

35. "Break thou the arm of the sinner and of the malignant: his sin shall be sought, and shall not be found." "Break thou the arm;" that is, the power and strength of the sinner, that so humbled, he may repent and sin no more; so that afterwards "his sin shall be sought, and shall not be found:" as Isaias 28 has it, "Vexation alone shall make you understand what you hear;" and in Psalm 82, "Fill their faces with shame, and they will seek thy name."

36. "The Lord shall reign to eternity, yea forever and ever: ye Gentiles shall perish from his land." He predicts the fulfillment of his prayer. "The Lord shall reign;" that is, always will reign in spite of his enemies; nay, his enemies even shall "Perish from his land;" that is, shall be exterminated from this world, for the world is God's land, as we read in Psalm 23, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."

37. "The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor; thy ear hath heard the preparation of their heart." He uses the past for the future tense, on account of the certainty of the thing being done; and the word "Desire," instead of prayer, to show how sure and quickly they would be heard; as if he said: God, the searcher of hearts, will not wait for their prayers, but will even hear their desires, that usually precede prayer. "Desire" and "Preparation of their heart" are the same, desire being a preliminary to prayer.

38. "To judge for the fatherless and for the humble, that man may no more presume to magnify himself upon earth." "The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor," — "to judge for the fatherless and for the humble;" that is, to protect the fatherless and the humble against their oppressors, in order that man, who is upon earth, a creature, should not "Presume to magnify himself" against God, who is in heaven, and man's Creator. All these denunciations of the oppressors of the poor are considered, by a figure, to apply to Antichrist. So St. Jerome and St. Augustine say: but if they are applied, as I consider they ought, in the literal sense, to the oppressors of the poor in general, they prove how great is the sin of such oppression, when the Holy Spirit denounces it as such length, and in such expressive language.

### END OF PSALM 9

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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: 9

*The Church praiseth God for his protection against her enemies.*

1. I will give praise to thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: I will relate all thy wonders.
2. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing to thy name, O thou most high.
3. When my enemy shall be turned back: they shall be weakened and perish before thy face.
4. For thou hast maintained my judgment and my cause: thou hast sat on the throne, who judgest justice.
5. Thou hast rebuked the Gentiles, and the wicked one hath perished: thou hast blotted out their name for ever and ever.
6. The swords of the enemy have failed unto the end: and their cities thou hast destroyed. Their memory hath perished with a noise:
7. But the Lord remaineth for ever. He hath prepared his throne in judgment:
8. And he shall judge the world in equity, he shall judge the people in justice.
9. And the Lord is become a refuge for the poor: a helper in due time in tribulation.
10. And let them trust in thee who know thy name: for thou hast not forsaken them that seek thee, O Lord.
11. Sing ye to the Lord, who dwelleth in Sion: declare his ways among the Gentiles:
12. For requiring their blood he hath remembered them: he hath not forgotten the cry of the poor.
13. Have mercy on me, O Lord: see my humiliation which I suffer from my enemies.
14. Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death, that I may declare all thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Sion.
15. I will rejoice in thy salvation: the Gentiles have stuck fast in the destruction which they prepared. Their foot hath been taken in the very snare which they hid.
16. The Lord shall be known when he executeth judgments: the sinner hath been caught in the works of his own hands.
17. The wicked shall be turned into hell, all the nations that forget God.
18. For the poor man shall not be forgotten to the end: the patience of the poor shall not perish for ever.
19. Arise, O Lord, let not man be strengthened: let the Gentiles be judged in thy sight.
20. Appoint, O Lord, a lawgiver over them: that the Gentiles may know themselves to be but men. >

