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THE
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

WHAT IS THE TRUE CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIAN
WORSHIP?

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I. IMPORTANCE OF THE INQUIRY.

THE question we propose to consider does not owe its importance to the special interest which this whole subject has awakened of late years; it cannot but be regarded as of vital moment for its own sake and its ultimate relation to practical piety. And no one can imagine it is a matter which may be left to take care of itself, when we notice how scrupulous the apostles of Christ were in discharging the offices of devotion: "There are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship," says Paul in his speech before Felix; and though mentioned incidentally, the fact is a fact of special significance. The apostle, who was the most enlightened, liberal-minded, spiritual of Christians, and who was sweeping away the dead forms of Judaism, went up to Jerusalem from distant parts of the world, making long and perilous journeys, for the purpose of worshipping in the temple.

Why could he not perform this service as acceptably in Macedonia? He was preaching the gospel there, he was living a pure and holy life. Was there not more genuine

piety in this than in withdrawing from his work, turning away from the bedside of the dying, leaving his people to weep at his departure, unclasping the hands that clung around his neck, and hastening to Jerusalem to lay a lamb or a pair of doves on the altar and to burn incense? Did not this clear-sighted man recognize the truth that "work is worship," or that "deeds of charity are the most acceptable offering"?

On one occasion the disciples of Ephesus were eagerly expecting a visit from their beloved teacher. They had heard of his great success in "the regions beyond," and news came that he was on his way to their city. The church was notified, and a meeting appointed to greet his arrival. As their expectations were raised to the highest pitch, word was brought at the last moment "that Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus; for he hastened, if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost." So once before, in the midst of pressing labors, he broke off and left them. They prayed him to tarry longer time, but he consented not, but bade them farewell, saying: "I must, by all means, keep this feast that cometh at Jerusalem. But I will return to you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus."

We can easily imagine that some of the disciples may have thought this scrupulous regard for places and times and forms a melancholy token that the best men are but imperfectly sanctified; possibly they counted the weakness a remnant of Pharisaic prejudice. If there were none among the enlightened believers at Ephesus who criticized the conduct of the apostle, there are many now who think that unusual care about rites of worship is contrary to the spirituality of the gospel. Indeed, to not a few Christians, worship, as consisting in paying divine honors to God by methods devised purely to this end, savors of superstition. Religion is limited by them to that human side of which the apostle James speaks: visiting the fatherless and widows in their afflictions and keeping themselves unspotted from the world. It is conceded that there must be religious services,

but the design of them is the improvement of men, not the honor of God. The great, if not sole, aim is to convert sinners, and instruct, comfort, and sanctify believers. The sermon and the prayers are to this end ; and the singing is in order to make the service more impressive, heighten the interest, and add force and impressiveness to the preaching.

We shall not be misunderstood as implying that it is not *one* great purpose of religious services to convert and sanctify men. But besides this, special honor is to be rendered to Almighty God ; and the object of all our spiritual culture is to prepare us to worship him more suitably. The angels and saints in heaven perform grand ministries of worship. And if we needed neither preaching nor praying on our own account, the obligations of divine worship would be as strong as they are now.

II. DEFINITION OF WORSHIP.

There is a distinctive duty of honoring God, not to be confounded with other duties, any more than lying is confounded with stealing. A thief is likely to be a liar ; and all good actions may be associated with worship, and may enter into the service, without constituting it.

A precise definition of divine worship is : The expression of appropriate conceptions and emotions concerning God in appropriate forms.

The first and essential condition is, that there be conceptions and feelings in the mind and heart which ought to be entertained, such as reverence, love, penitence, and the like. There must be a pause and silence of the soul, and a lifting of itself upward ; the dormant feeling must be working, by internal aspirations, or by outward, visible, audible manifestations.

The second condition is, that the form of expression be appropriate. It is not every manifestation of right feeling that is worship. Feeding the hungry, giving a cup of cold water to the thirsty, are acts of piety, but not necessarily of worship. There is an expression appropriate to the

nature of the emotions and of the being towards whom they are uttered. And in Christian worship the feelings must be such as the gospel requires, and the expression in forms which harmonize therewith.¹

III. DUTY OF WORSHIP.

1. A just conception of God and of our relations to him, of itself determines the propriety of worship. He is worthy of it; and it is not derogatory to his perfections to believe that he desires and is pleased with the homage of men.

There is a feeling that while it benefits us, adoration and praise are really of no account with God. He is supremely happy in himself, our homage does not increase his honor, he does not need our praise. The lamb which was sacrificed as a thank-offering, and the loaves of bread which were laid on the altar, were of no use to him. And our hymns and bowing in prayer, our sacraments and solemn ordinances are really of no greater value. The heart is what he regards. And the best proof of a right heart is an upright life.

True, the best proof to men of a right heart is an upright life. But he who searches the heart does not need even this token. And yet he is pleased with it. And he is pleased with services which have special regard to his honor.

It is an utterly unworthy conception of God to suppose that because of his greatness our worship contributes nothing to his happiness. Has God no heart? Is there nothing in his universe that can give him joy? Why, the very amplitude of his being, instead of removing, brings him into the closest sympathy with the lowliest of his creatures. He has avenues by which everything he has made can

¹ Vinet defines worship as "the interior or exterior act of adoration — adoration in act; and adoration is nothing less than the direct and solemn recognition of the being and presence of God, and of our obligations towards him." — *Pastoral Theology*, Part III. § 1. In the *German Theory of Worship*, as given in this Review, Vol. XIV. p. 791, it is defined as "the representation, by means of forms correspondent to the nature of the soul, of the inward faith of the believer."

approach him. Creatures do not affect each other so easily as every creature affects the Creator. The violet does not appreciate the fragrance of its sister lily of the valley. The rose does not enjoy the beauty of the violet. Man, a higher being, whose nature takes them into his own, watches over them and delights in the incense with which they repay his care. The flowers are far beneath us. Can we therefore have no enjoyment in the tributes they offer? And does the fragrance of a little flower give pleasure to the noble creature man; and cannot the infinite God perceive and enjoy the tributes which loving human hearts present to him?

There is no being so sensitive to whatever may give pain or pleasure as God. God is all heart. No one can so appreciate love; to no being is it so blessed. No creature has such feelings to be wounded by disobedience or grieved by neglect. He is alive to everything intended for his honor. He is sensitive to the slight which the most grovelling creature may show to its Creator. He recognizes the blind movements of matter in his praise, the dancing leaves, the flashes of auroral light, fire and hail, stormy wind fulfilling his word, mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars. The modest floweret gives more pleasure to the Creator than to all his creatures. And so far from being above noticing how men treat him, made in his image, designed to hold fellowship with him, lingering here a little while in order to be fitted for his society in heaven; what God has done to win us to love and honor him is the best proof how he values our homage. In literal truth, and not in any accommodated sense, "the Lord taketh pleasure in his people"; he loves to be honored by the worship of his creatures; he delights in the service of loving hearts.

Rites of worship are simply the language with which we express our thoughts and feelings to our heavenly Father. And that he is touched by them, so far from being derogatory to him, enhances his glory. The more sensitive we are to pleasure and pain from the most insignificant things, the more capacious does our nature prove itself to be. And

God would not be God if he did not desire and enjoy the worship of his creatures.

2. That it is necessary for our good is admitted by those who see no other propriety in it. They who lay the whole stress of religion on the office it holds in human culture, do not exaggerate the value of divine ordinances. There can be no spiritual life without worship. The soul is dwarfed, man is shrunk back into a lower type of being, when he is cut off from sensible communion with Heaven. The laws of human development seem to be, that a germ must be introduced into the lower from the higher. The civilization of nations has been by colonization, by the importation of a higher life from without, to leaven and elevate. And in worship the human race is brought into contact with him whose inspiration giveth understanding. There is, moreover, a philosophical basis for divine worship in the fact that there is a religious faculty in man which needs to find suitable expression in order to come to self-consciousness and to attain its power and fill its sphere.

