

Free Grace Broadcaster

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Our Purpose

***“To humble the pride of man,
to exalt the grace of God in salvation,
and to promote real holiness in heart and life.”***

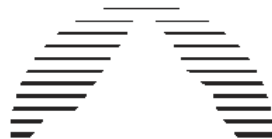
*“Whom have I in heaven but
thee? and there is none upon earth
that I desire beside thee. My
flesh and my heart faileth: but
God is the strength of my heart,
and my portion forever.”*

-Psalm 73:25-26

Worship



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The Worship of God's Pilgrims

by Phillip Mauro



At the beginning of chapter eight, the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews sets forth “the sum,” that is to say, the chief or the capital point of the things whereof he has spoken. That chief or essential matter is that “we have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb 8:1-2).

The language here used is such as to call very special attention to the truth set forth. At this point everything pertaining to the service and worship of God is transferred to heaven—from the tabernacle which man pitched by the Lord’s command to the true tabernacle which the Lord himself pitched; from the holy places made with hands, which were but the figures of the true, into heaven itself.

Moreover, the service of God is taken out of the hands of an order of priests composed of men in the flesh and placed in the hands of the risen Son of God who has obtained a ministry as much more excellent than that of the old order of priests, as the covenant, whereof he is the mediator, is better than the old covenant, and the promises on which it is based are better than the old promises (Heb 8:5-6).

The previous portions of the epistle had to do specially with the trials, dangers, and difficulties besetting the path of the pilgrims, on which account stress is laid upon the prospect before them in the kingdom of God that is to be established in the age to come. The present portion of the epistle (Heb 8:1-10:25, inclusive) has to do with the worship of God’s pilgrims on which account prominence is given to the present ministry of the Son of God, now appearing in the presence of God for us, and to the one sacrifice which he, when on earth, offered for sin, in virtue of which we may boldly draw near to

God. Those two topics: the present ministry of Christ on high and the one sacrifice offered by him on earth are kept constantly before us in this section of the epistle.

The matter of worship is one of great practical importance to God's pilgrims and has much to do with the perfecting of the sons whom he is bringing unto glory. The leading characteristics of the life of the true Hebrew are symbolised by two objects, the tent and the altar. The tent is that which marks out the true Hebrew as a sojourner or pilgrim in the earth. We shall now give our attention briefly to that which pertains to the altar. We are exploring this portion of the Word of God with the special object of noting the bearing it has upon the revealed purpose of God with respect to those whom he has, in love, predestined to the position of sons unto himself by Christ Jesus.

THE SERVICE OF THE ALTAR

The services of God's priests of the Levitical order were available to all his people. Some of those services, such as the "continual burnt offering" offered day by day (Num 28:3-8), were of general application and efficacy for all the people, being a continual daily reminder to God, morning and evening, of the true burnt offering. This is true also of the service of the high priest on the great day of atonement when the sin offering for the whole congregation was slain according to the solemn rites appointed by God and its blood was taken into the holy of holies by the high priest (Lev 16).

The service of the day of atonement is the type that has its special fulfilment in the present ministry of Christ in the heavens, as very clearly appears from the text of this portion of Hebrews (8:1; 10:25). It was expressly commanded that "there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he (the high priest) goes in to make atonement in the holy place until he comes out" (Lev 16:17). The congregation awaited the reappearance of their high priest. Thus there was enacted once each year a scene typical of what is set forth in Hebrews 9:24-28.

Christ appeared once in the end of the age (preceding this), to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself as the sin-offering of the atonement for the whole congregation. Then he entered, by his own blood, into the holy place (heaven itself), now to appear in the presence of God for us; and he will presently come forth to those in the outer court who wait for him for salvation.

But while the services of the priesthood were available for all, they were profitable mainly to those who approached the tabernacle to avail themselves thereof. The law contemplated voluntary, individual offerings. "If any one of you bring an offering unto the Lord" (Lev 1:2, etc.). "And when any will offer," i.e., offers of his own will, "a meat offering unto the Lord ... he shall bring it to

Aaron's sons, the priests" (Lev 2:1-2). All the five offerings described in detail in the opening chapters of Leviticus (the whole burnt offering, the meat offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering), were to be made by individuals. The priest acted only in an official capacity, to present to God, in the prescribed manner, the offerings voluntarily made by the people. Unless the people brought offerings, there would be nothing for the priests to present on their behalf.

Therefore, at the outset of this part of the epistle it is written: "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have something also to offer" (Heb 8:3). The saints of this dispensation do not have to offer the blood of animals, for the blood of Christ has been offered by himself (Heb 9:11-14). This is effective to purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God. But there remains for us also a "continual" offering, to be offered "day by day." As it is written, "By him, therefore, let us offer the SACRIFICE OF PRAISE TO GOD CONTINUALLY, giving thanks to (literally, confessing to) his name" (Heb 13:15).

Surely, in respect of worship, the saints of this era, who have access to God through Jesus Christ, the great high priest and the mediator of the new covenant, should not fall below the standard set for the Israelites. They offered every day, morning and evening, the memorial lamb, besides all the voluntary offerings. They were taught scrupulously to present to God of the best that he had given them. For an Israelite to appear before God with empty hands would be to say that God had not blessed him. Surely then, it is for us to fill the hands of the high priest with sacrifices of praise continually, presenting to God thanksgivings for the unspeakable gift of his love to us.

CHRIST - THE TRUE TABERNACLE

Our sacrifices are to be offered "by him" "confessing to his name." This admonishes us of a fact that is commonly lost sight of, namely, that men can approach God only through a priest duly appointed for that purpose by God himself.

Although the saints of God on earth have received a new birth from God, the washing of regeneration, nevertheless they have sin in them and are occupying the mortal (death-doomed) bodies of their humiliation. Therefore they may approach God only through the high priest, the minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle.

"For THROUGH HIM we both have access by one Spirit to the Father" (Eph 2:18). Christ said, "I am the Way, no man comes unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). So also it is written in Hebrews, "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living

way" (Heb 10:19-20). Again, "By him let us offer continually" (Heb 13:15).

Unquestionably, this command is intended to be carried out just as literally as the similar commands given to the Israelite. It cost each one time and trouble to procure his offering and present it at the door of the tabernacle. So if we are faithful in regard to our sacrifices, it will be at the expense of time and diligence. God was not honoured by, nor would he accept, anything but the very best of that with which he had enriched his people; and our offerings to him, to be acceptable, should be of the very best of our time, especially the early hours of the day, and of the most excellent of our praises.

If one is poor in his knowledge and appreciation of the riches that are his in Christ, his offering of praise will be correspondingly meagre; but the more he possesses of "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ," the richer will be his offering. Therefore, poverty in the sacrifices of thanksgiving is due to lack of diligence in reading and meditating in the Word by which comes "the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph 4:13).

"Confessing to his Name," or offering praise or prayer in his name, does not mean using his name as a closing formula. His name stands for himself, and for his relations to God and to men. To offer in his name is to present our offering to God in all the merit of his person, and of the work whereby he glorified God in the earth. He himself, therefore, should form the very Substance of our praises, for in praising God for Christ, we praise him for all. In Christ all fulness dwells, and he is all and in all.

May we, then, be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. If he dwells in our hearts, then the praises of our hearts will be unto God a sweet savour of Christ. So let us give thanks "always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 5:20).

OFFERING PLEASING SACRIFICES

Mention is made in Hebrews, and in other Scriptures, of other sacrifices that are acceptable and well-pleasing to God. "But to do good, and to communicate (or distribute to other saints of what we have), forget not. For with SUCH SACRIFICES God is well pleased" (Heb 13:16). This applies to material and also to spiritual things.

The essence of love is the giving or sacrificing of oneself. In this the children of God are bidden to be "imitators of God." "Be, therefore, followers (imitators) of God as beloved children; and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given himself for us, AN OFFERING AND SACRIFICE TO GOD for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph 5:1-2). The reference here is to those offerings that were known as "sweet-savour offerings," namely, the whole burnt offering,

the meat offering, and the peace offering. In like manner, the saints are called upon to offer themselves for others by walking towards them in love.

In regard to this matter of doing good and sharing, viewing it as a sweet-savour offering to God, when done in the name of Christ, Paul highly commends the Philippian saints, saying, “I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. Notwithstanding you have done well that you did *SHARE* with my affliction. “And he tells them that “no church shared with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift, but I desire *FRUIT THAT MAY ABOUND TO YOUR ACCOUNT*. But I have all things and abound. I am full; having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, *AN ODOUR OF A SWEET SMELL, A SACRIFICE ACCEPTABLE, WELL-PLEASING TO GOD*” (Phil 4:14-18).

These scriptures instruct us clearly as to the sacrifices that are acceptable and well-pleasing to God from his pilgrims of this era. Therefore, among the exhortations with which this section of Hebrews closes occurs the following “And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works” (Heb 10:24).

That exhortation is preceded by another, to which the chief prominence is given in this portion of the epistle, namely: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God, *LET US DRAW NEAR*” (Heb 10:19-22).

DRAWING NEAR TO GOD

This drawing near, or approaching to God, is the act of worship in spirit and truth. It is essential to the character of God’s pilgrims. They approached him by means of a sacrifice, offered in faith. The perfect sacrifice has now been offered for us. Because of the blood of Jesus, we may have “boldness to enter the holiest.” We approach by the new and living way that has been consecrated “*FOR US*.” Therefore, and because we have such a high priest over the house of God, our approach should be “in the full assurance of faith.”

Availing ourselves of the privilege of worship has much to do with securing the great salvation spoken of in Hebrews. Our high priest is able to save to the uttermost them that approach to God (as worshippers) by him. Therefore, it is written: “Having a high priest over the house of God, let us approach in full assurance of faith,” that is to say, believing God implicitly as to the access we have through Christ, as to the value of his blood, and as to his present ministry before God for us, which are unseen things, that exist only for faith.

Point is given to this lesson in the next chapter, where it is brought to mind in regard to Enoch that, before his translation, he had witness borne him that he had been well pleasing to God (Heb 11:5). From this it is deduced that he must have exercised faith towards God, for “without faith it is impossible to please him; for he who APPROACHES TO GOD must believe that HE is (exists as a living God), and is a rewarder of them that seek him out” (verse 6, Greek).

This proves also that the manner in which Enoch approached God in faith, and thus found favour with him, was in the appointed way, by means of a sacrifice, as did Abel, Noah, Abraham, and the other “Hebrews.”

This lesson is of the utmost importance. According to the Word of God, man is a sinner and justly under the condemnation of death. His only hope is in a God who raises the dead and through a sacrifice that fully pays the penalty of his sin. None but God himself could supply a sacrifice adequate to discharge that penalty. Hence, he sent forth his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, to be a sacrifice for sin.

The one sacrifice, offered by Jesus Christ once for all, is the heart of the work of redemption, and believing God as to that fact is absolutely essential to acceptance with him. Therefore, when the man of faith of old approached God with an innocent victim and sacrificed it before the Lord, that man confessed himself a sinner, deserving the death suffered by the victim. He also confessed his faith in God as the author of a way of redemption for the death-deserving sinner.

To us, the meaning of those oft-repeated sacrifices, which could never take away sins, or make the “approachers” perfect (Heb 9:9; 10:1,4), has been made plain. By the will of God, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb 10:10). Therefore, we ought continually to approach, in full assurance of faith, availing ourselves of the powerful ministry of our great high priest, in order that thereby the purpose of the Father may be accomplished in us.

*“Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship
at his footstool; for he is holy.”*

(Psalms 99:5)

What is Worship?

Excerpts from "What the Bible Teaches"

WORSHIP OF GOD AND OF CHRIST IS COMMANDED

We owe worship to God. It is his due. We owe love to man and obedience to parents, but worship to God. It is our first duty toward him. He is the all holy, all wise, the Almighty, the Infinite, all perfect One, and our rightful attitude toward him is that of bowing before him, or prostrating ourselves before him, in adoring contemplation of his infinite loveliness and glory, of his attributes, of himself. If we do not worship God, we are robbing him of what is his due. It is not enough that we obey him, that we pray to him, that we return thanks to him, that we seek to serve him and do his will. We must worship. How much time do you spend daily in bowing before him in silent and adoring contemplation?

GOD IS SEEKING TRUE WORSHIPPERS.

The one thing above all else that God desires of men is worship. God desires obedience of men, he desires service, he desires prayer, he desires praise and thanksgiving, but his supreme desire from men is worship. He is seeking "worshippers."

It has been said that "we are saved that we may serve." This is true, but this is even more profoundly true: we are saved that we may worship. The whole work of redemption finds its culmination and completion in a body of men and women being found and fitted to worship God.

