

indwelling proof against “The disturbance of men;” that is, from all manner of evil that usually disturbs man. “Thou shalt protect them in thy tabernacle;” the same just will be protected in the very house in which yourself is lodged, for God has no house capable of containing him, he is his own house; and those who, in love and contemplation, dwell in God, “Make the Most High their refuge. No evil shall come to them, nor shall the scourge come near their dwelling,” as it is beautifully expressed in Psalm 90. In this tabernacle they are protected, not only from evil doers, as was explained in the preceding verse, but also from evil speakers, for such is the meaning of “The contradiction of tongues,” for they who can call upon God as a witness care little for what man can say. And if the face of the Lord be such a retreat and a refuge to the elect, in the time when he is seen only “Through a glass in an obscure manner,” how will matters be when we shall see him as he really is? Then truly will our dwelling be in Jerusalem, the vision of peace, of which is written in Psalm 147, “Who hath placed peace in thy borders.”

21. “Blessed be the Lord, for he hath shown his wonderful mercy to me in a fortified city.” He now applies to himself, as being one of the just, what he had said in general, touching the consolation they feel in their troubles, and thanks God for it. “Blessed be the Lord, for his wonderful mercy to me in a fortified city,” because he “So hid me in the secret of his face,” which is like “a fortified city,” that my enemies could do me no harm.

22. “But I said in the excess of my mind: I am cast away from before thy eyes. Therefore thou hast heard the voice of my prayer, when I cried to thee.” He accuses himself of the despondence he was in when his persecution commenced. When I was almost idiotic through fear, I said to myself, “I am cast away before thy eyes,” that is, you wish me no longer to govern; or no longer to live, as appears from your withholding that look of benignity and kindness, and that help with which you were wont to countenance me. As we read, in 2 Kings 15, of David, “If I shall find grace in the sight of the Lord, he will bring me again. If he shall say to me, Thou pleases me not, I am ready, let him do that which is good before him.”

23. “O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord will require truth, and will repay them abundantly that act proudly.”

24. “Do ye manfully, and let your heart be strengthened, all ye that hope in the Lord.” He now encourages all pious people, similarly suffering, not to cease loving God, and putting that trust in him; for, though the wicked may seem to persecute them with impunity for awhile, they will ultimately suffer the bitterest punishment for it.

### END OF PSALM 30

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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: 30

*A prayer of a just man under affliction.*

1. In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded: deliver me in thy justice.
2. Bow down thy ear to me: make haste to deliver me. Be thou unto me a God, a protector, and a house of refuge, to save me.
3. For thou art my strength and my refuge; and for thy name's sake thou wilt lead me, and nourish me.
4. Thou wilt bring me out of this snare, which they have hidden for me: for thou art my protector.
5. Into thy hands I commend my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.
6. Thou hast hated them that regard vanities, to no purpose. But I have hoped in the Lord:
7. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy. For thou hast regarded my humility, thou hast saved my soul out of distresses.
8. And thou hast not shut me up in the hands of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a spacious place.
9. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am afflicted: my eye is troubled with wrath, my soul, and, my belly:
10. For my life is wasted with grief: and my years in sighs. My strength is weakened through poverty: and my bones are disturbed.

*continued >*

*Continued from preceding page*

11. I am become a reproach among all my enemies, and very much to my neighbors; and a fear to my acquaintance. They that saw me without fled from me.
12. I am forgotten as one dead from the heart. I am become as a vessel that is destroyed.
13. For I have heard the blame of many that dwell round about. While they assembled together against me, they consulted to take away my life.
14. But I have put my trust in thee, O Lord: I said: Thou art my God.
15. My lots are in thy hands. Deliver me out of the hands of my enemies: and from them that persecute me.
16. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; save me in thy mercy.
17. Let me not be confounded, O Lord, for I have called upon thee. Let the wicked be ashamed, and be brought down to hell.
18. Let deceitful lips be made dumb. Which speak iniquity against the just, with pride and abuse.
19. O how great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee! Which thou hast wrought for them that hope in thee, in the sight of the sons of men.
20. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy face, from the disturbance of men. Thou shalt protect them in thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues.
21. Blessed be the Lord, for he hath shown his wonderful mercy to me in a fortified city.
22. But I said in the excess of my mind: I am cast away from before thy eyes. Therefore thou hast heard the voice of my prayer, when I cried to thee.
23. O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord will require truth, and will repay them abundantly that act proudly.
24. Do ye manfully, and let your heart be strengthened, all ye that hope in the Lord.

