

such wonderful works, it will, therefore, "Discover the thick woods;" that is, on the day of judgment, "It will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart," 1 Cor. 4; and then will God's justice appear in that great theatre or temple, and will be recognized by the wicked, as well as by the just; for then will "Every knee be bent to Christ;" and all, whether with or against their will, shall exclaim, "Thou art just, O Lord, and right is thy judgment;" and thus, "All in his temple shall speak his glory."

10. "The Lord maketh the flood to dwell: and the Lord shall sit king forever. The Lord will give strength to his people: the Lord will bless his people with peace." According to the first interpretation, the meaning is that a reason is assigned here for all things giving glory to God, for "He maketh the flood to dwell;" he pours out his wholesome rain in such abundance on the earth, as to supply all the vegetable world with nutrition, which, in their turn, give support to animal life; and "the Lord shall sit king forever;" for it is he that guides, governs, and directs all these matters. According to the second interpretation, when the Lord, on the day of judgment, shall have "discovered the thick woods," and his justice shall have been praised by all, then he will "make a flood to dwell," inundating the wicked with all manner of evils; and thus, all resistance being broken down, the whole power of demons, bad men, and all power in general being swept away, "the Lord shall sit King forever." Some will have the flood here spoken of to refer to the deluge, others to Baptism; and those who so explain it being of great weight and high position, I will not contradict them. "The Lord will give strength to his people: the Lord will bless his people with peace."

The conclusion of the Psalm, in which, according to the first interpretation, having praised God for his dealings with all the inferior things and creatures of the world, he now praises him for "giving strength to his people;" nerve and strength to subdue all their enemies, and then to rest in profound and undisturbed peace. According to the second interpretation, herein is a promise of "strength" to resist temptation in this our pilgrimage, and a "Blessing;" namely, everlasting life in the world to come. Some pious people have remarked the significance of the words, the "Voice of the Lord," being repeated exactly seven times in this chapter, and that this has reference to the seven Sacraments. Thus, the voice of the Lord "On the waters" alludes to Baptism; "In power," confirmation, "In magnificence," the Eucharist; "Breaking the cedars, Penance; "Shaking the desert," Orders; "Dividing the flame of fire;" Matrimony; "Prepareth the stags," Extreme Unction.

### END OF PSALM 28

## 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: 28

**An invitation to glorify God, with a commemoration of His mighty works.**

1. Bring to the Lord, O ye children of God: bring to the Lord the offspring of rams.
2. Bring to the Lord glory and honor; bring to the Lord glory to his name: adore ye the Lord in his holy court.
3. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of majesty hath thundered, The Lord upon many waters.
4. The voice of the Lord is in power; the voice of the Lord in magnificence.
5. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars: yea, the Lord shall break the cedars of Libanus,
6. And shall reduce them to pieces, as a calf of Libanus, and as the beloved son of unicorns.
7. The voice of the Lord divideth the flame of fire:
8. The voice of the Lord shaketh the desert: and the Lord shall shake the desert of Cades.
9. The voice of the Lord prepareth the stags: and he will discover the thick woods: and in his temple all shall speak his glory.
10. The Lord maketh the flood to dwell: and the Lord shall sit king forever. The Lord will give strength to his people: the Lord will bless his people with peace.

*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: 28**

### **Explanation of the Psalm**

1. "Bring to the Lord, O ye children of God: bring to the Lord the offspring of rams." The Prophet, being about to chant the praises of the divine power, stirs up God's peculiar people, to whom he was known, for "God is known in Judea, in Israel great is his name," Psalm 75, to honor that power with the victims of the season, the hymns of their voice, and the prostration of their bodies. Taking the summons to refer to a later period, the explanation would be, that when about to chant the praises of the divinity, the perfecter of the tabernacle, that is, of the Church, who is the mother of all God's children, he invites those children, so called by the inspiration of heaven, to offer to God sacrifice of praise. "Bring to the Lord, O ye children of God, the offspring of rams;" you that have been made children of God by the blood of the immaculate Lamb, bring your own lambs, bring the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, as he further explains in the following verse.