21. Why, O Lord, hast thou retired afar off? Why dost thou slight us in our wants, in the time of trouble?
22. Whilst the wicked man is proud, the poor is set on fire: they are caught in the counsels which they devise.
23. For the sinner is praised in the desires of his soul: and the unjust man is blessed.
24. The sinner hath provoked the Lord, according to the multitude of his wrath he will not seek him:
25. God is not before his eyes: his ways are filthy at all times. Thy judgments are removed from his sight: he shall rule over all his enemies.
26. For he hath said in his heart: I shall not be moved from generation to generation, and shall be without evil.
27. His mouth is full of cursing, and of bitterness, and of deceit: under his tongue are labor and sorrow.
28. He sitteth in ambush with the rich in private places, that he may kill the innocent.
29. His eyes are upon the poor man: he lieth in wait in secret like a lion in his den. He lieth in ambush that he may catch the poor man: to catch the poor, whilst he draweth him to him.
30. In his net he will bring him down: he will crouch and fall, when he shall have power over the poor.
31. For he hath said in his heart: God hath forgotten, he hath turned away his face not to see to the end.
32. Arise, O Lord God, let thy hand be exalted: forget not the poor.
33. Wherefore hath the wicked provoked God? For he hath said in his heart: He will not require it.
34. Thou seest it, for thou considerest labor and sorrow: that thou mayest deliver them into thy hands. To thee is the poor man left: thou wilt be a helper to the orphan.
35. Break thou the arm of the sinner and of the malignant: his sin shall be sought, and shall not be found.
36. The Lord shall reign to eternity, yea forever and ever: yea Gentiles shall perish from his land.
37. The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor: thy ear hath heard the preparation of their heart.
38. To judge for the fatherless and for the humble, that man may no more presume to magnify himself upon earth.

28. "He sitteth in ambush with the rich in private places, that he may kill the innocent." He comes now to describe the evil works, the oppression of the poor, making use of a metaphorical expression, taken from those who, when they meditate assassination, conceal themselves in a house for the purpose of observing the ingress and egress of those whose lives they are bent upon; and the meaning is that those wicked and powerful people enter into a conspiracy with other rich and powerful people, to circumvent the poor by various arts and stratagems, and so destroy them entirely,

29. "His eyes are upon the poor man: he lieth in wait in secret like a lion in his den. He lieth in ambush that he may catch the poor man: to catch the poor, whilst he draweth him to him."

30. "In his net he will bring him down: he will crouch and fall, when he shall have power over the poor." The metaphor used in the twenty-eighth verse is here explained by different metaphors. In that verse he compared the oppressor of the poor, to one man lying in ambush for another. In verse twenty-nine he compares him to a lion, lying in wait for the weaker beasts; and finally, to a man laying snares for wild beasts, and catching them. "He lieth in wait to catch the poor," which he does by enticing him, when off his guard, and draws him to himself. "In his net he will bring him down;" that is, will oppress and trample on him; will fall down, and rush upon him. "When he shall have power over the poor;" when he shall have made himself entirely their master. These verses contain a beautiful allusion to the wicked man's intention, who then dreadfully comes into the slavery of the devil, when he seems to have made poor people slaves to himself.

31. "For he hath said in his heart: God hath forgotten he hath turned away his face not to see to that end." The cause of all the impiety being the wicked man's thinking within himself, that God was, and ever would be, indifferent to human affairs.

32. "Arise, O Lord God, let thy hands be exalted, forget not the poor." A prayer to God to curb the wicked. "Arise," as if from sleep, "and let thy hand be exalted," to strike; for the hands of a passive man, or of one asleep, are either hanging down, or folded.

33. "Wherefore hath the wicked provoked God? For he hath said in his heart: He will not require it." He again repeats the cause of the wicked man's offending God: namely, thinking that God will not punish him.

34. "Thou seest it, for thou considerest labor and sorrow: that thou mayest deliver them into thy hands. To thee is the poor man left: thou wilt be a helper to the orphan." He contradicts the above by saying: you "do see it," and you "will require it," O God, because, "Thou considered the labor and sorrow" of the poor, and in due time you will "deliver into thy hands" the wicked to be punished; and justly, because to you, the Father of all, belongs the special care "of the poor man and the orphan."

