defamations, say this Psalm."—*John Donne.*

*Verse 1.*—"Only." The particle may be rendered *only*, as restrictive; or, *surely*, as affirmative. Our translators have rendered it differently in different verses of this Psalm; in verse 1, "*truly*;" in verses, 2, 4, 5, 6, "*only*;" in verse 9, "*surely*." If we render "*only*," the meaning will be here that God exclusively is the object of trust; if "*surely*," that this truth, that God is his salvation, has come home to him with a more lively conviction, with a more blessed certainty than ever.—The first line of the verse rendered literally is, "*Only unto God my soul is silence.*"—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

*Verse 1.*—"Truly my soul waiteth upon God," etc. In the use of means, for answers of prayer, for performance of promises, and for deliverance from enemies, and out of every trouble: or, *is silent*, as the Targum; not as to prayer, but as to murmuring; patiently and quietly waiting for salvation until the Lord's time come to give it; being *subject* to him, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; resigned to his will, and patient under his afflicting hand: it denotes a quiet, patient waiting on the Lord, and not merely bodily exercise in outward ordinances; but an inward frame of spirit, a soul-waiting on the Lord, and that in truth and reality, in opposition to mere form and show.—*John Gill.*

*Verse 1.*—"Truly my soul waiteth upon God;" or, as the Hebrew, *My soul is silent.* Indeed, waiting on God for deliverance, in an afflicted state, consists much in a holy silence. It is a great mercy, in an affliction, to have bodily senses, so as not to lie raving, but still and quiet, much more to have the heart silent and patient;

and we find the heart is as soon heated into a distemper as the head. Now what the sponge is to the cannon, when hot with often shooting, hope is to the soul in multiplied afflictions; it cools the spirit and meekens it, so that it doth not break out into distempered thoughts or words against God. [See also verse 5].—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 1.—“*Waiteth.*” *Waiting* is nothing else but *hope and trust lengthened.*—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—“*My soul is silent before God.*” As if he had said: To me as a man God has put in subjection all his creatures; to me as a king he has subjected the whole of Judæa, the Philistines, the Moabites, Syrians, Idumeans, Ammonites, and other tribes; having taken me from the sheep-cotes he has adorned me with a crown and a sceptre now these thirty years, and extended my kingdom to the sea, and to the great river Euphrates; it is not without reason, then, that I subject myself to God alone in this affliction, wherein Absalom thirsts to crush me, especially since he reveals the deliverance prepared for me, and from him alone can I expect it.—*Thomas Le Blanc* (—1869), in *Psalmorum Davidicorum Ana ysis.*

Verse 1.—“*Is silent.*” The Hebrew word used is *דומיה* *dumijah*, that is, silent, resting, expecting, reflecting, solicitous, and observing. For, first, we ought to be subject to God as silent disciples before a master. . . . Whatever God has allowed to happen to me, yet I will be silent before him, and from my heart admire, both enduring his strokes and receiving his teaching. . . . Secondly, we ought to be subject to God as creatures keeping quiet before their Creator. . . . “Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker.” *Isaiah* xlv. 9. Thirdly, we ought to be subject to God as clay in the hands of the potter, ready for the form into which he wishes to fashion us. . . . “*As clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.*” *Jer.* xviii. 6. Fourthly, we ought to be subject to God, as a maid servant to her master, observing his wish, even in the most menial affairs. . . . Fifthly, we ought to be subject to God, as a wife to her husband (*sponsa sponso*), who in her love is solicitous and careful to do whatever may be pleasing to him. “*My beloved is mine, and I am his.*” *Cant.* ii. 16. And, “*I am my beloved's.*” *Cant.* vi. 3.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 1.—After almost every quiet prayer and holy meditation in the divine presence, we have the consciousness that there was an ear which heard us, and a heart which received our sighs. The effect of a silent colloquy with God is so soothing! There was a time when I used greatly to wonder at these words of Luther:—

“Bear and forbear, and *silent* be,  
Tell to no man thy misery;  
Yield not in trouble to dismay,  
God can deliver any day.”

I wondered because we feel the outpouring of grief into the heart of a friend to be so sweet. At the same time, he who talks much of his troubles to *men* is apt to fall into a way of saying too little of them to *God*: while, on the other hand, he who has often experienced the blessed alleviation which flows from silent converse with the Eternal, loses much of his desire for the sympathy of his fellows. It appears to me now as if spreading out our distress *too largely* before men served only to make it broader, and to take away its zest; and hence the proverb, “Talking of trouble makes it double.” On the contrary, if when in distress we can contrive to maintain calm composure of mind, and to bear it always as in the sight of God, submissively waiting for succour from him, according to the words of the Psalmist, “*Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation;*” in that case, the distress neither extends in breadth nor sinks in depth. It lies upon the surface of the heart like the morning mist, which the sun as it ascends dissipates into light clouds.—*Augustus F. Tholuck*, in “*Hours of Christian Devotion,*” 1870.

