

## 'From Dust to Dignity'

- Renaissance – “new birth” used to describe the intellectual awakening that took place in the Middle Ages:
- The Renaissance focused on the glory of man instead of the glory of God:
- With the new focus upon man and his capabilities there came a reliance upon human reason rather than divine revelation:
  - 1) Reason:

### 1) Reason:

- **Positively Viewed:**
  - Reason is the sphere within which concepts are formed as the basis for communication from one person to another:
  - Reason is a necessary channel for giving and receiving truth:
- **Negatively Viewed:**
  - Reason is the judge of truth, and often the originator of truth:
  - Reason is autonomous, governed by no higher or outside authority:
  - The basis for this being a negative view is that reason is severely limited by its finitude and fallibility:

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  - 1) Reason:
  - 2) Feelings:

### 2) Feelings:

- This was a reaction against rationalism:
- Schleiermacher developed a theology of feeling, emphasizing the analysis of religious experience and based religion on feeling or awareness:
- In effect, theology became anthropology and psychology:

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  - 1) Reason:
  - 2) Feelings:
  - 3) Conscience:

### 3) Conscience:

- Conscience then became the basis of authority:
- Conscience is an important part of the human nature:
- But one's conscience can be –
  - 1) Good
  - 2) Clear
- But it can also be –
  - 1) Corrupted
  - 2) Weak
  - 3) Seared

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- With the new focus upon man and his capabilities there came a reliance upon human reason rather than divine revelation:
- Man was seen as basically good and could be directed to do good through education:
- Essentially the message was optimism with the progressive betterment of society:

### A. The Exclamation of Praise (שְׂמֵחַ הַלְלוּ) (v. 1a)

### A' The Exclamation of Praise (שְׂמֵחַ הַלְלוּ) (v. 9)

## A. The Exclamation of Praise (v. 1a)

1. *The Redeemer-God (לְעֹלָם) is King (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) (v. 1a)*

2. *The Redeemer King is Creator (vv. 1a, cf. v. 3)*

## B. The Glory of the Creator King (vv. 1b-2)

קֹדֶר אֲדִיר... בְּקִל־הָאָרֶץ... הוֹרֵךְ עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם

- The whole earth is full of the manifestation of His power:

- The heaven, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain God:

## A. The Exclamation of Praise (v. 1a)

## B. The Glory of the Creator King (vv. 1b-2)

## C. The Interest of God in Man (vv. 3-4)

➤ In the next few verses (vv. 3-6) there is going to be a focus upon

1) Man's physical insignificance (vv. 3-4)

2) Man's moral dignity (vv. 5-6):

➤ In respect to a material point-of-view, man is insignificant compared to the starry sky:

➤ But in respect to his mental nature he far transcends in worth and dignity the whole material universe:

## A. The Exclamation of Praise (v. 1a)

## B. The Glory of the Creator King (vv. 1b-2)

## C. The Interest of God in Man (vv. 3-4)

## 1. The Observation (v. 3)

- As often as I see (כִּי־אֶרְאֶה) (then the thought arises):

## 2. The Question (v. 4)

*What is Man (מִי־אִנְשׁוֹ)?*

*What is the son of Man (מִי־בְנֵי־אָדָם)?*

- The questions evoke a sense of awe and place a proper perspective on one's self-worth:

- "No man can survey himself without forthwith turning his thoughts towards the God in whom he lives and moves; because it is perfectly obvious, that the endowments which we possess cannot possibly be from ourselves; nay, that our very being is nothing else than subsistence in God alone" (John Calvin, Institutes)
- "It is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he have previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after such contemplation to look into himself" (John Calvin, Institutes)

## A. The Exclamation of Praise (v. 1a)

## B. The Glory of the Creator King (vv. 1b-2)

## C. The Interest of God in Man (vv. 3-4)

C' *The Investment of God in Man (v. 5)*1. *God Made Him A Little Lower than Himself (v. 5a)*

(מִיַּעַן מְאִלְהִים) "to make someone lack," "to come short but little from God"

Man is short of being divine because he is an earthing, yet man is not beast, because he is also 'celestial'

2. *God Crowned Him with Glory (וְקִבְלֵהוּ) and Majesty (וְתִקְדֵהוּ) (v. 5b)*

- Glory and majesty are attributes of God's kingship extended to man's royal status:

## A. The Exclamation of Praise (v. 1a)

## B. The Glory of the Creator King (vv. 1b-2)

## C. The Interest of God in Man (vv. 3-4)

C' *The Investment of God in Man (v. 5)*B' *The Glory of Man as Ruler (vv. 6-8)*

➤ Man is appointed vassal over God's creation:

➤ The dignity of man is a gift from God and there is requirement of relationship and responsibility:

1. *To Maintain Order:*

2. *To Keep a Beneficent Relationship with all that God has Created:*

## A. The Exclamation of Praise (v. 1a)

## B. The Glory of the Creator King (vv. 1b-2)

## C. The Interest of God in Man (vv. 3-4)

C' *The Investment of God in Man (v. 5)*B' *The Glory of Man as Ruler (vv. 6-8)*A' *The Exclamation of Praise (v. 9)*

➤ The true value of all creation lies in its relationship to the Lord:

➤ This value becomes a reality whenever the individual creature participates in the life and the power of God (not just physically but spiritually):