23. "For the sinner is praised in the desires of his soul: and the unjust man is blessed." The reason assigned why prosperity makes "the wicked man proud," and "the poor is set on fire;" because, when the sinner doth evil, and by reason of his being in power, and having riches, he is praised by many, as if he were doing right; and his desires, however sinful and unjust, are applauded; and hence it comes that "The unjust man is blessed," when he rather deserved to be cursed and reviled.

24. "The sinner hath provoked the Lord, according to the multitude of his wrath he will not seek him:" He goes on to explain the malice of the proud sinner: "He hath provoked the Lord," at a time that he should have, with all his might, sought for a reconciliation with him; but, "According to the multitude of his wrath he will not seek him;" that is, his extravagant anger towards the afflicted poor will not let him seek God to be reconciled to him. For his mind has been so blinded by arrogance, that he never reflects how great an evil it is to provoke Almighty God.

25. "God is not before his eyes: his ways are filthy at all times. Thy judgments are removed from his sight: he shall rule over all his enemies." The blind sinner thinks not of God. The Hebrew puts it more expressively, "God is not in all his thoughts," meaning none of his thoughts, however numerous they may be, ever turn to God. "His ways are filthy at all times," a consequence of the preceding; for, when he never thinks of God, never directs his steps to God, or to aught but gratifying his carnal desires, all his ways, therefore, that is, all his actions are filthy with the mire of concupiscence. "Thy judgments are removed from his sight." The only thing that could turn him from his evil ways, the dreadful reflection on thy judgments, is far from his heart; and he, therefore, fearless of God, "Rules over all his enemies;" that is, tyrannically oppresses all he considers as such.

26. "For he hath said in his heart: I shall not be moved from generation to generation, and shall be without evil." The vain confidence of the wicked man! Who thinks that nothing can harm him. "He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved;" nobody can disturb me, or bring me down from my station, forever and ever; I shall meet no evil.

27. "His mouth is full of cursing, and of bitterness, and of deceit: under his tongue are labor and sorrow." Having described the heart of the wicked man that never thinks on God, or his judgments, nor fears anything from them, he now describes his mouth, and afterwards his actions. Under the head of malediction, "or cursing," may be classed blasphemies against God, and railing against men; under "bitterness" come detraction, contention, murmuring, and such like, indicative of hatred and rancor; finally, "to deceit" belong calumnious lies, and perjuries. The expression, "under his tongue are labor and sorrow," explains the effect of the evils so enumerated; for the effect of all the evil words of the impious "is labor and sorrow, under his tongue;" that is, the labor and sorrow of wretched mortals, and the matter on which his tongue is constantly exercised.

## **EXPLANATION OF THE REMAINING NUMBERING OF THE PSALMS**

The Septuagint translators combined Psalms 9 and 10 into one psalm, even though they are separate in the Hebrew text. Consequently, from this psalm through Psalm 147, the numbering of the psalms in the Roman Catholic versions of the Bible differs from the numbering in the Protestant versions. The Roman Catholic versions follow the Septuagint (Greek) and Vulgate (Latin) versions, whereas the Protestant versions follow the Hebrew Bible. Twice the Septuagint translators combined or renumbered two psalms into one (PSS. 9 and 10 into 9, and PSS. 114 and 115 into 113), and twice they divided two psalms into four parts (Ps. 116 into 114 and 115, and Ps. 147 into 146 and 147).

The Septuagint translators evidently combined Psalms 9 and 10 for two reasons. First, together they complete a somewhat modified acrostic in which each verse (almost) begins with the succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Second, the same usual terms and the same basic structure occur in both psalms, suggesting that they may have been linked originally. In spite of these similarities, the differences between Psalm 9 and 10 while they may be justified in their separation, for our own purposes we will be using the Roman Catholic version of the Psalms throughout this series.