Verse 1.—The natural mind is ever prone to *reason*, when we ought to *believe*; to be *at work*, when we ought to be *quiet*; to go our own way, when we ought steadily to walk on in God's ways, however trying to nature. . . . And how does it work, when we thus anticipate God, by going our own way? We bring, in many instances, guilt on our conscience; but if not, we certainly weaken *faith*, instead of increasing it; and each time we work thus a deliverance of our own, we find it more and more difficult to trust in God, till at last we give way entirely to our natural fallen reason, and unbelief prevails. How different if one is enabled to wait God's own time, and to look alone to him for help and deliverance! When at last help comes, after many seasons of prayer it may be, and after much exercise of faith

and patience it may be, how sweet it is, and what a present recompense does the soul at once receive for trusting in God, and waiting patiently for his deliverance ! Dear Christian reader, if you have never walked in this path of obedience before, do so now, and you will then know experimentally the sweetness of the joy which results from it.—George Müller, in "A Narrative of some of the Lord's Dealings," 1856.

Verse 2.—"I shall not be greatly moved." Grace makes the heart move leisurely to all things except God. A mortified man is as a sea that hath no winds, that ebbs not and flows not. The mortified man sings and is not light, and weeps and is not sad, is zealous in God's cause, and yet composed in spirit; he is not so eager on anything, but he can quit it for God. Ah ! few can act, but they over act.—Alexander Carmichael, in "The Believer's Mortification of Sin," 1677.

Verse 3 :—

"How long will ye assault a man ?  
How long will ye all crush him,  
As though he were a leaning wall—  
A fence nearly thrust down ?"

French and Skinner.

Verse 3.—"Against a man." That sure is but a poetical expression for *against me*, i.e., David, the speaker, against whom the neighbouring nations raised war, and his own subjects rebellions. Thus doth Christ oft speak of himself under the title of the *Son of Man*, in the third person; and Paul (2 Cor. xii. 2), *Ὁδὸν ἀνθρώπου*, "I knew a man," i.e., undoubtedly himself.—Henry Hammond.

Verse 3.—"As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence." Christ gave no blow, but merely asked his murderers whom they sought for; and yet they fell flat and prostrate to the ground (John xviii.), so that the wicked persecutors of the godly are aptly and properly likened and compared to a tottering and trembling wall. For as soon as ever the blasts of God's wrath and judgment are moved and kindled against them, they are so quivering and comfortless, that they would take them to be most their friends who would soonest despatch them out of the world; as Christ said aptly of them, they would pray the mountains to fall upon them. Luke xxiii.—John Hooper.

Verse 3.—"As a bowing wall shall ye be." In consequence of heavy rains and floods, and unsound foundations, it is very common to see walls much out of perpendicular; and some of them so much so, that it might be thought scarcely possible for them to stand. "Poor old Răman is very ill, I hear." "Yes, the wall is bowing." "Begone, thou low caste! thou art a *kutte-chiover*," that is, "a ruined wall." "By the oppression of the head-man, the people of that village are like a ruined wall."—J. Roberts's "Oriental Illustrations."

Verse 3.—"A bowing wall." A wall, when ill built, bulges out in the centre, presenting the appearance of nearly twice its actual breadth; but, as it is hollow within, it soon falls to ruin. The wicked, in like manner, are dilated with pride and assume, in their consultations, a most formidable appearance; but David predicts that they would be brought to unexpected and utter destruction, like a wall badly constructed, and hollow in the interior, which falls with a sudden crash, and is broken by its own weight into a thousand pieces.—John Calvin.

Verse 4.—"They only consult," etc. Truly I am he whom if "they shall consult to cast down from his excellency, they shall delight in a lie, they shall bless with their mouth and curse inwardly." That is: what I have said of worldly men, boasting themselves upon a man, falling into ruin, I desire that you should know that the same fate shall never befall me who trust in God; for otherwise does the matter stand.—Hermann Venema.

Verse 4.—"Excellency." Rather, *elevation*; the figure of the preceding verse being followed out.—Religious Tract Society's Notes.

Verse 5.—"My soul, wait thou only upon God." They trust not God at all who trust him not alone. He that stands with one foot on a rock, and another foot upon a quicksand, will sink and perish, as certainly as he that standeth with both feet upon a quicksand. David knew this, and therefore calleth earnestly upon



his soul (for his business lay most within doors) to trust only upon God. See verse 1.—*John Trapp.*

*Verse 5.*—“*My expectation is from him.*” As if he had said, never will he frustrate the patient waiting of his saints; doubtless my silence shall meet with its reward; I shall restrain myself, and not make that false haste which will only retard my deliverance.—*John Calvin.*

*Verse 5.*—“*My expectation is from him.*” In an account of the voyage of some of the early missionaries who left Hermannsburg for South Africa, is the following incident:—After a long calm, a brother prayed thus to the Lord for favouring wind: “Lord, thou givest them that fear thee the desires of their heart, and dost help them; help us now, that we may no longer be becalmed upon the sea; help us on our journey, thou who ridest on the wings of the wind.” He was so joyful over this word of the Lord, that he rose up and said in his heart: “Now I have already that for which I prayed.” After the prayer, one of the crew stepped over to the helmsman, and said, half mocking, half in earnest, “So we shall have wind: didn’t you hear the prayer? It doesn’t look very like it!” So he said, and half an hour after there came so strong a blast that the waves broke over the ship.—*William Fleming Stevenson, in “Praying and Working,” 1862.*