*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: 30**

#### **Explanation of the Psalm**

1. "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded: deliver me in thy justice." King David, in his flight from Absalom, destitute of all earthly assistance, appeals to God, and says, "In thee have I hoped," and I am therefore confident, as you are all powerful, and most true to me, that you will not disappoint me in my hope. Agreeable to such hope, therefore, "Deliver me in thy justice;" that justice that prompts you to punish the wicked and free the just.

19. "O how great is the multitude of thy sweetness. O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee! Which thou hast wrought for them that hope in thee, in the sight of the sons of men." The holy Prophet, feeling that he had been heard, and having felt a gleam of heavenly consolation, exclaims in admiration, as above. The verse may thus be explained. In the time of tribulation, God conceals the "Multitude of his sweetness;" that is, the unbounded rewards he has in store for the just, in order to prove them; but in a little time after he displays those very prizes and rewards, "In the sight of the sons of men," that his servants may learn from thence to have greater hope in him. Thus, for a time he concealed his sweetness from David, while he was flying from his son's persecution; but soon after he displayed the extent of his goodness to him, when he restored his kingdom to him in the greatest triumph. The very same thing happens to all the just, whose reward is now hid, but will appear to all on the day of judgment. It may be interpreted differently thus: Truly manifold are the consolations, O Lord, that you pour into the inmost recesses of the hearts of those that fear you—that fear you with a filial, fond, and loving, not a servile, fear. For this is "The hidden manna which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it." Such as was felt by David, when, in Psalm 93, he said, "According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts have given joy to my soul." And, as Saint Paul, 2 Cor. 7, says, "I am filled with comfort, I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulations." And if, in time of tribulation, such be the "Multitude of the sweetness" in the heart of the exile, who can conceive the amount of the joy in his heart when his triumph shall have been accomplished! "Which thou hast wrought for them that hope in thee, in the sight of the sons of men." The sweetness "Thou hast wrought" for those who refuse all consolation but yours is perfect, most copious, most abundant; and all this "In the sight of the sons of men;" that is, in spite of them all, before their face; because the more pain they inflict externally, the more consolations you multiply internally. This sweetness is infused into the hearts of the just, "In the sight of the sons of men," in another way, when the sons of men, who persecute the children of God, see what and how they suffer; for, carnal as they are, with the palate of their soul infected by sin, they cannot feel, nor even have an idea of the sweetness, though they see its effects in the meekness, patience, nay, even hilarity and peace of the just; and thus, their sweetness is, to a certain extent, hidden in the sight of the sons of men, though its effects are apparent.

20. "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy face, from the disturbance of men. Thou shalt protect them in thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues." He gives a description of the manner in which the just feel the sweetness of God in the day of tribulation; for, by love and contemplation, they are carried up to God; and in him find a house of refuge, as he says in this very Psalm, "Be thou unto me a God, a protector, and a house of refuge;" for those who know how to take refuge in God, think as little of all manner of tribulation as if it did not at all belong to them. "Thou shalt hide them," those that fear thee, "In the secret of thy face;" in that hidden place, that is, in thy face; for the soul wrapped up in contemplation, feeling that God is attentively looking on it, observant of God's slightest expression, burning with love at the idea of God's beauty that is lodged,

take David's life, which is here alluded to. I am abused to my face; behind my back a conspiracy is entered into at Jerusalem to have my life.

14. "But I have put my trust in thee, O Lord: I said: Thou art my God." The holy soul, in all his troubles, shows he did not despond, because he did not put his trust in the fallacious help of man, but in the all powerful God, whom no one can resist. "But I have put my trust in thee, O Lord." Why? Because "I said" in my heart, "Thou art my God." I have a great protector, without whose consent no one can take my life, because,

15. "My lots are in thy hands. Deliver me out of the hands of my enemies: and from them that persecute me." My life does not depend on lot or chance, but depends on your will and power. "Deliver me out of the hands of my enemies." The meaning is quite plain, and needs no explanation.

16. "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; save me in thy mercy.