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***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: 9**

### **Explanation of the Psalm**

1. "I will give praise to thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: I will relate all thy wonders." The matter of the Psalm is here proposed, viz., the praise of God for his wonderful works. The words, "With my whole heart," signify the subject to be praised is one of the highest importance, and, therefore, to be done with all his might and affections. The words, "All thy wonders" imply that the subject of his praise is so expansive as to comprehend in one view all the wonderful works of God. Such, in reality, was the redemption of man; a work of infinite mercy, in which are comprehended all the beneficent acts of God, as the apostle has it, Eph. 1, "To establish all things in Christ;" that is, to comprehend, to reduce everything into one sum through him.

2. "I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing to thy name, O thou Most High." The same sentiment, in different language, or, perhaps, rather an explanation; as if he said: With exultation and joy will I confess to thee, with joy in my heart and exultation in my exterior, thus confessing with all my affections. Playing on the harp before thee, O Most High, will I relate all thy wonders, chanting them to thy glory.

3. "When my enemy shall be turned back: they shall be weakened and perish before thy face." He begins to narrate the victory of Christ over the devil and his satellites, and speaks in the person of the entire Church. "When my enemy shall be turned back," that means, when my enemy, the devil, flying from your face, shall begin to turn back, then all his soldiers "Shall be weakened, and perish;" that is to say, the moment they see their leader to fly, they will become unnerved, will fly, scatter as if they had been actually destroyed. Of such flight the Lord himself speaks in the gospel, John 12, "Now is the judgment of the world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

4. "For thou hast maintained my judgment and my cause: thou has sat on the throne, who judgest justice." A reason assigned for the devil's flight and the scattering of his forces; for you, my Lord, the Son of God, "hast maintained my judgment and my cause;" that is, you have put an end to the litigation, the struggle, and the contest between mankind, or the Church and the devil. For the devil maintained that mankind was justly held in bondage by him, and therefore harassed it in a most tyrannical manner, until Christ, by his sufferings on the cross, thereby atoning for man, put an end to the struggle; hence the expression, "Thou has sat on the throne, who judgest justice," meaning the cross, as St. Leo has it, in his eighth Sermon on the Passion of our Lord: "O unspeakable glory of the passion, in which are united the judgment seat of God, the judgment of the world, and the power of the crucified;" and these are in reality the occult things of the Son, which by some are prefixed as a title to this Psalm. For he who, to all appearance, seemed to be guilty and was suffering punishment in the greatest ignominy, at that very moment was sitting on his throne, "judged justice," that is, judged most justly, inasmuch as now that the price had been paid, man was delivered, and the devil despoiled of his dominion over him, and actually, as the apostle has it, Col. 2, "Blotting out the handwriting of the decree which was against us, which was contrary to us, and the same he took out of the way, fastening it to the cross."

20. "Appoint, O Lord, a lawgiver over them: that the Gentiles may know themselves to be but men." The judgment that issued against the Gentiles, who persecuted the Church, was quite manifest when they became subject to a Christian prince. They then plainly saw they were weak mortals, and could not prevail against Christ. That the Prophet predicts, but in the shape of a prayer. The word "lawgiver," in the Hebrew, means a teacher, or a terrible character. And as the Prophet spoke of a terrible teacher, who was to teach and to command with authority, the Septuagint, most properly, used the word legislator. By the legislator, many have said Christ is meant; many more say, Antichrist is alluded to. Let every one have their own opinion. Mine is, that he alludes to Jovinianus, Valentinian, Theodosius, and such characters.

21. "Why, O Lord, hast thou retired afar off? Why dost thou slight us in our wants, in the time of trouble?" This verse, according to the Hebrew version, is the first of Psalm 10, but not recognized as such by the Septuagint; and it is most likely that such division of the Psalm was made in later times, by those who considered that the matter of the latter part of the Psalm was quite different from the first part; because, in the first part, hitherto the Church was exulting in the victory of God over his and her own enemies; and in the succeeding part she mourns over the success of the same enemies over the Church. The whole difference, though, consists, not in the matter, but in the times of which David prophesies. In the beginning of the Psalm, David exulted in spirit on account of the secret mysteries of the Son of God, who by his death subdued the evil spirits and paganism, and destroyed their idols; and then in the end of the said part, and the beginning of this part, foretells the persecutions that will be raised by the Gentiles, and by the evil minded persons, assuming betimes such a magnitude that it would appear God had entirely forgotten the people he had delivered with such glory to himself; and as he said previously, "The Lord is become a refuge for the poor; a helper in due time in tribulation:" having before him another time, namely, that in which God permitted the poor to be oppressed by the more powerful, he says, "Why, O Lord, hast thou retired afar off?" that is to say, permitted such a raid of the unjust on the just, as if you were not present, and had "retired afar off. Why dost thou slight us in our wants, in the time of trouble?" Why not help us when we need help; and that is most in the time of trouble?