*Verse 5.*—He shifteth much needless labour, and provideth great contentment, who closeth himself with God alone. To deal with man alone, apart from God, is both an endless and fruitless labour. If we have counsel to ask, help or benefit to obtain, or approbation to seek, there is none end with man: for every man we must have sundry reasons and motives; and what pleaseth one will offend twenty: as many heads, as many wits and fancies. No man can give contentment to all, or change himself into so many fashions, as he shall encounter humours; and yet it is more easy to take sundry fashions than to be acceptable in them.—*William Struther.*

*Verses 6, 7.*—Twice in this Psalm hath he repeated this, in the second and in the sixth verses, “*He is my rock, and my salvation, and my defence,*” and (as it is enlarged in the seventh verse) “*my refuge and my glory.*” If my “*refuge,*” what enemy can pursue me? If my “*defence,*” what temptation shall wound me? If my “*rock,*” what storm shall shake me? If my “*salvation,*” what melancholy shall deject me? If my “*glory,*” what calumny shall defame me?—*John Donne.*

*Verses 6, 7.*—How quickly the soul of the faithful returns again to the God of its confidence. He spared a moment to admonish the ungodly, but like the dove of Noah he returns to the ark. Observe how the expressions of this holy confidence are repeated, with every pleasing variety of expression, to denote the comfort of his heart. Reader, ask yourself—are such views of Christ your views of him? Do you know him in those covenant characters? Is Jesus your rock, your salvation, your defence?—*Robert Hawker, D.D.*

*Verse 7 (first clause).*—On the shields of the Greeks, Neptune was depicted; on the shields of the Trojans, Minerva; because in them they put their confidence, and in their protection deemed themselves secure. . . . Now, Christ is the insignia of our shields. Often does David say, God is his protector. The Hebrew is *magen*; that is, shield, buckler, as Ps. xviii. 2 & 30.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

*Verse 7.*—There are several names of God given in this verse, that so every soul may take with him that name which may minister most comfort to him. Let him that is pursued by any particular temptation, invest God, as God is a *refuge, a sanctuary*; let him that is buffeted with Satan, battered with his own concupiscence, receive God, as God is his *defence and target*; let him that is shaken with perplexities in his understanding, or scruples in his conscience, lay hold on God, as God is his *rock and his anchor*; let him that hath any diffident jealousy and suspicion of the free and full mercy of God, apprehend God, as God is his *salvation*; and let him that walks in the ingloriousness and contempt of the world, contemplate God, as God is *glory*. Any of these notions is enough to any man; but God is all these, and all else, that all souls can think, to every man.—*Abraham Wright.*

*Verse 8.*—“*Trust in him,*” etc. To trust in God is to cast our burden on the Lord, when it is too heavy for our own shoulder (Ps. lv. 22); to dwell “in the secret place of the Most High” when we know not where to lay our heads on earth

(Ps. xci. 1); to "look to our Maker" and to "have respect to the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah xvii. 7); to lean on our Beloved (Cant. viii. 5; Isaiah xxxvi. 6); to stay ourselves, when sinking, on the Lord our God (Isaiah xxvi. 3). In a word, trust in God is that high act or exercise of faith whereby the soul, looking upon God and casting itself on his goodness, power, promises, faithfulness, and providence, is lifted up above carnal fears and discouragements; above perplexing doubts and disquietments; either for the obtaining and continuance of that which is good, or for the preventing or removing of that which is evil. . . . "Trust in him at all times." This holy duty is indeed never out of season; so much the original word for *time*, *ny*, imports. True, indeed, our Saviour saith, and saith truly, "My time," i.e., my time of discovering myself to be a wonder-working God, "is not yet come." Yea, but *all time* in respect of *trust in God*, is an appointed, yea, and an *accepted* time. The wise man tells us (Eccl. iii. 1), "There is an appointed time for every purpose under heaven: a time to kill and to heal, to plant and to pluck up, to weep and to laugh, to get and to lose, to be born and to die. In all these *trust in God* is not, like snow in harvest, uncomely, but seasonable, yea, necessary. There may be, indeed, a time when God will not be found, but no time wherein he must not be trusted. *Nullum tempus occurrit regi*, saith the law; let me add, *ne fiducia*, and it is sound divinity. The time of trusting in God cannot be lapsed. But more expressly. There are some *special* instances and nicks of time for trust. 1. *The time of prosperity*; when we sit under the warm beams of a meridian sun; when we wash our steps in butter and feet in oil; when the candle of the Lord shines on our tabernacle; when "our mountain stands strong:" now, now is the time for trust, but not in our mountain (for it is a mountain of ice and may soon dissolve), but *in our God*. Halcyon days to come are temptations to security, but to saints times for trust. . . . 2. *The time for adversity*. This also is a seasonable time for trust; when we have no bread to eat, but that of "carefulness;" nor wine to drink, but that of "affliction" and "astonishment;" no, not water either, but that of our "tears." Now is a time, not for overgrieving, murmuring, sinking, desponding, but for *trusting*. In a tempest, then, a believer thinks it seasonable to cast anchor upward. Thus did good Jehoshaphat: "O our God; we know not what to do: only our eyes are unto thee." 2 Chron. xx. 12. Thus David: "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." Ps. lvi. 3. Times of trouble are proper times for trust, be the trouble either spiritual or temporal. . . . "At all times." 1. *Quando*: When must we trust? "At what time?" At all times, *omni hora*, "every hour:" so the Syriac version. As a true friend is to love, so a sound believer is to trust, at all times. Prov. xvii. 17. 2. *Quamdiu*: The duration of this trust: "How long?" "All the day long." Ps. xlii. 8. All our lives long: all the days of their *appointed* time must God's Jobs not only "wait," but "trust," till their change come. Yea, "for ever" (Isaiah xxvi. 4); nay, "for ever and ever." Ps. lii. 8.—*Thomas Lye, M.A. (1621—1684), in "The Morning Exercises at Cripplegate."*