2. "Bring to the Lord glory and honor; bring to the Lord glory to his name: adore ye the Lord in his holy court." The Prophet tells us what sort of sacrifice we should offer to God, namely, "Glory and honor;" that is, in your words and your works glorify the Lord; and not only in your words and works, but even in the carriage of your person, which should be so reverential as to make it appear to all that you acknowledge him as your supreme Master, and that you adore him as such. "Bring to the Lord glory to his name." Bring glory to the Lord, that is, to his name, by celebrating the name, fame, and knowledge of the Lord. "Adore ye the Lord in his holy court." The holy court may mean either the vestibule of the Jewish tabernacle, to which all could resort, while the priest alone were permitted to enter the tabernacle; or the Catholic Church, which is like the porch or vestibule of the heavenly tabernacle. All, good and bad, are promiscuously

desert; but when he can from the very desert call up trees and animals, making it thus to shake with parturition. We have something like this idea in Psalm 106, "He hath turned rivers into a wilderness: a fruitful land into barrenness. He hath turned a wilderness into pools of water. And hath placed there the hungry: and they made a city for their habitation. And they sowed fields, and planted vineyards." According to the second interpretation, the meaning would be: The barbarians who were, up to that time, so backward in the cultivation of their souls, and in the grace of God, so that compared to other nations they might have been called deserted, would also be brought to the light of the Gospel.

9. "The voice of the Lord prepareth the stags: and he will discover the thick woods: and in his temple all shall speak his glory." According to the first interpretation, the Prophet, having praised God's power in all the elements, water, air, fire, and earth, turns now to animals and plants, and afterwards to man. "The voice of the Lord prepareth the stags." See God's dealing with them! Job 39 tells us they bring forth their young with the greatest difficulty, and the reason seems to be that they bring them forth in a most perfect state, so that the moment they leave the mother's womb they go to pasture, and never more trouble the mother, as we read in the same passage. "Preparing the stags," then, means helping them in their difficult parturition, through which they could never pass, had not providence mercifully helped them through it. "And he will discover the thick woods." In the Hebrew it is, "Will open the woods," and the meaning is that nothing can be concealed or hidden from God, for he penetrates everything, acts upon everything, not only on animals, but on plants and trees, and men, too; and, therefore, he follows up by, "And in his temple all shall speak his glory." All creatures in the universe, for the universe is God's temple, will praise and glorify him.

According to the second interpretation, it would be thus: "The voice of the Lord prepareth the stags." The preaching of the Gospel prepares devoted souls, aiming at perfection, and blasting with their spirit the poisoned serpents, to produce wonderful things; for what can be more wonderful, or more surprising, than for a weak, infirm man to do any thing deserving of life everlasting. And since the voice of the Lord causes

masses and congregations. “And as the beloved sons of unicorns,” a most graceful animal in its movements, light and agile; such will be the avidity of all tribes and nations to obey the Gospel. According to the second interpretation, the meaning would be: The preaching of the Gospel will not only humble the powerful and the wise, but it will break them into pieces, and make them as small as a calf on Libanus. By the calf we properly understand Christ, who was not only humble and mild as a suckling calf, but was also offered up in sacrifice to God. “And as the beloved sons of unicorns;” that means, when those proud cedars of Libanus shall have been destroyed, the beloved Christ, the most beloved of his father, the desired of all nations, will appear, no longer the helpless calf, but the son of a most valiant unicorn. The majesty of God and the omnipotence of Christ then began for the first time to show itself, when, through the preaching of the fishermen, the orators, the philosophers, nay, the very kings of the world, began to believe in Christ. On the strength of the unicorn, see Job 36.

7. “The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire:” The Prophet now passes from the action of God on the air to his action on the fire, and says, “His voice,” that is, his power and authority, “divideth the flames of fire,” which he does when, at his command, the thunderbolts of heaven, the most destructive and dreadful weapons that can be used against man, issue, as it were, from the forges of heaven, and are “divided,” to intimidate how sharp and acute they are, as Moses expresses, when he makes the Lord say, “If I shall whet my sword as lightning.” According to the second interpretation, the voice of the Lord is the preaching of the Gospel, which divides the flames of fire, because the Holy Ghost sends various shafts in various ways through the hearts of men; and it was in such “cloven tongues, as it were of fire,” that the Holy Ghost settled in the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

8. “The voice of the Lord shaketh the desert: and the Lord shall shake the desert of Cades.” His action on the earth is now the subject. The Hebrew for shaking implies more than mere shaking; it implies a shaking, previous to parturition, or the production of something. Thus, God’s wonderful power is brought out when he appears to be able not only to lay waste and denude the forest of Libanus, and make it a

permitted to enter the Church, but they alone will enter the heavenly tabernacle who can say to Christ, “Thou hast made us a kingdom and priests to our God.”