WE SHOULD WORSHIP BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

The only true worship, worship acceptable to God, is the worship which the Spirit inspires. Not all worship is "in the Spirit." Very much is of man himself, in the power of his own will. It is of the flesh. The flesh seeks to intrude into every sphere of life, even the highest and most sacred. The flesh has its worship. Men seek to do the things that please God and win credit for themselves, of their own motion and in their own strength. But this worship is not acceptable. Men may be earnest and sincere in this worship, but it is not acceptable. It is not what God is seeking. God is seeking worshippers who worship in the Spirit and who have "no confidence in the flesh." To worship aright we must recognize the utter inability of the flesh—i.e., ourselves untaught, unprompted, and ungoverned by God's Spirit—to worship acceptably. We must realize the danger of the flesh intruding into our worship. In

utter self-abnegation we must cast ourselves upon the Holy Spirit to lead us in our worship. The first thing we should do when we worship is, with a realization of our own utter helplessness, to look up to the Holy Spirit to teach us and enable us to worship properly. He must present God to our mind for our contemplation. He must subdue and awe our hearts before him in true adoration. The only living that is acceptable to God is living in the Spirit, the only walk that is acceptable to God is walk in the Spirit, the only service that is acceptable to God is service in the Spirit, the only prayer that is acceptable to God is prayer in the Spirit, and the only worship that is acceptable to God is worship in the Spirit. For us to worship well, our hearts must look up and cry, "Teach me, Holy Spirit, to worship!" He will do it.

**WHEN THERE IS TRUE WORSHIP, THE WORSHIPPER IS SATISFIED;
HIS HIGHEST JOY IS FOUND.**

There is no higher, no deeper, no purer joy than that which springs from the adoring contemplation of God. I have walked miles, and climbed through underbrush and briars and over crags and precipice just to get some beautiful view, and as I have looked out upon it, and feasted upon the never-to-be-forgotten vision of mountain and valley, forest and river, village and hamlet, cloud and sunshine, I have felt well repaid for the trial and suffering and weariness. I have sat by the hour before a great painting in joyous beholding of its beauty. Earth has few purer joys than these, but they are nothing to the profound and holy joy that fills the soul as we bow before God in worship, asking nothing, seeking nothing from him, occupied with and satisfied with himself. Was the psalmist thinking only of the future, or of what he had enjoyed in the present, when he wrote, "In thy presence is fulness of joy" (Psa 16:11)? One of the highest privileges of heaven will be that we shall see his face.

*"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his
name; worship the Lord in the
beauty of holiness." (Psalms 29:2)*

*"Be silent, O all flesh before the Lord:
for he is raised up out of his holy
habitation." (Zech 2:13)*



God Seeking Worshipers

by Horatius Bonar

For ages before God sought a temple, he had been seeking worshippers. He could do without the former, but not without the latter. His first sanctuary was but a tent; and three thousand years had elapsed before he said, Build me a house wherein I may dwell. Yet all this time he was seeking for worshippers amongst the sons of men. By man's sin God had lost the worship of earth, and he had set himself to regain it.

1. **He wants LOVE.** Being the infinitely loveable God, he asks love from man—from every man; love according to his worth and beauty.

2. **He claims OBEDIENCE.** For his will is the fountainhead of all law; and he expects that this will of his should be in all things conformed to.

3. **He expects SERVICE.** The willing and living service of man's whole being is what he claims and desires,—the service of body, soul, and spirit.

4. **He asks for WORSHIP.** He does not stand in need of human praise or prayer; yet he asks for these, he delights in these, he wants the inner praise of the silent heart. He wants the uttered praise of the fervent lip and tongue. He desires the solitary praise of the closet; and still more the loud harmony of the great congregation; for "the Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob," (Psa 87:2). True praise is a 'speaking well of God', (1 Peter 1:3), speaking of him in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, according to

his excellency. "Bless the Lord, O my soul" (Psa 103:1), "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 1:3).

It was of "worship" that the Lord spoke so much to the woman of Sychar. To Nicodemus he said nothing of this; nor indeed to any others. It was in regard to "worship" that the Samaritans had gone so far astray, therefore he speaks specially of this,—even to this poor profligate. He spoke to her of "the Father," and of "the worship of the Father" (John 4:21); reminding her that God was a spirit and that "they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." And then he adds these memorable words, "the Father seeketh such to worship him."

It was of the difference between outward and inward religion, between the real and the unreal, between the acceptable and the unacceptable, that he spoke to the woman. Samaria and Jerusalem, Gerizzim and Moriah, these were but external things. There was no religious virtue connected with them; God is not the God of the outward, but of the inward; not the God of places, but of living creatures; not the God of cities and mountains, but the God of hearts and souls. No rites, however numerous or gorgeous or beautiful, can be a substitute for the life and the spirit. The question is not intellectual, or aesthetic, or pictorial, but spiritual; not as to what gratifies our eye or ear, our sense of the great or the tasteful, but what is acceptable to God and according to his instructions.

Where am I to worship God? man asks; but he answers it in his own way; as all false religions, and indeed some true ones, have done. On certain sacred spots, he says, where some man of God has lived, where some martyr's blood has been shed, where the footsteps of good men are recorded to have been, which have been consecrated by certain priestly rites,—there and there only must men worship God. God's answer to the question, Where am I to worship God? is, EVERYWHERE: on sea and land, vale or hill, desert or garden, city or village or moor,—anywhere and everywhere. For certain purposes God set apart Sinai for a season, and then Moriah; but not to the exclusion of other places. And even these consecrations are at an end. Sinai is but the old red granite hill,—no more,—where now no man worships. Moriah is but the old limestone platform, now desecrated by false worship. "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father" (John 4:21).

When am I to worship God? man asks; but he answers it in his own way also. Only at certain times, he says,—certain hours, and certain days, fixed and arranged by priestly authority, or ecclesiastical law, or traditional rule. God's answer is, "at all times and seasons": pray without ceasing. The naming of certain hours and days is necessary for the gathering together of the worshippers; but worship is to be perpetual, without restriction of times. All

hours are holy; all days are holy, in so far as worship is concerned; only one day having been specially appointed of God, and that not for restriction but for order.

How am I to worship God? man asks; and he has answered it also in his own way. In the gorgeous temple, in the pillared cathedral, with incense, and vestments, and forms, and ceremonies, and processions, and postures, he says. But these performances are the will-worship of self-righteousness, not the obedient service of men worshipping God in ways of his own ordination. Man cannot teach man how to worship God. When he tries it he utterly fails. He distorts worship; he misrepresents God, and he indulges his own sensuous or self-righteous tastes. His “dim religious light” is but a reflection of his own gloomy spirit, and an ignorant misrepresentation of him “who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all.” God’s answer to man’s question is given in the Lord’s words, “they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” The vestments may or may not be comely; that matters not. The music may or may not be fine: the knees may or may not be bent; the hands may or may not be clasped; the place of worship may or may not be a cathedral, or a consecrated fabric. These are immaterial things; adjuncts of religion, not its essence. The true worship is that of the inner man; and all things else are of little moment. As it is with love so it is with worship. The heart is everything. God can do without the bended knee, but not without the broken heart.

It is of the Father that Christ is here speaking;—of him whose name is not only God but Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the fountainhead of all being in heaven and in earth, the paternal Creator, the Father of spirits, the great Father-spirit, the God of the spirits of all flesh, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, yet who visiteth earth in his fatherly love,—as such he is here spoken of by our Lord. He is a spirit, yet he is no vague or cold abstraction, no mere assemblage of what we call attributes, but full of life and love; with the heart of a father, with the pity and power and care of a father, and also with all a father’s resources and rights. Though we have broken off from that father and gone into the far country, that does not change his paternal nature, though it alters our relationship to him and the treatment we are to receive at his hands. He made the fatherly heart of man, and he did so after the likeness of his own. That fatherly heart yearns over his wandered family; “His tender mercies are over all his works.”

It is as Father that he is seeking worshippers, and seeking them here on earth among the fallen sons of men.

He seeketh! That word means more than it seems. He is in search of something; of something which he has lost; of something which he counts precious; of something which he cannot afford to lose. Great as he is, there are many things which he cannot think of letting go. His very greatness

makes him needy, for it makes him understand the value, not only of every soul which he has formed, but of every atom of dust which he has created. When he misses any part of his creation he goes or sends in search of it; he will not part with it. Men of common souls, when they lose anything, are apt to say, Let it go, I can do without it. Men of great minds, when they lose anything, say, I must have it back again, I cannot afford to lose it. Much more is this true of the infinite Jehovah. It is his greatness that makes him so susceptible of loss. Others may overlook the lost thing. He cannot. He must go in quest of it.

It is the same kind of seeking and searching as the prophet Ezekiel, speaking in the name of Jehovah, declares,—“I will search and seek,” (Eze 34:11); and to which our Lord so often refers, when he represents himself as “seeking the lost” (Luke 19:10); it may be the lost sheep, or the lost piece of silver, or the lost son.

We must not dilute these expressions, and say that they simply imply that God is willing to have us back again if we will come; that he is willing to take us as worshippers if we will come. All that comes very far short of the meaning. And though we may say, what can the infinite Jehovah be in want of; what can he need, to whom belongs not only the heaven of heavens but the whole universe;—still we must see how anxious he is to show us his unutterable earnestness in seeking and in searching.

Such is the attitude of God! He bends down from his eternal throne to seek; as if the want of something here on earth, on this old sinful earth, would be a grievous and irreparable loss. What value does he attach to us and to our worship!

Yes, the Father seeketh worshippers! He is in search of many things of which sin has robbed Him; affection, homage, allegiance, reverence, obedience; but worship,—the worship of man, and of man’s earth, he is specially seeking and claiming. He so created this world, that from it there should arise, without ceasing, wide as the universal air, that fragrance of holy worship, from the creatures which he had made and placed upon its surface. The command is not merely, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,” but “thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.” Over this broken command he mourns; “it grieves him at his heart”; and he seeks to have it restored in man. He loves worship from human hearts and lips, and he will not be satisfied without it. It might seem a small thing to lose the worship of a creature’s heart, here on this low and evil earth. Can he not let it go? It will only be the worse for the creature, not for him, who has the worship of heaven, and of ten thousand times ten thousand angels. No; he cannot lose that worship. It is precious to him. He must have it back.

O man, God speaks to you and says, “Worship me.” He comes up to each

sinner upon earth and says, "Worship me." If he does so, he must care for you and he must care for your worship. It is not a matter of indifference to him whether you worship him or not. It concerns him, and it concerns you. Perhaps the thought comes up within you, what does God care for my worship? I may praise, or I may not, what does he care? I may sing, or I may blaspheme, what does it matter to him? He cares much. It concerns him deeply. He is thoroughly in earnest when he asks you to worship him. He wants these lips of yours, that tongue of yours, that heart of yours. He wants them all for himself. Will you give him what he wants?

You say he has enough of praise in heaven, what can he want on earth? He has angels in myriads to praise him, does he really desire my voice? Will he be grieved if I refuse it? Yes, he desires your voice, and he will be grieved if you withhold it. He has many a nobler tongue than yours, but still he wants yours. He has many a sweeter voice than yours, still he is bent on having that poor sinful voice. Oh come and worship me, he says.

This answers the question so often put by the inquiring, What warrant have I for coming to God. God wants you. Is not that enough? What more would you have? He wants you to draw near. He has no pleasure in your distance. He wants you to praise him, to worship him. He is seeking your worship. Do you mean to ask, What warrant have I for worshipping God? Rather should you ask, What warrant have I for refusing to worship him? Is it possible that you can think yourself at liberty not to worship him; nay, think that you are not under any obligation to worship him, until you can ascertain your election, or feel within you some special change which you can consider God's call to worship him?

His search for worshippers is a world-wide one. It goes over the whole earth; and his call on men to worship is equally universal. He made man to worship and to love; can he ever forego such claims, or can man ever be in a position in which that claim ceases, or that obligation is cancelled? Can his sinfulness or unworthiness exempt him from the duty, or make it unwarrantable in him to come and worship Jehovah?

Let us hear how he speaks to the sons of men, Jew and Gentile:—

*"Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands!
Sing forth the honour of his name,
Make his praise glorious." (Psa 66:1, 2)*

Again he speaks,—

*"O sing unto the Lord a new song;
Sing unto the Lord, all the earth!
Sing unto the Lord,
Bless his name!
Show forth his salvation from day to day." (Psa 96:1, 2)*

Again he speaks,—

*“Praise ye the Lord!
For it is good to sing praises unto our God;
For it is pleasant;
Yea, praise is comely.” (Psa 147:1)*

Nay, he calls on all nature to praise him. He claims the homage of the inanimate creation.