Verse 8.—"Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him." According to our love, so is our faith and trust in God; and according to our trust, such is our freedom at the throne of grace. Trust in him, and pour out your hearts before him; pour them out, like water, in joyful tears. For when the stone in the heart is melted by mercy, the eyes will issue like a fountain of tears. Good men have melting spirits. It is a branch of the covenant and a fruit of the effusion of the Spirit of grace. It is asserted by the learned in chemistry that no menstruums are so powerful as sulphureous and oily liquors to melt down the hardest minerals; to be sure there is nothing like the oil of mercy, so potent a solvent for an iron heart.—*Samuel Lee.*

Verse 8.—"At all times." I might mention many times in which we might trust in the Lord, but they are comprised in this little word "*all*," and a precious word it is: "Trust in him at all times." When you are full of fears, then you shall bring the little word "*all*" unto him, and say, I have nothing to encourage me to come to thee but that precious little word, "*all*."—*John Berridge.*

Verse 8.—"Pour out your heart." The word "*pour*" plainly signifies that the heart is full of grief, and almost afraid to empty itself before the Lord. What does he say to you? "Come and pour out all your trouble before me." He is never weary with hearing the complaints of his people; therefore you should go and keep nothing back; tell him everything that hurts you, and pour "all your complaints into his merciful bosom." That is a precious word: "*Pour out your heart before him.*" Make him your counsellor and friend; you cannot please him

better than when your hearts rely wholly upon him. You may tell him, if you please, you have been so foolish as to look to this friend and the other for relief, and found none; and you now come to him, who commands you, to "*pour out your heart before him.*"—John Berridge.

Verse 8.—"*Pour out your heart.*" Pour it out as water. Not as milk, whose colour remains. Not as wine, whose savour remains. Not as honey, whose taste remains. But as water, of which, when it is poured out, nothing remains. So let sin be poured out of the heart, that no colour of it may remain in external marks, no savour in our words, no taste in our affections. "I will cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord." Isaiah xiv. 22. Thus Hugo. But if you fear lest there remain anything in your heart not poured forth, bring the whole heart, and cast it before the eyes of the Lord, and sacrifice it to him, that he may create a new heart in thee.—Thomas Le Blanc.

Verse 9.—Other doctrines, moral or civil instructions, may be delivered to us possibly, and probably, and likely, and credibly, and under the like terms and modifications, but this in our text, is assuredly, undoubtedly, undeniably, irrefragably. "*Surely men of low degree,*" etc. For howsoever when they two are compared together with one another, it may admit discourse and disputation, whether men of high degree, or of low degree, do most violate the laws of God; that is, whether prosperity or adversity make men most obnoxious to sin; yet, when they come to be compared, not with one another, but both with God, this asseveration, this "*surely*" reaches to both: "*Surely men of low degree are vanity,* and, as *surely men of high degree are a lie.*" And though this may seem to leave room for men of middle ranks, and fortunes, and places, that there is a mediocrity that might give an assurance, and an establishment, yet there is no such thing in this case; for (as *surely* still) "*to be laid in the balance, they are all*" (not all of low, and all of high degree, all rich, and all poor), but all, of all conditions, "*altogether lighter than vanity.*" Now, all this doth destroy, not extinguish, not annihilate, that affection in man, of hope and trust, and confidence in anything; but it rectifies that hope, and trust, and confidence, and directs it upon the right object. Trust not in flesh, but in spiritual things, that we neither bend our hope downward, to infernal spirits, to seek help in witches; nor miscarry it upward, to seek it in saints or angels, but fix it in him who is nearer us than our own souls—our blessed, and gracious, and powerful God, who in this one Psalm is presented unto us by so many names of assurance and confidence: "*my expectation, my salvation, my rock, my defence, my glory, my strength, my refuge,*" and the rest. . . . "*Men of high degree are a lie.*" The Holy Ghost hath been pleased to vary the phrase here, and to call "*men of high degree*" not "*vanity,*" but "*a lie;*" because the poor, men of low degree, in their condition promise no assistance, feed not men with hope, and therefore cannot be said to *lie*; but in the condition of men of high degree, who are of power, there is a tacit promise, a natural and inherent assurance of protection and assistance flowing from them. For the magistrate cannot say that he never promised me justice, never promised me protection; for in his assuming that place, he made me that promise. I cannot say that I never promised my parish my service; for in my induction I made them that promise, and if I perform it not I am a *lie*: for so the word *chasab* (which we translate a *lie*) is frequently used in the Scriptures, for that which is defective in the duty it should perform: "Thou shalt be a spring of water" (says God in Isaiah), *cujus aquæ non mentiuntur*, "whose waters never lie;" that is, never dry, never fail. So, then, when men of high degree do not perform the duties of their places, then they are a lie of their own making; and when I over-magnify them in their place, flatter them, humour them, ascribe more to them, expect more from them, rely more upon them than I should, then they are a lie of my making. . . . "*To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.*" Vanity is nothing, but there is a condition worse than nothing. Confidence in the things or persons of this world, but most of all a confidence in ourselves, will bring us at last to that state wherein we would fain be nothing, and cannot. But yet we have a "*balance*" in our text; and all these are but put together in one balance. In the other scale there is something put too, in comparison whereof all this world is so light. God does not leave our great and noble faculty and affection of hope, and trust, and confidence without something to direct itself upon, and rectify itself in. He does not; for, for that he proposes himself. The words immediately before the text are, God "*is a refuge;*" and, in comparison

of him, "To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity."—*John Donne*.