3. The importance which the Bible attributes to this duty is seen in the very structure and contents of the revelation. The object of the holy scriptures is to give such a knowledge of God, and excite such emotions as shall flow out in worship, and to make known by what rites and in what methods service must be rendered. The commonwealth of Moses was little more than a grand ritual of worship. And while the Jewish economy has passed away, and its burdensome ceremonials are no longer in force, the fact that God so carefully instituted that complicated system has instructive lessons for Christians. It shows the necessity of great attention to the service we render, and the just ordering of it. It teaches modesty and diffidence in pronouncing that rites to which we are not accustomed are absurd or puerile, and that ceremonies which we do not see the reason of are superstitious. God set forth the system of Judaism. He knew the danger of superstition and formalism, and how liable forms are to be abused. And he was the same spir-

itual being to the Jew he is to the Christian. An attention to outward forms and to ritualistic ceremonies entered into the very warp and woof of the pure worship of David and of Isaiah, and of Peter and John and Paul, to an extent which would shock the notions of many good men now. Humility and modesty in judging those who differ from us in these things would be no serious injury.

Not only did our Saviour and his apostles scrupulously observe rites which many would be likely to judge, if they saw such things, frivolous, if not perilous; it is to be noted that after the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, and after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, the disciples continued to go to the temple to worship. They were observing the feast of Pentecost when they received the great baptism of the Spirit. Paul, the most free from the trammels of the old dispensation, paid his vows at the altar. He discarded circumcision, but he shaved his head and performed lustral purifications.

All this took place after, and in complete harmony with, that conversation of Christ with the Samaritan woman, in which we have the pregnant sentence which sets forth spirituality as the sign and seal of true and Christian worship.

IV. SPIRITUALITY OF WORSHIP.

The gospel edition of Leviticus is comprised in a single verse which the Lord Jesus uttered as he sat on the mouth of Jacob's well. He was returning with his apostles from the temple worship of Jerusalem. The Samaritan woman claimed a higher sanctity for mount Gerizim than for mount Zion. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither at this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The very conciseness and brevity of a law sometimes renders it liable to be misinterpreted and calls for copious explanation. Many have drawn the inference from this declaration of our Master, that in proportion as we dispense

with the forms we realize the spirit of worship; and that for the highest spirituality the formal elements must be wholly eliminated.

Now there is no better way of ascertaining what spiritual worship is, than by considering the worship of Christ and of the apostles and of holy men of old. The worship which our Lord rendered was spiritual. The worship of Paul, of Peter, and James was spiritual. The worship of Isaiah, of David and Moses and Abraham, was spiritual. Looking at the illustrations which the holy scriptures give, it is evident that modes, times, places, are purely circumstantial, and vary under varying conditions of society; and that the essential thing is, that there be real life, the spirit of living faith, in the service. Spiritual worship is the spirit worshipping. The error to guard against is, on the one hand, that of smothering the life by forms which God does not authorize, and attributing virtue to divinely authorized forms after the spirit has departed; or, on the other hand, of neglecting, as needless, forms which are scriptural.

1. Spirituality of worship does not imply that there is no sanctity to be recognized in special places and seasons. The true conception of Christian worship demands both sanctuaries and sabbaths.

Some have misapprehended the words of our Lord to the Samaritan woman, and have thought he intended to teach that it was wrong to make so much of Jerusalem and of the rites of the temple, and that one place was no more to be regarded than another.

Why then did Jesus himself go at regular intervals to Jerusalem? What aroused his indignation in seeing his Father's house made a house of merchandise; and why did he scourge the buyers and sellers out of it? Who established Jerusalem, who ordered the arrangements of the tabernacle and the temple? Did not God himself? And does the Son of God mean that this was all wrong, that it was a mistake?

So far from it, our Lord added new sanctity to the temple. He worshipped there. And he simply declares in his

discourse in the vale of Shechem, that the exclusive worship of Judaism is ended; that the observance of the Mosaic rites is no longer required; that the Father seeketh those to worship him whose hearts are right, not those who, as Samaritans or Jews, claim descent from Abraham.

Both scripture and reason teach that special seasons and special places are to be devoted to public worship. The sabbath and the sanctuary are hallowed by one and the same divine command: "Ye shall keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary" was the original ordinance;¹ and the gospel has only modified the form, without abrogating the substance, of the law in respect to the one or the other. We are bound, under the Christian economy, to devote to God a certain portion of time as a sabbath. We need it. God requires it. It is one part of spiritual worship. There is no need of arguing this point. And so the Christian sanctuary is no less to be set apart for the special worship of our Redeemer and Lord. Our convenience and the honor of God demand it. Some think it unscriptural to imagine that God is more truly present in a house of worship than elsewhere. Was he not present in the tabernacle and in the temple in a special sense, and with a glory he manifested nowhere else? That notion of God which supposes that he cannot be in some special place would prove that he can be in no special place. And if he is in no special place he is nowhere. And God nowhere is no God.

We cannot conceive of God without giving him a definite locality. We are compelled, by the finiteness of our minds, to think of him thus. He gives this representation of himself. He is specially present in heaven. There is a place in heaven where the divine majesty most gloriously appears. The saints and angels worship before the throne. And there are places on earth where God draws nigh to men, in a special sense. As the patriarchs wandered through Syria the Lord Jehovah appeared to them, and they erected altars on the spot. Instead of worshipping in chance places, they

¹ Levit. xix. 30.

came back afterwards to these altars. They lingered around them. The encampment grew to a village, the village to a city, the city became the capital of the tribe, and the altar the temple. The temple of Solomon was where Abraham erected the altar to sacrifice Isaac.

When the tabernacle was set up in the wilderness a cloud descended and rested upon it in token of God's presence. And the temple, which took the place of the tabernacle, was visited by similar symbols. In the holy of holies God was pleased to show himself as nowhere else. The Lord was in his holy temple. It was not superstition which made David cry out: "When shall I come and appear before God"? David had enlightened conceptions of the spiritual nature of the Godhead. There are no nobler representations of the divine spirituality than the Hebrew scriptures present. They knew in those days that God was everywhere. When Solomon was dedicating the temple, he exclaimed: "Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!" But with the same breath Solomon invoked the special presence of God in that house; and in answer to his prayer, the Lord appeared; a cloud descended and filled the house, and filled every heart with awe. Was there no meaning in that sublime scene?

We do not look for such manifestations. But does the gospel remove God farther away? Does not the gospel give new assurances of the real presence of our Saviour among his worshipping people? Do we believe that God was present in the ancient temple, and shall we not believe that, in a literal and blessed sense, our Lord Jesus Christ keeps his sacred promise, and is where two or three are gathered together in his name?

It is a profound remark of Charnock, that in worship there is not only an approach of man to God, but "an approach of God to man."¹ He bows his heavens and comes down; darkness is under his feet. We do not see how he comes. He clothes himself with light as with a garment.

¹ Attributes, Discourse IV. head 3, reason 4.

Our Saviour was not more literally present on the Mount of Beatitudes, than he is present now in the mountain of the Lord's house set apart for his service.