*“Let the heavens rejoice,
And let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein;
Then shall the trees of the wood rejoice
Before the Lord.” (Psa 96:11-13)*

Thus is God seeking for worshippers here on earth. And what is his gospel but the proclamation of his gracious search for worshippers? He sends out his glad tidings of great joy, that he may draw men to himself and make them worshippers of his own glorious self.

The shepherd loses one of his flock; and he misses it. The shepherd misses the sheep more than the sheep misses the shepherd. The sheep is too precious to be lost. It must be sought for and found; whatever toil or peril may be in the way. Even life itself is not to be grudged in behalf of the lost one, “The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep,” as if the life of the sheep were more valuable than that of the Shepherd.

The woman loses one of her ten silver pieces, she cannot afford to lose it. She must have it back again. She seeks till she find it. It does not miss her, but she misses it. She seeks and finds!

The father loses his son; and is troubled. The son may not miss the father, but the father misses the son; nor can he rest till he has taken him in his arms again, and set him down at his table with gladness and feasting.

But the passage we are considering brings before us something beyond all this. It is not the shepherd seeking his sheep, nor the woman her silver, nor the father his son; it is Jehovah seeking worshippers! and he is in earnest. He wants to be worshipped by the sons of Adam. He desires the worship of earth no less than that of heaven. He has the praise of angels, but he must have that of men. Such is the value he sets upon us, and such is his love?

But it is spiritual worship, and spiritual worshippers that he is seeking: “The Father seeketh such to worship him.” The outward man is nothing, it is the inner man he is in quest of. The worship must come, not from the walls of the temple, but from the innermost shrine. It must be something pervading the man’s whole being, and coming up from the depths of the soul; otherwise, it is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Forms, sounds,

gestures, dresses, ornaments, are not worship. They are but

*“Mouth-honour breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, but dare not.”*

Instead of constituting worship, these outward things are often but excuses for refusing the inward service. Man pleases himself with a sensuous and theatrical externalism, because he hates the spiritual and the true. God says, “Give me thine heart.” Man says, “No; but I will give you my voice.” God says, “Give me thy soul.” Man says, “No; but I will give thee my knee and my bended body.” But it will not do. “God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

But what provision has God made for all this? It is not enough to say to us, “Be worshippers,”—this might be said to the unsinning, and they would at once comply. “Let all the angels of God worship him.” But say this to a sinner, and he will ask, “How can I, a man of unclean lips and unclean heart, approach the infinitely holy One? It would not be safe in me to come, nor would it be right in God to allow me to approach.” There must be provision for this;—something which will satisfy the sinner’s conscience, remove the sinner’s dread, win the sinner’s confidence, on the one hand, and satisfy God, vindicate righteousness, magnify holiness, on the other.

For this there is the twofold provision of the blood and the Spirit. The blood satisfies God’s righteousness and the sinner’s conscience. The Holy Spirit renews the man, so as to draw out his heart in worship. It is the blood that propitiates, and it is the Spirit that transforms. God presents this blood freely to the sinner; God proclaims his desire to give this Spirit freely.

“May I use this blood?” perhaps one says. Use it! Certainly. Thou fool, why shouldst thou ask such a question? Use it! Yes; for thou must either use it, or trample on it. Which of these wilt thou do?

“May I expect the Spirit?” some one may say. Expect him! What! art thou more willing to have the Spirit than God is to give him? Art thou so willing, and God so unwilling? Thou fool, who has persuaded thee to believe such a lie?

God has come to thee, O man! saying, “I want thee for a worshipper”: wilt thou become one? Remember, thou must either be a worshipper or a blasphemer; which wilt thou be?

(Taken from the book: *The Rent Veil*)

Do You Worship God ?

by George Swinnock

“Exercise thyself unto godliness.” - 1 Timothy 4:7

The main work which God commands and commends to the children of men, is to glorify him upon the earth by exercising themselves to godliness.

What is godliness? Godliness is a worshipping the true God in heart and life according to his revealed will.

First, godliness is a worship. Worship comprehends all that respect which man owes and gives to his Maker. It is that service and honor, that faithfulness and homage which the creature owes and tenders to the fountain of his being and happiness.

Second, godliness is a worshipping the True God. All religion without the knowledge of the true God is a mere notion, an airy, empty nothing.

Third, godliness is a worshipping God in heart and life. Godliness is the worshipping God in the inward motions of the heart and the outward actions of life.

Fourth, godliness is a worshipping God according to his revealed will. Every part of divine worship must have a divine precept. The institutions of Christ; not the inventions of men, are the rule of worship.

Godliness should be every man's main and principal business because it is God's chief end in sending man into this world and continuing him in it.

Now then, if godliness is a worshipping the true God in heart and life according to his revealed will; and if godliness is the main work which God commands to the children of men, it is of the utmost importance to us to consider:

Do we worship God? Do we truly exercise ourselves unto godliness?

Consider how this duty is so exceedingly neglected by mankind (and well may we mourn that it is so!) and then examine your own heart and life to see if you do indeed “Exercise thyself unto godliness!”

First; How eager is the worlding for wealth and earthly things! Though they loiter about the meat which endures to eternal life, yet they can labor for the meat that perishes; though they are so negligent about the kingdom of

heaven, yet the kingdom of earth suffers violence. What pains do the mariners take for treasure! What perils does the soldier undergo for plunder! What labor and industry does the husbandman use for profit! he rises early, sits up late, denies himself, loses his sleep, rides and runs to and fro, embraces all opportunities, is eaten up almost with cares and fears, all for the earthly mammon,—while the heavenly mansions are like the unknown part of the world, which no man regards or looks after; “they pant after the dust of the earth,” as greedily as hot creatures do after the air to cool their scorched entrails (Amos 2:7). The serpent’s curse is entailed on that poisonous brood; the dust is their diet, they feed on ashes. They laugh at dangers, and trample upon difficulties, they force their way through darkness and the shadow of death, through stifling damps and overflowing floods, through rocks and mountains, in the pursuit of earthly treasures (Job 28:9-11). Ah, what a pity is it that this jewel should hang in a swine’s snout, which would so well become the Christian’s finger; that this diligence, this violence, should be exercised about men’s earthly and particular calling, which would so well suit their heavenly and general calling.

Is it not sad, that so noble a being as man’s soul should be wholly taken up with such mean, sordid things? God has entrusted you with a precious soul, descended highly, even from God himself, claiming kindred with the glorious angels, and capable of inheriting that kingdom, to which the most glorious empires of the world are but muck-heaps. Are you not one of them that employ this princely soul altogether about unsuitable and earthly practices, and causing it (as the lapwing, though it have a coronet on its head) to feed on excrements? It was one cause of Jeremiah’s sad lamentation that “the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold,” should be “esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter” “they that were brought up in scarlet, [should] embrace dunghills” (Lam 4:2, 5). Have not we more cause of sorrow that men’s souls should be put to no better use than earthen pitchers that they which should be brought up delicately in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, should be busy about dross, and embrace dunghills; that your precious soul should thus seek after earth and vanity, when it should be always standing and waiting in the presence of the Lord?

May I not say to you, Are you not ashamed, being an immortal, spiritual substance, the offspring of God, and capable of his likeness and love, to be glued as a toadstool to the earth, to spend your time and strength, venture the perishing of your mortal body, and immortal soul too, for that meat which perishes? Ah! how costly is that treasure which makes him a beggar to all eternity!

How foolish is man, and what a silly thing, to prize and take pains for husks before bread, vanity before solidity, a shadow before the substance, the

world's scraps before the costly feast, the dirty kennels before the crystal water of life, a mess of pottage before the birthright, and the least fleeting and inconstant good before the greatest, truest, and eternal good. Their particular callings are but about earth; and yet how eagerly are they pursued. How closely are they followed! how constantly are they busied about them! Their general callings are about their souls, their eternal salvation; yet how lingeringly is this calling entered upon, how lazily is it followed, and how quickly cast off. O foolish man! who has bewitched you, that you do thus dislike and disobey the truth? The favor of God, the promises of the gospel, the covenant of grace, the blood of Christ, the embroidery of the Spirit, the life of faith, the hope of heaven, joy in the Holy Ghost are laid before man; yet he overlooks them all, and lives like a mole, digging and delving in the earth. Though men see before their eyes an end of all earthly perfections, that the beauty, the bravery of all earthly things is but like a fair picture drawn on ice, quickly perishing; that their riches and estates are but like snow, which children take much pains to rake together to make a ball of, which upon the sun's shining on, presently melts away; though they see daily men that hoarded up silver, and wrought hard for wealth, hurried away into the other world, leaving all their heaps behind them; yet they will take no warning, but, as the silly lark, still play with the feather in the glass till they are caught and destroyed by the fowler.—What say you, friends, should we not blush to think that worldings are more busy and laborious about the low things, the rattles and trifles of this life, than we are about the high affairs of God and our soul, the noble and serious concerns of eternity?

Second, how do men make superstition and idolatry their business! Though they are careless about divine institutions, yet they are zealous for human traditions. How zealous were the Pharisees for the inventions of their elders! Though they were backward where God commanded, they were forward when men commanded. What an outcry did Micah make for his idol! What a diligent search did Laban make for his images! Gideon must die for throwing down the altar of Baal. How earnest are many for priests, altars, sacrifices, days, meats, consecrations! In these their zeal is hot, boiling over to the scalding of themselves and others! Jeroboam will be at great cost for his idols; they must be not iron, or brazen, no, not silver, but golden calves; not gilded over, but massive, molten gold. The Israelites will spare their jewels for their idols (Exo 32:3). Micah's mother, to make molten and graven images, will lay out eleven hundred shekels of silver. The papists are so prodigal, though it is the less wonder in them, because they hold such actions meritorious of salvation, that not only their churches, but even cloisters, are stuck and stuffed with costly, pearly presents to their supposed saints.

How many zealots, that will hardly give a penny to the relief of a poor Christian, throw away pounds for the maintenance of superstition.

They slight their relations to further their idolatrous devotion. Nay, they will sacrifice not only their estates and children, but their lives and all their outward comforts, to superstition. How did the worshipers of Baal cut and lance themselves! Ahaz sacrificed to the gods of Damascus that smote him; so fervent he was that he chose rather in the service of false gods to be scourged, than in the service of the true God to be saved.

Alas! what sorrow does this call for and command, that men should be so hot and fiery in will-worship, in false worship, wasting their wealth, cutting and carving their bodies, as if they were made only to be their slaves, and themselves to be the tyrants over them, laying out so much cost, and exercising so much cruelty, for that which is worse than nothing, for that which will not only not profit them, but extremely and eternally prejudice them; and in the interim, the easy yoke of Christ is scorned, the power of godliness slighted, which might be minded with much more mildness and mercy to their outward and inward man.

Third, as many, make the world their main work, and others superstition their principal occupation, so most make wickedness their chief, their constant trade and business. While holiness is but coldly entertained, but complimented with, sin is laid in the bosom and heartily embraced; the turnings and windings that are in the sinner's way are not easily to be observed. In what haste and hurry is Absalom for a halter! what work does lust make in Amnon to waste his body, and send his soul to endless woe! how fast does Gehazi run after a leprosy, as if he might come too late! how sick and violent is Ahab for Naboth's vineyard! how fiercely does Balaam ride, even without reins; after the wages of unrighteousness! How eager and earnest were Pharaoh and the Egyptians to fight against God! What a stir, what ado they make to overtake destruction, and to sink like lead in the midst of the mighty waters! Joshua could stop the sun in its course, but not stop Achan in his covetous career. Paul, before his conversion, followed the saints with such close persecution, and was so mad upon it, that like a tired wolf, wearied in worrying the flock, he lay panting for breath, and yet still breathed out persecution.—Men run by sin away from God, even to the tiring of themselves here, and tormenting themselves hereafter. They run as fast as if they feared that hell would be full before they came thither.

All the rubs which are laid in their way do rather increase their rage than hinder their riot. When God would stop the steam of their lusts by his prohibitions, laws, judgments, like waters dammed up, they swell the more, and like the possessed person, break all those cords in pieces. When Paul chides the Ephesians for their idolatry, they cry out for it with the greater vehemence. When Stephen had reproved the Jews for their cruelty, they were cut to the heart, and “gnashed upon him with their teeth.” When Ahaz was

hampered in affliction, like a mad dog he bites at his chain, and sinned yet more in his distress against the Lord. When the sinner's tide of nature is thwarted and crossed by the winds of reproof, or some judgment, what a storm is presently raised! how does he, like the sea, presently discover and foam out his own shame! Though God command, entreat, persuade, threaten, promise, yet all this physic does often but move and stir, not remove, nor purge away their ill-humors. Oh! how deadly is that disease which no physic can cure! and how tough is that wood that no wedge can cleave! The bird will beware of the pit-fall in which she has been caught, and the beast of the snare in which he has been taken; but brutish man, more foolish than beasts, will not be parted from sin, though he has been sharply punished for it.