Verse 9.—"Surely men of low degree are vanity."

"Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,  
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain!  
Vain as the leaf upon the stream,  
And fickle as a changeful dream;  
Fantastic as a woman's mood,  
And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood,  
Thou many-headed monster thing,  
O, who would with to be thy king!"

*Walter Scott (1771—1832).*

Verse 9.—"Surely men of low degree are vanity," etc. Or, sons of Adam; of the earthly man; of fallen Adam; one of his immediate sons was called Hebel, vanity; and it is true of all his sons, but here it designs only one sort of them; such as are poor and low in the world; mean men, as the phrase is rendered in Isaiah ii. 9; these are subject to sinful vanity; their thoughts are vain, their affections vain, their minds vain, their conversation vain, sinful, foolish, fallacious, and inconstant.—*John Gill*.

Verse 9.—"Men . . . are a lie." An active lie—they deceive others; and a passive lie—they are deceived by others; and they who are most actively a lie, are most usually and most deservedly a passive lie, or fed with lies.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 9.—"Lighter than vanity."—If there were any one among men immortal, not liable to sin, or change, whom it were impossible for any one to overcome, but who was strong as an angel, such a one might be something; but inasmuch as every one is a man, a sinner, mortal, weak, liable to sickness and death, exposed to pain and terror, like Pharaoh, even from the most insignificant animals, and liable to so many miseries that it is impossible to count them, the conclusion must be a valid one: "Man is nothing."—*Arndt*.

Verse 10.—"Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery." Now this robbery and wrong is done two manner of ways—to God and to man. He that putteth his trust for salvation in any other, save in God, loses not only his salvation, but also robs God of his glory, and does God manifest wrong, as much as lieth in him; as the wicked people amongst the Jews did, who said as long as they honoured and trusted unto the queen of heaven, all things prospered with them; but when they hearkened to the true preachers of God's word, all things came into a worse state, and they were overwhelmed with scarcity and trouble. Hosea ii.; Jeremiah xlv. He also that puts his trust and confidence in any learning or doctrine beside God's word, not only falls into error and loses the truth; but also, as much as lies in him, he robs God's book of his sufficient truth and verity, and ascribes it to the book of men's decrees; which is as much wrong to God and his book as may be thought or done. In which robbery, or rather sacrilege, no man should put his trust, as the prophet saith.—*John Hooper*.

Verse 10.—"Become not vain in robbery." What? would he have them serious in robbery? No; the meaning is this: do not trust in a thing of nought; if you rob, oppress, deceive, or wrong others, you trust to a vain thing—in a thing that is not—in a thing that will never do you good: there will be no tack, no hold in anything got in such a manner. When you think to get riches by wrong dealing, or closely circumventing others, you "become vain in robbery."—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 10.—"If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." We naturally love riches, and therefore as naturally spend many thoughts, both how to get and how to keep them. If a man have riches, or an increase of riches, it is not unlawful for him to think of them (yet we should be as sparing of our thoughts that way as may be, our thoughts and the bent of our souls should always be upon God), but that which the Psalmist forbids is the settling of our hearts; as if he had said, Let not your thoughts stay or dwell here. Riches are themselves transient things, therefore they should have but our transient thoughts. "Set not your hearts upon them," for they may quickly be unsettled. Samuel bespake Saul in the same language about a worldly concernment, when he went out to seek his father's asses: "Set not thy mind on them." 1 Sam. ix. 20. 'Tis like Saul was overburdened with this thought, "What's become of, or what shall I do for, my father's asses?"

"Be not solicitous about them," saith Samuel, "greater things are towards thee."—*Joseph Caryl.*

*Verse 10.*—"If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Consider what is here meant by "riches." Indeed, some may imagine that it is hardly possible to mistake the meaning of this common word. Yet, in truth, there are thousands in this mistake; and many of them quite innocently. A person of note hearing a sermon preached upon this subject several years since, between surprise and indignation, broke out aloud, "Why does he talk about riches here? There is no rich man at Whitehaven, but Sir James L——r." And it is true there was none but he that had forty thousand pounds a year, and some millions in ready money. But a man may be rich that has not a hundred a year—not even one thousand pounds in cash. Whosoever has food to eat, and raiment to put on, with something over, is rich. Whoever has the necessaries and conveniences of life for himself and his family, and a little to spare for them that have not, is properly a rich man; unless he is a miser, a lover of money, one that hoards up what he can and ought to give to the poor. For if so, he is a poor man still, though he has millions in the bank; yea, he is the poorest of men; for

"The beggars but a common lot deplore  
The rich poor man's emphatically poor."

