

Lord be upon you," nor "we have blessed you in the name of the Lord;" but, on the contrary, they will be told by Christ, the judge, and by all his saints, "go, ye cursed into everlasting fire."

*END OF PSALM 128*

## *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: 128*

**The church of God is invincible: her persecutors come to nothing.**

1. Often have they fought against me from my youth, let Israel now say.
2. Often have they fought against me from my youth: but they could not prevail over me.
3. The wicked have wrought upon my back: they have lengthened their iniquity.
4. The Lord who is just, will cut the necks of sinners.
5. Let them all be confounded and turned back, that hate Sion.
6. Let them be as grass upon the tops of houses, which withereth before it be plucked up:
7. Wherewith the mower fillet not his hand; nor he that gathereth sheaves, his bosom.
8. And they that passed by have not said: The blessing of the Lord be upon you: we have blessed you in the name of 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: 128**

### **EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM**

1. "Often have they fought against me from my youth, let Israel now say." God's people, in trouble, console themselves by the reflection that troubles and difficulties are nothing new to them, and that, through God's assistance, they have always got through them. This applies to the Jews, and the repeated attacks of the neighboring nations, while the Temple and the city were being rebuilt; and it also applies to the Church of Christ, that scarcely ever had a moment's respite from the assaults of pagans, heretics, or bad Christians. He, therefore, says, "often have they fought against me from my youth, that Israel now say." Let not Israel, God's people, be surprised if her enemies assail her; for it is no new story with her; because, from her very infancy, at the first dawn of the Church, she suffered persecution from Cain, and similar persecutions have been going on to the present day.

2. "Often have they fought against me for my youth: but they could not prevail over me." He assigns a reason for the enemies having come so often to the charge, and says it was because "they could not prevail over him;" for, had they prevailed over and destroyed God's people, they would have had no occasion to renew the fight. The history of the Church bears testimony to this.

3. "The wicked have wrought upon my back: they have lengthened their iniquity." He now repeats and confirms by similes and metaphors what he had just expressed in plain language. "The wicked have wrought upon my back." They used my back for an anvil that smith so repeatedly hammers; for their persecutions were so fierce and so numerous, that they could be compared to nothing else. "They have lengthened their iniquity." It was not once or twice they so hammered me, but they repeated it, kept it up and continued it.

4. "The Lord who is just, will cut the necks of sinners."

5. "Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Sion." The Prophet now consoles God's people by predicting that the divine vengeance was not far off from the wicked persecutors of the just; as if he said: cheer up, you just, for your persecutors, to be sure, wrought upon your back, or your necks; but, in a very short time, God, in his justice, instead of working on their necks, will cut them off with this sword, so that they will never again have the power of harming you; and then, finally, all those who had been so puffed up in their pride "shall be confounded," and all they

"that hate Sion," and persecuted God's people, shall fly, and fall, and "be turned back." We must remark that the expression, "will cut the necks of sinners," applies only to the impenitent sinners; for God, instead of cutting the necks of those who humbly confess their sins with a fixed purpose of amendment, "heals all their diseases." The words, "let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Sion," is not to be read in this sense of an imprecation, but of a prophecy; as we have frequently remarked.

6. "Let them be as grass upon the tops of houses, which withereth before it be plucked up."

7. "Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that gathereth sheaves, his bosom." Another imprecation, which, too, is to be read as a prediction, for it conveys to us the briefness of the happiness of the wicked, and, by a very happy idea, compares it to grass, a vile and fragile substance, and, as is said of it, "which is to day, and tomorrow will be cast into the fire;" and, not content with comparing it to grass, he adds, that it is like the grass that grows on the top of a house, a thing of no value, so much so that nobody ever thinks of cutting it, saving it, or making it into bundles, but leaves it where it grows to wither and to rot. At present, we do not see the full extent of this comparison, though we know of nothing, perhaps, more worthless, or of less value than such grass; but when we shall all come to be judged we shall see that such a comparison, instead of being over the mark, is considerably under it. What will be, then, to see those who abounded in the riches and power of this world, and who imagined they had, through such riches, established themselves and their families in their kingdoms and empires, shoved out ignominiously, and hurled into the lowest pit? And, furthermore, to see those who had reveled in pleasures and enjoyments, who knew not how to put up with the slightest inconvenience, consigned to everlasting torments, without the slightest hope of the smallest relief for all eternity?

8. "And they that passed by have not said: the blessing of the Lord be upon you: we have blessed you in the name of the Lord." As he said that the grass on the housetop was not usually cut or gathered, he adds, that neither will the mowers of such grass be saluted or blessed by the passersby, as they are wont to salute the reapers or mowers of the hay or corn that grows in the fields; which will be another ingredient in the confusion of the wicked, who are compared to the grass on the housetop. He, therefore, says, it never occurred, nor will it occur, that the passersby should salute or bless them that mow you, for you were never mowed, but when there was occasion to clean the roof you were pulled up and thrown into the fire or the sewer; and though the blessing of the passersby is given to the mowers, still it has its own effect on what is being mowed, for it includes the abundance and the ripeness of the crop and thus, the absence of any benediction on the wicked will have its effect on them too, because, in the Last Judgment, nobody will bless or salute them, nobody will have pity on them; they will be despised and condemned by all, which will tend very much to their further disgrace. No one will say to them, "the blessing of the