Who would imagine that a reasonable soul should act so much against sense and reason? Where, is the saint that is not shamed by the very damned? Sinners drive furiously, like Jehu, against their God, their Sovereign; but saints drive heavily, though they are marching in the road to the heavenly Canaan. Ah! who presses towards the mark for the prize of high calling? Who works so hard to be preferred to the beatifical vision, as wicked men do to be punished with eternal destruction? They sweat at sowing in the devil's field when all they shall reap thereby will be damnation; and you are very sluggish in seeking God's favor; when the fruit thereof will be everlasting salvation.

But possibly you may say: There are many that make godliness their business; they abound in every country, congregation and family. All are Christians and make the worship of God their main work.

I must answer as he did when he saw the vast army of Antiochus: "There are many men, but few soldiers; many mouths, but few hands." There are many nominal Christians, many that flourish like fencers, beating only the air, but few that fight in earnest the good fight of faith.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart" (Jer 17:9, 10).

The heart is the great workshop where all sin is wrought before it is exposed to open view. It is the mint where evil thoughts are coined, before they are current in our words and actions: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts" (Matt 15:19). That is the nest in which those hornets breed. The heart is the source of sinful words as well as sinful thoughts. They were in the heart before ever they were on the tongue. Every sinner conceives at the heart what he brings forth at the mouth: the heart is the vessel of poisonous liquor, the tongue is but the tap to broach it: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The heart is the forge also where all our evil works, as well as words, are hammered out: "Out of the heart proceed murders, thefts, and adulteries, and fornications." You will say that murders and thefts are hand sins, and that adulteries and fornication belong to the eye and outward parts

of the body, but alas! the heart is the womb wherein they are conceived and bred. The outward parts are but the midwives to deliver the mother of those monsters, and to bring them into the world; "An evil man, out of the evil treasure in his heart, bringeth forth evil things." ***There is no sin but it is dressed in the drawing-room of the heart, before it appear on the stage of the life. It is vain to go about a holy life till the heart be made holy. The pulse of the hand beats well or ill, according to the state of the heart and the inward vital parts.*** Our earthly members can never be mortified, unless the body of sin and death be destroyed. Therefore the Holy Ghost calls on men to take away the cause, if they would have the effect to cease. "O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness" (Jer 4:14). And in James 4:8 "Cleanse your hearts, ye sinners, and purify your hands, ye doubleminded;" first the heart cleansed, then the hands.

There are several things which may help to make the life fair in the eyes of men, but nothing will make it amiable in the eyes of God, unless the heart be changed and renewed. Indeed, all the medicines that can be applied, without the sanctifying work of the Spirit, though they may cover, they can never cure the corruptions and diseases of the soul. Some insects lie in a deep sleep all the winter, stir not, make no noise, that one would think them dead; but when the weather alters, and the sun shines, they revive and show themselves; so though lusts may seem dead in an unregenerate man, they are only laid asleep, and when opportunity comes will reveal. Shame may hide sin, but it will not heal sin; corruption often lies secret in the heart, when shame hinders it from breaking out in scabs and blotches in the life.

Fear may do somewhat to curb a corrupt nature, but it cannot cure it. The bear dares hardly touch his desired honey for fear of the stinging of the bees; the dog forbears the meat on the table, not because he does not like it, but because he is afraid of the cudgel. Many leave some sin in their outward actions, as Jacob parted with Benjamin, for fear they should starve if they kept it, who are as fond of their sin as the patriarch of his child. This inward love of sin is indeed its life and that which is most dangerous and deadly to the soul. ***Sin, only reigning in the heart, is oftentimes more hurtful than when it rages in the life.*** Such civil persons go to hell without much disturbance, being asleep in sin, yet not snoring to the disquieting of others; they are so far from being awaked that they are many times praised and commended.

Example, custom, and education, may also help a man to make a fair show in the flesh, but not to walk after the Spirit. They may prune and lop sin, but never stub it up by the roots. All that these can do, is to make a man like a grave, green and flourishing on the surface and outside, when within there is nothing but noisomeness and corruption. It has often appeared that those means which the great moralists have used to bridle their lusts and passions,

have rather raised them than recovered them. Indeed, if the chief fault were not in the vital parts, then outward applications might be effectual. When the fault is in the foundation of a house, it cannot be mended by plastering or painting. A leopard may be flayed, but he is spotted still because the spots are not only in the skin, but in the flesh and bones and sinews. When a person loses his sight on account of a disease, by small-pox or the like, there the physic of morality may be advantageous, but when a person was born blind, there physic will do no good—a miracle alone must restore such a one to sight.

An unconverted person may do something, some small matter for the sake of religion, from common gifts of illumination, etc., but the most that he does is for his own sake, for the credit or profit which he expects thereby.

Friends, make sure of this inward change; otherwise, though your conversation may be specious, it can never be gracious, nor your profession durable. If the house be built on sand, it will never stand long. When the principles are variable and uncertain, so will the practices be. I wonder not that many professors disown the Lord Jesus, when they were ignorant why they at any time owned him. Christ tells us, some which heard the word, though for a season they rejoiced in it, when tribulation came because of the word, were offended at it, because they had no root. He that follows Christ, he knows not why, will forsake him, he knows not how. But not so he, unto whom his misery without Christ was revealed, who had a discovery of the absolute necessity of Christ, who by the eye of faith saw the excellencies in Christ, what love, and peace, and endless bliss, God offers with his Son, who, knowing what Christ expects from all that will be married to him, even the denial of themselves, the taking up of their cross, the contempt of father, mother, wife, children, estate, life, and all for him, yet being drawn with the cords of love, gives himself up to Christ, resolved to be faithful unto death, and to own the Lord Jesus Christ, whatever it may cost him.

And now, my friends, do you worship God? Do you exercise yourself unto godliness?

Let me address myself to those of you whose hearts have not been renewed. I would bespeak you, or rather God himself, “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Turn ye unto me, saith the Lords of hosts, and I will turn unto thee, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zech 1:3) After all your neglect and contempt of God and his Word, after all your wandering and wickedness, you have his call to turn and live. He calls you to turn unto him for your good, that you might be happy in his favor.

To those of you whose hearts have been renewed, in whose hearts saving faith has been implanted, I say: “Exercise thyself unto godliness.”

If you would exercise yourself to godliness, set God always before your

eyes. **Let your eye be ever on him whose eye is ever on you.** *If the eyes of men make even the vilest to forbear their beloved lusts for a while, how powerful will the eye and presence of God be with those that fear him, and know the sweetness of his favor! The thoughts of his omnipresence will quicken you to holiness.*—There is a story told of Bishop Latimer, that he having in a sermon at court much displeased the king, was commanded to preach again the next Lord's day, and to recant his former sermon. According to the appointment he came up, and prefaced his sermon in this manner: Hugh Latimer, do you know this day to whom you are to speak? even to the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away your life if you offend; therefore take heed how you speak a word which may displease;—but (as if recalling himself, he proceeded) Hugh, Hugh, do you know from whom you come, upon whose message you are sent, and who it is that is present with you, and beholds all your ways? even that almighty God who can cast body and soul into hell forever; therefore look about you, and be sure that you deliver your message faithfully. And so he went on to his text, and confirmed what he had spoken before, and urged it with more vehemency than ordinary.

If you would exercise your self to godliness, walk humbly with your God. He leaves the high hills barren, but makes the valleys to abound in corn, that you should remember: “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.”

True Worship

“Worship God.”—Rev. 22:9.

“What may be the reason that prayer and intercession are not a greater joy and delight? And is there any way in which we may become fitted to make fellowship with God our chief joy, and as intercessors to bring down his power and blessing on those for whom we pray?”

There may be more than one answer to the question. But the chief answer is undoubtedly: We know God too little. In our prayer, his presence is not waited for as the chief thing on which our heart is set. And yet it should be so. We think mostly of ourselves, our need and weakness, our desire and prayer. But we forget that in every prayer God must be **first**, must be **all**. To seek him, to find him, to tarry in his presence, to be assured that his holy presence rests upon us, that he actually listens to what we say, and is working in us—it is this alone that gives the inspiration that makes prayer as natural and easy to us as is the intercourse of a child with his father.

And how is one to attain to this nearness to God and fellowship with him? The answer is simple: We must give God time to make himself known to us. Believe with your whole heart, that just as you present yourself to God as a suppliant, so God presents himself to you as the hearer of prayer. But you cannot realize this except as you give him time and quiet. It is not in the multitude or the earnestness of your words in which prayer has its power, but in the living faith that God himself is taking you and your prayer into his loving heart. He himself will give the assurance that in his time your prayer will be heard.

True Spiritual Worship

by C. H. Spurgeon,



“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”—John 4:23, 24.

The woman’s conscience had been aroused by Christ’s declaration of her sin. He was touching upon matters of the most vital importance, and her depraved heart naturally shrunk from the lancet. From the truth which was becoming inconveniently personal she flew to that natural resort of the carnal mind, namely, to religious discourse upon points of outward observance. Instead of confessing her sin, and asking how it may be forgiven, she must needs say, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” The carnal heart dreads the contact of spiritual truth, and finds a most convenient way of avoiding it by running to questions of holy places, holy times, and holy customs. Jesus, to her astonishment, informs her that the question which she had asked was of only temporary importance. There had been a time when it was well to know that salvation was of the Jews, and that the rival temple of the Samaritans was an imposture; but he says in effect to her, “Woman, believe me that question is of no importance now, for the hour cometh, yea and now is, when the external is to be abolished and the ritualistic is to be put away, and a purer, simpler, and more spiritual worship, is to take its place.”

The worship which our Lord Jesus Christ established involved a change. That is implied in the expressions here used. He announced to her that the hour was just then come when all questions about this or that place must cease, and be superseded by spiritual worship. Our Lord gave a very brief, but I think a very instructive description of what this worship was to be. If you observe carefully the words, you will see that it was a distinguishing kind of worship, for he mentions true worshippers. There had been but little distinction before; so long as they all passed through the same outward form they all seemed to be worshippers; but a distinction was now to be made clear and manifest. Merely outward worshippers were now false worshippers, and only those who pressed into spiritual worship were to be regarded as true. The gospel of Christ is a great discerner and an accurate judge. Christ has the winnowing fan in his hand; he sits as a refiner; he is compared by the prophet to the "refiner's fire" and to "fuller's soap;" and hence you see he discerns at once between worshippers and worshippers. There they stand both alike with bended heads, perhaps both repeating the same words, but the Savior distinguishes: "there is," saith he, "a false worshipper, and there is a true worshipper, and he alone who is spiritual is true." He announces further that under the gospel, God is to be worshipped in the character of a Father; true worshippers shall worship the Father. This had not been the case before. The Lord had been adored as the Adonai, and revered as Jehovah; but to say "Our Father which art in heaven" remains the prerogative of the enlightened Christian who, having believed in Christ, has received power to become a son of God. *True Christian worship addresses God, not merely as Creator and Preserver, or as the great Lord of the Universe, but as one who is very near of kin to us, our Father, beloved of our souls.* Jesus likewise states that gospel worship is to be of a kind which does not result from the man himself merely, but comes from God, and is a work of grace. This is implied in the sentence, "The Father seeketh such to worship him," as if no true worship would come from any man unless God sought it. True devotion under the Christian dispensation is not merely human but also divine. It is the work of the Spirit in the soul returning to its author; or as our hymn puts it—

*"Prayer is the breath of God in man,
Returning whence it came."*

These are very grave points, and draw a broad line of distinction between the living worship of the chosen of God and the dead formal worship of the world which lieth in the wicked one.

Furthermore, the Savior goes on to say that they who worship God are to worship him "in spirit." No longer with the visible sacrifice of a lamb, but inwardly trusting in him who is the Lamb of God's passover; no more with sprinkled blood of goats, but heartily relying upon the blood once shed for many; no longer worshipping God with ephod, breastplate, and mitre, but

with prostrate soul, with uplifted faith, and with the faculties not of the body but of the inward spirit. We who worship God under the Christian dispensation are no longer to fancy that bodily exercise in worship profiteth anything, that bended knees and contortions are of any value, but that acceptable worship is wholly mental, inward, and spiritual.