The warrant of the scriptures for the Christian sanctuary meets the demands of our renewed nature. We are so constituted that it is easier to realize the presence of God in some places than in others. And wherever we instinctively recognize his presence, in whatever place vivid and solemn ideas of God are spontaneously and habitually excited, there to us God specially is. If we are accustomed to do certain things in certain places, we do them easier and more pleasantly there than elsewhere. There are habits of thought and feeling, moods of emotion which depend on outward conditions and associations gathered by age and silently hallowing a place of worship. There are styles of building which the mind comes to connect with places of prayer. It is a little thing. But a little thing may be a great help or a great hinderance. A solemn strain of music which is usually heard in devotion, if it falls on the ears of men in the busy streets, will interrupt them and render them thoughtful. It is wise to take advantage of these invisible influences which memory gathers about the sanctuary. Without chrisms and anointings, a hallowed incense is insensibly diffused; and the places which are consecrated by the least interference of our conscious wills may be the most truly sacred.

2. As the spiritual character of Christian worship does not dispense with set times and places, so neither does it abrogate set forms of worship. Spirituality is not measured by the character of the formal rites.

Many suppose simplicity and spirituality are the same thing. But the simple flowers on the platform of the Music Hall in Boston, and the baldness of the service, does not make the worship there more spiritual than the worship in the church of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception. Neither simplicity nor complexity are gauges of spirituality. We cannot measure a feeling by a rule of gold any better

than by a rule of iron ; and fresh flowers are as material as wax candles. The offering of prayer in words is no more spiritual than sacrificing a lamb and burning incense. It is a strange mistake to suppose that if worship is simple it is therefore spiritual, and that in proportion as rites multiply spirituality disappears. Dr. Payson would never be guilty of the presumption of imagining that, because he lifted up holy hands, and poured forth vocable sounds of prayer in the name of Christ, he was a more spiritual worshipper than Abraham, the friend of God. The father of the faithful arranged a heap of stones, killed a lamb, and, with careful rites, sprinkled the blood and laid portions of the animal in order, and burnt a sacrifice.

The nature of the rite has nothing to do with the spirituality of the service ; this depends wholly on the state of the heart. In all worship material symbols are used, and must be used. Language is a symbol. And though certain symbols seem to us more delicate, less gross, more ethereal, approaching nearer to the spiritual, God regards them simply as they express devout feelings.¹ Some of the most spiritual worshippers have had the most complicated rites. Thus it was with patriarchs and prophets. While those who have reduced rites of worship to the fragrance of fading flowers have dissolved the spirit into thin air. Without some formal rites there can be no worship. For worship, in its very idea, is a form. It is an *expression* of feeling, piety taking to itself a form ; the embodiment of spiritual emotions. And the great question is : What is the appropriate expression of pious feeling now among Christians ?

3. The forms of spiritual worship vary. They are adapted by God to the progressive changes of society. That which expressed the pious feeling of Abraham would not express the pious feeling of Wilberforce. More than three thousand years are between them ; they stood on opposite sides of

¹ "The most delicate and fitting form which can be employed, that which approaches nearest to spirit, is speech."—German Theory of Worship, ut supra, p. 790. Approaches nearest. Yes ; but how much nearer to Sirius is a man on a hill-top than a man in the valley ?

Calvary. There was at first a patriarchal economy: Abel offered his first-fruits, Enoch walked with God, Abraham went to Moriah and sacrificed a lamb. There was an enlargement of this cultus in the Mosaic dispensation. Samuel and David, by divine direction, introduced other changes. Our Saviour came to fulfil the law and the prophets. He took up the ancient economy as it had grown to be, and instituted new rites, very different in important respects, less cumbrous and burdensome. But we make a great mistake if we suppose the gospel worship, because of its simplicity, is more spiritual than that of holy men of old. All the rites of worship which God ordained in the Bible are rites of spiritual worship. They have been precisely adapted to the circumstances of those to whom they were given. And the spiritual worship adapted to us is that which the Holy Spirit authorizes in the Bible; no more and no less.

4. In the New Testament we find certain new sacraments to be observed through all time. But there is no formal ritual of worship, such as the Old Testament contains. And for the reason that a new ritual was not needed. The New Testament joins on to the Old. It takes the Old Testament up into itself, and baptizes it with the name of Christ. Whatever in the old economy is not superseded, whatever is not out of harmony with the new, is of as much force now as ever. Many things had reference to the Jews as a nation. With the extinction of the nation, all this scaffolding fell at once. The sacrificial economy was superseded by the offering of the Lamb of God once for all. There is to be no more sacrifice for sin. With the end of sacrifices there was an end of the priesthood. Circumcision gave place to Christian baptism. But with these changes, which the gospel necessarily makes, and their accompaniments, all the rest remains. Our Saviour did not abrogate the system which he found, and which he indeed had previously framed. He worshipped according to it, and left his disciples to worship thus, substituting certain rites for others. It is

doubtful whether the apostles understood at first that they were no longer to keep the passover. The Lord's supper gradually superseded the old rite. And all other changes were by the spontaneous development of gospel doctrines through the Holy Spirit, modifying the previous cultus.

We are not, therefore, to look in the New Testament alone to see what Christian worship should be. All of the Old Testament not inconsistent with the New is equally important. The gospel takes for granted all it finds ready for it. The spiritual life of the first dispensation is perpetuated. We are not to consult our notions of what is expedient and what is frivolous and unimportant. We are to follow the pattern shown to us in the mount. The great characteristics of the service which is pleasing to God are impressed on the old economy. There are suggestions as to the mode of serving him which we are bound to follow. Reverence for the sabbath and for the sanctuary would be no more obligatory if the New Testament contained express directions in regard to them. Services which meet our necessities, and which are in harmony with ancient forms, and which are nowhere forbidden, are required of us. Concerts for prayer, jubilees of missions, fast days and thanksgivings, answer to similar seasons in olden times. The Christian church festivals are in place of the Jewish sabbath and pentecost, and the like. The Jews were bound by special ordinance what ones to observe, and how. We are bound by the same Spirit to observe some; but, within certain limits, we are left free to choose what ones, and how to keep them.

5. The danger to be guarded against is twofold: making too much of forms, as though that was devotion, and sweeping them away, as though that was spirituality. Superstition and scepticism are simply opposite poles of rationalism. And rationalism in worship judges everything by what it is supposed the necessities of the soul or the reason of the thing demands. Thus, instead of binding themselves by the letter and spirit of the Bible, men frame modes of wor-

ship according to their taste. Whatever conduces to the beauty of the service, and is fitted to impress the imagination, whatever is serviceable and has gained a place, though it be contrary to the essence of the gospel, is made a part of worship. On the other hand, the sceptic rejects every rite and service which does not commend itself to him as useful, or to which he does not happen to be accustomed. No matter that God authorized it, or the like to it. "That was the Old Testament!" As though God authorized in the Old Testament anything which we are entitled to pronounce frivolous and absurd. "True," says the sceptic, "the Jews were commanded to observe such ceremonies, and were held strictly to forms. But it is not safe. It savors of superstition. It is apt to be perverted." As though God allowed superstitious practices to the Jews; as though he did not see how good things might be perverted. And so the sceptic sweeps away what his judgment does not approve.

We are not to presume to honor God by services which his word interdicts or abrogates. But in guarding against this, which has seemed heretofore the chief danger, we are not to swing into the opposite extreme and neglect such rites as he has ordained, and has not abolished. We are not to demand an explanation of everything. It may be inexplicable to Abraham why God bids him go to a distant mountain to offer sacrifice. One place seems as good as another. But he does well to obey. The temple will one day stand on that mountain, the Son of God take the place of Isaac, and Abraham become the father of the faithful. The apostle Paul may not see the advantage of washing and shaving his head, and performing a vow. But it is not superstition for him to obey God in such a way. The Scotch Covenanters at Cambuslang may not comprehend the full significance of the sacraments. But they observe them because they are divinely ordained, and they do well to sing psalms and break bread and pour out wine in joyful remembrance of the Lamb of God whose blood was shed for man on Calvary.

The bowing of the head and the silent response in prayer may not seem of much account. The choral anthem trembling in the air is but a wave of sound that breaks upon the ceiling and is lost. But prayer and praise are required by God, and are not spending breath in vain.

