

8. "The Lord keepeth the strangers: he will support the fatherless and the widow: and the ways of sinners he will destroy." He now repeats that God will both help and protect the pilgrims who move along "the narrow way" to their country. "The Lord keepeth the strangers," they who do not belong to Babylon, nor to this world, but the true pilgrims in a strange land. "He will support the fatherless and the widow." The fatherless are the just who have no one to protect them, who have no father in this world, and who put their hope in nothing in this world. The widow is the Church, who is truly a widow, so long as she is separated from her spouse, as subject to all the trials and troubles daily pouring in upon her. These orphans and this widow will be all taken into God's house at the fitting time, and then "he will destroy the ways of sinners," the prosperous ways in which they walk being so many broad ways that lead to destruction, all of which God will, in the end of the world, thoroughly upset and destroy.

9. "The Lord shall reign forever: thy God, O Sion unto generation and generation." Finally, on the termination of the exile, and on the ways of the wicked, as well as the wicked themselves having been exterminated, Christ's eternal kingdom shall commence, for "the Lord shall reign" with his saints, "forever." Your God, I repeat, O holy Sion, will reign with his children forever and ever. Amen.

END OF PSALM 145

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: 145

We are not to trust in men, but in God alone.

1. Praise the Lord, O my soul: in my life I will praise the Lord: I will sing to my God as long as I shall be. Put not your trust in princes,
2. In the children of men, in whom there is no salvation.
3. His spirit shall go forth; and he shall return into his earth: in that day all their thoughts shall perish.
4. Blessed is he who hath the God of Jacob for his helper; whose hope is in the Lord his God.
5. Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them:
6. Who keepeth truth forever; who executeth judgment for them that suffer wrong; who giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth them that are fettered:
7. The Lord enlighteneth the blind. The Lord liftest up them that are cast down: the Lord loveth the just.
8. The Lord keepeth the strangers: he will support the fatherless and the widow: and the ways of sinners he will destroy.
9. The Lord shall reign forever; thy God, O Sion, unto generation and generation.

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: 145

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. "Praise the Lord, O my soul: in my life I will praise the Lord: I will sing to my God as long as I shall be. Put not your trust in princes."

2. "In the children of men, in whom there is no salvation." This Psalm commences in the shape of a dialogue. The exile finding his flesh beginning to groan in the hardships of his exile, exhorts his soul, just beginning to taste of happiness in hope, to praise God, and thereby to refresh the entire man. Addressing his soul; then, he says, "praise the Lord, O my soul." The soul answers, "in my life I will praise the Lord." I will praise him when I come to enjoy the true life, because here below, instead of singing and praising him, we must rather weep and pray to him; for though we do praise him, even at present, to some extent, it is not praise properly so called, or full praise, but is mingled with prayers and with tears, but when we come to the true life, then, indeed, will our praise deserve the name of praise, for it will be pure, everlasting, and most delightful. He repeats the same when he adds, "I will sing to my Lord as long as I shall be," when I shall have come to eternal life I will sing unceasingly to my God. At present I cannot sing while I have so many things to interrupt me, but when I shall have been disengaged and free from all care, "I will sing to my God as long as I shall be," or during the whole space of that true life; and as I shall never have any fear of dying, I shall sing forever without failing. "Put not your trust in princes," admiration of place and power. As if such things could confer happiness on those who enjoy such positions, in pity for their blindness, he exclaims, "put not your trust in princes," which he explains, by calling them "the sons of men," mere mortals like yourselves, there being only one true prince, the Creator of mankind, in whom we should put our trust: and he assigns a reason why we should place no trust in them when he adds, "in whom there is no salvation," because the princes of this world, when they cannot save others, have no salvation in themselves, nor are they saved themselves, but must be saved like all others, if they deserve it. If such be the case, how did Christ, who was man, and the "Son of Man," as he was wont to style himself, save the whole human race? He saved them through his divinity.

3. "His spirit shall go forth; and he shall return into his earth: in that day all their thoughts shall perish." The Prophet might have adduced many arguments to prove that "there is no salvation in the children of men," inasmuch as they are infirm, variable, deceitful, often aiming at what they are unable to accomplish, and as often refusing to accomplish what they are equal to; but he puts forward one simple reason alone, one that no one can contradict, one taken from death that is common to us all, for how can he save others who cannot save himself? For, beyond aye or nay let him shut himself in a fortified tower, let him surround it with a powerful army for protection, were he even monarch of the universe, "his spirit shall go forth" from his body, and then his body shall "return into his earth," of which it was composed, and then, "in that day all their thoughts shall perish," the thoughts of all those who put their hope in him, depended on him, expected riches, places, appointments from him, but the moment God takes

away the spirit, that is, the life of him on whom they so depended, all their castle building tumbles to the ground, and thus, "all their thoughts shall perish."

4. "Blessed is he who hath the God of Jacob for his helper, whose hope is in the Lord his God."

5. "Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them." The Prophet now tells us that the person who will sincerely desire to arrive at true and everlasting salvation will have to place no confidence whatever in the princes of this world, but in the only true God alone. "Blessed is he," at least in hope, and in the safe and direct road to actual happiness, "who hath the God of Jacob for his helper," who has the one true God to assist and to protect him in this world. He calls the true God "the God of Jacob," by reason of Jacob's people adhering to God, while the Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and the other surrounding nations, worshiped false gods. And he tells at once whom God will help, when he says, "who hope is in the Lord his God," or, God will help all who hope in him, of which there is abundant testimony in the Scriptures. "No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded," Eccl. 2; and in Psalm 113, "the house of Israel hath hoped in the Lord, he is their helper and their protector." He then proves the advantage of hoping in the Lord, because it was he "who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them." Whence it follows that there are no bounds to his power, that he is Lord of all things, and that all things are subject to him, and therefore, that anyone protected by him has no reason for fear from any quarter.

6. "Who keepeth truth forever; who executeth judgment for them that suffer wrong; who giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth them that are fettered." As in exile might have said, in reply, I know God is all powerful, and that he can, if he choose, protect and assist me, but how do I know that he will? The Prophet takes him up, and proves that God will do it, by reason of his justice, and of his mercy. By reason of his justice, "you keepeth truth forever;" that is to say, he always stands to what he has promised, and he has promised help to those who put their trust in them. In like manner, in consequence of his being supremely just, "he executes judgment for them that suffer wrong;" that is to say, he gives just judgment in favor of the just against the wicked, by punishing the latter, and rewarding the former; and inasmuch as he is merciful, "he gives food to the hungry," providing for the temporal as well as the spiritual wants of those who trust in him, in a most extraordinary and wonderful manner.

7. "The Lord enlighteneth the blind. The Lord lifteth up them that are cast down: the Lord loveth the just." As it would not be enough for the exiles, on their return to their country, to be ensured safe conduct from robbers, and wherewithal to support them on the journey, if their feet were not at liberty, and themselves wide awake, besides being in rude health, he therefore, in order to show how determined God is to assist those who put their trust in him, adds, "the Lord looseth them that are in fetters," the fetters of concupiscence, which he does gradually, by destroying all their evil desires; and as concupiscence always blinds us, "the Lord enlighteneth the blind," by giving them the light of wisdom and of interior prudence; and as sin was the cause, not only of concupiscence and blindness, but also of human infirmity, man having been brought, by means of sin, to the condition of him, who going down from Jericho, fell in with robbers who despoiled him, and left him more dead than alive, the Prophet therefore adds, "he lifteth up them that are cast down," and finally, he adds, "the Lord loveth the just," in order, that man, after having been healed, set free, and enlightened through grace, may look forward to perseverance through the goodness of God.