But he adds, lest there should seem an omission in the description, "must worship him in spirit and in truth;" for though we should profess to worship God only with the spirit and so despise forms, yet unless the soul shall truly love, and really adore, and sincerely bow, our worship will be as unacceptable as though it were formal and outward. See then, brethren, putting the whole three together, the worship under the Christian dispensation which God ordains, and which he accepts through Christ Jesus, is a worship distinguished by an inward vitality from the outward worship of the carnal mind. It is the worship of a child towards a father, feeling within himself a kinship with the divine; it is a worship wrought in us by God the Holy Ghost, because the Father has sought us out and taught us how to worship him. It is a worship which is not outward, but of the inner man, and occupies not hand, eye, and foot, but heart and soul and spirit: and it is a worship which is not professional and formal, but real, hearty, earnest, and so acceptable before God.

*Let me give a sketch of this worship as it actually exhibits itself. A man may have been to a place of worship from his youth up, and he may have fallen into a habit of repeating a sacred form every morning and every evening, he may even have been a tolerably diligent reader of the Word of God, and yet though this may have been continued for sixty years and more, he may never once have worshipped God after the fashion prescribed in the text. But see him! the Father seeks him, truth comes home to his soul, and in the light of that truth he feels himself a sinner, and feeling himself so, he cries, "Father, I have sinned." **That is his first true worship.** See, brethren, his spirit feels it, he means what he says. All that he said before was as nothing, but that first cry "I have sinned" has in it the vitality of worship. He hears the story of the cross, the full atonement made by God's appointed sacrifice, and he prays, "Lord, I believe in Jesus, and I trust him;" here is another specimen of true worship; here is the spirit resting upon God's appointed sacrifice, and reverencing God's way of salvation by accepting it. Being saved by the precious blood of Jesus, he cries, "Father, I bless thee that I am saved, I thank thee that my sins are washed away." This is true worship. *Whether a man sings in the assembly, or sings alone; whether he prays aloud, or prays in silence, if he feels gratitude to God for pardon received, he offers the true worship. The whole of the Christian's life, consisting as it must do of dealings with the invisible God through Jesus Christ by his heart, is a life of worship, and when at last he comes to die, you perceive that his worship will not cease with death, because it has always been spiritual, and did not depend upon**

the body. So that while the outward man faileth him, the inward spiritual man grows more strong in devotion than ever it was before; and when at last the spirit leaves its earthly tenement, and is disembodied, it has still a song for God, and throughout eternity its spiritual worship can continue; which worship must have been suspended if it had been connected with the body, and not with the immortal part of man.

If I understand the Savior's words, and I hope I do, not only theoretically but practically, he means that those of us who are his true worshippers must worship him with our better and our nobler part, and our soul, with all the power she has, must pay reverence to the unseen God. Brethren, this is the kind of worship that men will not render to God; they will render him anything else but this; and until divinely effectual grace shall work such worship in man's heart, it is obnoxious to him; he will worship God with robes, and incense, and flowers, and banners, but he will not consent to worship him in spirit and in truth.

HISTORY OF WORSHIP

I shall proceed to my work by giving a BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF WORSHIP, in connection with the doctrine that we are now to worship more manifestly than ever God in spirit and in truth. It appears from Scripture that worship before the flood was of the very simplest form. The outward ordinances were very few; the chief of them being the offering of sacrifice. This was probably instituted by God himself when he clothed Adam and his wife with skins of beasts; it has been thought that he then indicated to them the slaughter of beasts for sacrifice. Certain it is that the first worship of fallen man was by sacrifice. There was connected with this no doubt the meeting of gracious hearts for prayer, and also the ministration of truth, for Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord; so that they appear to have had what was tantamount to a ministry, and the sons of God had appointed times for meeting. But this simple form of worship seems to have been too high, too spiritual for fallen man at the first; at any rate the seed of the serpent could not endure it, for Cain at the very first commenced a schism; instead of bringing a sacrifice by blood he must needs bring a sacrifice of the fruits of the ground. Perhaps he was a man of taste, and desired to bring something that should look more decorous than a poor bleeding victim; he would lay those rich grapes, those ruddy fruits upon the altar; and those fair flowers that gemmed the bosom of earth, surely he might consecrate those. At any rate he was the first man who set up taste and self as the guide in religious worship, and God had no respect unto his sacrifice. The two stood by their altars; Abel by faith, exercising spiritual worship, offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain; Cain's offering was possibly even more fair to look upon but it was of his own invention; Abel was accepted, but Cain discarded.

The ultimate result of man's sinfulness in connection with this early type of worship was general neglect of all religion. The sons of God seem to have maintained their simplicity for a time, but at last by unholy alliances with the ungodly race there arose a widespread neglect of all thought of God, so that they were married and given in marriage, they ate and they drank till the day when the flood came and swept them all away. Depraved nature thus refused to render spiritual worship. After the flood we find worship restored in very much the same form: let us distinguish it as the patriarchal method of worship. The head of a family was accustomed to offer sacrifice, and no doubt if Job be taken as a type thereof family prayer and household religion were maintained. But you see very early the indication that man, although he could not forget God, for the deluge had struck to the very heart of manhood an awful dread of the Most High, began to interpose symbols and visible objects between God and himself. The use of teraphim became very common; so that in the house even of Abraham's ancestors teraphs were found; and when we come down to the time of Jacob, we find one of his wives stealing her father's images, thus proving that Laban, one of a once God-fearing family, had become a worshipper of God through the medium of images. Thus was it among those who still had some knowledge of God; but the nations being dispersed, soon lost the pure idea of the invisible One, and worshipped gods of their own devising. From the plagues of Egypt, which were no doubt intended to be a blow against all Egypt's gods, we find out that, in addition to the worship of the calf or bull, the Egyptians paid religious reverence to flies, the river Nile, the elements, beetles, and all kinds of creatures; and throughout the world, as a general rule, through the introduction of visible symbols of the unseen Being, the Lord himself had become forgotten, and spiritual worship had almost ceased, except in one elect household; and even there, alas! how fallen had spirituality become!

Keeping to the line of grace, we shall now introduce you to the ceremonial form of worship which God instituted after the more spiritual method had entirely broken down. He saw that the children of Israel whom he loved were but a mob of slaves; their spirits had been broken by bitter bondage, they seemed as a whole incapable of rising at once to mental dignity, and needed to pass through a generation or two before they could as a nation achieve manly self-government. So when he brought his people out of Egypt the Lord did not try them with an altogether spiritual form of worship; because of the hardness of their hearts among other reasons, though he was still to be worshipped as a spirit, yet he gave them certain outward signs by which they might be enabled to understand his character.

A great deal has been made of the symbolical worship of the Jew, as if it were an excuse for the manmade symbolism of the Roman and Anglican Antichrist. We would remark that nothing ought to be made of it at all now,

since it has been positively declared many times in Scripture that the age of the shadow has gone, and that the age of the substance now reigns. Whatever may or may not have been the excellence of the old Jewish economy—and being divinely ordained, God forbid we should say a word against it—yet the apostle Paul always talks of it as being but a yoke of bondage to which we are no more to submit ourselves, being but the shadow and not the very image of the good things which were to come; and he speaks of it as a thing so passed away, that to go back to it is to go back to the rudiments, and not to go onward in the full-grown manliness of Christianity. If there were no other passage my text might show that the ceremonialism of the Jew is no excuse whatever for ceremonialism now, but that we ought to stand in direct contrast to that, hearing the Savior declare, that whatever may have been before his time, the hour had come when the true worshipper must worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

Remember that symbolical worship was suitable merely to the infancy of God's church, and that now having received the Spirit of God to dwell in us it would be as unsuitable as would the swaddling bands of babyhood to full-grown men. Besides, even while it existed it was spoken of as soon to be superseded by a new and better covenant. It was frequently broken through by divine authority. Elijah though not at all of the house of Levi offered sacrifice, and prophet after prophet as he arose manifested and declared by his actions that God did not intend to give the Levitical form of worship undivided sway, but that when he poured his Spirit upon special men they were to break through all ritual regulations in order to show that they were not meant to be fixed and permanent.

It is not sufficiently remembered that the most of God's people in the Jewish nation had very little to do with this symbolical worship. When they were all in the wilderness, and gathered round the one tent called the tabernacle, they might all see the fiery cloudy pillar; but when they came into the land which God had given them, what had they most of them to see? ***Why the temple itself the most of them would only see once or twice in a year. Scarcely anyone ever saw the ark, the cherubim, or the golden candlestick; they were always within the veil, and only once in the year did the high priest enter that sacred place. Even the place where the sacrifices were carried on continually, no one entered but the priests; so that to at least eleven tribes out of twelve the ceremonials were mainly invisible. Little was done outside the court of the priests, but the most of the sacrifices, and of the typology of Judaism, was as much a hidden thing as the spiritual things of God are to us at the present day; and thus there was a great exercise of the spiritual faculties, and comparatively little of outward display. Moreover, it is to be remembered that there was nothing whatever visible for the Jew to worship.*** It is not so in the symbology of that false Church which is trying to

raise up and revive the beggarly elements; there men bow before a cross; a piece of bread inside a box is revered and treated with worship; cast-off cloths and rotten rags, called relics, are the objects of adoration; but there was nothing like this with the Jews, they did worship toward the temple, but they did not adore the temple, or mercy-seat, the altar, or any other emblem. Is it not said expressly, "Ye saw no similitude"? When God descended upon Sinai, and all the people worshipped there, they saw nothing which they dared to worship; God was to them still invisible, and they had to exercise their mental faculties in the worship of the invisible God. When at one time it was thought that the miraculous powers of the brazen serpent entitled it to worship, Hezekiah called it Nehushtan, that is, a piece of brass, and broke it to pieces. So that with all its splendor of imagery, embroidered vest, and glittering breastplate, to a great extent there was a powerful element of spirituality even about Aaronic worship; I mean, of course, only to spiritual men. David himself utterly outstripped the outward, when he declared, "Sacrifice and offering thou dost not desire;" and when he said again, "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it thee." ***The prophet declares that God is weary of their sacrifices, and in another place the Lord himself says that if we could come before him with rivers of oil, or ten thousand of the fat of fed beasts, he would not accept us with these. To obey is better than sacrifice, is told us even under the law. So that even there, though not so distinctly as now, the spirituality of worship was taught and declared.***

But, dear friends, what became of this accommodation of worship to the childhood of the church? You know that very soon after Israel came out of Egypt they said, "Let us make gods that they may go before us." They could not do without a visible God. Do not think that when they set up the calf they meant to worship the calf instead of Jehovah, that would be a slander upon them; they worshipped Jehovah through the calf—that was their plea, for they said, "Tomorrow is a feast unto Jehovah." They thought to represent Jehovah by a bull, "they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass." Though severely rebuked, it was the constant sin of Israel to desire to worship God under the favourite Egyptian emblem of the bull. At last they had so far gone into idolatry that they were driven far away; and in captivity they were so chastened, and moreover brought into such contact with the abominations of idolatry that they were heartily sick of it, and no Jew has been an idolater ever since. Still, spiritual worship they would not offer, and therefore fell into rigid ritualism, reverencing the mere letter of the law, and fighting over trifling refinements of regulation and observance; so that in Christ's day they made broad their phylacteries and the borders of their garments, but they forgot the Great Spirit who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

Since that day the Lord has been treated by carnal men in one of three

ways; either God is adored by outward symbols as among Brahminists, Romanists, Puseyites, and other idolaters; or else he is worshipped through ritualism, as among too many who claim to be orthodox, who contend for pre-arranged, and unbending forms; written or unwritten as the case may be: or else men show an utter indifference to God altogether, and then rush into superstitious reverence for something or other which is evil, and therefore to be dreaded and spoken of with awe. This is the history of religious worship, that let spiritual worship assume what form it may, man always will if he can, get away from it and forget his God and set up something seen, instead of bowing down before the unseen; hence the necessity of the second commandment in the Decalogue, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God", and so on. This is not a command against worshipping another God, that is the first commandment, but a command against worshipping God under any shape, or through any medium or under any symbol; for he is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth and not by symbols. ***Against this command the human mind is always dashing itself, and in one shape or another idolatry is the ruling religion of mankind.***

Christ comes to tell us that now his worship is to be wholly spiritual, even the altar which belongs to antediluvian times is gone, for we have an altar of another kind; even the sacrifice which belonged to the early period has departed like a shadow, because we have the sacrifice of Christ in which to trust. As for the institutions which suited the infancy of the church, they also have disappeared, for now Jesus would have the worship of men enlightened by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; he would have us understand that a perfect revelation demands of us, that in the perfection of our spiritual powers we should adore the invisible God without the interference of visible signs. Now he would have us cast away all outward types and signs, except the two which he has himself ordained, and even these are types of the Savior's manhood and not of his Godhead at all, to be only valued because of the spiritual communion which they enable our hearts to hold with Jesus; baptism being intended for spiritual men, that they may enter into the Savior's death and burial, and the Lord's supper that the same persons may remember his body broken and his blood shed for them; the water, the bread, the wine, being mere emblems, not to be treated with reverence, but put to their proper emblematic use.

