

10. "The Lord hath heard, and hath had mercy on me: the Lord became my helper." This verse clearly shows that the preceding verses should have been understood in the past instead of the future tense. The Prophet asserts here, both in his own person, that of Christ, and that of the elect, that his cry was heard by God.

11. "Thou has turned for me my mourning into joy: thou hast cut my sackcloth, and hast compassed me with gladness:" Here is the effect of his having been heard. David, from a wretched exile, becomes a powerful king. Christ rises from the dead, thus gaining a victory over death itself. Every one of the elect, on arriving at their heavenly kingdom from this valley of tears, can most justly exclaim, "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into joy, thou hast cut my sackcloth, and hast compassed me with gladness." You have changed my garb of mourning into that of joy, and you have not taken it simply off, but "hast cut" it, entirely destroyed it, as a sign that I am not to put it on again. The "sackcloth" means that wretched garb of mortality and misery that has been entirely destroyed, of no longer use to the saints, much less to Christ, who, "Rising from the dead, dies no more."

12. "To the end that my glory may sing to thee, and I may not regret: O Lord my God, I will give praise to thee forever." The final end of the glory of Christ and his saints is the praise of God: "Blessed are those who dwell in thy house, forever and ever they will praise thee." Let my glory, then, not my groans, for fear of death or of sin, sing to thee.

### END OF PSALM 29

## You are Psalms

Some people think you never get discouraged, but the fact is, when you do, you know where to run. Your prayers are open and honest because you realize that God already knows your heart, He's just waiting to hear you spill it. And when you do, what starts out as heavy ends up becoming a song of praise. You may struggle... and often you do... but each time, you grow in your understanding of God's faithfulness. You're just a song waiting to happen.

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## PSALMS (SONGS OF PRAISE)

TRUST  
IN THE  
LORD *and do good;*  
*dwell in the land and*  
*enjoy safe pasture.*  
PSALM 36: 3

### PSALM NUMBER: 29

*David praiseth God for his deliverance,  
and His merciful dealings with him.*

1. I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast upheld me: and hast not made my enemies to rejoice over me.
2. O Lord my God, I have cried to thee, and thou hast healed me.
3. Thou hast brought forth, O Lord, my soul from hell: thou hast saved me from them that go down into the pit.
4. Sing to the Lord, O ye his saints: and give praise to the memory of his holiness.
5. For wrath is in his indignation; and life in his good will. In the evening weeping shall have place, and in the morning gladness.
6. And in my abundance I said: I shall never be moved.
7. O Lord, in thy favor, thou gavest strength to my beauty. Thou turned away thy face from me, and I became troubled.
8. To thee, O Lord, will I cry; and I will make supplication to my God.
9. What profit is there in any blood, whilst I go down to corruption? Shall dust confess to thee, or declare thy truth?
10. The Lord hath heard, and hath had mercy on me: the Lord became my helper.
11. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into joy: thou hast cut my sackcloth, and hast compassed me with gladness:
12. To the end that my glory may sing to thee, and I may not regret: O Lord my God, I will give praise to thee forever.

*The Psalms are songs of praise and cover a period of about 1000 years, from the time of Moses (ca. 1400 B.C.) to the Israelites' return from exile (ca. 450 B.C.). They deal with selected events of that period and provide us with the thoughts and feelings of those who went through the experiences recorded. After being made a Cardinal by Pope Clement VIII, Saint Robert Bellarmine, prepared for posterity his very own commentary on each of the Psalms. Enclosed are his interpretations on each of the Psalms.*

## **PSALM NUMBER: 29**

### **Explanation of the Psalm**

1. "I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast upheld me: and hast not made my enemies to rejoice over me." David, now established on his throne, after fortifying the citadel of Sion, and the city having been called after his name, finally, having built a most magnificent palace, and acknowledging God to be the author of so many favors, offers him the tribute of praise, saying, "I will extol thee, O Lord." Exalted as thou art incapable of being more exalted; yet, to those who are not so fully cognizant of thy greatness, I will, as far as in me lies, by my preaching, "extol thee," so that all may acknowledge thee to be the supreme Lord of all. "For thou hast upheld me," raised me from nothing, from the lowest depths, even to the throne of thy kingdom. You have extolled me and I will therefore extol you; attributing my exaltation, not to my own merits, but to your greatness; you have exalted me, and I will humble myself in order to exalt you. "And hast not made my enemies to rejoice over me." The consequence of such exaltation was, that his enemies, who were most numerous, and were for a long time seeking his death, got no reason to be glad of his death, which they most eagerly looked for; but, on the contrary, had much source of grief at his exaltation, which with all their might they sought to obstruct. In a prophetic sense, David speaks in the person of Christ; and of all the elect in general, as well as in particular, who, he foresaw, would be exalted in the kingdom of heaven, himself included. "I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast upheld me;" that means, how truly, O Lord, internally and externally will I extol thee, for my exaltation has led me to some idea of your immense sublimity; for, from the lowest earth, from the depth of misery, from mortality itself, thou hast raised me up and upheld me to the glory of resurrection and immortality, and thus to a heavenly and everlasting kingdom. "And hast not made my enemies to rejoice over me;" you have not indulged them in their

8. "To thee, O Lord will I cry; and I will make supplication to my God.