. . . . . O! who can convince a rich man that he sets his heart upon riches? For considerably above half a century I have spoken on this head, with all the plainness that was in my power. But with how little effect! I doubt whether I have in all that time convinced fifty misers of covetousness. When the lover of money was described ever so clearly, and painted in the strongest colours, who applied it to himself? To whom did God and all that knew him say, "Thou art the man?" If he speaks to any of you that are present, O do not stop your ears! Rather say, with Zaccheus, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have done any wrong to any man, I restore him fourfold." He did not mean that he had done this in time past; but that he determined to do so for the time to come. I charge thee before God, thou lover of money, to "go and do likewise!"

I have a message from God unto thee, O rich man! whether thou wilt hear or whether thou wilt forbear. Riches have increased with thee; at the peril of thy soul, "set not thine heart upon them!" Be thankful to him that gave thee such a talent, so much power of doing good. Yet dare not rejoice over them but with fear and trembling. *Cave ne inhæreas*, says pious Kempis, *ne capiaris et pereas*; "Beware thou cleave not unto them, lest thou be entangled and perish." Do not make them thy end, thy chief delight, thy happiness, thy god! See that thou expect not happiness in money, nor anything that is purchasable thereby; in gratifying either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, or the pride of life.—*John Wesley's Sermon "On the Danger of Increasing Riches."*

*Verse 10.*—"If riches increase," etc.—"The lust of riches," says Valerian, "stirs with its stimulus the hearts of men, as oxen perpetually plough the soil." Hugo, on Isaiah, says: "The more deeply riches are sown in the heart through love, the more deeply will they pierce through grief."—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

*Verse 10.*—"If riches increase" (צוּ)—*lit.*, "sprout up" of their own accord, as distinguished from riches acquired by "oppression" and "robbery"—*A. R. Fausset.*

*Verse 10.*—Riches have in them uncertainty and deceitfulness. Riches have never been true to those that trusted in them, but ever have proved "a lie in their right hand." Isaiah xlv. 20. Hence they are called "lying vanities," Jonah ii. 8; and compared to a flock of birds sitting upon a man's ground, which upon the least fright, take wing and fly away. Riches have "wings," saith Solomon; and rather than want they will "make to themselves wings." Prov. xxiii. 5. Yea, though they have not the wings so much as of a little sparrow, wherewith to fly to you; yet will they make to themselves the large wings of a great eagle, wherewith to fly from you. Oh, how many have riches served as Absalom's mule served her master, whom she lurches, and left, in his greatest need, hanging betwixt heaven and earth, as if rejected of both! A spark of fire may set them on flying, a thief may steal them, a wicked servant may embezzle and purloin them, a pirate or shipwreck at sea, a robber or bad debtor at land; yea, an hundred ways sets them packing. They are as the apples of Sodom, that look fair yet crumble away with

the least touch—golden delusions, a mere mathematical scheme or fancy of man's brain, 1 Cor. vii. 31; the semblances and empty show of good without any reality or solid consistency: *nec vera, nec vestra*; as they are slippery upon the account of verity, so they are no less in respect of prosperity and possession, for they are winged birds, especially in this, that they fly from man to man (as the birds do from tree to tree), and always from the owner of them. This is a sore deceit and cosenage, yet your heart is more deceitful, inasmuch as it will deceive you with these deceitful riches, a *quo aliquid tale est, illud est magis tale*; they are so, because the heart is so.—*Christopher Love* (1618—1651), in "*A Chrystal Mirrour, or Christian Looking-glass,*" 1679.

Verse 10.—"*Set not your heart upon them.*" The word *set* properly is *to place*, to arrange in a fixed firm order, is specially used of the foundation stones of a building being placed fitly and firmly together . . . Therefore to *set the heart* upon riches is, to fix the mind closely and firmly upon them, to give it wholly up to them with all its powers; at the same time to be puffed up with confidence and arrogance, as Cl. Schultens observes.—*Hermann Venema*.

Verses 10—13.—Our estimate of man depends upon our estimate of God. David knows that men of low and high degree, if separated from the primal fount of every good, weigh *nothing*, and are less than nothing. Riches are nothing, especially ill-gotten ones. Man is not to get proud when riches increase. But such is the course of things, that in proportion as the gifts of God are rich, men confide more in the gifts than in the rich giver. But holy David is better instructed. Once and again he has heard the divine voice in his soul, "that power belongeth unto God only." Job xxxiii. 14. This powerful God is merciful: can then any merit attach to our poor works? and yet the Lord rendereth to every pious man according to his imperfect pious work.—*Augustus F. Tholuck*.