22. "Whilst the wicked man is proud, the poor is set on fire; they are caught in the counsels which they devise." Rather a difficult verse, but the sense would seem to be, "Whilst the wicked man is proud," that is, while in his prosperity he appears full of vain boasting, "the poor is set on fire;" that means, is scandalized, and lights internally with anger: "They are caught in the counsels which they devise;" that is, both one and the other are caught; the impious man, by attributing all his happiness to himself, and thus deceiving himself; and the just man, seeing such prosperity, and not understanding it, equally deceives and involves himself. The expression, "The counsels which they devise," is a Graecism, and has been translated literally, and merely signifies their thoughts. This verse would seem to supply a reason for the preceding one, showing that the Prophet had implored of God "not to slight their wants in the time of trouble," because the prosperity of the wicked is equally hurtful to the sinner and to the just, contributing, as it does, to the pride of the former, and the scandal of the latter.

15. "I will rejoice in thy salvation: the Gentiles have stuck fast in the destruction which they prepared. Their foot hath been taken in the very snare which they hid." Having been liberated from the "gates of death," "I will rejoice in thy salvation;" that is, in the salvation you bestowed on me; since "the Gentiles who laid a snare for me" have been caught in the very snare they laid, as they would in the deepest mud, from whence they cannot extricate themselves; in other words, their persecution did much harm to them, none to me; and the same may be said not only of their open and avowed persecution, but also of their private persecution, which, "like a snare, they laid for me." May be too, that the avowed persecutions of Diocletian and others of the Roman emperors, and the disguised persecutions of Julian the Apostate, and other heretical emperors, are here intended.

16. "The Lord shall be known when he executeth judgments: the sinner hath been caught in the works of his own hands." From the wonderful dispensation of providence, who turns the arms and the wiles of the wicked on themselves, David gathers that God will come to be known. "The Lord shall be known when he executeth judgment;" that is, his judgments will be so admired that he will be known to be the true and supreme God; and mainly, through his providence in causing the sinner "to be caught in the works of his own hands:" namely, when he falls into "the destruction he had prepared for others," and "the snare which he had hid for them."

17. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, all the nations that forget God." To be taken as a prophecy, not as an imprecation. "Shall be turned," means in the Hebrew, "shall return;" which is applied to sinners, inasmuch as the devil, when he seduced them, made them his slaves; and, therefore, they will return to him. For God created man in innocence: the devil made him a sinner. As our Savior, in John 8, says, "You are from your father, the devil." The latter part of the verse, "all the nations that forget God," declares who the sinners are that will return to hell: namely, all those "who forget God." For the forgetting of God is the root of all sin; for he who sins turns away from God unto the creature.

18. "For the poor man shall not be forgotten to the end; the patience of the poor shall not perish forever." Sinners, therefore, who are in the habit of oppressing the poor will be cast into hell; for God, sooner or later, will avenge their wrongs; for, though he may seem to forget them for a time, "he does not forget them to the end," but will one time remember them; and, therefore, "the patience of the poor shall not perish forever." When the patience of the poor is said not to perish, it does not mean that their patience in itself will be everlasting; but that it will in its effects, inasmuch as its reward will be everlasting.

19. "Arise, O Lord, let not man be strengthened: let the Gentiles be judged in thy sight." Having predicted the final ruin of the wicked, he now asks for their coercion. "Arise, O Lord, let not man be strengthened;" that is, let not man, a handful of dust, prevail against God, his Creator: "Let the Gentiles be judged in thy sight;" meaning: Let judgment issue against them, as we have in another Psalm, "Judge them, O God."