Whatever forms we use or disuse, it is the spirit worshipping that is of consequence. A living dog is better than a dead lion; but if both be dead, it is undeniable that the dead lion is the more majestic corpse, and lies in state with greater dignity.

V. CONCEPTIONS AND EMOTIONS DEMANDING EXPRESSION IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

As it is the nature of the emotion which underlies and gives meaning to worship, we cannot have the true conception of Christian worship unless we determine what emotions Christians ought to have and to express towards God. Brought into familiarity with the circle of truths which the gospel reveals, there are peculiar conceptions and emotions demanding expression and distinguishing the service we are to render. They all seem to be included under the classification of: (1) The recognition of God as manifested in Christ, (2) adoration and reverence, (3) homage, (4) gratitude and praise, (5) penitence and faith, and (6) love and joy.

1. The distinctive recognition of God in Christ is fundamental to Christian worship. The New Testament presents God in more glorious manifestations and in more winning attitudes than the Old Testament. The Son of God appears as the Saviour of the world, the King and Lord of all. Ascriptions of praise and divine homage are attributed to the Holy Ghost.

There can be no Christian worship where these vital truths are ignored or are not dominant and pervasive. They are the starting-point. They must give tone and color to every service. If Jesus Christ is not our God and Saviour, then we must not worship him, we must not associate him in every rite with God the Father. If he is

the Son of God with power, then he holds a peculiar position, as Redeemer and Intercessor, and must be met with peculiar homage.

In the ancient economy God appeared as Jehovah. By that name he demanded homage. He was jealous of any partition of his prerogative. But when he bringeth in the First Begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him. This is my beloved Son; worship him.

The whole arrangement of our worship should be such as to bring out and emphasize and illuminate the blessed truth that we believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord; and in the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

In the Protestant churches of Europe generally, and in many churches in this country, the service of public worship begins with the doxology. And there is an obvious propriety in the custom. The apostle Paul almost invariably begins his epistles with ascriptions of praise to God in Christ: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus; Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus he proceeds. These epistles are of the nature of sermons, and indicate the style of apostolic preaching. A formal recognition of God in Christ may have constituted the opening doxology of the apostolic worship. Coming in again at the close of worship as it comes in at the close of the epistles, the whole service is bound together by the name of Christ, as by a golden band.

2. Under adoration we include awe, reverence, solemnity, admiration, and the like feelings, which arise in view of the grandeur and glory of the divine attributes. The propriety of adoration is so obvious that nothing need be said to vindicate it. The Psalms and other inspired models of prayer make adoration a chief element. It has a use many

overlook. We need to dwell on the attributes of God and to magnify and laud him. It is the means of presenting the Deity vividly to our minds. It assists us to think of him as a real and personal being. There is a tendency to vagueness in our ideas of God; we cannot comprehend his greatness, we diffuse his glory, and insensibly run into pantheism. Acts of adoration compel us to gather up and concentrate our thoughts on a personal Divinity.

3. The idea of homage underlies all worship. As adoration is the feeling which is due upon the simple perception of the divine character, homage is the feeling which is due, upon the perception of God as sustaining certain relations to us as our sovereign Lord. The whole service indeed is an act of homage, an acknowledgment of dependence and responsibility, a confession that we belong to God and owe him obedience; a consecration of ourselves to his service. But homage in Christian worship takes up another feeling. We are the disciples of the Lord Jesus. He has redeemed us, and we belong to him and owe him special service. We are brought into a new relation to the Father; made sons of God, having received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba Father. And our allegiance to our Redeemer must be expressed in our homage.

4. We need not speak of the large place which must be given to the expression of gratitude and praise in the worship of redeemed sinners. But,

5. Penitence and faith, the feelings connected with guilt and atonement, must give the chief character to Christian worship. Humility and self-abasement, sorrow for sin, confession, renunciation, supplication, the consciousness of the necessity of expiation, and the appropriation of the atonement of Christ, demand distinctive expression in our services. All worship among all nations has hinged upon sacrifices. The position of worshippers is that of prostration, as sinners imploring mercy and propitiating justice. The consciousness of sin is stronger in the heart of the Christian than it was in the hearts of men of old. We know that it is not in our

power to wash away guilt, but help is laid upon one who is mighty. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world is our propitiation. We do not offer the sacrifice which was the great event in the worship of old. We appropriate by faith the sacrifice made in our behalf. We hold up the cross, and seek forgiveness through the blood of him who hath borne our sins thereon. In Christian worship the feelings which spring from our sinfulness, and which once dictated sacrifices, gather around the cross.

6. The key-note of the gospel is salvation. And the feelings which salvation awakens are love and joy. And thus the final and complete object of Christian worship is to manifest love and joy.

The Mosaic dispensation was pre-eminently a joyful service. Great strictness of obedience was required. The great day of atonement was a day of oppressive solemnity. Remembrance of sins was kept up by the victims daily bleeding on the altars. But the characteristic of Jewish worship was joyfulness. The sacrifices, with few exceptions, were at the same time feasts for the worshippers. The grandeur of the service, the gorgeous ceremonials, the music and singing, were to express joy: "My soul doth boast herself in the Lord." Boasting in the Lord, taking as it were personal pride in his glory, was a feeling the pious Jew cherished. He gloried in the Lord. As a poet chooses a hero for his song, the psalmist cries: "The Lord has become my song." There are, indeed, penitential psalms. No one has gone into lower depths than the depths out of which David cried. But the tone of the Hebrew Psalter is jubilant. Thanksgiving and the voice of melody ring through it.

Now if love and joy so abounded in the Jewish worship, what place should they occupy in Christian worship? The gospel is glad tidings: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come." Angels awakened the shepherds to praise him. Kings from the east brought gold and frankincense and myrrh. Have we nothing but sighs and tears to offer?

We are in no danger of feeling too much our guilt, and

of dwelling too much on the cross. This ought ye to do, and not to leave the other undone. The great tragedy of Calvary has cast a dark shadow forward. Contemplations of the sufferings of Christ and of our sinfulness have given a dirge-like tone to our worship. Plaintive tunes have been made the favorite tunes for chorals. The church music is chiefly on the minor key. We sing misereres in the choir, but oratorios are too jubilant, and are delegated to concerts and academies of music. But do we understand the fulness of gospel grace in making no more of the joyful emotions in our worship? Did ever God's people have such reason to sing loud anthems as Christians have? When Jesus was crucified the disciples stood afar off weeping. But after he had risen from the grave, when they saw the clouds parting, the King ascending, they returned to Jerusalem with gladness.

We worship a Saviour not now hanging upon the cross, but sitting upon the throne. He suffers no more. On his head are many crowns. And because of the happiness of God, as the Puritan Charnock well says, cheerfulness should give the tone to Christian worship.¹

There do not seem to be any emotions demanding expression in Christian worship which will not fall under these classes. And unless all these find an appropriate place, something is lacking. We need not give utterance to all in every service, of course; at times, some, at times, others

¹ "God is a Spirit infinitely happy, therefore we must approach him with cheerfulness; he is a Spirit of infinite majesty, therefore we must come before him with reverence; he is a Spirit infinitely high, therefore we must offer up our sacrifices with the deepest humility; he is a Spirit infinitely holy, therefore we must address him with purity; he is a Spirit infinitely glorious, we must therefore acknowledge his excellency in all that we do, and in our measures contribute to his glory, by having the highest aims in his worship; he is a Spirit infinitely provoked by us, therefore we must offer up our worship in the name of a pacifying Mediator and Intercessor." — *Ut supra*, head 2, divis. 6, § 11. Charnock specifies, by enumeration, eleven "Spiritual habits to be acted in worship": faith, love, sense of weakness, spiritual desires for God, thankfulness and admiration, delight, reverence, humility, holiness, with raised aims at the glory of God, and, eleventhly, in the name of Christ.

will be predominant. But opportunity must be found for all in the circle of our services. There is a tendency to single out one, or a few, for exclusive manifestation. Some worship wholly towards love and joy. Many lay so much stress on the feelings connected with sin that joyful tones are smothered. It is a characteristic of some churches to make most of adoration and praise. There can be no question but the feelings which gather about the cross must give form and color to the whole. Everything is to work up towards Calvary, and everything to flow off from Calvary. But the strong feelings we are to pour forth in view of the body broken and the blood shed for our sins are not feelings of sadness, but of inexpressible love and trust and joy.

