

## Psalms of the Son

### I - What is Man? - Psalm 8

*O Lord, our Lord, the Psalmist exclaims, how majestic is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory above the heavens.*

The glory of God is indeed above the heavens; and that is our problem, is it not, that it is far from us, that we do not see it. Well, we do see glimpses of His glory in the world around us, the majesty of the mountains, the beauty of nature, and its order: for those who have eyes to see, the created world cannot but show at least glimpses of His glory who created it.

But not all see how majestic His name is in all the earth, that is: His very own being. Some might see that there must be a creator, since the created world is there, and so, obviously, somebody must have put it there; but their idea of who the Creator is, and what He is like, is but vague. Most make up their own image of their maker in their minds, by means of their imagination, their own sense of what is good and right, and what a god must be like; as if God were somehow bound to obey them in terms of His very being. As the holy Apostle Paul writes it: *Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man. And since Man is not only corruptible, as the Apostle writes it, but also corrupt, any image of God made up in the mind of corrupt Man will also be a corrupted image of God. As the Apostle also writes it, they did not glorify Him as God, the true God, that is, nor were they thankful, rather, they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

Corrupt Man will only come to know the true God in so far as He Himself makes His name known to us, that is: only when He speaks to us; o Only by His Word can we know Him, who He is.

It is of this the Psalmist speaks when he exclaims: *O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!* He is not addressing an unknown Maker for the beauty of the world He has made; rather, he is praising the God who has spoken and made His name known, and Himself, and His goodness toward men, that is, of course, toward human beings of both sexes, which is usually what Holy Scripture means when it mentions *Man*. But that is beside the point; or perhaps it is not. Well, actually it really is not.

More important, much more glorious, than the beauty of the created world is the goodness of God toward Man. But as the believer, who knows God, considers the beauty of Creation, he cannot but also come to consider the goodness of God toward men. *When I look at Your heavens, as he writes it, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is Man that You are mindful of him, and the son of Man that You care for him?*

A greater wonder than the beauty of the world God has made is the care and concern He has for His most beloved creatures, He who is the Master and Maker of all things, that His eye is upon us, always, that each and every one of us, as many as there are of us, has His undivided attention always, each and every moment, which is something we can barely begin to fathom because we have but a vague idea of the realities of God, and of what *eternity* is; but there it is.

God sees all things, always, and knows all things. When Holy Scripture speaks about God *remembering* His promises, or His goodness, or sins, or about the festive meal our Lord Jesus instituted to be observed *in my remembrance*, it does not mean that God forgets and is ignorant about something until He is reminded and then remembers, rather, it means that He *acts upon* that which He remembers, and brings it to effect, whether in judgement or in deliverance.

Such is the care God has for His most beloved creatures. Well, let us call it *love*; Holy Scripture calls it that. Out of His love God made Man in His own image, and yet different from Himself, and this is why any god made in the image of Man is a false god, in order for Man to live in His love and have all things good given to us out of the goodness of God. As the Psalmist says it of us: *You have made him but a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour.*

This is the heart of the love of God for His most beloved creatures; that we were made to be like Him so as to be able to live with Him in love. Out of this love is it that, as the Psalm says it, *You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.*

The Psalmist knows about the love of God because God has made it known; He had not only shown His goodness to His people by His works in history, He had also *spoken* to them, by His Prophets, so that His people would not be left to themselves and their own devices to speculate and guess as to what it all meant, His great works in history, and what they could observe in creation, as to who He is and what He is like, but could *know* Him, by His goodness.

Even with what He spoke to His people by the Prophets, though, everything was not said and done, or known. Although His people knew His goodness, His goodness was nevertheless to be revealed in even greater clarity and beauty, and the glory of His goodness.

This holds true, also, for the Psalm we have before us tonight. That also, is a prophecy, that is: a Word from God, laid in the mind and mouth of His chosen servant to be spoken to His people. That is the meaning of the very word *prophecy*. It comes from a Greek word that means to *bear forth*; and to *prophecy* literally means to bear the Word of God forth to His people.

And from Holy Scripture we learn that God not only had more in mind with the Psalm than meditation upon the beauty of His created world, but also more than His goodness toward His most beloved creatures in this world. As we heard it earlier, of the Letter to the Hebrews, with reference to the Psalm: *We see Jesus, who but for a little while was made lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.* In this the goodness of God has been made manifest in its fullness, and His love for His most beloved creatures: in what He has done for the salvation of sinners.

Although we have turned away from His goodness, and *are* turned away from His goodness in our hearts and minds, and turned *against* Him in ungodliness and unbelief, He turned to us in love. Although we did and do Him so much evil with our sin as we cannot begin to comprehend, He did good to us, and the *greatest* good. Although we deny Him the love and obedience we owe Him, He has given all for us, and gives all to us.

The Son of God left His heavenly home in glory behind to come to us. For a little while He who is God from eternity had Himself made lower than the angels, born into our kind to suffer for us and with us a lifetime in this world of suffering and sorrow and sin. More than that, He had Himself made miserable, and more so than any other man has ever been, baptised with sinners, and crucified clothed and covered in the sin of sinners, and cursed and condemned for it and with it by the goodness of God, His holy hatred against evil, ungodliness, impurity, and unbelief.

*For it was fitting, as we also heard it, for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings,* that is: it was good and right because it was the eternal will of God, because God is that good.

Therefore is it that the Son of God had Himself made lower than the angels, born into our kind; as we heard it: *In all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people.* Therefore is it that He came to us, as we prepare to celebrate it, these days, that He did, therefore is it that He had Himself born into our kind, and baptised with us: to make Himself one with us in all that is us and ours, all our evil and ungodliness and impurity. As He has had His holy Apostle Paul write it: *Him who knew of no sin God made to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* All that we are, He made Himself to be; and all that He is, He makes us to be. This is the answer to the question the Psalm asks: *What is Man?* Well, *He is,* who made Himself one with all Mankind. And we are Him, as God sees us, made to be one with Him by His Word, and in His Baptism, and in His festive meal of salvation, in which He gives Himself to us with all that He is and all that is His.

This is the meaning of the otherwise rather obscure statement in the Psalm, that *out of the mouth of babes and infants You have established strength because of Your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.* He makes His power of salvation manifest when He makes even babes and infants, otherwise incapable of comprehending anything, to embrace His salvation in faith, as Holy Scripture teaches that He does. And in doing so, He also makes it manifest that His salvation really is that, *His* salvation, and by no means our own, His gracious gift to those who are helpless and can contribute absolutely nothing, given to sinners out of His goodness alone and for no other reason whatsoever.

It is of Him the Psalm speaks, also, when it says that *You have given Him dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under His feet.* Yes, for as the Letter to the Hebrews also writes it of Him: *After having provided purification for sin He has taken seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. And: He upholds all things with His Word of power.*

It is our Lord Jesus the Psalm sets before us, and our salvation in Him. This is how we know the only true God, in His Word of salvation, not from pondering the beauty of His creation; although the majesty of His creation might cause the believer to wonder at the love His Word sets before us: *What is Man, that You are mindful of him, and the son of Man that You care for him?*

Blessed is He that comes, in the name of the Lord. Amen.