3. “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of Majesty hath thundered, The Lord upon many waters.” He now explains why he invited us to celebrate and praise the power of God, and the reason is, because the “voice of the Lord” has a wonderful influence on the elements of nature, as well as on the spiritual fabric of the Church. He then describes God’s action on the waters, on the air, on the fire, and, finally, on the earth; these four elements being the principal ones of this world here below, as known to us. God’s action on the water is described in the first chapter of Genesis, where it is said that “The spirit of the Lord moved over the waters;” “And God said: Let there be a firmament made amidst the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” “God also said: Let the waters that are under the heavens be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear.” Then was “the voice of the Lord upon the waters,” when God commanded a division in them, and, on their division, their retirement into one place, to the caverns of the earth, so that the earth may be habitable. That voice or command of God is called thunder; for, as thunder prostrates and makes us submit and obey, so, at the command of God, the waters retired, and betook themselves into lower places. This voice and thunder of God “was upon the waters,” because at that time water covered the whole surface of the earth, and there was, therefore, an immense abyss of water on the earth. This is more clearly described in Psalm 103, where he says “The deep, like a garment, is its clothing; above the mountains shall the waters stand;” that is, the earth was covered all over by an immense body of water, so as even to cover the mountains. “At thy rebuke they shall flee; at the voice of thy thunder they shall fear. The mountains ascend, and the plains descend into the place which thou hast founded for them;” that is, at God’s command the waters retired as they would from a thunderbolt; and then there appeared the mountains raised up and the plains depressed. “Thou hast set bounds to them which they shall not pass over; neither shall they return to cover the earth.” At the voice of the Lord, not only have the waters retired and left the

earth dry and habitable, but by reason of the same voice, a limit has been put to them which they will never dare to transgress. Another interpretation refers this passage to the beginning of the preaching of the gospel, which had its first rise when God, on the baptism of Christ in the Jordan, announced to the whole world that Jesus Christ was his Son, which is, as it were, the compendium of the Gospel. "The voice of the Lord on the waters" would then mean that magnificent declaration of God, on the baptism of Christ, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And then "The God of majesty thundered, and thundered upon many waters," because then was instituted Baptism, and all the waters of the world got the power of regenerating the children of God.

4. "The voice of the Lord is in power; the voice of the Lord in magnificence." The praise here attributed to God's voice can be well applied to either interpretation. For the voice of the Lord, in the first stages of creation, ordering the waters to divide, to betake themselves to the lower caverns of the earth, never to return, was not an empty or idle command, or without producing its effect; as thunder, that, generally speaking, does no more than make a great noise, but was full of nerve, efficacious and glorious, and produced the effect required. So also the voice of the Gospel, intoned by God himself, taken up by Christ and his apostles, was not an empty parade of words, like that of many philosophers and orators, but was most effective, being confirmed by signs and miracles. The efficacy of the preaching is conveyed in the words, "in power;" the splendor and glory of the miracles, in the word, "magnificence," as Saint Paul has it, 1 Cor. 2, "My preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the showing of the spirit and power;" and, 1 Thess. 1, "For our gospel hath not been to you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost."

5. "The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars: yea, the Lord shall break the cedars of Libanus." According to the first interpretation, the Prophet passes now from the action of God upon the waters to his action on the air; and he tells us that "the voice of the Lord," namely, his orders, raise the winds and the storms, which, in Psalm 148, he calls, "Stormy winds which fulfill his word." How wonderful is God's power!

that can give such force and strength to a thing apparently so weak and feeble, that will, in one moment, tear up and lay prostrate the largest trees, that many men could not accomplish in many days. He quotes "cedars," and the "cedars of Libanus," they being the largest, deepest rooted, and longest lived trees in the world. According to the second explanation, the cedars of Libanus are those high people who, by reason of their power, their wisdom, or their eloquence, are so very high in their own estimation; or, in reference to the fragrance of the cedar, those people who are entirely devoted to pleasure and gluttony; or, in reference to density of foliage and endurance, those who are perverse and obstinate in error. All such cedars will be broken to pieces by the preaching of the Gospel, and brought down to Christian mildness and humility, and to the bringing forth fruits worthy of penance. History abounds in such examples.

6. "And shall reduce them to pieces, as a calf of Libanus, and as the beloved son of unicorns." According to the first explanation, the meaning of the passage is very easy and very beautiful, when explained through the Hebrew, and it means, the voice of the Lord will not only break the cedars of Libanus, but will even tear up entire cedars from the roots, and make them bound like so many calves. And not only the calves, but even the mountains themselves, will be made to bound like a young unicorn. Similar to it is the expression in Psalm 113, "The mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like the lambs of sheep." According to the second interpretation, the meaning would be: The sound of the Gospel will not only break the cedars of Libanus, that is, men, however proud and high they may be, and bring them down to the humility of the Christian religion; but will even tear up the same cedars from the roots, and make them bound to another place; that is, will entirely detach them from all earthly affections, and bring them to nearly an angelic life; a thing clearly carried out in the apostles, who became so religious and so perfect upon earth, as to appear more like angels than like men. And it is not one isolated cedar, but a whole forest of them, that the preaching of the gospel causes to bound and leap; that means that it is not an individual or two that will be brought to faith, religion, and perfection, but whole