17. "Let me not be confounded, O Lord, for I have called upon thee. Let the wicked be ashamed, and be brought down to hell." The same petition renewed, but with additional arguments, calculated to move God to mercy. "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant;" that means show me your face; or look on me, which is the same. For as God, when he is angry with us by reason of our sins, is said to turn away his face, or to put a cloud between him and us, and not to look on us; so, on the contrary, when he is reconciled, he is said to turn his face to us to regard us, and make "it shine upon us, so as to make us, too, a mass of light. He, therefore, first asks to be reconciled to God, in case he should have been angry with him; and assigns as a reason, his being a servant most ready at all times to do God's behest and commands. He then adds, "Save me," which is only the consequence of reconciliation; and to move him thereto, he adds, "In thy mercy," not through my merits, but through your own pure mercy; and he adds a third argument, "Let me not be confounded, for I have called upon thee." For it is the duty of a good and faithful master, who has promised to help those that confide in him, not to suffer one who so unceasingly and so confidently invoked him to be confounded. "Let the wicked be ashamed, and be brought down to hell." A prophetic imprecation, and one fulfilled immediately after; for Achitophel, the principal minister of Absalom, who had advised the most impious proceedings against David, was so confused, on his plans being defeated by divine providence, and being unable to bear up against the confusion consequent thereon, hanged himself; and thus, "The wicked became ashamed, and was brought down to hell."

18. "Let deceitful lips be made dumb. Which speaks iniquity against the just, with pride and abuse." Achitophel's lips are called deceitful, because for a long time he pretended to be the fast friend of David; but the moment he got the opportunity, he betrayed his perfidy. "Which speaks against the just;" against David, who had offered no injury to either Achitophel or to Absalom; and they spoke "Iniquity;" gave advice full of injustice. "With pride and abuse;" that is, with the greatest contempt and arrogance.

2. "Bow down thy ear to me: make haste to deliver me. Be thou unto me a God, a protector, and a house of refuge to save me." The persecution was pressing on him; his friends had sent him word to rest in no one place, to continue his flight, unless he chose to be destroyed; and therefore he prays to be heard at once, and to be delivered from the impending danger. "Be thou unto me a God, a protector, and a house of refuge, to save me." Be like a well protected strong house to me; for there is no fortified place in this champaign country to which I can fly.

3. "For thou art my strength and my refuge; and for thy name's sake thou wilt lead me, and nourish me." You are my stronghold to which I will fly for refuge. "And for thy name's sake thou wilt lead me, and nourish me," corresponds exactly with David's history. His flight was so sudden, that he knew not whither to betake himself, nor whence to obtain the necessaries of life, until providence directed Siba to him, with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred cakes of figs, and a vessel of wine; and he therefore says, "For thy name's sake," for the glory of your name, you will lead me to a safe place, and there supply me with provisions.

4. "Thou wilt bring me out of this snare, which they have hidden for me: for thou art my protector." You will not only bring me to a safe place, and there provide for me, but you will also deliver me from the conspiracy, which, like a hidden snare, they have laid for me; alluding, to the conspiracy got up in Hebron against him by Absalom, when he neither dreaded nor even thought of the like.

5. "Into thy hands I commend my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth." Though full of hope, when he said, "Thou wilt bring me out of this snare," being not yet quite secure of his life, he adds, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," to your care I entrust my life. And, as you have at other times frequently "redeemed me," saved me from death, you who are a most true and most faithful God. These expressions lead many to think that the whole Psalm has reference to Christ, by reason of his having, while hanging on the cross, exclaimed, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." But though the Psalm, to the letter, may not be applicable to Christ, the Lord might have taken these words from the Psalm, when he wished to commend his spirit to his Father, just as Saint Nicholas, in his last moments, repeated this with the preceding verses; and we, not infrequently, ourselves use them. The words, "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth," appear to be against the

application of the verse to Christ, for, instead of being redeemed, he is the Redeemer. Saint Augustine, attributes the first part of the verse to Christ, the latter to his people; for he is of the opinion that the Prophet is fond of speaking in the person of different characters — sometimes of Christ, sometimes in that of the people. All right and pious enough, when one is looking for a mystic sense or explanation; but when we look for the literal sense, it does not appear why different persons should be introduced, when there is nothing in the context or the punctuation to call for such change.

6. “Thou hast hated them that regard vanities, to no purpose. But I have hoped in the Lord:” He assigns another reason for having “commended” his life to the hands of God, because God is wont to hate them who, instead of trusting in him, trust in “vanities,” that can afford them no possible help. “Thou hast hated them that regard vanities to no purpose;” those who regard dreams or omens, or the responses of demons, as Saul did, when he consulted the pythoness. Under the word “vanities,” may also be included those who, relying on human industry, craft, cunning, human aid or help to the exclusion of the divine help and counsel; all of which are vain and useless; and he, therefore, adds the words “to no purpose,” for all such exertions are, in reality, “to no purpose.” “But I have hoped in the Lord:” not so with me, I hoped in none, in nothing but God.