9. "What profit is there in my blood, whilst I go down to corruption? Shall dust confess to thee, or declare thy truth?" These expressions are to be taken in the past, and not in the future tense; a thing not uncommon among the Hebrews. David then, in a historic sense, states that, in the time of his tribulation and danger, he cried out to the Lord, and, among other things, threw out to him, that his death would be of no use to the Lord, for, once dead, he could praise him no more. "To thee, O Lord, will I cry." When I became troubled, by the aversion of your face from me, I did not despair of your mercy, but "I cried out to thee;" and in terms of deprecation said, "What profit is there in my blood?" That is, what will the spilling of my blood profit you, when my enemies shall have put me to death, and I shall have come to rottenness in the grave? Dust can offer you no tribute of praise. According to a prophetic and higher interpretation it means that Christ, in his passion, cried out and prayed to the Lord, which was fulfilled at the time he, according to the apostle, Heb. 5, "With a strong cry and tears, offered up prayers and supplications to him that was able to save him from death." It was at that time he said, "What profit is there in my blood whilst I go down to corruption?" That is, how will my spilling my blood on the cross conduce to the glory of God or the salvation of mankind, if my body like that of all other mortals, is to rot and perish in the grave? For, as the apostle says, 1 Cor. 15, "If Christ be not risen again your faith is vain;" and Christ himself could not have returned to announce God's truth to his apostles; nor could poor mortals, who are but dust and ashes, become spiritual, become children of God; to confess to him, and announce his truth to others, that is, the justice and the fidelity of God. These words may be applied to each of the elect, who, touched with sorrow for having fallen into sin, cried out to God for pardon, that they may be able to confess to him, and announce to other sinners how true he is to his promises.

of his principal elect, when he said, "even though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee." "O Lord, in thy favor thou gavest strength to my beauty;" that is, my strength was not my own but yours; for the whole beauty of my soul had its rise from the light of your justice and wisdom, and was kept up and maintained by your assistance. "You turned your face away from me." To punish my presumption, you abandoned me, left me to myself; and, at once, I collapsed, fell, and "became troubled." As regards Christ, these verses will apply to him, speaking in the person of his Church, his members, or even as speaking in his own person. For, as he said on the cross, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" so he could say, "Thou turned thy face away from me," not because he was an enemy, but because he seemed to desert him in his passion; and then the meaning would be: "And in my abundance I said:" My human nature, having been endowed with the choicest graces, far and away beyond any other mortal, inasmuch as it was hypostatically united to God, the fountain of all grace, said, "I shall never be moved:" nothing can harm, hurt, or disturb me. "O Lord, in thy favor," that means, to my beauty and my excellence, already superior to that of all men and angels, you have added strength and power; that is, the indissoluble tie of the Hypostatic Union, and that "in thy favor," which no one can resist. "Thou turned away thy face from me." Notwithstanding that indissoluble tie of the Hypostatic Union, and without injuring "the strength of my beauty," you "turned away your face from me:" from defending me, but it was for the salvation of mankind; and you wished the cup of my most bitter passion not to pass from me, that I may free mankind; therefore, "I became troubled:" began to fear, to grow weary, and to be sad, and I exclaimed, "My soul is sorrowful unto death." We are not to infer from this that Christ had to suffer anything he did not expect, or of which he had no previous knowledge, for nothing could have injured or have harmed him against his own will; but he suffered the persecutions freely, and thus "troubled" himself. And, as Christ said to his Father, "Thou turned away thy face from me," so he could say to himself, I have turned away the face of my divinity from helping my humanity, and thus willingly and knowingly I have been troubled.

impious desires of effecting my eternal destruction, a thing ardently sought for by the evil spirits in this and in the other world. The Jews, it is true, rejoiced when they exhorted the sentence of death against Christ from Pilate; and the wicked not infrequently rejoice when they can deprive their neighbors of their properties, their riches, or even their lives; but their joy is short-lived, followed by interminable punishment, so that it may rather be called the dream of joy than the reality of it.