WHY MEN DON'T TRULY WORSHIP GOD

I shall now, in the second place, try to ACCOUNT FOR THE EXTREME RARITY OF SPIRITUAL WORSHIP. The reason is, my brethren, because man has fallen. If man

were what he once was, pure and holy, I cannot conceive of his wanting holy places and crosses, copes, and dalmatics, crosiers, and chasubles. I cannot conceive of the temptation to bow down before a bull, or a Virgin Mary, or a wafer. There the noble creature walks in paradise, and if he reclines beneath a shady tree, he lifts up his eyes and says, "My Father, thou hast made this grateful shade, here I will adore thee;" or if he walks in the full heat of the sun, he says, "My God, it is thy light that shineth on me,—I adore thee." Up yonder on the mountain's brow, or down by the gleaming river, or the silvery lake, he needs build no altar, his altar is within himself; he needs make no temple, his temple is everywhere. The morning is holy, and the evening is holy; he hath no prescribed hour of prayer, it is devotion all day long; his morning bath is his baptism; each meal is his Eucharist. Depend upon it, the nearer we get back to the nakedness of worship, the nearer we get to its truth and purity; and it is because man has fallen, that as his body wants clothing, so he is always dressing up his religion.

Moreover, it is far more difficult to worship God in spirit than in form. To patter through a dozen Ave Marias or Paternosters is so easy, that I can nearly go to sleep over them: to repeat a form of prayer in the morning and evening is a very small matter, and one can be thinking of the shop all the while; to go to church or chapel so many times a week is a cheap duty, and withal one may still be a thief or a hypocrite; but it is hard, very hard, to bring the heart down to humble penitence, and the soul to holy meditation. The last thing that most people will do is to think. The noblest part of our nature is still the least exercised. Humbly to tremble before God, to confess sin before him, to believe him, to love him—this is spiritual worship! Because this is so hard, men say, "No, no, let me crawl on my knees around a shrine! Let me kneel down before a pyx, let me help to make a cope, or to manufacture some pretty piece of millinery for the priest to wear. Let me go every morning to the steeple house and come out in half an hour, and feel I have done my religion." That is quite easy, but the hard part of religion is the part of spiritual worship.

And yet again, *to worship God spiritually men would have to part with their sins*. There is no effect produced upon a man's conscience by his being sprinkled, or by his taking the sacraments, he can do all that and be as much a pleasure-lover, or a worshipper of Mammon, as he was before; but, ***to worship God spiritually, a man must give up his sins, must overcome his pride and lust, and his evil concupiscence must be cast out of him.*** Many persons might honestly declare, "I do not mind worshipping God if it consists in doing penance, or going without meat on Fridays; but if I am to give up my sins, love God, seek Christ, trust to him, I cannot attend to that." Furthermore, man, for the most part, somehow cannot get the idea of this spiritual worship into his brain, Oh the many times I have tried to preach spiritual worship here, and yet I am conscious that when I try at it I do not interest

many of you, and some of you think, “if he would only give us more metaphors, more anecdotes, and so on;” I say I will do that, for I believe we should speak by parable, but sometimes I do not know how to clothe these spiritual things without making you look at the clothing rather than the spirit. It is not your worshipping God by words in hymns and prayers, or sitting in a certain place, or covering your faces at certain times that is acceptable to him; ***true worship lies in your heart paying reverence to him, your soul obeying him, and your inner nature coming into conformity to his own nature, by the work of his Spirit in your soul***, and because men can scarcely get the idea of this till the Holy Spirit gives it to them, this is a reason why it is so rare, so exceedingly rare. There is one other reason, dear friends, why spiritual worship is unusual, and that is because man cannot traffic in spiritual religion. The priest is up at arms directly. “Oh,” saith he, “spiritual! spiritual! why they will do without me one of these days. Spiritual—why, if you tell these people that every place is holy, and that there are no holy places; and that one believer is as much a priest as another, and that prayer is as acceptable at home, as it is in a particular spot, why,” says he, “there is an end of me.” Yes, sir, there is an end of you, and the sooner the better for the world; for of all the curses that have ever fallen upon the human race, the priesthood is the worst. Its claims are imposture, and its actions are full of deceit. In the age of witches and ghosts priesthood might be tolerated, but he who now sets himself up as a priest is as much a common nuisance as a fortune-teller. Nothing has been such a nightmare upon the intellect of man; nothing has sat like old Sindbad the Sailor upon the back of humanity, like the pretensions of priesthood. God forbid that Christianity should even for a moment endorse the lie! Christ has put it all down. Christ says, “All ye are brethren,” and he says of the whole body of his elect, “Ye are a royal priesthood.” Concerning all the saints, Scripture declares, “Ye are God’s clergy,” for that is the Greek word in the passage—“Ye are God’s heritage.” We know no clergy and no laity; we know nothing whatever now of priesthood and of the common people, for ye are made priests and kings unto God to offer spiritual sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

WHY MUST WORSHIP BE SPIRITUAL?

Turning from that point, a third subject is this, WHY IS SUCH WORSHIP TO BE RENDERED? Why did not God ordain worship by windmills as in Thibet? Why has he not chosen to be worshipped by particular men in purple and fine linen, acting gracefully as in Roman and Anglican churches? Why not? He gives two reasons which ought to suffice.

The first is, *he himself seeks spiritual worship*. It is his own wish that the worship should be spiritual, And in the second place, he is himself a spirit, and is to be spiritually worshipped. Whatever kind of worship the great Ruler

desires he ought to receive, and it is impertinence on my part if I say to him, "No, not that, but this." It is true I may say, "I am very sincere in all this, very earnest in it. It suits my taste. There is a beauty about it; it excites certain emotions which I think to be devotional." What is all that but saying, "Great God, thou hast chosen such-and-such a way of being worshipped, but I will not render it to thee?" Is not that in effect saying, "I will not worship thee at all;" for must not worship, to be worship, be such as the person worshipped himself will accept? To invent our own forms of worship is to insult God; and every mass that is ever offered upon the Romish altar is an insult to heaven, and a blasphemy to God who is a Spirit. Every time any form of worship by procession, celebration, or ceremonial of man's invention is offered to God, it is offered in defiance of this word of Christ, and cannot and will not be received; however earnest people may be they have violated the imperative canon of God's Word; and in fighting for rubrics they have gone against the eternal rubric that God as a Spirit must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

The second reason given is, that *God is a Spirit*. If God were material, it might be right to worship him with material substances; if God were like to ourselves, it might be well for us to give a sacrifice congenial to humanity; but being as he is, pure spirit, he must be worshipped in spirit. I like the remark made by Trapp in his commentary on this passage, when he says that perhaps the Savior is even here bringing down God to our comprehension; "for," saith he, "God is above all notion, all name." Certainly, this we know, that anything which associates him with the grossness of materialism is infinitely removed from the truth. Said Augustine, "When I am not asked what God is, I think I know, but when I try to answer that question, I find I know nothing." If the Eternal were such an one as thou art, O man, he might be pleased with thy painted windows. But what a child's toy must coloured glass be to God! I can sit and gaze upon a cathedral with all its magnificence of architecture, and think what a wonderful exhibition of human skill; but what must that be to God, who piles the heavens, who digs the foundation of the deep, who leads Arcturus with his sons? Why, it must be to him the veriest trifle, a mere heap of stones. I delight to hear the swell of organs, the harmony of sweet voices, the Gregorian chant, but what is this artistic sound to him more than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal? As a sight, I admire the choristers and priests, and the whole show of a grand ceremonial; but do you believe that God is imposed upon by those frocks and gowns of white, and blue, and scarlet, and fine linen? It seems to me as if such a notion brings down God to the level of a silly woman who is fond of finery. The infinite God, who spreads out the heavens and scatters stars with both his hands, whom heaven and earth cannot contain, to whom space is but a speck, and time is as nothing, do you think that he dwelleth in temples made with hands, that is to say, of man's building? And is he to be worshipped with your organs, and your

roodcreens, and your gaudy millinery? He laugheth at them, he treadeth on them as being less than nothing and vanity. Spiritual worship is what he regardeth, because he is a Spirit. *My brethren, if you could get together a procession of worlds, if you could make the stars walk along the streets of some great new Jerusalem, dressed in their brightest array; if instead of the songs of a few boys or men you could catch the sonnets of eternal ages; if instead of a few men to officiate as priests you could enlist time, eternity, heaven and earth to be the priesthood, yet all this would be to him but as a company of grasshoppers, and he would take up the whole as a very little thing.* But let me tell you that even God himself, great as he is, does not despise the tear that drops from a repentant eye, nor does he neglect the sigh that comes from a sinner's soul. He thinks more of your repentance than of your incense, and more of your prayers than of your priesthods. He views with pleasure your love and your faith, for these are spiritual things in which he can take delight; but your architecture, your music and your fine arts, though they lavish their treasures at his feet, are less than nothing and vanity. Ye know not what spirit ye are of. If ye think to worship my God with all these inventions of man, ye dream like fools. I feel glowing within me the old iconoclastic spirit. Would God we had men now like Knox or Luther, who with holy indignation would pull in pieces those wicked mockeries of the Most High, against which our soul feels a hallowed indignation as we think of his loftiness, and of that poor paltry stuff with which men degrade his name.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

WHAT THEN? What is the practical drift of this? Why two things.

The first is, my dear brothers and sisters, I mean you who have learned to worship God in spirit and in truth, who have got above the beggarly elements of the outward, and can worship him in spirit and in truth, what then? Why, in the first place, let us be particularly jealous of anything which looks at all like going back to ceremonialism. As a matter of taste I have a great liking for noble architecture. Many an hour have I lingered in the ruins of some splendid abbey or our own majestic buildings still used for sacred worship. I have a great delight in a well-painted window. I cannot say that I like most Dissenting painted windows, because they look to me as if they were a sort of would be if you could. I cannot say I have any kind of liking for most of our Dissenting Gothic, for it seems to me such a paltry thing to build a front just like St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey, and then as if to cheat the Lord to make the back part shabby. I cannot say I care for that kind of thing. But a really splendid place of worship I admire, as a matter of taste. I like an organ very well, as a matter of musical taste. But, my brethren, I feel that these are times when we must stand out even against allowable things, lest going one step we should go another. I do pray you therefore if you have any influence anywhere

always use it in favor of simplicity, and if you see at any time in the churches of which you are the members a tendency to creep on to something a little nearer, a little towards the way of Rome, cry "Halt!" Let us rather go back to the barns in which our fathers worshipped, or better still to the hill side, and to the green sward than go forward to anything like symbolism, which will tempt the soul away from spiritual worship. ***We ought ourselves to guard against falling into formalism by means of simplicity, for we may do it the one way as well as the other, by laying it down as a rule that a service must begin with prayer or begin with singing, that the preacher must preach at such a time in the service, that the service must commence, continue, and conclude in some fixed fashion; that seems to me to have a tendency to breed another form of ritualism inconsistent with worshipping God in spirit and in truth.*** I am afraid I have hardly grace enough to worship God by two or three hours together in silence as our Quaker friends do. I do enjoy a quarter of an hour's silence every now and then; to sit quite still seems to me to be an admirable way of getting into contact with God. Our service is so much words, words, words, that I am almost afraid you get to think as much of words as other people do of banners, and flags, and so on. Now, to sit still, to get right away from words, if so your heart keeps to God, is better even than preaching and singing. Juan De Yaldes, a Catholic, but a good Protestant for all that, remarks that the vulgar in seeking to remember Christ by the crucifix do not exercise their mind but stop at the crucifix, and therefore that which was intended to be a help becomes a hindrance; so the learned get their bibles which should help them to think upon divine things, but being content with having read the letter of Scripture they often fail to reach the spiritual truth which it containeth, and so after all do not worship God. Remember that while we should be jealous of anything which would make it easy to be formal of worship which might be adopted, yet we may still after all have missed the main thing, the worshipping of God in spirit and in truth.