7. “I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy. For thou hast regarded my humility, thou hast saved my soul out of distresses.

8. “And thou hast not shut me up in the hands of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a spacious place.” As “I hoped in the Lord,” I will “be glad and rejoice in thy mercy,” for the divine mercy never deserts those who hope in him. “For thou hast regarded.” He brings up past favors, in the hope that by his acknowledgment of them he may obtain fresh ones. “I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy,” for I have a pledge of it in my deliverance from Saul; for then you “regarded my humility,” my abjection, and affliction; and then you “saved my soul” from the troubles that surrounded me, and from which I could not extricate myself. “And thou hast not shut me up in the hands of the enemy;” you did not allow Saul, who sought my death, to accomplish, his purpose; but “thou hast set my feet in a spacious place;” you freed me from the troubles that encompassed me, and placed me, free and disembarassed, as it were, on an open plain; at liberty to go about at pleasure.

9. “Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am afflicted: my eye is troubled with wrath, my soul, and my belly.” Bearing past favors in mind, he prays for future ones, and relates his misfortunes. “Have mercy on me, O Lord.” As you have had mercy on me in former tribulations, have mercy now, too; for tribulation has again set in on me; and here they are, “My eye is troubled with wrath.” “Whose wrath? God’s or his own? I rather think, with Saint Augustine, God’s; for, it is clear, from the First and Second Book of Kings, that David, in all his persecutions, never burst into wrath, but was always most mild and most patient; and I, therefore, take the meaning to be “in thy wrath,” in which you punish me for my sins, “my eye is troubled;” my corporeal eye has grown dim with my tears; or, the eye of my soul has grown dark: “my soul,” too,

is confused, for it has been fearfully frightened; so also has been “my belly,” the very interior of my soul; that is, my memory; the receptacle of my thoughts. Thus the Prophet makes brief allusion to the functions of the soul - the eye representing the intellect; the soul, the will; and the belly, the memory.

10. “For my life is wasted with grief: and my years in sighs. My strength is weakened through poverty: and my bones are disturbed.” David, being now an old man, could justly say, “For my life is wasted with grief:” was spent in constant trouble and “sighs.” In the first thirty years of his life his troubles were innumerable. On being made king, for seven years he had to wage war against the descendants of Saul; he then had various wars with neighboring kingdoms; then with his own son. Then, the very care of a kingdom, to one who wishes to govern it conscientiously, is enough to “waste” one, and make them “sigh.” “My strength is weakened through poverty.” In addition to all his other afflictions, he has lost his strength. The first and last members of this sentence are synonymous; they mean the same thing: “my strength is weakened,” is the same as “my bones are disturbed;” for bones stand for health, power, strength. That was literally the case with David. He had to fly, without any provision whatever, to the most deserted places; not only on foot, but even barefooted; and there to remain until relieved by his friends.

11. “I am become a reproach among all my enemies, and very much to my neighbors; and a fear to my acquaintance. They that saw me without fled from me.” Another misfortune, consequent on his notorious persecution, the neighboring people, “enemies” of his, having heard of his base flight, began to despise him. His “acquaintances,” too began to fear that Absalom, should he succeed, may wreck his vengeance on them for having proved friendly to David. “They that saw me without;” an explanation of a fear to my acquaintance. Many of my acquaintance, when they saw me an outcast and afflicted, “Fled from me,” ran, fearing for their lives, should they be found to have come near me; and thus,

12. “I am forgotten as one dead from the heart. I am become as a vessel that is destroyed.” Their heart neither remembers me nor thinks of me, no more than if I were dead and buried, for they consider I am just as if such had been the case with me. “I am become as a vessel that is destroyed.” My friends and acquaintances have not only abandoned and forgotten me; but even the people around me despise and look down upon me, as they would upon a broken vessel, of no use or value, which is evident from the abuse they heap upon me. He evidently alludes here to Semei’s abuse, who, not content with abusing him, sought to stone him; looking upon him as an outcast and an exile, and as a broken vessel that should be thrown into the sewer. And though the Scripture makes mention of Semei alone abusing him, it is probable that others did the same, and that they are here alluded to, when he says, “I have heard the blame of many.”

13. “For I have heard the blame of many that dwell round about. While they assembled together against me, they consulted to take away my life.” After the abuse of Semei, a conspiracy was entered into, in the presence of Absalom, to