

1- O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

6- O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. (Psalm 95)

It seems incongruous that this exhortation to the most sublime of adoration and worship should conclude with that fearful and awful decree of final reprobation, “*Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.*” The Epistle to the Hebrews recounts this impassioned entreaty, (3:7-11) beginning with “. . .as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice . . .” Then follows a chronicle of those who were examples and types for us upon whom the ends of the world have come (I Cor. 10:11); who saw and experienced the goodness and mighty power of God toward them, yet hardened their hearts in rebellion.

If we would not share the judgment of those who believed not, who “went astray in their hearts,” who never learned the ways of God, then we must **hear His voice today**. Today is the only time we will have to hear His voice. If we do not hear today, we will go astray tomorrow, and we will find ourselves finally rejected in **that DAY**.

To hear His voice is to believe what He says and to obey. It is not merely to be aware that He has spoken and to know what He has spoken, but to make His words the law and life of our being. Nor is this faith and obedience a dreary and reluctant shouldering of grievous and contrary obligation and burdens. Those who go about their “Christian faith” with such a perspective and manner of life are those who only have a “form of godliness” which denies the power of the living God. They are those who wish to get into heaven on the cheapest and least costly possible terms. They honor God with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him. They are also offended by that whole-hearted, sacrificial, self-denying manner of worship practiced by robust “enthusiasts” as is pictured in the first part of this Psalm.

We who hear God, believe and obey Him, have learned something of His ways. It has gotten into our souls, and provokes a response that will not be denied or quieted. We will **sing**. Others may have their “artists” performing for their appreciation, but we will do our own singing. Others may sing about what they do, what they are, and “heaven some day,” but we will sing praises to our **God**. We will **shout joyfully**. To shout is inescapably explicit. There will be no quiet, subdued shouting. It is a *loud* and joyful noise made by one whose passions are provoked by the Rock of his salvation. It is a robust bellowing and bawling of praises to the Almighty. We will come before His Presence with **thanksgiving**. Who can know God, know his own sin and unworthiness, and fail to be thankful? We will worship, we will **bow down**, we will **kneel** in submission and adoration to our Maker.

Such is the worship of those who are indeed the people of His pasture and the sheep of His Hand. They, and they only, are those who will finally enter into His rest. Are there some of us seeking a “middle ground,” a compromise between such enthusiastic worship, and being of those who refuse to hear His Voice? Are we among those who wish to be merely “nominal” Christians, and yet avoid the contempt the world reserves for the devout? Then consider this: Am I “red hot” for God? No? Then am I “ice cold toward God? Well, no. then perhaps God is about ready to spew me out, too (Rev. 3:16).

-C.M.