With such emotions demanding utterance, in what ways does the Holy Spirit indicate that we shall express them?

VI. FORMS APPROPRIATE TO EXPRESS CHRISTIAN FEELINGS IN WORSHIP.

The external forms of Christian worship now seem to be included in four particulars: (1) prayer and praise in vocal and musical expression; (2) the presentation of thank-offerings; (3) reading and meditating upon the word of God, and preaching; (4) the celebration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper.

1. Prayer has a prominence in Christian worship it never had before. We use the word not simply to signify supplication, which is only a small part of prayer, but as including adoration and homage and ascriptions of praise, in which worship distinctively consists. Praise is a part of prayer, and prayer is a part of praise. Indeed, everything in divine service may be considered as only modifications and various expressions of prayer and praise.

If it were possible, all might join aloud in public prayer. But it is utterly impracticable and it is not necessary. Bowing the head, assuming a reverent posture, fixing the thoughts on God, responding in heart to the petitions and praises of the minister, is as truly joining in the prayer as

though we gave audible utterance. The closing of the eyes may be as true prayer as the opening of the lips. There is this significance in the position we assume; not merely do we shut out the world and show obeisance to God, but by our posture we express our participation in what is done in our behalf. If we stand up to praise the Lord, and make the psalm our own, following the words and adopting the music as the expression of our emotions, we sing, though our voices are not heard. God hears our hearts singing.

For the expression of adoration and praise, and the love and joyfulness of Christian worship, singing and music are needed in the largest measure. Music was a chief constituent in the worship of the Jewish church, and it is more important now. It is capable of filling, and is destined to fill, a nobler place and to make our pure and simple services more impressive and inspiring than the most gorgeous rites of baptized heathenism.

Much has been said, of late, of the participation of the congregation in the service of song; and it cannot be too earnestly insisted upon. But it must not be supposed that in urging congregational singing we lay less stress on the part which belongs to music, as such, in our devotions. Lest it should be thought, by making such a large collection of psalms, that only singing was to be used in worship, it was not enough that directions to praise God with the harp and various instruments were distributed through the Psalter, but the Holy Spirit closed the collection with the resonant command: "Praise God with the sound of the trumpet, with the psaltery and harp, with stringed instruments and organs; praise him upon the loud cymbals, upon the high-sounding cymbals; let everything that hath breath [with every instrument capable of music] praise the Lord."

The spontaneous utterance of deep emotion is not in speech or in song, but in simple sound. Articulate language is not capable of expressing the utmost solemnity of feeling.

There are delicate shades of emotion which can only be breathed out in sighs and interpreted by music. And yet, instead of recognizing, as the scriptures do, that the highest praise cannot be uttered by the voice, some hesitate about making instruments even adjuncts to singing. That grand Christian instrument, the organ, is employed rather to aid our voices and produce emotions suitable for worship, than to give expression to them, as the only channel capable of pouring out in full volume the praises of the congregation.

Now in the service arranged by special divine direction music held a prominent part. The psalms were probably never sung by voices alone. Suitable persons were trained to "play skilfully and make a loud noise." Not a few psalms were composed music and words together, the music, it would seem, being written first, and the words adapted to it. Directions are given in the titles of many psalms for the instrumentation by which they were to be performed. And the notes which David composed were as truly inspired as the verses. He took his harp and struck off the sounds which expressed his spiritual emotions. And only when those sounds were again awakened was the psalm truly repeated. David, like Beethoven, could not express the spiritual thoughts within him by words. Music was to both of them the natural language.

In fact, to look at the philosophy of the matter, language is only an inferior sort of music. Words are sounds articulated; sounds with suitable joints and hinges, to turn this way and that. Musical notation is a universal alphabet. Letters are a kind of musical signs, signs what sounds to make; and speaking is simply making sounds. The value and meaning and expressiveness is wholly in the sound, not in the letters. And however the most exultant sound can be produced, by one word, by many words wrought into an eloquent period, by peculiar words rythmically connected and welded into a song or psalm, or by the melting of words together, the hinges and joints being loosened and the full volume of sound rol-

ling continuously along; however the sounds of praise can best be uttered, in that way they are to be uttered. We may employ our own voices, or call to our aid the more expressive vocal organs of others; or, if we can find no human throat sufficiently sonorous, we may go abroad into nature and discover what God has made for this purpose, and contrive in a grander organ all the possibilities of sound. The mightiest instrument is but a magnified voice; it is speaking through a thousand instead of through one windpipe. And the flexible muscles of a human throat are no more truly God's workmanship, nor more truly designed for praising him, than the organ constructed by the intelligence God has given to that end. God has established the laws of sound and the resonant qualities of certain materials, and taught man to combine them for the praise of his glory. And we might as properly be precluded from assisting the sight of our eyes by lenses as from assisting the music of the soul by instruments.

It is the heart which sings in praising God, not the voice; the value of music is value which the soul puts into the sounds and utters by them. And if our hearts cannot utter what they feel, because our instruments are too poor, if we are dumb of song as some are dumb of speech, we may sing with the fingers if we are cunning thereto, as the dumb man talks with his fingers; or we may invoke the aid of such as are divinely gifted with song or instrumental skill. And when our hearts respond to the strains of song and music, when we enter into the meaning of the notes, adopting them as our own and rejoicing in them, he who hears in secret detects the silent undertone in our hearts, and accepts the praises which are so jubilant that we are compelled to seek aid to utter them.

2. The presentation of offerings needs to be recognized as an act of the purest, most elevated Christian worship.

That we are to take the words of the Bible in a literal sense, and "bring an offering" when we come into his courts, as we bring a prayer and a psalm, many do not

understand. "That belonged to Judaism. We no longer make sacrifices." Yes; many no longer make sacrifices when they come to worship.

Under the ancient economy a large part of divine service consisted in presenting offerings. Of old, men used their tongues less in serving God and their hands more. There were fewer prayers and songs, less preaching, more oblations and sacrifices; they uttered their feelings by more emphatic language. Civilization has affected the speech of man chiefly — loosened the play of his tongue. The ancient notion was, that deeds speak louder than words, and that it was a truer way of praising the Lord to bring a costly treasure which could be used in the service, and lay it on the altar. They thought this was truer homage and heartier gratitude than simply lifting up the voice and pouring out volumes of sound.

The first worship of which we have an account was not by prayer, nor by singing, nor by sermon; and no sacraments were administered: "Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering." And when, under divine guidance, the ritual of the ancient church was established, when inspired prophets preached and Aaronitic priests approached the throne of grace, while the smoke of sacrifices and odor of incense ascended, and when king David wrote the hymns and arranged the music for the choir, worship was not complete unless precious gifts were laid as offerings on the altar.

Is there anything in Christianity that changes this? The sacrifice is abolished, the priesthood has given way. Prayer and praise are as needful as ever. Are offerings no parts of Christian worship?

Then what a mistake those wise men made who came from the East when they heard Christ was born, and brought gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Christian worship was inaugurated with thank-offerings, and it is to be perpetuated with thank-offerings.