5. "Thou hast rebuked the Gentiles, and the wicked one hath perished: thou has blotted out their name forever and ever." The devil having been subdued through the cross, Christ our Lord, through his apostles, "rebuked the Gentiles," "convicting the world of sin, of justice, and of judgment," as the Lord himself foretold: and in such manner "The wicked one hath perished;" that is the wickedness of idolatry perished, and man from impiety was brought to love God. Which was effected not only among the impious of that time, but Christ so entirely destroyed idolatry and the religion of the Gentiles forever, that it can never appear again, having been plucked out from the roots. A thing we see already fulfilled, the Jews themselves, who were most prone to idolatry, having never attempted to return to it. "Forever and ever," to signify true, real eternity, having no end, for fear any one should suppose that a very long time, but still a definite one, was intended.

6. "The swords of the enemy have failed unto the end: and their cities thou hast destroyed. Their memory hath perished with a noise:" A reason assigned for idolatry not being likely to return, inasmuch as the power of the devil and his strongholds had disappeared, and he has no means of carrying on an offensive or a defensive warfare, "His swords having failed" — "unto the end;" that is, thoroughly, without a single exception—not one remaining. By "the swords of the enemy" we may also understand the temptations, or suggestions, which may be looked upon as the words of the devil, in the same sense that the apostle calls the word of God, "the sword of the Spirit." The same apostle calls the temptations of the devil, "weapons of fire;" and such weapons are said "to have failed," because they cannot injure those armed in the faith of Jesus Christ. In which sense, St. Anthony, in his life of St. Athanasius, quoted this very passage, proving therefrom that the temptations of the devil are most easily repulsed by the sign of the cross. By "their cities" may be understood all infidels, in whom the devil dwells without disturbance; these were destroyed by Christ when he put down idolatry. Our Lord himself seems to have this in view when he says, in Luke 11, "When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things which he possessed are in peace. But if a stronger than he come upon him, and overcome him, he will take away all his armor, wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils." When the devil held possession, everything he possessed was in peace; because, while man is in a state of infidelity, he is always in the power of the devil, however morally good his life may have been, as has been the case with many pagan philosophers. But Christ, having got possession, by the extirpation of infidelity and the introduction of the knowledge of the true God, the devil lost his all. "Their memory has perished with a noise;" that is to say, the memory of idolatry, idolaters, and of the whole kingdom of Satan has perished amidst much noise and confusion. For the whole world resisted Christ; the most powerful kings and emperors sought to stand up for and defend their idols; but the more the world raged, the more idolatry tottered, and the remembrance of it was being blotted out; and, finally, the cessation of persecution was succeeded by a total destruction of idolatry.

7. "But the Lord remaineth forever. He hath prepared his throne in judgment." Christ's memory, on the contrary, will never fade after his death and Resurrection. "All power in heaven and on earth was given to him," which David alludes to here; as if he said, after such contest with the devil, the Lord "Hath prepared," or, as the Hebrew has it, established "His throne in judgment;" that is, for the purpose of judging; and he, the Prince of the kings of the earth, "Shall judge the world;" meaning the people of the whole world, "In equity and justice," two words used synonymously. Christ is said to sit in judgment on the world, though there may be many wicked and infidel princes in the world in rebellion against him, but who can, however, devise nothing — do nothing against his will and permission.

8. "And he shall judge the world in equity, he shall judge the people in justice." Explained above.

