

I Will Praise Him

"I will praise You with my whole heart; Before the gods I will sing praises to You. I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth: For you have magnified your word above all Your name. (Psalm 138)

What a contrast with the previous psalm! In Babylonian captivity, Zion's pilgrim can only sit down and weep. No song can rise from his broken heart. His harp hangs silent and useless from a willow limb. He remembers Zion, but the remembrance only increases his sorrow; and his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth.

But now his whole being bursts forth with praise. His mind is so taken up with God that he does not even mention His name. The sheer magnitude of God's revelation in His word, His Being and His realized Presence has eclipsed any need to verbalize His name. Bursting forth in natural and spontaneous communication, he speaks to God with the consciousness of His Presence as one would be with a friend or relative standing near him.

"I will!" A settled commitment, intention, and resolve, is announced and promptly pursued..

How shall I praise the Lord? With the whole heart! Else it is not truly praise, but only noisy lip service. Praise claims the full force of one's whole being. The heart alone is sufficient provocation. Such praise needs no prompting by others. Modern "praise services" choreographed by an energetic "praise leader" equipped with electronic sound tracks, the rote words and music of cheap little religious ditties projected on a screen, are religious frauds.

Nor does one need a congregation to incite his praise. He can praise the Lord as exuberantly in solo as in concert. It is not other voices that stirs His soul: It is God Himself.

But the true worshipper is not intimidated into silence by the public. Nor is he muted by the presence of "gods"(*elohim*...persons of power and station). In the presence of dignitaries, intimidating personalities, his voice will ring with praise to God. He is not afraid of being thought an uncouth "enthusiaist".

Praise is effectively employed in dispatching oppressing hordes of evil spirits, terrifying and accusing demons. Hearty, steadfast, joyous praise and adoration to the Almighty puts the powers of darkness to flight.

True praise to the true and living God trivializes idols, false gods, empty religion, false teachings, and old wives tales. We need not be silent in the face of these; and praise is far more effective than railings, contention, and debate. Better, rather, to smile at God's impotent rivals and loudly adore Him. Sincere and unashamedly hearty praise is unanswerable. God-glorifying, truth-filled songs of praise, set in appropriate melody and meter is great armor against heresy, and sweet comfort in discouragement and setbacks.

Such cheerful praise helps the weak and timid, and puts strength and iron in our souls. The voices of praise to the Eternal God of heaven and earth will never be silenced

-C. M.