Our Saviour made almsgiving of the very essence of the

gospel. He received the most costly gifts presented in homage to himself. He commended the woman who brake the alabaster box of ointment, a gift that seemed needless and wasteful. He approved of the waste and absolved her sins therefor. And when he went to the temple to observe the sincerity of the worshippers, what position did he choose? He did not sit on the pulpit stairs and observe who was most melted by the preaching. He did not listen to hear who prayed loudest, or who sang most divinely. He sat over against the treasury, to see how they paid their devotions.

The act of the widow so commended was an act of simple worship. The treasury was a common collection for general purposes, for the support of the temple and the like. She did not give because a moving appeal had been made for starving people in some distant frontier. Her two mites hardly swelled the stream that flowed into a treasury already rich. Doubtless the widow needed the money more than the treasury. And the mites may have laid there till some Roman soldier, in the sack of the temple, got them and spent them for drink. It was not for charity's sake that the widow gave all her living; it was in worship of God, as an act of homage, of love, and thankfulness. Suppose the money did go into the pocket of a drunken soldier; she offered it to the Lord, and the Lord had regard to her and to her offering.

An offering expresses feelings with an emphasis no other mode of worship does. It is a symbolical act of acknowledging that God is entitled to all our possessions. It is a token of homage, a tribute of sovereignty. It is the most marked proof of love. In the gospel church offerings are more appropriate and are more needed than of old. God is now more glorified by gifts than ever. To overlay the temple with gold-leaf, to prepare rich vessels and vestments, was no such honor to God as to erect Christian churches, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, build hospitals, send Bibles and missionaries through the world.

The gospel has developed a spirit of benevolence which makes charitable institutions the characteristic of Christian civilization. Large sums are devoted to religious purposes. But there is a fault in the secular character which our charities have assumed. They are given more for the sake of relieving men than of honoring God. They are monuments of pity rather than of piety. They are not enough regarded as religious offices. It is well to give a cup of cold water to the thirsty, but it is a better act when the feeling that prompts is love to the Saviour, recognizing the needy as his representative, and doing it as unto the Lord. It is this reference to the Lord Jesus, making our charities tributary of worship to him, that needs to be emphasized. A one-sided notion of the truth that good works do not avail for salvation, a fear lest they might come to be regarded as propitiating God, has made many suspicious of looking upon offerings in the light in which the Old Testament, our Saviour, and his apostles speak of them. Things have come to such a pass that many feel it a disturbance to devotion to have the subject of money introduced and hear the rattle of money-boxes. They complain that their enjoyment in worship is spoiled by being called upon to give. Occasional contributions are tolerated as necessary evils. If what is needful could be procured in some other way the contribution-box should be abolished, and the Sabbath and the church be no more profaned by any allusions to giving. And yet these persons have no such horror of the prayers or of singing — that is devotional.

The Sabbath profaned by making offerings to the Lord ! It is the day, and the church is the place, for this most imperative, most grateful and hearty, most acceptable and solemn, act of worship. While we are not to abstain from charity, as we do not abstain from prayers, on the other days of the week, there should be a more marked and thankful offering made on the sabbath, as a special tribute of praise to the Redeemer. It is hardly practicable to change our customs, especially in this direction. But there ought

to be a place for giving gifts in every service of public worship. It is not the amount given that is essential, as it is not the length of the prayer or the loudness of the praise that is of moment. But enough should be given to remind us that we belong to God, and to be a symbol of the consecration of all we have and are to him. In many churches the scriptural custom is preserved of making offerings as a regular part of the service.

3. Reading and meditating upon the word of God and preaching have come to fill a prominent part in public worship. The sermon, in fact, is making the other elements of worship subordinate and tributary. What is its true function? Has preaching any place in worship distinctively considered? Is it not an intruder that has forced itself in where it does not rightly belong, to crowd out more devotional ordinances? Not a few declare that such is the fact. And many who insist upon the pre-eminent importance of preaching, do not recognize it as strictly worship. They value it for the office of conversion and instruction, and not as a chief method of giving glory to the Saviour.¹ But if the preacher is nothing but a teacher or an orator he ought to be sent down to the platform. He is the ambassador of God, he speaks in the name of God, and is constituted an organ of communication from God. As a medium of divine communication in worship, the highest place belongs to the reading of the word. And the sermon is fitly made a chief

¹ Even Vinet says that preaching "is rather appended to worship than a constituent part of it. Only when we generalise the idea of worship, — make it embrace all that has God for its object, all that is by our intention related to God, — only then can we call preaching, or the teaching of religious truths, worship, and that not more nor less than every good work." "Adoration," according to Klopstock, as quoted by Harms, "is the essential element in public worship; the teaching and exhortation of the minister, notwithstanding their great utility, are not elements of so essential a character." "Die unterrichtende Ermahnung." "Preaching is an addition to worship, and is not itself worship. Harms is not wrong in proposing hours of worship in which preaching shall not be introduced. This would not tend to disparage preaching, but to set a higher estimate on worship." — Harms, Vol. II. p. 123; Vinet, *ut supra*, Part III. sect. 1.

part of divine service ; for besides its great office of promoting our spiritual culture, it holds a place in the direct worship of our Redeemer.

We will say nothing of preaching as an ordinance of instruction, but only of that side of it which touches upon worship.

Now in spiritual worship, as has been said, two things are involved, the approach of man to God, and the approach of God to man. There can be no complete service unless both these conditions are fulfilled : if God is not sensibly present, all is vain. Draw nigh to me, and I will draw nigh to you. There must be this mutual action of God toward us, and of our souls towards God.

In ancient times the divine participation was by visible or audible tokens. When holy men worshipped a form appeared, a cloud seemed hovering, a lightness flashed forth, an angelic appearance was seen, words were heard. Abraham was sensible that God was before him, for he heard his voice and conversed with him. The communications he received were the most certain evidence of the real presence.

Are we left with no such tokens of God's presence? Does he speak no word of invitation and welcome and instruction and encouragement to us? Precisely this most assured communication with our heavenly Father we have, in the fullest measure. The Son of God became incarnate as the Word, and the holy scripture is given to fill in our worship the place which the miraculous manifestations filled in olden time. In the reading of the Bible and in preaching God comes near to us. When the scriptures are opened, the incarnate Word is before us. If we heard a voice responding when our prayers had been offered, if out of the depths there came words of promise, of warning, and reproof, of hope, should we not listen? Thus is he speaking when his ambassador repeats the message. So far from being an incidental thing, the reading of the Bible in our service is the act in which the Lord communicates directly with us.

And preaching, in its original purpose and legitimate character, is reading the Bible so as to give due emphasis, and make the meaning plain. A sermon is only such an expansion of scripture as will convey the sense fully. The preacher takes the truths which God reveals and translates them into the hearts of the hearers. Few would understand if he read the communication as it was given in the original Hebrew and Greek. He must transfer the meaning into other language. And a sermon is simply opening the plain English of the Bible. The various heads and illustrations and arguments and appeals are only tones and modulations of voice employed to emphasize the text.

While in one aspect preaching is only the emphatic reading of the Bible, it serves also to make the worshipper vividly sensible of the presence of God. The preacher may so present the character of God, and give such living portrayal of his glory, that while listening we may seem to see God. The preacher may so work upon us as to lift us into the conscious presence of the majesty of heaven. The Lord Jesus may be revealed while his minister is showing his death. Under the inspiration of some preacher whose lips had been touched with coals from the altar, men have felt as though God himself did beseech them to be reconciled to him. In prayer and in praise we have not succeeded, perhaps, in getting near to our Lord. But under the awe and pressure of some sermon we have said: How awful is this place. It is no other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven.

