

- 1- *O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth.*
 2- *Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.*
 9- *O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. (Psalm 96)*

The “new song” is the New Covenant, the Advent of the Saviour Who has come, offering God’s salvation to all the earth. It is the end of the ethnic, local, regional gospel. The glory of the Lord is to be declared among all nations (vs. 3).

It is good for us to be reminded that the first thing to be apprehended, understood, and appreciated in the gospel, is the **God** of the gospel. It can provoke no more joy and praise than the size, power and beauty of its God. There can be no doubt that this is the first and most ruinous weakness of the gospel that is preached today, which has plunged “mainstream” Christendom into darkness and perversion. It is a man-centered enterprise, rather than a God-centered revelation.

We may sing *because* (for) the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods (vs. 4). We who were brought up in a monotheistic culture can hardly appreciate the fear, uncertainty and confusion of a polytheistic one. Each deity (represented by its appropriate man-made idol) has limitations. None are omnipotent or sovereign. They all have limits, weaknesses, enemies and vulnerabilities. One never is sure he has the right god for the right problem, and if he does, he never has any assurance of the god’s power or willingness to meet his need. Now, that is some contrast to the God of the Bible, Who made and sustains the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. If **that** God has undertaken our salvation, then His is a salvation worth shouting and singing about. We may safely fear Him, and not be worried about offending any of His adversaries. We need fear none other.

“Honor and majesty are before him” (vs. 6). Men have only the emblems, the shadows, the trinkets and trappings of these glories. They *are* only because *God* is! And because God is, their sensibility is in the universe. So man futilely tries to attain to them in himself. He even claims the power to confer it upon other men. But our “Pomp and Circumstances” is a well-known bubble that soon pops, disappears and leaves no trace. True honor and majesty are in Him, and it truly rests only on the man upon whom He confers it.

“Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary” (vs. 6). Our God is not merely a “utilitarian” God. He is indeed Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Sovereign. He is, and has, all power. His strength is never tested or taxed. Indeed, **all** strength is in His sanctuary. There is no other. But His great power is not displayed at the expense of beauty. It would be a dull and wearisome god indeed who could do no more than rescue us and meet our needs. We desire and love life for its *esthetics*, its beauty, and therefore, its joys and pleasures.

The original garden contained not only everything men needed to live, but all that was beautiful, pleasant and joyful. When man was driven out because of his sin, he was told that he must sustain his needs by his own hard labor, the sweat of his brow. But he was also told that the earth would bring him nothing but “horns and thistles,” no joy, no fulfillment, no beauty.

It is fallen man’s continual occupation to try to simulate what he lost in the garden. He wants to get out of work, to have unlimited power at his disposal, and he is vainly pursuing beauty, joy, a vague yearning for a nobility long gone. He devises monstrous machines and inventions that only curse him more. He abandons himself to senseless revelry and foolishness, seeking “fun” and pleasure. And his attempts to be an “artist” produce only corrupted perversions of reality rising out of demonic inspiration. What ugly wretchedness this is today in paintings, sculptures, music, literature and theater!

Beauty, the true esthetic, is found in the same place we find the power and salvation of our Great God: in His sanctuary! They will never be separated, for our God is One, and everything is in Him. *That* is something to sing about!

-C.M.