Let us make it a matter of heart-searching as to whether we ourselves have been in the habit of worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth. Dear friends, I am jealous of some of you that you do not do this. If the preacher happens to be away you do not feel in so good a frame; somebody else takes my place, and there are certain feeble folk among you who feel as if the sabbath had lost its enjoyment. But God is here, and you might worship God as much surely without me as with me; and though the instruction received from one man may not seem so edifying as that which may come from another, and possibly may not be so, yet still if your object be the worship of God, which should be the main object of our gathering, surely you should do that as well under the ministry of Mr. A. as Mr. B. I am afraid too that many of you are content with singing through the hymn; now all that singing which is not thought-singing is of no use; you may have very sweet voices but God

does not regard your voice, he hears your heart, and if your heart does not sing you have not sung at all. When we stand up to pray it may be that the preacher's words may happen to be suitable to your case, but it is not prayer so far as you are concerned, though it may be as far as he is, unless you join in it. Recollect that if you do not put your hearts into the worship of God, you might for that matter as well be at home as here; you are better here than at home for other reasons, because you are in the way where good may come to you; but for worship's sake you might as well have been in bed as here. You who have no spiritual worship may even clog the devotions of those who have; an invisible savor of death unto death may be stealing from you, helping to pollute or to render dead the worship of those who truly adore God. At any rate, my dear hearers, if you have not with your whole hearts loved and worshipped God, repent over it, and pray the Holy Ghost to make you spiritual. Go to Christ's cross, and trust in him; then, and not till then, will you be capable of adoring the most High God in a style in which he can accept your worship. God grant that this may be impressed upon the hearts of all of us, that we may worship God in spirit and in truth.

(This sermon was previously titled: *The Axe at the Root—A Testimony Against Puseyite Idolatry*)

A Fragment On Worship

It is deeply important that the Christian reader should understand the true character of the worship God looks for, and in which he delights. God delights in Christ; and hence it should be our constant aim to present him to God. ***Christ should ever be the material of our worship, and he will be, in proportion as we are led by the Holy Ghost.*** How often, alas! it is otherwise with us the heart can tell. Both in the assembly and in the closet, how often is the tone low,—and the spirit dull and heavy! We are occupied with self instead of with Christ; and the Holy Ghost, instead of being free to do his own proper work—which is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us—is obliged to occupy us with ourselves, in self-judgment, because our ways have not been right.

All this is to be deeply deplored. It demands our serious attention, both as assemblies and as individuals, in our public reunions and in our private devotions. Why is the tone of our public meetings frequently so low? Why such feebleness, such barrenness; such wandering? Why are the hymns and prayers so often wide of the true mark? Why is there so little that really

deserves the name of worship? Why is there so little in our midst to refresh the heart of God?—so little that he can speak of as “My bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savour unto me?” We are occupied with self and its surroundings—our wants, our weakness, our trials, our difficulties; and we leave God without the bread of his sacrifice. We actually rob him of his due, and of that which, his loving heart desires.



Conscience

Pacified

Forever

by Horatius Bonar

“No more conscience of sins.”—Hebrews 10:2

Mark, at the outset, it is not said “sin,” but “sins;” not, no more sins, but no more “conscience of,”—not consciousness of.

One great object in sacrifice is to provide acceptable worship; such as God can accept, and by means of which he will be glorified. All his works are to praise him; all his creatures are to worship him. It is his prerogative and joy to be worshipped; it is his creature’s part to give this worship. Our praise goes up, his love and blessing come down.

But in order to acceptable worship, there must be an acceptable worshipper. Hence the first thing in sacrifice is to provide such a worshipper. ***For we do not worship in order to be accepted by God, but because we have been accepted. It is not first worship and then acceptance; but first acceptance and then worship. Acceptable worship is the worship of an accepted man.***

Sacrifice then provides for acceptance; secures it. It does so by substitution and exchange. It substitutes the just for the unjust, in the bearing of that guilt the existence of which was a barrier to all acceptance. Sacrifice is no mere piece of self-denial; and the sacrifice of the cross is no mere specimen of

self-surrender which we are to imitate, and, in imitating, commend ourselves to God. It is substitution, suretyship, exchange; the innocent taking the place of the guilty, that the guilty may take the place of the innocent. It is this transference that produces the accepted worshipper; for worship, such as God delights in, can only come from one who has found favour in the sight of God; and the favour which a sinner finds in the sight of God, comes from his being identified with one who is already in favour, even the only-begotten Son.

But this is only one side of the great truth contained in sacrifice,—the side that looks Godward; for every truth has a twofold aspect, a divine and human side. We have seen the bearing of sacrifice as to God; let us mark its bearing on man, which is the great object of the epistle to the Hebrews.

It is with the conscience that it has to do. Not with the heart, or the understanding, or the imagination; but with the conscience. ***An evil conscience is the great barrier to acceptable worship.*** And what is an evil conscience? Not simply that which testifies against us that we have sinned,—in that sense there are no consciences but evil ones on earth,—but one with the pressure of guilt still upon it; with no sense of pardon, no knowledge of the removal of sin; with the persuasion that there is still something between the soul and God, some variance or estrangement; something which makes God frown upon him, which makes him afraid to look up to God, which makes it not safe in him to approach God because of sin; sin unremoved; unpardoned guilt.

Sacrifice, then, bears directly upon the conscience, by showing God's way of removing guilt. The knowledge of the one sacrifice, the belief of God's testimony regarding it, operates immediately on the conscience; because it is written, "Through this man is preached the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things." This immediate forgiveness and acceptance, as the consequence of our belief of the divine record regarding the finished sacrifice, places us at once in the position of accepted men on the one hand, and of men delivered from an evil conscience on the other; brought back, in so far as the conscience is concerned, to the position of the unsinning and the unfallen.

There are two things special in sacrifice, blood and fire: the blood, the substitution of life for life; the fire, the righteous displeasure of God consuming the victim and exhausting the penalty, satisfying righteousness, vindicating holiness, so as to set the guilty free. In the fire, conscience recognises the wrath due for sin,—the "condemnation;" in the blood, it sees that wrath exhausted and extinguished,—the "no condemnation." It needs to see both; both together; else its idea of each will be imperfect. Not the blood without the wrath (that would have no meaning); nor the wrath without the blood (that would only terrify). It is this double sight that relieves the conscience from the pressure of guilt and the dread of meeting God. Until this

great sight is seen the sinner is not in a state for worship; for dread and darkness and uncertainty as to the gracious mind of God, are hinderers, nay, destroyers of all true worship; as well as of all true and happy service.

One great object of sacrifice, then, is to purge the conscience; to give us a “good conscience” and a “true heart;” to remove the dread of God, arising from the thought of his being our enemy, and of our sin being unpardoned. Revealed to us in the cross, we learn to trust him; interpreted as his character and purposes are by the death of his Son, we are attracted to it; we “draw near with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith,” having “no more conscience of sins.” Instead of flying from God, we fly to him, and rest in him for evermore.

O blood of Christ, what a refuge art thou for a troubled conscience and a wounded spirit! O love of God, what a resting-place art thou for the sad and weary!

(This article available in tract form)



Family Worship

by J. H. Merle D'Aubigne

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

—Joshua 24:15.

“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!” We have said, my brethren, on a former occasion, that if we would die his death, we must live his life. It is true that there are cases in which the Lord shows his mercy and his glory to men who are already lying on the death-bed, and says to them, as to the thief on the cross, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” The Lord still gives the Church similar examples from time to time, for the purpose of displaying his sovereign power, by which, when he is pleased to do so, he can break the hardest hearts and convert the souls most estranged, to show that all depends on his grace, and that he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. Yet these are but rare exceptions, on which you can not rely absolutely; and if you wish, my dear hearers, to die the Christian’s death, you must live the Christian’s life; your heart must be truly converted to the Lord, truly prepared for the kingdom, and, trusting only in the mercy of Christ, desirous of going to dwell with him. Now, my brethren, there are various means by which you can be made ready, in life, to obtain at a future day

a blessed end. It is on one of the most efficacious of these means that we wish to dwell today. This mean is Family Worship; that is, the daily edification which the members of a Christian family may mutually enjoy. "As for me and my house," said Joshua to Israel, "we will serve the Lord." We wish, my brethren, to give you the motives which should induce us to make this resolution of Joshua, and the directions necessary to fulfill it.

WHAT ARE THE MOTIVES FOR FAMILY WORSHIP?

to bring glory to God

But, my brethren, if the love of God be in your hearts, and if you feel that, being bought with a price, you ought to glorify God in your bodies and spirits, which are his, where do you love to glorify him rather than in your families and in your houses? You love to unite with your brethren in worshipping him publicly in the church; you love to pour out your souls before him in your closets. Is it only in the presence of that being with whom God has connected you for life and before your children, that you can not think of God? Is it, then, only, that you have no blessings to ascribe? Is it, then, only, that you have no mercies and protection to implore? You can speak of every thing when with them; your conversation is upon a thousand different matters; but your tongue and your heart can not find room for one word about God! ***You will not look up as a family to him who is the true Father of your family; you will not converse with your wife and your children about that Being who will one day, perhaps, be the only husband of your wife, the only Father of your children!*** It is the Gospel that has formed domestic society; it did not exist before it; it does not exist without it; it would, therefore, seem to be the duty of that society, full of gratitude to the God of the Gospel, to be peculiarly consecrated to it; and yet, my brethren, how many couples, how many families there are, nominally Christian, and who even have some respect for religion, where God is never named! How many cases there are in which immortal souls that have been united have never asked one another who united them, and what their future destiny and objects are to be! How often it happens that, while they endeavor to assist each other in everything else, they do not even think of assisting each other in searching for the one thing needful, in conversing, in reading, in praying, with reference to their eternal interests! Christian spouses! is it in the flesh, and for time alone, that you are to be united? Is it not in the spirit, and for eternity also? Are you beings who have met by accident, whom another accident, death, is soon to separate? Do you not wish to be united by God, in God, and for God? Religion would unite your souls by immortal ties! But do not reject them; draw them, on the contrary, tighter every day, by worshipping together under the domestic roof. Voyagers on the same vessel converse of the place to which they are going; and will not you, fellow-travelers to an eternal world, speak together of that world, of the

route which leads to it, of your fears and your hopes? "Many walk thus," says St. Paul, "of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ;" but "our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

to protect your children from sin

But if it be your duty to be engaged with reference to God in your houses for your own sakes, ought you not to be so engaged for the sakes of those of your households whose souls have been committed to your care, and especially for your children? You are greatly concerned for their prosperity, for their temporal happiness; but does not this concern make your neglect of their eternal prosperity and happiness still more palpable? Your children are young trees entrusted to you; your house is the nursery where they ought to grow, and you are the gardeners. But oh! will you plant those tender and precious saplings in a sterile and sandy soil? Yet this is what you are doing, if there be nothing in your house to make them grow in the knowledge and love of their God and Savior. Are you not preparing for them a favorable soil, from which they can derive sap and life? What will become of your children in the midst of all the temptations that will surround them and draw them into sin? What will become of them in these troublous times, in which it is so necessary to strengthen the soul of the young man by the fear of God, and thus to give that fragile bark the ballast needed for launching it upon the vast ocean?

Parents! if your children do not meet with a spirit of piety in your houses, if, on the contrary, your pride consists in surrounding them with external gifts, introducing them into worldly society, indulging all their whims, letting them follow their own course, you will see them grow vain, proud, idle, disobedient, impudent, and extravagant! They will treat you with contempt; and the more your hearts are wrapped up in them, the less they will think of you. This is seen but too often to be the case; but ask yourselves if you are not responsible for their bad habits and practices; and your conscience will reply that you are; that you are now eating the bread of bitterness which you have prepared for yourself. May you learn thereby how great has been your sin against God in neglecting the means which were in your power for influencing their hearts; and may others take warning from your misfortune, and bring up their children in the Lord! Nothing is more effectual in doing this than an example of domestic piety. Public worship is often too vague and general for children, and does not sufficiently interest them; as to the worship of the closet, they do not yet understand it. A lesson learned by rote, if unaccompanied by any thing else, may lead them to look upon religion as a study, like those of foreign languages or history. Here, as everywhere, and more than elsewhere, ***example is more effectual than precept.*** They are not merely to be taught out of some elementary book that they must love God, but ***you must show them God is***

loved. If they observe that no worship is paid to that God of whom they hear, the very best instruction will prove useless; but by means of Family Worship, these young plants will grow “like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither.” Your children may leave the parental roof, but they will remember in foreign lands the prayers of the parental roof, and those prayers will protect them. “If any,” says the Scripture, “have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home. But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

to produce real joy in the home

And what delight, what peace, what real happiness a Christian family will find in erecting a family altar in their midst, and in uniting to offer up sacrifice unto the Lord! Such is the occupation of angels in heaven; and blessed are those who anticipate those pure and immortal joys? “Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.” O what new grace and life piety gives to a family! In a house where God is forgotten, there is rudeness, ill-humor, and vexation of spirit. Without the knowledge and the love of God, a family is but a collection of individuals who may have more or less natural affection for one another; but the real bond, the love of God our Father in Jesus Christ our Lord, is wanting. The poets are full of beautiful descriptions of domestic life; but, alas! how different the pictures often are from the reality! Sometimes there is a want of confidence in the providence of God; sometimes there is love of riches; at others, a difference of character; at others, an opposition of principles. O how many troubles, how many cares there are in the bosoms of families.