It is a great office of preaching to bring God distinctly to view, to dispel our vague conceptions and make us see him as he is. The main scope of the sermon is sometimes the illustration of the divine character, or the vindication of divine providence. The discourse may be a spiritual meditation, the utterance of truths which the Holy Spirit awakens in a thoughtful believer.¹ There is no exhortation,

¹ "There are also discourses, which in form are addressed to an audience, but which nevertheless have this character of meditational flow, such as the

but by the thoughts presented our souls are filled with emotions of reverence and love and praise. We are drawn near to God; the distance between us vanishes; he seems to be dwelling in our hearts; he is with us.

Now this is worship; this being in sensible contact with Christ is worship. And it is doubtful if any other rite so fulfils the prime condition of securing the sensible presence of God to the soul as the preaching of the word secures it. The soul is perhaps in a more devotional frame, more full of love and reverence and thankfulness and joy during the sermon, and flows out towards God in more ardent aspirations, and is offering more hearty vows of service during the sermon, than during any other part of the worship.

The silently-working influence which has brought preaching into the prominence it holds, is because in the new dispensation it is as the word that God has come to men. Under the old economy it was as sovereignty, as law, which employs material symbols, ensigns of authority, and formal demonstrations of power, that the Deity was manifested. Now it is as the word, speaking to the heart and working in the mind and will, as light and love and life, that he comes nigh.

The element of worship in preaching is not as well understood as it should be. The possibility and the necessity of it should be more regarded. It would make changes in the mode of preaching. More of this element is needed; it is the most effective element.

It is not true that we lay most stress on something which is intended as preparatory and introductory to worship; though if this were the object of the sermon, no less stress should be laid on the preaching of the gospel. But no rite in any service fulfils better the essential condition of worship, that of securing the sensible approach of God, than the preaching of the word. Only it should be remarked that, when securing this purpose, the sermon is not

writings of Leighton and Scougal."—J. W. Alexander, *Thoughts on Preaching*, p. 46.

so much preached to as preached by the body of worshippers. The most effective and true sermon is that which all join in preaching — the thoughts uttered by the minister, inwardly felt and responded to and truly experienced, and made the common expression before God, as the prayer offered by the minister expresses the supplications of all.

4. The culminating point of Christian worship is the celebration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. They were instituted under the most solemn circumstances, with express injunctions that the one should be applied to all nations, and that the other should be observed to the end of the world.

The eucharist constitutes the heart of Romish worship, while preaching is thrown into the background. On the other hand, in many of our churches this sacrament is hardly a constituent part of public worship. It comes as an appendix at the close of the service.¹ And baptism is regarded as merely the door of admission to the Lord's supper. The relation of these solemn rites to divine worship does not seem to be justly apprehended.

In upholding and insisting upon certain meanings of the Christian sacraments, we do not maintain that there are no other meanings. One great cause of dispute and of misapprehension is in supposing that they express only one thing or only certain things. Because the Lord's supper is a memorial feast, it does not interfere with its being a symbolical representation of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Baptism may be none the less the rite of admission to the church because it is also an act of consecration to the Lord. On the one side the sacraments relate to men; they are tokens of discipleship and bonds of union; they are the marks by which we recognize our mutual relations; they are pledges of communion in life and labor. On the other side,

¹ Dr. J. W. Alexander makes this criticism upon some New England churches: "The absence of a spirit of worship in assemblies is very striking. Communion seasons are brief and perfunctory, and the ordinance is just an addition, as when we baptize a child." — Letters, etc., Vol. II. p. 200, Letter from Newport, 1854.

they relate to God: they are expressions of homage and tenders of service to him, and they are the channels for the communication of grace from him. It is only of this latter aspect, as being that in which they enter into worship specifically, that it is needful to speak.

Of baptism, the first thing to be remarked is:

(1) That this rite is a solemn recognition of God in his most endearing relations, and in his mysterious three-fold manifestation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and thus meets the fundamental idea of worship. It is the most explicit acknowledgment that God is our sovereign, that we belong to him, and owe him service; that he is our Father, our Saviour, and our Comforter. It is a most impressive act of homage and a pledge of fealty and of childlike submission, and a token of recognition of the lordship of Christ over ourselves and those we baptize into his name.

(2) It is a solemn act of consecration of body and soul to the service of God, a symbol of the voluntary giving back to God that which is his. The child baptized is dedicated to the Lord, named with his name, and sealed with his seal. "Into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," as the true formula is; not as though the minister acted in the name and by the authority of Christ, but as indicating that baptism is into obedience to God, into the sonship and service of God. In the ancient economy vessels intended for the service of God were consecrated by sprinkling with blood; persons were dedicated by this sprinkling. And baptism is one of the most expressive and beautiful symbols by which we signify that we commit to our heavenly Father the charge of our life and the treasures of our love.

(3) A third meaning of baptism is that of a solemn confession of faith in the Lord Jesus and acceptance of his gospel. He instituted the rite, and we perform it because we are his disciples, thus proclaiming with an emphasis beyond language that Jesus is our Master.

(4) And hereby it becomes a token of the reception and

welcome of the Holy Ghost as our renewing Spirit and indwelling life. We are the temples of God, says the apostle. The material structure is consecrated and constituted the dwelling place of God's Spirit by appropriate rites: "Arise, O God, into thy rest; thou and the ark of thy strength." In response to the invocation, the Spirit draws nigh. And in baptism we thus welcome the Lord to abide in our hearts.

(5) As the rite of admission to the visible church little need be said of baptism. Some formal sign seems necessary. Of old it was circumcision. But it should be kept in mind that baptism does not confer or constitute the right of admission. It is simply a recognition of the fact that we are already members. Giving a name to a child is not giving him life, but only recognizing his birth and acknowledging his personality. And baptism is giving a legitimate position within the communion of the church. Baptism presupposes that the person is a Christian, and designates him by his Christian name, and authorizes him to assume it.

While it is the necessary form of admission to the church, this is the least significant part of baptism; and laying so much stress here is like laying stress on the naming of a child. The vital thing in baptism is the recognition of the sovereignty and fatherhood of God and of the redemption and lordship of Christ; the consecration of ourselves to him, and acknowledgment of faith in him, and of the reception of his Spirit.

(6) In a deeper meaning, baptism is the symbol of spiritual regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and of purification by the blood of Jesus. In the other particulars it is expressive of our feelings towards God. In this it is expressive of his feelings towards us. It is an exhibition of his grace and mercy. We are born anew by the Holy Ghost and cleansed from guilt by the blood of the Lamb, and thus become sons of God and heirs of heaven. And baptism is the symbol of the operation of this divine grace. An emblem has been chosen which illustrates the spiritual change.

The Holy Ghost is spoken of as poured upon us, and we are said to be sprinkled with the blood of Christ. And by the application of water this cleansing and new birth are represented.

A great mistake is made in supposing that baptism is the same to all recipients; whereas it does not signify the same to any two persons. Each one has as much meaning in it as it is possible for him to have; how much, depends upon the spiritual capacity of the individual. A child repeats the Lord's prayer as soon as it can speak. It is not the same service to him it is to the mother. He expresses almost nothing; she, almost everything. Because he is a child and does not understand all its significance, shall he not express all he can? And it is not necessary, it is impossible that all the meaning of a sacrament shall be understood in order to receive it. We see more and more in the Lord's supper every time we come to the table, and we never expect to know the whole blessedness of it till we sit down, if by God's grace we are permitted to sit down, in heaven. We are thankful now, as a child of God, to eat the crumbs which fall from the table. And so a child may receive as much of the meaning of baptism as it is capable of receiving. If a parent has consecrated himself, he must give his offspring the same consecration in baptism. The child is yet a part of himself, not severed by birth physically or spiritually, not indeed full born. He continues to be moulded and nurtured, takes shape and growth from the parent, in body and soul, as truly as when unborn. His life is dependent, his spiritual development is in the largest measure through the parent. It is the father's will and thought that direct him.

