

PSALM 19 THE WORLD-BOOK AND THE WORD-BOOK

The heavens so clearly declare the glory of God, and they so loudly proclaim His wisdom and power and goodness, that all ungodly people are left without excuse! They show themselves to be works of God's own Almighty hands; for they must have a Creator Who is eternal, absolutely wise, infinitely powerful, and supremely good. The continuous alternation between day and night is a great proof of the power of God; it calls us to observe that – just as in the kingdom of nature; so also, in the Kingdom of Providence – He forms the light and creates the darkness (Isa. 45:7).

The sun in the sky (verses 4-6) is an emblem of the Sun of righteousness – the Bridegroom of the Church, and the Light of the world – diffusing Divine light and salvation, by His Gospel, to all the nations of the earth. He delights to bless His Church, which He has espoused to Himself; and His course will be as unwearied as that of the sun, until the whole earth is filled with His light and salvation. As the true Light and Life of the world, He graciously communicates all the blessed rays of spiritual and eternal life. Jesus rejoices to give out of His fullness – shining in upon the dark minds of His people; and causing them to rejoice in His light, and to find happiness in His grace here, and in His glory hereafter. He is that Sun of righteousness, which the prophet Malachi predicted would arise with healing in His wings! (Mal. 4:2) Let us pray for the hastening of that wondrous time when He shall enlighten, cheer, and make fruitful every nation upon earth, with His blessed salvation. In the meantime, however, all people may hear these celestial preachers – the sun, moon, and stars – speaking, in their own language, the wonderful works of God.

Overview of the Psalm, adapted from Charles Spurgeon:

In his earliest days, the Psalmist – while caring for his father's flock of sheep – had devoted himself to the study of God's two great Books: nature and Scripture. And he had so thoroughly entered into the spirit of these two solitary volumes in his library, that he was able to devoutly compare and contrast them – magnifying the excellency of the Author as seen in both. How foolish and wicked are those who – instead of accepting the two sacred tomes, and delighting to behold the same Divine hand in each – spend all their wits in endeavoring to find discrepancies and contradictions between them! We may rest assured that the correct account of the beginning of our world will never contradict Genesis, nor will a true study of science be found at variance with the narrative of Moses. He is wisest who reads both the world-book and the Word-Book as two volumes of the same work, and who feels concerning them, "My Father wrote them both!"

This song very distinctly divides itself into three parts: the creatures show God's glory (verses 1-6), the Word shows His grace (verses 7-11), and David prays for grace (verses 12-14). Thus praise and prayer are mingled; and he who here sings the work of God in the world without, also pleads for a work of grace in himself within.

Beginning in verse 7, the Psalmist makes a beautiful transition from the awe-inspiring works of nature to the contemplation of the works of amazing grace. Having celebrated the praises of Jehovah in His outward courts, Da-



vid now enters the inner temple (so to speak) to adore Him. Although it is true that the heavens do declare the glory of God, yet they do not declare enough knowledge to save the lost souls of mankind. The things that we see in nature are enough to show the thinking person that the Lord does exist, and that He is their Creator; but in order to know how sinful man may be reconciled with that Holy Creator, we must look elsewhere besides the realm of nature and creation. That is why, in order to recover man out of his fallen state, the Lord mercifully revealed Himself more clearly to us in His written Word. Within its sacred pages, we learn the Gospel-message – which we could never discover by a mere study of His wonders of nature! The Psalmist proceeds to give us several descriptions of the written Word of God, as well as several ways in which the Holy Spirit uses it for the good of mankind. This Word, when it is received by faith, becomes more precious to the soul than gold, and more sweet than honey. Gold only helps the body to live in comfort, for as long as time lasts; but grace serves the deeper needs of the soul, which will last to all eternity. May our hearts be much moved by meditating upon the excellence of the Word of God!

Although David is here speaking of the preciousness of the written revelation of the Lord, in the Holy Scriptures; we cannot help remembering that the Apostle John taught us that Christ Himself is “the Word!” Just as Jehovah manifested Himself to sinful man in the pages of the Bible; He has also revealed Himself to us in human form, in the Person of Jesus – the God-Man Mediator! Jesus Himself is the substance and theme of the law, the testimony, and the statutes that are found on the pages of Scripture. It is He Who converts the lost and causes the heart of the believer to rejoice. He is the Alpha and the Omega of all God’s gracious dealings with humanity. Truly, He is more precious than gold!

In the concluding verses (12-14) of this Psalm, David not only desired to be pardoned for the sins which he had discovered and confessed, but he also wished to be cleansed from those which he had forgotten or overlooked. All discoveries of sin which the Law of God shows us should drive us to the throne of grace, and to pray there with the same words that the Psalmist uses here. “Let the words of my mouth,” he says, “and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer!” What a sweet prayer! No prayer can be acceptable before God, unless it is offered in the strength of our Redeemer and Divine Kinsman – Who took our nature upon Himself, so that He might redeem us unto God, and restore our long-lost inheritance!

Thank You, Lord, that You have not only given us the revelation of Yourself as Creator, for You have also revealed Yourself to us as the merciful Redeemer! Amen.