Domestic piety will prevent all these evils; it will give perfect confidence in that God who gives food to the birds of the air; it will give true love toward those with whom we have to live; not an exacting, sensitive love, but a merciful love, which excuses and forgives, like that of God himself; not a proud love, but a humble love, accompanied by a sense of one’s own faults and weakness; not a fickle love, but a love unchangeable as eternal charity. “The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacle of the righteous.”

to console during times of trial

And when the hour of trial comes, that hour which must come sooner or later, and which sometimes visits the homes of men more than once, what consolation will domestic piety afford! Where do trials occur if not in the bosoms of families? Where, then, ought the remedy for trials to be administered

if not in the bosoms of families? How much a family where there is mourning is to be pitied if it has not that consolation! The various members of whom it is composed increase one another's sadness. But if, on the contrary, that family loves God, if it is in the habit of meeting to invoke the holy name of God, from whom comes every trial, as well as every good gift; then how will the souls that are cast down be raised up! The members of the family who still remain around the table on which is laid the Book of God, that book where they find the words of resurrection, life, and immortality, where they find sure pledges of the happiness of the being who is no more among them, as well as the warrant of their own hopes. The Lord is pleased to send down the Comforter to them; the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon them; an ineffable balm is poured upon their wounds, and gives them much consolation; peace is communicated from one heart to another. They enjoy moments of celestial bliss. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." "O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave! Thine anger endureth but a moment: in thy favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

to influence society

And who can tell, my brethren, what an influence domestic piety might exert over society itself? What encouragements all men would have in doing their duty, from the statesman down to the poorest mechanic! How would all become accustomed to act with respect not only to the opinions of men, but also to the judgment of God! How would each learn to be satisfied with the position in which he is placed! Good habits would be adopted; the powerful voice of conscience would be strengthened: prudence, propriety, talent, social virtues, would be developed with renewed vigor. This is what we might expect both for ourselves and for society. "Godliness hath promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

HOW TO CONDUCT FAMILY WORSHIP

If you wish to profit by all the blessings of Family Worship, what are you to do? What measures are you to follow?

with true spirituality

And first, so far as it is in your power, let not these exercises of domestic piety be wanting in spirituality, truth, and life; let them not consist merely in reading certain passages, and repeating certain forms of prayer, in which the heart is not concerned. It would, perhaps, be better to have no Family Worship than to have such as this. These dead forms are still to be found in some families. But at the present day, when the Church is every where struggling to rise out of its ruins, and when the wind of which Ezekiel spoke is breathing every where upon the dry bones to impart life unto them, we must return to

Family Worship and revive it, not in a state of languor and death, but in a state of life and strength. How shall we attain this object? *Let us perform the exercises of family piety, not merely as though it were a good work which we ought to accomplish, for then we might fall either into the error which we have just pointed out, or into pride; but let us perform them rather like miserable beings who want riches; as famished creatures, who want food to nourish that which is most noble in them.* Do it as a duty, if you choose; but do it rather on account of your own wants. The little child knows how to ask for a piece of bread, or even for its mother's milk; and do not we know how to go to God and ask of him his pure and spiritual milk? "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

with flexibility

We will give you another rule, nay brethren: do not adhere too exclusively, too rigidly to any one particular form. First establish such a service in accordance with your own wants and those of your family; let there be entire liberty; let it be conducted one day in one manner, and the next in another, if you choose; let it be prolonged at one time and abridged at another. Perhaps it were better that this exercise should not, at first, embrace all the members of your household, but should have a smaller and more intimate sphere; this will make it more easy and edifying. Follow these various suggestions; the great matter is, that God be not forgotten under your roof. "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

with the Word of God

In the first place, the Word of God should, of course be read, and sometimes, perhaps, other Christian books. In how many families that admirable Book, that Book of the nations, has been in all ages, and is still the most precious of treasures! In how many dwellings has the Bible diffused righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and submission to all authorities appointed by God! The various books which compose the Bible are almost all of a different nature from one another; it were difficult to have a greater variety in one volume, though the same Spirit of God is in each. This circumstance makes it remarkably appropriate for the nourishment of families; and hence so many poor and obscure families in Protestant countries, possessing that Book, do without any others, and by it are brought to the acquisition, not only of eternal life, but of a remarkable intellectual development. The child, the old man, the woman, and the full-grown man alike find something to interest them there, and to lead them to God. There is something for every situation in life. What abundant consolation have all troubled and afflicted but faithful souls derived always from the Psalms of the Royal Prophet! It is well to read throughout some book of the Scriptures, but it is not necessary to follow the order in which the different books are placed in the Sacred

Volume. On the contrary, it is, perhaps, best to turn from the New Testament to the Old, and from the Old to the New; from one of the Prophets to one of the Epistles of the Apostles, and then to one of the historical books of the Old Testament. It is desirable that the person who reads should make some remarks on the passage read. You know how to speak about any other book that you read; is it only here that thoughts and words are wanting? Do you find nothing there that is applicable to the state of your heart, to the situation of your family, to the character of some one of your children? *Read that book always, not as a history of past times, but as a book written for you, addressed to you now; you will readily find circumstances and occasions which render it suitable.* Nevertheless, if nothing has been given to you, be content with asking the Holy Spirit to impart to every heart the fruits which he has promised for his word. "As the rain cometh down, and the snow, from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it."

with prayer

Another act of worship is, prayer in common, or together. It is true that there are good written prayers; but can you not pray to God aloud yourself? You know very well how to speak to a friend; why should you not know how to speak to God? Is he not your greatest and most intimate friend? How easy is it to approach him when it is in the name of Christ crucified that we come! "Thou art near, O Lord," says David. "While they are yet speaking," God has said, "I will hear." If you can pray in secret, can you not pray aloud? Do not be so anxious about what you shall say; "Prayer requires more of the heart than the tongue, more faith than reasoning." How can it be otherwise than salutary, when, for instance, a father or a mother prays aloud for the children who are present, and enters into detail respecting their sins before God, asking him to give his help and his grace. And how often a family is in a situation in which it is called upon to offer up prayer unto God, for deliverance, for assistance, for consolation! "Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart," saith the Lord.

with singing

A third act of worship which ought, if possible, to form part of domestic devotion, is singing. In these days man has associated singing with his occupations, and especially with his pleasures; but to praise God was certainly its primitive object. It is to this that the Royal Prophet consecrated it, and shall not we do likewise? If so many profane things are sung in some houses, why should we not sing to the honor of the God who has created and redeemed us? Still more, if sacred hymns are sometimes sung for the sake of the beauty

of the sound, shall they not be sung with humility and fervor to celebrate the Lord? “Admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

at the most convenient time

But some will perhaps say, At what time ought we thus to think of God and approach him together? I answer, whenever you choose, at the most convenient hour, when you will be least disturbed by your other business. This is generally in the evening; perhaps it were better, on account of the fatigue of the day, that it should be in the morning; and best of all both morning and evening. When you have eaten your morning meal, or even while you are eating it, could you not spend that time which is usually spent either in saying nothing or in talking of trifles, in reading a few words which would raise your thoughts to God, or in hearing them read? I am about to begin the day by the first function of the animal being; but wilt not thou, O my spiritual and immortal soul, do any thing or receive any thing now? I am about to feed my body with that which God has created; but do thou, O my soul, awake and receive thy food from the Creator! O God! thou art my portion forever! O God! thou art my God; early will I seek thee! What a blessing, my brethren, will such a beginning bring down upon the whole day, and what a happy disposition of mind it will give you!

And to you, Christian parents, let the evening of the Lord’s day, that season when the children of irreligious parents run to places of dissipation, be peculiarly precious and sacred. Instruct your household in the way of the Lord, and your instructions at that time will be particularly blessed, provided your children see that you are really in earnest in the work which you are performing.

with singleness of heart

To all this, my brethren, add the essential thing: a life in accordance with the sacredness of the worship which you offer unto God. Be not one man before the altar of God and another in the world, but be truly one man at all times. Let your behavior throughout the day be a living commentary upon what you have read, heard, or said in the hour of devotion. “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves; for the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but He loveth him that followeth after righteousness.”

CONCLUSION

Such is Family Worship. We would remind you, my dear hearers, of all the motives which ought to hasten its establishment in your families, and we entreat you, and particularly those of you who are husbands or wives, fathers or mothers, to put your hands to the plough.

But do you say, “This is so strange a thing”? What, my brethren! Is it not more strange that a family professing to be Christian, professing to have a

firm hope for eternity, should advance toward that eternity without giving any sign of that hope, without any preparation, without any conversation, perhaps, alas! without any thought concerning it? Ah! this is very strange!

Do you say, 'This is a thing of very little repute or glory, and to which a certain degree of shame is attached'? And who, then, is the greatest: that father who, in former and happier days, was the high priest of God in his own house, and who increased his paternal authority and gave it a divine unction by kneeling down with his children before his Father and the Father of them all; or that worldly man in our days, whose mind is engaged only in vain pursuits, who forgets his eternal destiny and that of his children, and in whose house God is not? O what a shame is this!

But perhaps you say, 'Different times have different customs; those things were well enough then, but all has changed now'? ***It is precisely because all has changed that we must make haste and raise up the family altar in the midst of families, lest the feeble tie that still holds back these families should be broken, and they drag both Church and State into ruin.*** It is not when the disease has spread with great violence that remedies become useless; and before a man's life is despaired of, the most powerful preservatives are given to him.

Thus, then, do you, who, by the grace of God, are well disposed, and have made good resolutions, make an attempt, and be not discouraged; make another still; resort to prayer; ask God to guide you himself, to sustain you, and give you success; ask Jesus Christ to be with you; for "where two or three are gathered together in his name there is he in the midst of them."

But, my brethren, if you wish to erect an altar unto God in your house, you must, first of all, erect one in your own heart. And is there one there? I ask you, my brethren, Is there one? Ah! could I draw back the veil, could I now penetrate into the hearts of those who listen to me, what would I see? Or, rather, O Lord! what must thou see in our hearts—thou, from whom nothing is veiled, and before whom all things are naked and visible!

In your heart, my dear hearer, I see an altar erected to pleasure and worldliness; there you offer up your morning sacrifice; there you sacrifice, especially in the evening; and the incense arising from it intoxicates and bewilders you even at night.

In your heart, my dear hearer, I see an altar erected to the good gifts of this world, to riches, to mammon.

In yours, my dear hearer, I see an altar consecrated to yourself. You are the idol whom you worship, whom you exalt above everything else, for whom you wish for all things, and at the foot of whom you would fain see all the world kneel.

My brethren, is there an altar in your hearts erected to the only living and true God? Are you the temple of God, and does God's Spirit dwell within you? So long as there is no altar erected to God in your souls, there can be none in your houses; "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?"

Be converted, then, in your hearts! Die to the world, to sin, to yourselves even, and live to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Immortal souls, Christ hath redeemed you at a great price! He gave his whole life on the cross for you. Learn, then, "that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." "Wherefore come out from among idols, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

O happy is that family, my brethren, which has embraced that God who says, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people"! Happy for time, and happy for eternity! How can you hope to meet with those whom you love near Christ in heaven, unless with them you seek Christ on earth? How shall you assemble as a family there, if you have not as a family attended to heavenly things here below? But as to the Christian family which shall have been united in Jesus, it will, without doubt, meet around the throne of the glory of him whom it will have loved without having seen. It will only change its wretched and perishable dwelling for the vast and eternal mansions of God. Instead of being a humble family of the earth, united to the whole family of heaven by the same ties, it will have become an innumerable and glorious family. It will surround the throne of God with the hundred and forty-four thousand, and will say, as it said on earth, but with joy and glory, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power."

O, my brethren, if but one father or mother would now resolve to meet together in the presence of the Lord, if one single person not yet bound by domestic ties were to resolve to raise an altar unto God in his house when he shall be so bound, and would, in some future day, so act that abundant blessings would descend upon him and his, I would give thanks unto God for having spoken!

Dear hearer! may the Lord so affect your heart that you may now exclaim, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord!" Amen.

(This sermon is available in booklet form)

*O Worship the King,
All Glorious Above*

O worship the King, all glorious above,
O gratefully sing His pow'r and His love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.

O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath the deep thunder clouds form,
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.

Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail;
Thy mercies how tender! how firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer and Friend.