2. "O Lord my God, I have cried to thee, and thou hast healed me.
3. "Thou hast brought forth, O Lord, my soul from hell: thou hast saved me from them that go down into the pit." The prophet brings to his memory how he was anguished, previous to his getting possession of the kingdom, to show how true was his statement, that "His enemies were not made to rejoice over him." "O Lord my God, I have cried to thee;" when I was in frequent danger of death, and sick at heart in consequence, you, O my God, have healed me, and so delivered me from impending death, as if you had taken me out of hell itself. "Thou hast saved me from them that go down into the pit;" means the very same, but that it is a little more obscure. The meaning is: You have raised me from the dead, which may with propriety be applied to David, who had suffered such persecution, and was driven to death's door thereby. In a prophetic sense, it applies literally to Christ. "Thou hast healed me" of the wounds I suffered on the cross. "Brought my soul from hell," from Limbo, and "saved me" by my resurrection. All the saints can equally exclaim on the last day, "Thou hast healed me," most completely, in soul and body; "And brought my soul from hell," for you have not let me into hell of the damned. "And saved me from them that go down into the pit," inasmuch as you have given me salvation, and life everlasting. The same idea turns up in Psalm 102, "Who healeth all thy diseases who redeemeth thy life from destruction."
4. "Sing to the Lord, O ye his saints; and give praise to the memory of his holiness." Looking at the innumerable temporal blessings

David had received from God, and the everlasting blessings his saints had received, he thinks it unbecoming in himself alone to thank God, and therefore invites all who had received similar favors to join him in praise. "Give praise to the memory of his holiness" means praise his holy memory; just as "in his holy mountain" means the mountain of his holiness, by a Hebraism that uses the genitive for the ablative case; and the meaning is: Praise him, praise his holy memory, because his remembrance of you was a holy one, a pious one, a paternal one, bent on rewarding you instead of punishing you. And, in truth, it is owing to God's great goodness alone, which we should ever gratefully bear in mind, that while we, who always need his help, so often forget him, he, who wants nothing from us, should constantly bear us in mind; which he did in a most singular manner, when he sent his only Son to become our Savior; and, therefore, no wonder David should exclaim, in Psalm 8, "What is man that thou are mindful of him?"

5. "For wrath is in his indignation; and life in his good will. In the evening weeping shall have place, and in the morning gladness." He assigns a reason for having said that the holy recollection of God ought to be praised, because when God punishes us, he does so by reason of the "indignation" one's sins provoke, that is, through a strict sense of justice; but in other respects, in his will and election it is to us life, not punishment. By anger then, we understand punishment and chastisement, called anger from its proceeding from anger. By indignation, is to be understood, according to Saint Basil, the just judgment of God, "In the evening, weeping shall have place, and in the morning, gladness." He proves that God's anger towards the elect is only temporary, because to the lamentation produced by castigation and penance, joy will immediately succeed; and praise and thanksgiving is always connected with forgiveness and reconciliation, for between the evening and morning, that is, between day and night, nothing intervenes. Observe the propriety of attributing grief to the night, joy to the day, because, when we fall into sin, the light of divine grace abandons us; when we get to be reconciled, it comes back to us. Again, our passage through this world, in which we are mourning for our sins, groaning and sighing for our true country, heaven, is our night, in which we have no glimpse of God, the sun of justice; but the

sun of justice; but the life to come, which 1 Peter 1, describes as one in which we shall "Rejoice with an unspeakable and glorified joy," will be our day, because we shall see God face to face. This was fulfilled to the letter in Christ, who in the evening died in pain and suffering, in the morning rose in triumph and joy.

6. "And in my abundance I said: I shall never be moved." The alterations of anger and of life, of weeping and of gladness, alluded to in general by the Prophet in the preceding verses, are now explained in detail; the Prophet speaking sometimes in his own person, sometimes in that of the elect. First, speaking of himself, he says, that previous to his being put over the kingdom, such was his wealth, and in such peace did he possess it, that he thought his happiness should be everlasting. He would appear to allude to the time when, after having slain Goliath, he was in the highest favor with the king, the king's son, and the whole mass of the people, to such an extent, that he was elected to be a tribune, and got the king's daughter in marriage; and of that time he says, "In my abundance I said:" when I was so fortunate, and had such an abundance of everything, "I shall never be moved." My happiness seems so firmly established that it must be everlasting.

7. "O Lord, in thy favor, thou gavest strength to my beauty. Thou turned away thy face from me, and I became troubled." He assigns a reason for his having said, "I shall never be moved;" because you, O my God, givest "strength," nerve, and power, "to my beauty," to my happiness; "in thy favor," because such was your will, wish, and decree. "Thou turned away thy face from me, and I became troubled." Now come the reverses. In the midst of all the aforesaid happiness, "thou turned away thy face from me;" you allowed me to incur the king's displeasure, "and I became troubled," suffered banishment, had to fly, ran several risks of death, and many other misfortunes. All these risks and dangers are more applicable, however, to the elect, in their troubles and peregrinations here below. Any one of the elect can justly say: In my abundance, that is, while God favored me with much grace, and his spiritual favors, I said I will never be moved. So said Peter, one