Verse 11.—"*God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this.*" Nothing is able to settle our confidence in God, but the powerful impression of his own word. "*Twice have I heard this; that power,*" etc. How did he hear this "*twice?*" Once from the voice of *creation*, and again from the voice of *government*. *Mercy* was heard in government after man had sinned, not in creation: but we have heard of the power of God twice; once we heard of it in creation, and again more gloriously in the work of redemption, wherein his power and mercy were linked together. Or, "*Twice have I heard this; that power,*" etc.; that is, it is a most certain and undoubted truth, that *power* is essential to the divine nature. The repetition of a thing confirms the certainty of it. *Mercy* is also essential; but *power* is more apparently so, because no act of *mercy* can be exercised without *power*. Or, though God spake this but *once*, yet David heard it *twice*, or often: that is, he thoroughly weighed and considered it as God's *once* speaking. In this sense a gracious person hears that *twice* that God speaks but *once*. Or, *twice*, that is, frequently; because what God had *once* spoken, had been often repeated and inculcated, and often cleared and confirmed to him by repeated experimental evidence of the certainty thereof; and he had thereupon received the same more and more heartily, and had taken deeper impressions of it by repeated and inculcated thoughts.—*William Wisheart* (1657—1727), in "*Theologia; or, Discourses of God.*"

Verse 11.—"*God hath spoken once,*" etc. He made it known irrevocably and with great solemnity, so that it was not necessary to repeat it. With the Romans anything is said to be done *once*, which there is either no need to repeat, or which has no return. With the Hebrews also, and Orientals, *once* is at one turn, as in 1 Sam. xxvi. 8: "*Now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth AT ONE TURN, and I will not smite him the second time.*" See Schultens. So also Ps. lxxxix. 35. "*ONCE have I sworn in my holiness, I will not lie unto David.*" But what is the force of *to hear twice*? It may be taken in various ways. *To hear twice* can be regarded in the general sense of *frequently* or *often*. This will give the meaning:—God has but *once* spoken, yet I have often observed in my experience that his declaration is true.—*Hermann Venema*.

Verse 11.—"*Once; yea twice.*" This is answerable to the phrase of the Latins, *Semel atque iterum*; and it is usual in all writers to use a certain number for an uncertain, and particularly among poets: *Felice ter et amplius, Horace*.—*John Tillotson*, 1630—1694.

Verse 11.—"*Twice have I heard,*" etc. There are several renderings and interpretations of these words; but that which to me seems most intended by our

rendering is, I heard what was once spoken twice at once ; that is, I heard it speedily, and I heard it believably : as soon as ever the word came to me I received it, and I received it not only with my ear, but with my heart. That is a blessed way of hearing ; and they who hear so, at first speaking, may well be said to hear that *twice* which God speaketh once.—*Joseph Caryl.*

*Verse 11.—“ Power belongeth unto God.”* Believe the mighty power of God. Consider (1). It is difficult to believe his power. But how can that be ? Is not this a piece of natural divinity, that God is almighty ? What need is there, then, to press people to believe it ? Great need ; because this is the great thing we are apt to question in cases of difficulty. Else, why do we pray with cheerfulness when we see great probability of a thing, but faint in prayer when it is otherwise ? And why do we cry out, in sad times, “ Oh, we shall never see good days again ? ” (2.) The firm belief of God’s power is of great concern and moment in religion. Faith is never quite laid by till the soul questions the power of God. “ Oh, he cannot pardon, he cannot save ! ” When it cometh to this, the soul is no longer able to hold out. So that the life and vigour of faith is very much concerned in the belief of God’s power. It is, indeed, one of the first steps to all religion. Therefore it is put in the front of our creed : “ I believe in God, the Father ALMIGHTY ; ” and he that believes that first article will the more easily believe all the rest. (3.) God is much displeased, even with his own children, when his power is questioned by them. For this God takes up Moses short : “ Is the Lord’s hand waxed short ? ” (Numb. xi. 23) ; as if he had said : “ What, Moses, dost thou think that my power is exhausted or weakened ? What an unworthy conceit is this ! ” For this also Christ rebuked Martha very sharply : “ Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God ? ” John xi. 40. Yea, God is so tender of the glory of his power, and he hath sharply chastened his dear children when their faith staggered in this matter ; as we see in Zacharias, who, for questioning the power of God, was immediately stricken dumb upon the place. Well, then, let it be your great care to have your faith confirmed in the belief of God’s almighty power. For this end, ponder the verbal declarations made of it in the Holy Scriptures ; consider and improve the manifestations he hath given of it, both in your own and former times ; and pray much that God would strengthen and increase your faith.—*William Wisheart.*

*Verses 11, 12.*—Except some of the ancient versions, almost every version, translation, and commentary, says Dr. A. Clarke, have missed the sense and meaning of this verse. Of the former verse the Doctor offers the following translation : “ Once hath God spoken ; these two things have I heard.” But what are the two things the Psalmist had heard ? 1. *יְהוָה עוֹן לֵאמֹר*, “ *That strength is the Lord’s ;* ” that is, he is the origin of power. 2. *וְיְהוָה רַחֲמֵי הַרְחֵק*, “ *and to thee, Lord, is mercy ;* ” that is, *he is the fountain of mercy.* These, then, are the two grand truths that the law, yea, the whole revelation of God, declares through every page. He is the Almighty—he is the Most Merciful ; and hence the inference, the powerful, just, and holy God, the most merciful and compassionate Lord, will by-and-by judge the world, and will render to man according to his works. How this beautiful meaning, adds the Doctor, should have been unseen by almost every interpreter is hard to say ; but these verses contain one of the most instructive truths in the Bible.—*William Carpenter*, in “ *An Explanation of Scripture Difficulties*,” 1828.

*Verses 11, 12.*—I confess I wonder to find so constantly in Scripture that the inspired writers put “ merciful ” and “ mighty,” “ terrible ” and “ great,” all together : you shall find it so. Neh. i. 5. “ O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy,” etc. You have it also in Dan. ix. 4, in his solemn prayer. “ O Lord,” says he, “ the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy,” etc. Thus mercy, and great, and terrible are constantly joined together.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

*Verse 12.*—“ *Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.* ” Something more is necessary to invite us to a dependence on God than his bare “ power ” and ability to help us. There must be also a firm persuasion of the promptitude and readiness of his will to do what he is able ; and this we have in the other attribute of his “ mercy.” . . . “ *Unto thee,* ” unto thee *alone*, and unto none else. The tenderest mercy amongst the creatures is none at all, being compared with the divine mercy. It belongeth “ *unto thee,* ” as thy prerogative and peculiar excellency. Mercy is a peculiar jewel of his crown. Or, *thine, O Lord, is mercy.* Nothing amongst the

creatures deserves the name of mercy but his own. Nothing is worthy to be so called, but what is proper and peculiar to God. Or, *with thee is mercy*, as it is expressed elsewhere. Psalm cxxx. 4, 7. It is *with him*; that is, it is inseparable from his nature. He is merciful in a way peculiar to himself, "the Father of mercies." 2 Cor. i. 3.—*William Wisheart.*

Verse 12.—"*For thou renderest to every man according to his work*;" namely—judgment to the wicked, and mercy to the righteous; where the Syriac interpreter giveth the good note: *Est gratia Dei ut reddat homini secunda opera bona, quia merces bonorum operum est ex gratia*: It is mercy in God to set his love on them that keep his commandments. Exod. xx. 6.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 12.—"*Thou renderest to every man according to his work.*" Learn to admire the grace of God in rewarding your works. It is much that he accepts them; and what is it, then, that he rewards them? It is much that he doth not damn you for them, seeing they are all defiled, and have something of sin cleaving to them; and what is it, then, that he crowns them? You would admire the bounty and munificence of a man that should give you a kingdom for taking up a straw at his foot, or give you a hundred thousand pounds for paying him a penny rent you owed him: how, then, should you adore the rich grace and transcendent bounty of God in so largely recompensing such mean services, in setting a crown of glory upon your heads, as the reward of those works which you can scarcely find in your hearts to call good ones! You will even blush one day to see yourselves so much honoured for what you are ashamed of, and are conscious to yourselves that you have deserved nothing by. You will wonder then to see God recompensing you for doing what was your duty to do, and what was his work in you; giving you grace, and crowning that grace; enabling you to do things acceptable to him, and then rewarding you as having done them.—*Edward Veal* (—1708), in "*The Morning Exercises.*"

#### HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—I. *What he did?* "Waited upon God." Believed, was patient, was silent in resignation, was obedient. II. *To whom he did it?* To his God, who is true, a sovereign, gracious, etc. III. *How he did it?* With his soul, truly, and only. IV. *What came of it?* Salvation present, personal, eternal, etc.

Verse 2.—"*God a rock.*" David speaks of him as high and strong, and as a rock to stand upon, a rock of defence and refuge, a rock of habitation (Psalm lxxi. 3, in Hebrew), and a rock to be praised. Ps. xcv. i. See the Concordance for many hints.

["*Christ the Rock*:" a Sermon on 1 Cor. x. 4. By RALPH ROBINSON, in "*Christ All and In All.*"]

Verse 2 (*first clause*).—See "SPURGEON'S Sermons," No. 80, "*God alone the Salvation of His People.*"

Verses 2 & 6.—"*I shall not be greatly moved.*" "*I shall not be moved.*" Growth in faith. How it is produced, preserved, and evidenced.

Verse 4.—Wherein lies a believer's excellency? Who would cast him down, and why, and how they seek to do it?

Verse 4.—"*They delight in lies.*" Those who invent them, or spread them, or laugh at them, or readily believe them. Romanists, self-righteous persons, the presumptuous, persecutors, zealous errorists, etc.

Verse 5 (*first clause*).—See "SPURGEON'S Sermons," No. 144, "*Waiting only upon God.*"

Verse 5 (*second clause*).—Great expectations from a great God; because of great promises, great provisions, and great foretastes.

Verse 5 (*last clause*).—What we expect from God, and why and when?

Verse 8 (*first clause*).—How are we to live by faith on divine providence?—*T. Lye's Sermon* in "*Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 8 (*first clause*).—All trust, from all saints, at all times.



*Verse 8 (first clause).*—Times when this exhortation is most needed. Times of prosperity, of desertion by friends, of calumny, of poverty, of conscious sin, of chastisement, of death.

*Verse 8.*—“*Pour out your hearts.*” This teacheth us to deal plainly with God in laying open our hearts before him; and then, no doubt, we shall find ease.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

*Verse 8 (last clause).*—The peculiar security of the peculiar people.

*Verse 10.*—Evils usually connected with the love of riches. Idolatry, covetousness, carking care, meanness, forgetfulness of God and spiritual truth, neglect of charity, hardness of heart, tendency to injustice, etc. Means for escaping this seductive sin.

*Verse 11.*—I. How God speaks. “*Once,*” plainly, powerfully, immutably, etc. II. How we should hear. “*Twice,*” continually, in heart as well as ear, observantly in practice, in spirit as well as in letter.

*Verses 11 & 12.*—The constant union of power and mercy in the language of Scripture.

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