The only peculiarity of infant baptism is owing to the peculiarity of infants. They are mysterious beings. They have a separate existence, and yet they have not. The parental life flows on in them as it does in the body of the parent, like shoots growing around a tree, springing from the old root and drawing their sap from it, after they appear

above ground, and meantime sending out independent rootlets for their separate life, when they shall be prepared for it. The baptism of the children is a consecration of them in our own behalf, as a new development of our own lives, and as our richest treasure. And there is a higher privilege for those who are wise to know it. Acting for them, we may give them baptism in the highest significance in which we receive it ourselves. As we put the Lord's prayer into their mouths, we may put the Lord's seal upon their foreheads. And when, in maturity, they recognize and confirm it, it has the double sanction of our choice and of their own. For it makes no difference what space of time intervenes, whether moments, hours, or years, between the baptism and the confession of faith. In many churches there is a regular interval of a week between; in all, some moments elapse. The apostles had been baptized, if at all, months before they sat down in the upper chamber. And the act done in childhood, by one appointed of God to act for me in all solemn affairs, when acknowledged and assented to by me in maturity, is as valid and as truly mine as though my consent preceded the act.

The sacrament of the Lord's supper holds even a more distinctive place than baptism in Christian worship.

The fundamental idea of it is to be found in the ancient sacrifices. It represents and gathers up into itself the meaning of the sacrifices of expiation especially, and of the paschal lamb, whose body was broken and eaten at the pass-over. It is a memorial of many events, and a pledge of union with the Lord and of communion with believers.

(1) In the first place this sacrament is a solemn proclamation of the death of Christ as an atonement for sin. "As oft as ye do this, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." The service is of the nature of a scenic representation of the great sacrifice of the Lamb slain. The emblems are consecrated by special prayer, as the victim was set apart for sacrifice. The bread is broken, as was the body; the wine poured out, as the blood was poured forth. We offer all

before God. By these symbols we show to him the sacrifice in which we trust for the expiation of our sins. We do it in the sight of men, proclaiming that the sacrifice has been made which is our atonement.

Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, is the truth for all time. This truth of a sacrificial atonement is perpetuated by these solemn symbols. We do not seek out a spotless lamb for expiation. But the reason is not because a bleeding sacrifice is not a spiritual form of worship; it is spiritual; but because God hath chosen for us a lamb. And we employ these expressive symbols to show this blessed fact. By participating in the sacrament we appropriate to ourselves the atonement. It is a symbolical act of laying our hands upon the lamb as our expiation and of being sprinkled with his blood. Here is the inexpressible value of the service. "Unless ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have no life in you." This personal participation in the sacrifice, as of a lamb slain, is what is so vital in the sacrament.

(2) The Lord's supper has a second significance as a solemn memorial. "This do in remembrance of me," recalls to mind our Saviour and all he has done; it recalls his teachings and his life. By faith we feed upon the bread which came down from heaven. As bread and wine are incorporated in our bodies, so the life of our Lord, his doctrines, his example, are received by us. We are symbolically united to him, and he enters into us.

This is a special memorial of the scenes of the suffering and death when it was instituted. We are reminded of what our Redeemer has endured in our behalf; of the garden, the hall of judgment, the scourging, and crowning with thorns, and nailing upon the cross.

The passover feast was in memorial of the deliverance from Egypt. The Jew was bidden to tell his children that story, as often as the feast was celebrated. And all the story of our wretchedness and free deliverance is called to mind as often as we partake of our paschal lamb. Of such, and of many other things, it is a great memor-

(3) And then it is the symbol and pledge of personal discipleship. It is the token and public act of membership in his church. We do it in his name. By eating and drinking at his table we pledge our love and our lives to him. The most solemn sanction was given in the eastern world by breaking bread together. And this is the act by which our membership in the family of our heavenly Father is perpetually declared. It is the children's bread. Our Lord hath spread the feast; we come by his invitation, as his friends; and thus he gives himself to us.

Many lay chief stress on this sacrament as the token of church membership. This is only one, and one of the least significant, of its meanings. As the showing forth of Christ's death, as the self-appropriation of the sacrifice, as the memorial of him and of our redemption, it is more significant.

(4) And then it is a delightful pledge of union with Christ and of communion with believers. One of the most peculiar things in this service is the nearness in which it brings Christ to us. The Romish doctrine of the real presence is an attempt to express this vital fact of the eucharist. But Romanists grasp the shadow and lose the substance. The material body of Jesus was not the Lord. The change of the bread into that body, if such a change were conceivable, would not bring Christ to us. It was not the material body which the apostles shared. It is Jesus Christ present to their knowledge and present to their feelings; Christ conversing with them, and showing himself to their hearts. And we cannot, by preaching or by meditation or by prayer, have such vivid conceptions of a present Saviour, understand him so truly, and have our hearts so drawn out in fulness of worship and of communion as in this hallowed sacrament. "Handle me and see," said the Lord. We are handling the symbols of that which is peculiar, of the sacrifice and of the sufferings and of the life which is imparted.

And this as a feast with friends and kindred in Jesus. The sacrifice of old ended in a feast. The paschal lamb

was eaten. And the fellowship with those who hold the same Saviour is expressed by sitting together in heavenly places; Christ being at the head, and all being brethren.

It is not from undervaluing the two great sacraments, but it is rather unconsciously, that they are sometimes treated as incidental and subordinate, instead of being made the culminating point of divine worship. They are the most solemn recognition of God in his most glorious characteristics and most endearing relations. We offer no such prayer as when we give our lives to him in baptism. There is no such praise as when Christians consecrate their offspring to their Lord. Language cannot frame a doxology so sublime as when body and soul are thus dedicated into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Our confessions of faith, our repetitions of creed, are as nothing by the side of taking the body broken and the blood shed, and showing them before God and angels and men as our propitiation, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus. The approach of God to men which, as Charnock says, is so essential in worship, is never so realized as at the table of our Lord. This, by eminence, is the communion. The glory which hovered over the holy of holies, the cloud which shadowed the presence of God in the temple, was not so real and intimate and precious a manifestation as Christ promises to those who come up to the feast.

While the four particulars we have named, of prayer and praise, the presentation of offerings, reading the scriptures and preaching, and the celebration of the sacraments, are the essential constituents of Christian worship, it is not meant, as has been said, that each of these must enter into every public service. But care must be taken that in the complete circle of worship each bears its part.

A mistake is often made in judging how largely the devotional element prevails in our churches by looking simply at the services on the Sabbath and in the sanctuary. The predominant element here is perhaps the sermon. But for a right estimate it is necessary to include the services

which are held for almost purely devotional exercises, the prayer-meetings and concerts of prayer. In these "conference meetings," what seems a deficiency in our public worship is so fully supplemented that one may safely say there is a greater preponderance of the elements of worship in our churches than in many churches in which worship is thought by casual observers to be more prominent. Yet it may admit of a question whether it is not desirable to bring something out of our prayer-meetings into the general service of the Sabbath; and whether there are not important parts of public worship which we should do well to make more account of. No instrumentality can be contrived so effective for the spiritual renewing of men as a true and complete service of Christian worship.

Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

ARTICLE II.

NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY.

BY REV. DANIEL T. FISCHE, NEWBURYPORT, MASS.

(Concluded from p. 512.)

REGENERATION.

ALL Calvinistic divines believe in the necessity of regeneration, i. e. of a radical change of character; and they believe that whenever it takes place, the primary efficient cause is the Holy Spirit. But this doctrine had to a great extent been lost sight of during that deep spiritual declension which prevailed previously to the "great awakening." The fathers of New England theology aimed to restore or give greater prominence to this cardinal truth of the gospel.