



O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. (Psalm 63:1-2)

There is, to me, a divine power and mystery in the first two verses of this Psalm/Song of David! It expresses a beauty and a wonder that can scarcely be explained in human terms – it is felt in the secret chambers of the heart. This Psalm was the favorite of an old War Dog named General George S. Patton. He knew many of the Psalms by heart, but favored this one especially. I suppose this proves that the beauty of God's Word may be borne in a rugged vessel. The Author is One of particular antiquity being God Almighty Himself whose utterance was given through the pen of David the King – so this hymn can only be praised as PERFECT. The tune is St. Peter (or How Sweet the Name) which is the same for the hymn, *How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds*, composed by Alexander Robt. Reinagle of Oxford, England.

Psalms 63 (paraphrase)

*1 Lord, thee my God, I'll early seek:
my soul doth thirst for thee;
My flesh longs in a dry parch'd land,
wherein no waters be:*

*2 That I thy power may behold,
and brightness of thy face,
As I have seen thee heretofore
within thy holy place.*

*3 Since better is thy love than life,
my lips thee praise shall give.*

*4 I in thy name will lift my hands,
and bless thee while I live.*

*5 Ev'n as with marrow and with fat
my soul shall filled be;
Then shall my mouth with joyful lips
sing praises unto thee:*

*6 When I do thee upon my bed
remember with delight,
And when on thee I meditate
in watches of the night.*

*7 In shadow of thy wings I'll joy;
for thou mine help hast been.*

*8 My soul thee follows hard; and me
thy right hand doth sustain.*

*9 Who seek my soul to spill shall sink
down to earth's lowest room.*

*10 They by the sword shall be cut off,
and foxes' prey become.*

*11 Yet shall the king in God rejoice,
and each one glory shall
That swear by him: but stopp'd shall be
the mouth of liars all. AMEN!*

This hymn/Psalm was composed by David under the inspiration of the Holy ghost while a fugitive from King Saul in the desert of Judaea. He suffered deprivations of food and water and many other hardships of diverse kinds – not the least of which was the rejection of a King whom David loved bore particular allegiance as the anointed one of God. *1 Lord, thee my God, I'll early seek: my soul doth thirst for thee; My flesh longs in a dry parch'd land, wherein no waters be.* In a desert place where no water is plentifully available, we retire to sleep with thirst, and awaken with greater thirst; but David makes reference to a more lofty and divine thirst – that for the fellowship of the LORD. In the deserts of sin, there is no water to be had. The land of sin is a parched and desolate ground; yet, David's first waking thoughts are of his thirst for the Lord, and the realization of his great need for God. What a great change we should see in our own society were our leaders thirsting for God as did David.

2 That I thy power may behold, and brightness of thy face, As I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place. If one has not beheld the power of God in their lives, or the bright beauty of holiness in worship of Him, how destitute of riches is that soul! Such a one is afflicted with a blindness that may border on madness. But the child of God, which all devout Christians are, has indeed been given the spiritual vision to see God in His Holy Sanctuary which Sanctuary the Heart is.

Our good friend and teacher, Matthew Henry, expresses the meaning of the beginning two verses this way: *Early will I seek thee. The true Christian devotes to God the morning hour. He opens the eyes of his understanding with those of his body, and awakes each morning to righteousness. He arises with a thirst after those comforts which the world cannot give, and has immediate recourse by prayer to the Fountain of the water of life. The true believer is convinced, that nothing in this sinful world can satisfy the wants and desires of his immortal*

soul; he expects his happiness from God, as his portion. When faith and hope are most in exercise, the world appears a weary desert, and the believer longs for the joys of heaven, of which he has some foretastes in the ordinances of God upon earth. —Matthew Henry Concise

3 Since better is thy love than life, my lips thee praise shall give. 4 I in thy name will lift my hands, and bless thee while I live. 5 Ev'n as with marrow and with fat my soul shall filled be; Then shall my mouth with joyful lips sing praises unto thee: 6 When I do thee upon my bed remember with delight, And when on thee I meditate in watches of the night. Instead of cursings and by-words, should our lips not be used to the better purpose of praise to God? Our hands are, indeed, God's Hands. Should we not lift them in His cause and in praise of that Great Dignity who has preserved us? The best of all things belong to the Christian though the world is blind to true riches. When He has filled our hungry lips with the best of the table, and filled our cups with soothing wine of the Spirit, should we not praises Him all the more rather than to grow fat and self-satisfied? Here is an interesting thought: Do we remember the Lord upon our beds? Those who do can never be driven to adultery or other sins of the flesh. Though David is the writer of these words, God is the Author. David did not always heed the words God spoke herein. Remember when David arose from his bed and went for a little walk on the roof to spy out Bathsheba? Every rousing moment of our sleep, we should be mindful of the One who gives sleep and rest.

7 In shadow of thy wings I'll joy; for thou mine help hast been. 8 My soul thee follows hard; and me thy right hand doth sustain. 9 Who seek my soul to spill shall sink down to earth's lowest room. 10 They by the sword shall be cut off, and foxes' prey become. 11 Yet shall the king in God rejoice, and each one glory shall. That swear by him: but stopp'd shall be the mouth of liars all. AMEN! God is our Fortress and High Tower – a Fortress to protect from the slings and arrows of the Enemy; and a High Tower of watching for dangers and assaults. Once we admit that we can do nothing except God gives us the means, then are we more closely drawn to Him. We need not harbor vengeful thoughts against our enemy – the justice of God is sure and full. I have personally witnessed this in frightful ways often in my life. The true King shall rejoice in God our Father, and we all will have cause to glory in Him. But the evil eye and wicked tongue shall be destined to feed the fires of an eternal Hell.

It is not fear of Hell that motivates the Christian, but rather the joy of being accounted a Child of the King!