9. "And the Lord is become a refuge for the poor: a helper in due time in tribulation." From the fact of Christ's being the future ruler, to govern with supreme justice, he infers the poor, who are usually oppressed by the great, will have great consolation. Let the poor fear no longer, for the Lord, sitting in heaven, "Is become a refuge" to them; and, furthermore, "A helper in due time in tribulation;" that is, when necessity may require it. For the divine help never comes so opportunely, as when we are overwhelmed in trouble, with no human being to console us; and this promise will be most surely fulfilled to all who truly seek and fear God; and therefore, he adds:

10. "And let them trust in thee who know thy name: for thou hast not forsaken them that trust in thee, O Lord." The Prophet speaks now in the third, instead of the first person, a thing he often does, from some new inspiration. With great justice can all "Who know your name;" that is to say, not only by the sound of it, but in reality; and fully understand the significance of it, and thence know the power and the mercy of God, put their confidence in you in all their difficulties. Much more so can your friends, "Since thou hast not forsaken;" that is, you never have forsaken "Those that seek thee." By those "That seek him" he means those that covet his grace, and with all their heart seek to please him.

11. "Sing ye to the Lord, who dwelleth in Sion: declare his ways among the Gentiles." After a fervent appeal to God, he makes one to man in the same spirit; exhorting them too, to praise God, and to bring others to do so. The Lord is said "To dwell in Sion," for there was the "Ark of the testament," and "The place of prayer;" and this is put in here by way of apposition, that the true God may be distinguished from the false, who dwell in caves and the shrines of the Gentiles. The word "ways" comprehends the thoughts, counsels, plans, inventions, the wonderful works of God, that are so resplendent in the redemption of man. Thus the meaning of the whole verse is: Sing to God a hymn of praise; announce to the Gentiles his wonderful designs, his wonderful wisdom; and, in consequence, his wonderful works, that all nations, when they hear them, may unite in his praise.

12. "For requiring their blood, he hath remembered them: he hath not forgotten the cry of the poor." The Prophet returns to what he previously asserted: namely, that the Lord was a "Just Judge," the "Refuge of the poor in tribulation;" and takes up an objection that may be possibly raised, to wit, the fact of our seeing the poor, however pious, persecuted by the wealthy, sometimes even unto death. The answer is, "Praise God," says he, "for though he sometimes seems to forget his poor," such is not the case. "For requiring;" that is to say, inquiring into their daily actions, and examining them severally. "Their blood he hath remembered, he hath not forgotten the cry of the poor," who, in their persecutions, had appealed to him; which recollection of their sufferings will appear in its own time, when the punishment of the oppressors and the glory of the oppressed shall be declared.

13. "Have mercy on me, O Lord: see my humiliation which I suffer from my enemies." Having thanked God for past favors, he now asks his assistance, in present and future difficulties. The prayer of the Church against her visible and invisible enemies. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, see my humiliation," that is, my total prostration, caused by my enemies.

14. "Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death, that I may declare all thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Sion." The first part of this verse has a connection with the verse preceding. The meaning is: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, see my humiliation;" you, O Lord, "That liftest me up from the gates of death," meaning you that keep me far removed from the gates of death. Those gates are supposed to be very deep; for the Prophet does not allude to the death of the body, but to the death of the soul by sin, or everlasting death; and, therefore, he makes use of the word "Exalt," to be far removed from the said gates. By the "Gates of death," or of hell, the multitude of our infernal enemies would seem to be implied. The great body of the Jewish people were wont to assemble at the gates, whether for matters of justice or any other public business, and thus the word "Gates" got to signify a large assemblage of the people. Hence, we have in Matthew, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her;" and in the last chapter of Ecclesiasticus, "From the gates of tribulation that have encompassed me." And here we may note the beauty of the contrast between the gates of death, and the gates of the daughter of Sion or Jerusalem; the former are in the lowest bottom; the latter, on a high mountain: in the former are assembled the evil spirits; in the latter the people of God: from the gates of the former come forth nothing but temptations and war, that lead to death; the gates of the latter "Are built on peace;" for Jerusalem "Has put peace as its boundary;" and it is named as "The vision of peace." The Church, then, "Is lifted up from the gates of death," to announce God's praise, "In the gates of the daughter of Sion;" which means, being delivered from all temptations that may lead her to eternal death; to acknowledge the great grace conferred on her by her liberator, and to praise him with the angels of God, who are in the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem.