

WORSHIP - THE CHRISTIAN'S HIGHEST OCCUPATION

by Alfred Gibbs

Gibbs's theological treatise exploring the nature, practice, and centrality of worship in the Christian life. He presents worship as the believer's highest calling and privilege, examining what constitutes true worship and how it should be expressed both individually and corporately.

27 Chapters

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0.2. Foreword

FOREWORD

It has been our privilege to read "Worship, The Christian's Highest Occupation" in manuscript. We acknowledge a great debt of gratitude to the author for being the first to bring to our attention, over thirty years ago, many of the precious truths contained in this book; and the acceptance of which radically changed the course and character of our ministry.

Here is a book with which we thoroughly agree and which we can heartily endorse without reservation. The title is challenging and the treatment convincing. The author's assertion that "worship is associated with a spiritual maturity," is equally true of this book. Even a casual reader would soon detect that it is not the vaporizings of a novice ambitious to become an author; but rather the product of firm convictions based upon a careful searching of the Scriptures, and matured by meditation and by years of deep experience in the Christian path, and strengthened by keen observations. In his own inimitable way, the author proceeds in an orderly and cumulative fashion. His homiletic gift is evident and most helpful to the reader. The book is marked by clarity of thought and expression, made more forceful by vivid figures of speech and graphic illustrations. The reader is soon aware of the fact that worship is not a subject which can be developed and dismissed with a paragraph, but, instead, is impressed with the vastness and importance of the theme. Basic facts on the subject are drawn from both the Old and New Testaments. Practical applications and responsibilities are made clear and inescapable. The truth concerning worship is faithfully presented and false theories and practices are mercilessly exposed, frequently by the apt use of sanctified irony. Clouds which confuse many on the subject are dispelled as a number of distinctions of truth are drawn. We cite several. The contrast between the ritualistic worship of Judaism and the spiritual worship of Christianity and the superiority of the latter, is worth the reading of the book. The difference between worship and ministry is clearly drawn and is most helpful in these days when Christendom seems to know little about, and values less, the privileges of worship. The place of worship, within the veil, is clearly distinguished from the place of meeting; something which most religious systems utterly fail to see. The chapters which deal with the worshipper, his privileges and perils, the things to be sought and the things to avoid, the preparation of the heart and mind for true worship, are most searching. The description of the worship of the wise men is a spiritual classic, and might well be printed in pamphlet form for wider distribution.

Certain adult Bible classes would find this volume suitable for a text book for a series of studies on worship. Elder brethren would render a great service by circulating copies among those young in the faith.

We hope and pray that the book may have the wide reading which it merits, and that it may be used of GOD in leading many into an appreciation and practice of "the highest occupation of the Christian."

George M. Landis

0.3. Introduction

INTRODUCTION

If the title of this book is correct, as we believe it is, then the importance of the subject will be obvious to every child of GOD. A great deal of confusion exists in Christendom as to just what constitutes worship. It is often confounded with listening to a sermon; with service for the LORD on behalf of others; with testimony to CHRIST's saving and satisfying grace; with the preaching of the Gospel; with ministry of the Word to believers, and with prayer.

Many Christians put the emphasis of their lives on service for GOD, to the exclusion of the worship of GOD. Others swing to the other extreme, and so stress the importance of worship, that service for the LORD is viewed as being of little or no consequence. We must beware of lopsidedness, or of seeking to push one truth of Scripture to an extreme the Bible does not warrant. The believer must seek to maintain the truth of GOD in its proper perspective and correct balance. The words of our Lord JESUS CHRIST give the proper order of precedence. In His reply to Satan's temptation, He said: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). That quality of worship which does not result in service, and that service which does not flow from worship, both come short of the Divine ideal. The order in which the heroes of faith are mentioned, in Hebrews chapter 11, is not without significance. The first name is that of Abel, who, by faith, "offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (vs. 4). This surely speaks of worship. The next is Enoch, whose life was characterized by a walk of fellowship with GOD which delighted His heart. The third is Noah, who, in response to GOD's revelation, built an ark to the saving of his house. This certainly illustrates the work of faith. Thus the order of Divine precedence is here suggested: the worship, walk and work of faith. To a great number of people the word, "worship," only connotes the respectful and formal recognition of GOD, at a distance, on certain stated occasions, in accordance with an ecclesiastically prepared ritual, usually in buildings particularly designed for the purpose, and generally through the mediation of specially selected, theologically educated, and humanly ordained clergymen.

One sometimes sees signs outside a church building inviting all and sundry to: "Come and worship with us." On entering such a place, all one would hear would be a preaching service, with a sermon which might, or might not, lead the hearer ultimately to worship; but the mere fact of listening to a sermon, even though it may be on the subject of worship, is not worship. The distinction between ministry and worship can be simply stated as follows: Ministry is that which comes down to us, from the Father, through the Son, in the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, and through the human instrument whom GOD has gifted for this purpose. Worship is that which goes up, from the believer, by the HOLY SPIRIT's power, through the Son, to the Father. Thus ministry is that which descends from GOD to us; while worship is that which ascends from us to GOD.

We shall consider the subject of worship under the following ten headings:

1. Its meaning, or definition.

2. Its importance.
3. Its authority.
4. Its object.
5. Its ground.
6. Its power.
7. Its manner.
8. Its hindrances.
9. Its places.
10. Its results.

Grateful appreciation is due to my very good friend and brother in CHRIST, George M. Landis, of Fayetteville, Pennsylvania, for his kindness in reading the manuscript, and writing a foreword to this book. A detailed outline of the subject will be found at the beginning of the book. This brief analysis will enable the reader to grasp the argument as a whole, and also facilitate quick reference to any particular part in which he is interested. May it be ours, as we study this important subject, not only to gain an intellectual apprehension of what the Bible teaches regarding worship; but to so adjust our lives to this knowledge that we shall be found amongst those who "worship God in spirit and in truth." By this we shall not only be enabled to bring glory to His name, but also delight to His heart.

0.4. Preface to Second Edition

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

It is with gratitude to GOD that a second edition of this book has become necessary. It is sent forth thoroughly revised, and with an addition in the form of an appendix which is devoted to the subject of, "Direct Address to the Lord JESUS." May GOD be pleased to continue His good hand on the message of this book, and use it to lead many more believers to a greater appreciation of their privileges as "a kingdom of priests unto God," and a more faithful discharge of their responsibilities to GOD in this important matter of their worship.

01. Part I. The Meaning of Worship: Overview

WORSHIP The Christian's Highest Occupation Alfred P. Gibbs Copyright © 1950 CHAPTER ONE
I. THE MEANING OF WORSHIP: OVERVIEW

Under this heading we shall consider seven things, namely: Some good definitions; 1. The word translated, "Worship" in the New Testament; 2. Its first mention in the Bible; 3. Some distinctions between prayer, praise and worship; 4. Worship as giving to God; 5. The holy perfume; 6. The meaning of the word in the Old Testament.

1. SOME GOOD DEFINITIONS The term, "Worship," like many other great words, such as "grace" and "love," defies adequate definition. The meaning of these words, like the exquisite perfume of a rose, or the delightful flavor of honey, is more easily experienced than described.

Many have attempted to define the meaning of worship, and though unsuccessful in their attempts, yet their definitions have value. The following helpful quotations have been culled from various writers. (a) One describes it as: "The overflow of a grateful heart, under a sense of Divine favor."

Here the writer has emphasized the fact that worship is a spontaneous thing. It is not something which has to be laboriously pumped up, but that which springs up, and overflows from a heart filled with a sense of the greatness and goodness of God.

David spoke of this in Psalms 45:1, when he sang: "My heart is inditing a good matter."

David was expressing the thought that his heart was boiling over, or bubbling up. As he meditated on the glory and majesty of God, as revealed, both in creation and His word, his heart began to warm within him, until it boiled over, and there ascended to God the fragrance of his worship.

He speaks of this experience again in that well known twenty-third Psalm, and sang: "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over"! (Psalms 23:5) (b) Another has defined worship as: "The outpouring of a soul at rest in the presence of God."

Here the accent is on the spiritual condition of the one who worships. The believer is at rest. That is to say, he is in the full consciousness and enjoyment of his assurance of perfect acceptance before God, through the person of Christ. He has been brought to realize that, in Christ, he is seen by God as sanctified, redeemed, regenerated, justified, and blessed with all the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. As he thus basks in the sunshine of Divine favor, his heart goes out in adoration to the One who made it all so blessedly and gloriously actual in his experience. With the writer of the Canticles he exclaims: "I lay down under His shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love" (Song of Solomon 2:3-4). (c) Another has put it thus: "Worship is the occupation of the heart, not with its needs, or even with its blessings, but with God Himself."

Here the writer has sensed the subtle distinction that exists between prayer, praise and worship, which we shall discuss more fully later on.

David knew what this meant, for we are told that when Nathan was commissioned by the Lord to tell him that the throne of his kingdom should be established for ever, David's heart was so full that he went in and sat before the Lord. As he did so he was soon lost in wonder and praise, and exclaimed: "Wherefore Thou art great, O Lord God, for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears" (2 Samuel 7:18-22). (d) Still another has expressed himself as follows: "Worship is the upspring of a heart that has known the Father as a Giver, the Son as Saviour, and the Holy Spirit as the indwelling Guest." In this definition, the essential prerequisite of the worshipper is indicated. Thus it is only the regenerated believer that can spiritually and intelligently worship the Father and the Son, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. An unsaved person, though perfectly able to recognize God as supreme, and Creator of the universe, has not been brought into living relationship with Him as Father, and consequently is unable to really appreciate what only the Holy Spirit can reveal. We are told that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14-15).

Christ used the analogy of "living water" to describe the spiritual life which He came to make possible to all who believe: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13-14). This "living water" comes in to the believer at the new birth: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). - It springs up, within him, in worship (John 4:14).

It then flows out, from him, in service: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)" (John 7:37-39).

Thus worship really consists of this "living water" returning to its source.

Long ago Solomon made the discovery that though all the rivers ran into the sea, yet the sea did not become any fuller thereby. He correctly assigned the reason as follows: "Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return" (Ecclesiastes 1:7).

Thus the spiritual life which flows from God to us, returns to Him in worship from us, and thus the Divine cycle is complete.

Worship could well be pronounced, "worth-ship," for it consists of the ascription of worth to One who is worthy. A striking example of this can be seen in the last book of the Bible. In chapter four, the living creatures and the elders are described as falling down and worshipping the One who occupies the throne, and saying: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive honor and glory and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." In chapter five, the numberless hosts, who surround the LAMB, join in a glorious chorus and sing: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory,

and blessing!”

It will be seen in these two instances, that not a single petition occurs. It is worship in its purest form, for it is the ascription of worth to One who alone is worthy, or in other words, worth-ship.

2. The Word Most Commonly Translated “Worship” in the New Testament is “Proskuneo.”

It means to do reverence, or homage, by prostration; to pay Divine homage, to worship, and adore. A few instances will suffice. In Matthew 2:2; Matthew 2:11, the wise men are recorded as saying: “Where is he that is born King of the Jews?... We are come to worship him... And when they saw the young child, they fell down and worshipped him.” The same word is used in describing Christ’s reply to Satan’s temptation: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:10).

Again it is used in John 4:24, where our Lord declares: “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth.” The word “latreus,” which is seldom used, refers largely to the worship of the sanctuary, and is so used in Php 3:3 : “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” and Hebrews 10:2 : “For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.”

3. The First Mention of the Word in the Bible “The worship of the Lord, as also the work of the Lord, must be guided by the word of the Lord”

One of the many rules determining the real meaning of a word in holy Scripture, has been aptly termed: “The law of first mention.” This rule affirms that the first mention of a word, or doctrine, in the Bible, determines its meaning throughout the whole range of the Scriptures. If this be true, then the first mention of the word “worship,” is full of deep spiritual significance for us. In Genesis 22:5, Abraham is described as saying to the young men who accompanied him and Isaac to the mountains of Moriah: “Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.” In this first recorded mention of the word, many things concerning worship are clearly indicated. (a) We learn, first, that worship is based on a revelation from God.

“And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” (Genesis 22:1-2) “And God said.”

It was in response to a word from God that Abraham acted. It was not something he thought up himself, but was his response to a Divine revelation. Faith always presupposes a previous revelation.

We are told that: “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). For one to act without Divine authority is presumption in the worst degree. Take faith away from Abraham’s act in offering up Isaac, and it becomes murder! The worship of the Lord, as also the work of the Lord, must be guided by the word of the Lord. The believer’s authority in worship is not the traditions of men, however hoary with antiquity, nor the subtle reasonings of human wisdom, however plausible; but the clear revelation of God’s word. (b) Secondly, we discover that worship is conditioned by faith in, and obedience to, that Divine revelation. “And Abraham rose up early in

the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him" (Genesis 22:3) Abraham's response was unquestioning, prompt and full.

Unhesitatingly, he obeyed God's command.

- He arose early in the morning, - Saddled the ass, - Cut the wood for the burnt offering, - Secured the services of two young men, - Took Isaac his son, - Made his way in the direction God had indicated. The inspired writer puts it thus: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac" (Hebrews 11:7). In other words, Abraham did something in response to God's word.

Thus prompt, unquestioning obedience to the known will of God, as revealed in His word, is essential to true worship. It is one thing to know what God has revealed concerning worship; and another to turn from all humanly conceived views and act, promptly and fully, on that Divine revelation. That is faith. (c) Thirdly, we gather that worship involves a costly presentation to God (vs. 2). In Abraham's case, it meant the offering up of his only and well beloved son, - The darling of his heart, - His dearest possession, - The one in whom all his hopes of future posterity were centered.

God was careful to emphasize this phase of his worship, for He said: "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest... and offer him for a burnt offering."

Worship is not a cheap thing, to be offered thoughtlessly or carelessly, with no sense of the self-sacrifice involved.

David realized this aspect of worship and declared: "Neither will I offer burnt sacrifices unto the Lord my God of that which dost cost me nothing" (2 Samuel 24:24).

Thus when Abraham spoke of "worship," he understood it to mean that it involved the greatest sacrifice he had ever been called upon to make. His heart was wrapped up in his son, yet he evidenced his willingness to give to God his heart's best treasure.

We need ever to keep this in mind in our estimation of worship. It is spoken of as a "sacrifice of praise" (Hebrews 13:15).

Sacrifice connotes cost, and true worship will soon be discovered to be a costly thing. It is very much easier to let someone else do our worshipping for us. Many seem content to lean back on their chairs and allow some clergyman to perform this act for them, and thus lose both the ability and joy of worship.

Many a believer has had to seal his testimony with his own life's blood, in order to maintain a good conscience before God in this matter of worship. "The noble army of martyrs" give eloquent witness to this fact.

Worship will involve considerable cost to the believer, - In the outlay of time for spiritual preparation; - In the effort of Bible study; - In the loss of the prestige of one's social, business and ecclesiastical circle, - In the outlay of money.

All this entails cost, but the energy expended in offering true worship, brings both pleasure and glory to God. (d) Fourthly, we learn that worship necessitates a deliberate separation unto God.

“And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you” (Genesis 22:5).

Notice Abraham’s words to the two young men: “Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship.” The two young men could answer to the things which would combine to hinder the believer from entering by “the new and living way” into the holiest, to pour out his heart in adoring worship.

Like Abraham, each Christian must resolutely say to all his home cares, business affairs and hobbies, etc.: “Abide ye here, while I go yonder and worship.”

We are all conscious, more or less, of intruding thoughts which often seek, even in our holiest moments, to divert our minds from occupation with God to the exclusion of all else.

- Many a meal has been imaginatively planned, cooked and served in a meeting which was convened particularly to enable the people of God to worship.

- Many a business deal has been thought out, when the believer was supposedly deep in meditation, and others imagined his heart was overflowing with worship!

These unlawful and distracting thoughts must be dealt with in the same uncompromising manner as Abraham dealt with these two young men. They must be made, by a definite decision of the will, to abide outside of our meditations, lest they rob God of the worship due to His name. This calls for real concentration of thought, and the repudiation of all self interests. This is by no means pleasing to the flesh, which loves to wander, unrebuked, into the forbidden fields of fancy.

God’s exhortation to the believer connotes both privilege and responsibility: “Having an high Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:22).

- Here is our privilege: “having an high Priest.”

- Here is our responsibility: “Let us draw near.”

Worship therefore calls for spiritual activity, or the energy of faith, by which the Christian is enabled to go from “here” to “yonder,” and thus worship undistractedly in the presence of God.

It is significant that, in Abraham’s case, after he had parted from the young man, he ascended the mountain, until he reached the summit, where his act of worship was consummated. In like manner the believer, having left the sordid things of earth behind, ascends the heights, until he experiences the reality of being, “Shut in with God, far, far above the restless world that wars below.” Here his soul basks in the full enjoyment of the presence of the One Whom he worships. (e) Fifthly, we perceive that worship predicates the absolute renunciation of self, in all its varied forms. When Abraham said he was going to “worship,” he knew that it meant the offering up of his son, and this involved utter self-abnegation.

Needless to say, this denial of self is entirely contrary to the flesh in true spiritual worship. Just as Abraham, by this act of offering up his son, resolutely denied the appeal of the flesh for self-expression; so each believer must recognize that the true worshipper is he who “worships God in the Spirit, rejoices in Christ Jesus, and has no confidence in the flesh” (Php 3:3). As Abraham

approached God, with his son, to worship: so the believer must learn that, as a worshipper, he must not only come to God in Christ, and through Christ, but also with Christ.

God is infinitely delighted with His Son, for He testified, again and again: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Only as the believer concentrates his mind's attention and his heart's affection upon the Father's well beloved Son, will he learn to appreciate the glories and excellencies that are resident in Christ. As he comes into the Father's presence with his mind and heart full of Christ, and mentions these excellencies which he has found in His Son, then the fragrance of his worship will rise as incense, and be well pleasing to the One who has so completely revealed Himself in the Son of His love.

W.B. Dick, has beautifully expressed this thought in the following words, "We would, O God, present before Thy face The fragrant name of Thy beloved Son; By faith we view Him in that holy place Which, by His dying, He for us has won.

We share Thy joy in Him who sitteth there, Our hearts delight in Thy delight in Him; Chiefest of thousands, fairer than the fair, His glory naught can tarnish, naught can dim." (f) Sixthly, we are impressed with the fact that worship glorifies God, "And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the Heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Genesis 22:16-18) This act of worship on the part of Abraham delighted God's heart, and brought from Him an expression of His appreciation.

David, by the Spirit, was made to realize this truth, for God said through him: "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God" (Psalms 50:23).

Worship gives to God the place of absolute pre-eminence and thus glorifies Him, to the exclusion of all others. We shall discuss this more fully, later on in our study. (g) Lastly, we discern that worship results in blessing to the worshipper (verses 16-18). In the first place, God gave him back his son.

Though Abraham may have ascended the mount with a heavy burden, he certainly descended it with a happy song on his lips, and a holy joy in his heart. - God will be no man's debtor.

- All who honor Him shall be honored, by Him, in return.

- He will pour multiplied blessings into the heart of the one who, with a single eye, obeys Him fully, and gives Him the glory due to His name.

Then again, think of Abraham's greater appreciation of Isaac, as he witnessed his willing obedience unto death.

Isaac might easily have run away when his father confided to him that he was to be the sacrifice.

He might have resisted as his father bound him and laid him on the altar, but he did nothing of the kind. As God restored Isaac to Abraham, it was with a deeper sense of his preciousness to him.

This is what God does for each true worshipper. He gives back, to the believer, His beloved Son, in all the glory of His blessed Person, and grants to him a far greater appreciation of all those Divine attributes, so perfectly revealed in Him, and expressed by Him. God not only gave His Son for us, on the cross, for our salvation; but He now gives His Son to us, on the throne, for our satisfaction.

It is a significant thing that we are not specifically told that Isaac came down from the mount with Abraham. Of course we know that he did, but this fact is not mentioned. The next time Isaac's name is introduced, it is in connection with a bride that is to be wooed and won for him. This delightful "courtship by proxy," so full of typical significance, is recorded in Chapter 24. This beautiful romance is consummated when Isaac receives Rebecca to be his bride. For the sake of him, "whom, having not seen, she loved," she made the long journey across the desert sands to be united to him as his chosen bride.

- The last sight the world had of Christ was on the altar of Calvary.

- The next sight it shall have of Him is when He is manifested in glory with His blood-bought Bride. No wonder the Divine revelation concludes: "Even so, come Lord Jesus, Amen!"

~ end of chapter 1 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

02. Distinctive Uses of the Word. Worship

WORSHIP The Christian's Highest Occupation Alfred P. Gibbs Copyright © 1950 CHAPTER TWO
DISTINCTIVE USES OF THE WORD

Having considered the first mention of the word "worship," and gleaned something of what is involved in its use, let us now glance at, 4. Some Distinctions Between Prayer, Praise and Worship
Broadly speaking, - Prayer is the occupation of the soul with its needs.

- Praise is the occupation of the soul with its blessings.

- Worship is the occupation of the soul with God Himself.

Prayer and praise may be mingled in worship, and included in the general thought; but properly speaking, each, in itself, does not constitute worship.

- "Lord, save my soul," is prayer.

- "Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul," is praise.

- "Thank you, Lord, for what Thou art," is worship.

Perhaps an illustration may help to make this somewhat subtle distinction a little clearer.

Let us suppose a person who cannot swim falls into a river. As he vainly struggles to save himself, and realizes how hopeless his case is, he cries from the depths of his heart: "Help! Help!

Save me! Save me!" This is prayer. No convicted sinner needs to be taught to pray. An old Puritan's terse commentary on Psalm 107, where sinners, in their extremity are described as crying to God for deliverance, was: "Misery wonderfully indoctrinates a person in the art of prayer!" In response to this drowning person's cries for help, a well-dressed gentleman suddenly appears.

Without a moment's hesitation he plunges into the river and, at the risk of his own life, brings him safely to shore. The response of the saved person is immediate. He overwhelms his rescuer with praise and exclaims: "How can I ever express my gratitude to you for your brave act in saving my life! Thank you, ten thousand times!"

Surely this illustrates what takes place when a sinner is brought to realize that Christ, the Son of God, by His substitutionary work on Calvary, has made possible his salvation from sin's penalty.

Upon his acceptance of Christ as his own personal Saviour, he is assured, from God's own word, that he is now saved. This fills his soul with joy, and his lips with songs of praise to the One who has saved him. But now the rescuer, after seeing the one whom he has saved safely home, turns to him and hands him his card saying: "Here is my name and address. Would you please do me the honor of coming to my home tomorrow evening at 6:30 and dining with me. In this way, we can become better acquainted with each other."

Accordingly, the following evening the rescued man goes to the address on the card. To his astonishment, he finds himself in the wealthiest part of the town. Furthermore, he discovers that his rescuer's house is the grandest of all the palatial mansions in that district.

He rings the bell and the butler appears. After giving his name, he is ushered into the drawing room. The host then appears and immediately, like the perfect gentleman he is, puts his guest at ease. Dinner is announced and, during the course of the very excellent meal, the host skillfully steers the conversation so as best to entertain his guest. When the meal is over, the guest has been charmed beyond measure at the nobility of his host's character. He has been impressed with his kindness, intellect, hospitality, wisdom, graciousness, tact and humility of spirit. In other words, he now appreciates the moral excellence, and the intrinsic worth of his host's character, entirely apart from what he has done for him as his savior. While he does not forget, for one moment, that his host was his rescuer, yet his gratitude for what he did for him is now exceeded by his admiration and appreciation because of what he is, in himself.

Moreover, the more he gets to know his host by visiting him, talking and walking with him, the greater this sense of appreciation grows. This will serve to illustrate that fine distinction which exists between praise and worship. The believer can never forget that the Lord Jesus Christ is his Saviour, and that He has redeemed him at the infinite cost of his most precious blood. Yet, as he comes to know the Lord more intimately, his gratitude to Him as Saviour, merges with and is superceded by an ever-increasing appreciation of the preciousness of His glorious Person, as the displayed excellencies of His perfect character are revealed, by the Spirit, through the Word of God. The Christian, by communion with his Lord, is made to realize and exclaim with another, "My Beloved is... the chiefest among ten thousand... Yea, He is altogether lovely!" (Song of Solomon 5:10; Song of Solomon 5:16). "Chiefest of ten thousand!

Fairest of the fair!

Altogether lovely, Beyond all compare!

Lord of all creation; Man of Calvary!

Son of God who loved and Gave Himself for me!"

Now let us use another illustration, this time based on an actual incident. A tenement building was ablaze in London. On the top story, a young woman was seen standing at a window crying for help, for she was trapped by the flames beneath. Her case looked hopeless until a young fireman, seeing her peril, mounted a ladder and, at the risk of his own life, brought her safely down to the ground. In the excitement of the moment, the girl neglected to thank her rescuer for his brave deed, so the following day she called at his home to thank him for what he had done. He, in turn, reciprocated the call, and the acquaintance thus formed developed into friendship. This eventually ripened into love, and they became engaged. One day they both stood before a marriage officer, plighted their truth to each other and became man and wife.

Now this woman never allowed herself to forget that this fireman was her savior and that, but for him, she might have been burned to death; but he was now much more to her than a savior: he was her husband, her lover, her companion through all life's vicissitudes and her all in all. So it is with all Christians. The One who went to Calvary to make their salvation possible, has now united

them to Himself in a bond that neither time nor eternity shall sever. He is not only the Saviour, but the LOVER, FRIEND, COUNSELLOR, GUARDIAN and GUIDE to all who know Him. The words of God through Isaiah are peculiarly appropriate in this connection: "Thy Maker is thy Husband" (Isaiah 54:5).

5. Worship is Giving to God Salvation is something received by us, as a free gift from God (Romans 6:23).

Worship is something presented by us to God, as a willing acknowledgment of our deep appreciation of what He is and all He has done.

We shall consider three instances of this aspect of worship which are recorded for us in the word of God. They should combine to make this abundantly clear to every believer. A. The first instance we shall look at is the Israelite described in Deuteronomy 26:1-11.

"And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there. And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God.

"And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage, "And when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey.

"And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God: And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you."

Let each believer read this portion carefully for himself. Here is God's own picture of what is involved in the phrase, "And thou shalt... worship before the Lord thy God" (vs. 10).

Let us briefly examine this chapter, so full of spiritual significance, and notice seven things regarding this worshipper. (1) The worshipper is one who has experienced what it means to be redeemed by blood and by power (vs. 5-8) He was a redeemed man, who had been sheltered by the blood of the Passover lamb, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to

destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt” (Exodus 12:12-13). God instructed him to recall the fact that he had once been a slave under the bitter bondage of the Egyptians; but the Lord had looked upon his “affliction, labor and oppression,” and had brought him out of this dreadful condition by His “mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terrible, and with signs and wonders.”

Surely we have, in these words, a graphic illustration of that far greater work that God has done for every believer.

Though once, by nature, lost in sin and under its dread condemnation; yet because of the redeeming work accomplished by His beloved Son on Calvary, a full, free and eternal salvation has been provided for every sinner who will own his need, trust Christ as His Saviour and own Him as the Lord of his life.

Happy indeed is that person who can take the words of this Israelite upon his lips and truthfully testify: “And the Lord brought me forth... with an outstretched arm, out of my sin, my need and my bondage, into the glorious liberty of the children of God!”

Properly speaking, it is only one who has thus experienced God’s saving power in his own life, that can approach God as an intelligent and consistent worshipper.

Peter reminded those Christians, to whom he wrote, that they had “not been redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ.” As redeemed ones, they could now offer up “spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 Peter 2:5). (2) The worshipper is viewed as having an inheritance in the land. (v. 1) “When thou art come in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.” This person had been the subject of Divine guidance, for he had been led by the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. He had been the object of God’s providing care, for he had eaten of the manna from Heaven, and had drunk of the waters that flowed from the smitten rock. Now, by God’s grace, he is viewed as having been brought through the Jordan, and actually living in the land that God had promised. The typical significance of this should be obvious to each believer. The Christian is viewed in Scripture as, being already “seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6).

He is assured, by God Himself, that “in Christ” he has “obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Ephesians 1:11). With the blessed consciousness that all this is now his, the believer can come boldly to the throne of grace and offer his grateful worship. (3) The worshipper was one whom God had blessed (vs. 2).

He was instructed to take of the first fruits of the harvest, with which God had blessed him, and present it to the Lord as an act of worship.

God’s promises of blessing to Israel were largely temporal and material, and were conditioned upon their obedience to His commandments.

“It shall come to pass if thou wilt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come upon thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and

blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out” (Deuteronomy 28:1-6). In contrast to the earthly blessings of Israel, the blessings of the believer are eternal and spiritual.

How wonderfully the Epistle to the Ephesians opens!

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).

He then proceeds to enumerate some of these blessings, such as the Christian being chosen, predestinated, redeemed, etc.

Paul then points out the far reaching consequences of the bestowal of all those blessings. They shall redound, Firstly to the praise of the glory of the grace of the Father who planned it; Secondly, to the glory of the grace of the Son, who provided it; Thirdly, to the glory and grace of the Holy Spirit, who empowered it and made it actual in the believer’s experience (See Ephesians 1:6; Ephesians 1:12; Ephesians 1:14).

Thus both in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament, the worshipper does not come to be blessed; but because he has already been blessed. Perhaps a good definition of a Christian is, “one whom God has blessed.” Each believer can therefore truthfully testify: “The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22). (4) The worshipper is seen to be a grateful person (vs. 2-3).

He is described as first gathering this gift of the first fruits, then placing it in a basket, and finally bringing it before the Lord. There was to be nothing of a haphazard character in this offering. His act of worship consisted in, - Picking the fruit with care, - In arranging it in orderly fashion in the basket, - Then making the effort to travel to the place God had selected.

This, at least, suggests his appreciation of all that God was and had done for him. By this act he joined the great company of those who, through the ages, have sung: “God hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad” (Psalms 126:3).

God wants an appreciative people, who are not satisfied to be always receiving from Him, but who also desire to give to Him.

God wants us to be like the Samaritan whom the Lord healed of his leprosy.

While his nine companions went their way, he returned to the Saviour, fell at His feet and gave Him thanks. Christ’s comment on this act is significant: “There are not found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger” (Luke 17:12-19).

Altogether too many Christians suffer from what has been well termed, “the gimmee’s.”

Every time they come into God’s presence it is to ask Him to “give them” something.

“Give me this;” “Give me that;” “Give me the other;” is their constant and monotonous cry.

They are like some little children who only come to their parents to get something from them, and never think of giving anything to their parents in return.

There is a story of a little girl who brought great joy to her mother.

One day she came in from her play, sat down on a chair, and watched her mother as she ironed. Her mother inquired: "What do you want, dear?" The child replied: "I don't want anything, mother. I just want to sit here and look at you and love you!" Our Lord clearly indicated that God, the Father, was seeking for worship from His children.

"The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 3:23).

God greatly desires that those whom He has so abundantly blessed, will respond to His desire for worship and, as they wait in His presence, will pour out their love for Him in worship and adoration.

We are told that the words, "think" and "thank," were originally the same. Whether this be true or not, one thing is certain: a "thankful" Christian is certain to become a "thankful" Christian, for he has only to remember, to rejoice. God's word to Israel was: "None shall appear before me empty" (Exodus 23:15).

It is pathetic indeed, at a meeting convened particularly for worship, to see so many who apparently have neither taken the time nor made the effort to put anything in their basket of gratitude. The long periods of silence in many worship meetings are often, not the silences of worshipful adoration, but the silences of spiritual poverty.

It will be noted that in Deuteronomy 26, it is individual worship that is in view.

It goes without saying, that the quality of our collective worship, will be conditioned by the spirituality of each believer present at the meeting convened for that purpose. The obvious teaching of this passage in Deuteronomy 26 is that each believer should be spiritually exercised during the week, and personally select and arrange his basket of first fruits. He should then bring with him, to the assembly of God's people, a heart filled with his own individual appreciation of all that God is, as revealed in His beloved Son. As each Christian does this, the spiritual tone of the worship meeting will be lifted to a high plane, and God will receive that which He seeks -- the worship of His beloved, blood-bought and Spirit-born children. May we not disappoint Him in this! (5) The worshipper is anticipated as being obedient to God's word (v. 2).

He was told to go "unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there." This place was afterwards designated. At first it was at Shiloh, where "the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together," and the tabernacle was pitched. See Joshua 18:1.

Later on, this place was transferred to Jerusalem, where the temple was built: "That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place" (1 Kings 8:29).

It is important to note that God did not leave the choice of the place of worship to the caprice of the worshipper.

He selected one specific place, where He placed His name and made this place known to His people. The worshipper was instructed to come to this place and offer his gift of the first fruits, if he was to be well pleasing to God. It is conceivable that an Israelite, when in the land, might have argued: "I don't think it makes any difference where one takes his offering. Personally, I very much prefer Jericho to Jerusalem; for Jericho is much closer to where I live. Besides, the way to Jerusalem is uphill, and this calls for more effort than I care to make. In view of this, I shall worship God at the place of my choice."

All this sounds very much like the present day attitude of many Christians. In fact, it is quite common to hear a young convert advised to "join the Church of his choice." On many decision forms, a space is left for the person who professes to be saved to indicate, on the dotted line, his "Church preference." Has God left the believer no directions as to this matter of his Church fellowship? Is each Christian left to follow his own inclinations in this important matter? Of course not. The same God, who indicated to the Israelite in the Old Testament just when, how, and where to worship; has left us, in the New Testament, clear directions as to this matter. The well known words of the Lord Jesus should come home to every Christian's heart: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

Each believer would do well to examine his position in regard to his church, or assembly fellowship. He should make sure that he has the support of the general teaching of the New Testament Scriptures, both as to his warrant for meeting with believers, and also the conduct of such assembly gatherings. These Divine principles of church fellowship have been clearly laid down, and should be whole-heartedly obeyed, cost what it may. (6) The worshipper is seen to be a humble person (vs. 5-9) No provision was made for either pride of race, place, face, or grace. His confession was, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father."

He gave himself no "airs," evidenced no superiority complex, and assumed no patronizing manner as he came into the presence of God. There was to be no self-glorification, or display of that obnoxious thing, the flesh, which Christ declared "profiteth nothing" (John 6:63).

There was to be no place for snobbery, for all Israel had a common ancestry -- "a Syrian ready to perish." (A snob has been well defined as a person halfway up the ladder of fame, who spends all his time licking the feet of those above and kicking the ones below!) Of all snobbery, none is quite so nauseous as the religious brand, personified in the Pharisee, whose uplift was confined exclusively to his nose, and who prayed thus with himself: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are," etc. (Luke 18:11-12).

Each believer would do well to lay this to heart as he approaches God's holy throne.

God hates pride in any shape or form.

Through Isaiah, He has declared: "Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, Whose name is holy. I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit" (Isaiah 57:15).

Again we read: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

Pride ill becomes one who is "only a sinner, saved by grace," and who, but for the grace of God, might even now be in hell.

Humility of spirit is therefore an essential accompaniment of worship. (7) The worshipper is described as giving to God (vs. 10-11).

“Thou shalt set it (the gift) before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God.”

It will be noted in this chapter that the worshipper does not ask God for a single thing.

He does not come to God with a petition on his lips, but with a present in his hand.

Though it is quite true that he only brought to God what God had previously given to him, yet God was delighted with the gift and credited it to his account! (v. 10). A little girl once climbed into her daddy's lap and asked him for a quarter. When the father asked her what the money was for, she artlessly replied: “Why, it's your birthday tomorrow and I want to buy you a present.”

Accordingly, her father gave her the quarter and, sure enough, on the morrow he was the recipient of a little present from his daughter, for which he himself had paid!

It is hardly necessary to add how much her father appreciated this token of his child's remembrance and affection.

David clearly realized this fact, for he said to God: “But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee!” (1 Chronicles 29:14).

God freely and unstintingly pours His multiplied blessings upon His people. Is it too much for Him to expect that they shall bring Him the first fruits of their appreciation of what He is and all and all He has done?

Alas, how little worship God received from His children! How often so-called “worship meetings” degenerate into mere glorified prayer meetings!

One brother rises and prays: “O Lord, help us to worship.”

Another pleads: “O Lord, grant that we may truly worship Thee,” etc, etc. The person described in Deuteronomy 26 did not say: “Lord, help me to bring my basket of first fruits.” He brought it, and said: “And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits,” etc, (v.

10). The worship meeting does not exist for the purpose of enabling us to pray that we might worship God, but for the actual presentation of our worship to Him. The logical conclusion is, if there was more prayer offered before the worship meeting, there would be no need to pray at the worship meeting.

* For further information on this, see “An Introduction to a Study of Church Truth,” and “Scriptural Principles of Gathering,” by the same author.

~ end of chapter 2 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

03. The Meaning of Worship: The Wise Men

CHAPTER THREE THE MEANING OF WORSHIP: THE WISE MEN B. Our next instance of worship as giving to God is that of the wise men (Matthew 2:1-12).

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

“And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

“When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.” Of the purpose of their long journey from the east, there is no doubt, for they inquired, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him” (v. 2). As we concentrate our attention on these men whose mission was the worship of the Son of God, several things impress us: (1) That worship is an act of those who are wise As to the number of these men, we do not know, for Scripture does not inform us; but as to their description, we are left in no doubt. They were “wise” men. Though the worldly-wise may sneer and dub the Christian a fool, yet God views him as being wise in Christ. It has been well said that “nine-tenths of wisdom consists of being wise in time!”

God’s complaint regarding Israel was: “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!” (Deuteronomy 32:29). The first glimmerings of spiritual sanity are seen in a person when he is made to realize his true condition as a lost and guilty sinner, and turns to the Lord in true repentance and faith. This is what is implied by being “made wise unto salvation” (2 Timothy 3:15).

Modern education makes no provision for the acquisition of spiritual wisdom. In most of the institutions devoted to so-called “higher learning,” the fact of God’s reality and His revelation through His word is scarcely ever mentioned, except perhaps in ridicule. In this respect they have filled the description of those mentioned in Romans 1:22 : “Professing themselves to be wise, they

became fools” No man is truly wise, however great his stock of worldly wisdom may be, or however many his degrees of learning; - Until he has put God first in his consciousness, - Made the word of God the supreme authority of his life, - Come to know Christ as his own personal Saviour and Lord.

Only then, like these wise men, will he be in the position and condition to worship. God’s estimation of the wisdom of this world, divorced from a knowledge of Himself, has been thoroughly gone into, and should be carefully and prayerfully pondered by every child of God.

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:18-31). (2) That worship calls for Divine guidance These men were led by a star in the heavens, until they were brought into the presence of the Son of God, to present their gifts in worship. The application of this to the present day is surely obvious.

If we would worship God as we should, then we must not only be “made wise unto salvation;” but we must have a heavenly, authoritative and infallible guide in the matter of our worship.

Needless to say, this guide is the Bible, the Divinely inspired word of God.

It is this book which the indwelling Holy Spirit uses to lead the believer into a knowledge and appreciation of all truth: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16:13-15).

Wise indeed is that believer who, like the magi of old, is not content to be guided by the traditions of his fathers, however hoary with antiquity; or even “the dictates of his own conscience;” but who rests not until he has a “thus saith the Lord,” for both the assurance of his salvation and the manner of his worship. (3) That worship necessitates both separation and renunciation These men, at God’s call to worship, and led by the star, left their country, homes and loved ones and became strangers and pilgrims. Between them and the place to which God was leading them were

many weary miles of desert travel. For the sake of the One whom they wished to worship, they turned their backs on the comforts of civilization. They counted the price well worth while when, at long last, they were ushered into the presence of Deity clothed with humanity and prostrated themselves in adoration before Him.

Likewise, he who would worship God in accordance with those principles laid down in His word, must be prepared to suffer for his whole-hearted obedience to Divine guidance.

He may, and probably will, find himself opposed, at every turn, by his nearest friends and relatives. Some have had to face the prejudiced opposition and even persecution of highly organized religious systems; while others have had to cut across the long established customs of their particular society circle. The path of wholehearted obedience to God's word has never been cheap, or easy to the flesh; but the compensating joy of obedience more than makes up for the sacrifice involved. (4) That worship calls for both concentration of mind and determination of will. These wise men, after their long and arduous journey, finally arrived in Jerusalem, "the city of the great King."

Instead of finding themselves in the congenial atmosphere of glad expectation of their coming Messiah and King, they discovered, to their astonishment and chagrin, that the very people whose King they had come to worship were not only unaware of His arrival, but manifested the twin evils of apathy and antipathy to their mission!

"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King" (Psalms 48:2).

Blank stares greeted their query: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

Apparently the star, which had attracted and led these wise men, possessed no significance to the leaders of Israel. We are told that both Herod the King and "all Jerusalem with him," were "troubled" at this question.

What should have been "the Hope of Israel," became an annoyance, for it disturbed their smug complacency.

These religious leaders of Israel could turn to the holy Scriptures at Herod's command, and quote the prophecy of Micah regarding the place of Christ's birth; but we do not hear of one of them accompanying the wise men to Bethlehem, or joining with them in their worship of the Messiah!

Such was the apathy of the nation which God had selected for this very purpose! "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Romans 9:4-5). Not only were the magi faced by indifference but, in the case of Herod, by opposition veiled by hypocrisy. This arch fiend, well named "the bloody," plotted the destruction of this child, whom he feared would occupy the throne he had gained by usurpation.

How good it is to note that neither the apathy of Israel nor the antipathy of Herod affected these wise men. They had concentrated their minds on their mission of finding and worshipping Christ.

This, coupled with their determination of will to allow nothing to hinder them, finally resulted in the realization of their quest. The believer, who seeks to worship God in a manner well pleasing to Him, will also discover his need of these two virtues. This concentration of mind is not easy, but it must be rigidly practiced, lest distracting, wayward and unlawful thoughts are allowed to rob God of the worship due to His name.

Determination of will is also essential if the opposition of that triumvirate of evil: the Devil, the world and the flesh, is to be overcome. - The Devil, with his host of wicked spirits, will do his best to hinder.

- The world, with its pleasures, riches and cares, will combine to stifle the Heaven-born desire to worship.

- The flesh, with its love of ease, self-esteem and self-indulgence, will seek to erect a barrier that will hinder the believer from "entering into the holiest" to pour out his heart in worship to God. (5) That worship is accompanied by joy We are told that after they had been sent on their way to Bethlehem, the star again became their guide until it "stood over the place where the young child was." This further token of Divine leading and approval caused them to "rejoice with exceeding great joy" (v. 10). From this we may surely learn that occupation with the Son of God not only leads to worship, but fills the worshipper with a holy, indescribably joy, that almost amounts to rapture.

David sensed this long ago and said, "In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore" (Psalms 16:11). In Psalms 43:4 he says: "I will go unto the altar of God, unto God, my exceeding joy: yea upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God." When the Lord appeared to His disciples, after His resurrection, we are informed, in a triumph of understatement: "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20). The humanly-conceived religious systems of earth are characterized largely by the element of fear and dread of the false deity, whom its devotees seek to propitiate by their prayers, works and offerings. Christianity, on the contrary, is characterized by joy. The believer, assured of his eternal blessedness and "acceptance in the Beloved," is enabled to "joy in God through the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:11). This "joy of the Lord, which is our strength," must not be confused with that hilarity of spirit which the careless and Godless world exhibits on those occasions when he is able to banish God from his thoughts, and shut his eyes to the fact of his sinfulness and the dread consequences of dying in that condition. (6) That worship is conditioned upon seeing the Son of God It was when they saw the Lord Jesus that they fell down in adoration before Him.

It is only when, by faith, the believer sees and is occupied with the One, through Whom the Father has been pleased to reveal Himself in all the glory of His Divine attributes, that he is enabled to worship as he should. It was said of Christ: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him" (John 1:18).

It was the Son that "told Him out." All that can be seen of the Father is through the Son, and all that can be experienced of the Father is through the Holy Spirit.

Thus the glorious tri-unity of the eternal Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is revealed before the wondering and worshipping hearts of His redeemed people.

It is sadly possible for the Christian to have his spiritual vision beclouded, either through carelessness of walk, worldliness of life, or unjudged and unconfessed sin. In such a case, no worship ascends from the altar of his soul.

Spurgeon had this in mind when he wrote his beautiful communion hymn, "If now, with eyes defiled and dim, We see the signs, but see not Him; O may His love the scales displace, And bid us see Him face to face!"

How often, like the two doubtful and discouraged disciples on their way to Emmaus, the eyes of our hearts are veiled, so that we do not realize the presence of the Lord: "But their eyes were holden that they should not know him" (Luke 24:16).

Paul prayed for the believers in Ephesus that: "the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18). As the presence of Christ is sensed, and His beauties and glories apprehended by the soul, it will not be long before the believer is lost in wonder and worship. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of this glorious sight, and says: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor" (Hebrews 2:9).

Miss Thompson's beautiful hymn summarizes this thought, "Gazing on the Lord in glory, While our hearts in worship bow; There we read the wondrous story Of the cross, its shame and woe.

Gazing on it we adore Thee, Blessed, precious, holy Lord!

Thou, the Lamb, alone are worthy -This be earth's and heaven's accord!" (7) That worship is a presentation of our gifts to God We read that these wise men "presented unto Him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh." The typical significance of these gifts is beautiful.

- Gold speaks of Deity, as a study of the Tabernacle makes plain.
- Frankincense gives forth its perfume only as it is brought into contact with fire.
- Myrrh speaks of suffering, and is associated with the death and burial of our Lord.

Thus these wise men, by the gifts they presented to Him, typically expressed, First, their faith in His essential and eternal Deity; Second, their appreciation of the fragrance of His sinless life which should ascend, as a sweet perfume, to His Father; Third, their estimation of the virtue and value of His vicarious sufferings, by which the redemption of humanity should be accomplished.

Every believer may well profit by their example as he comes to God in worship.

Nothing delights the Father more than to receive, from His people, the gifts of their appreciation of His Son as they must upon Him.

- They may think of Him in the aspect of His official glories, as possessing full Deity, equal and eternal with the Father, and the Holy Spirit.
- They may meditate on His moral glories, as the perfect Man on earth, who fully and perfectly translated all the will of His Father into the terms of actual life, thus glorifying Him on earth.

- They may be occupied with His redemptive glories, which He acquired by the substitutionary sacrifice of Himself upon the cross, and concerning which God has signified His full acceptance, by raising Him from the dead, and glorifying Him at His own right hand. In whatever aspect Christ is contemplated, it always results in worship to God. May it be ours to follow the example of these wise men in their quest, and allow nothing and no one to turn us aside, until, led by the Spirit of God through the Word, we are brought consciously into the presence of the Son of God and present the gift of our worship to the Son and to the Father, who “seeketh worshippers to worship him in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24).

~ end of chapter 3 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

04. The Meaning of Worship: Mary of Bethany

CHAPTER FOUR THE MEANING OF WORSHIP: MARY OF BETHANY C. The third instance that illustrates the meaning of worship, as giving to God, is the case of Mary of Bethany. The story is recorded in John 12:1-11, and is perhaps one of the most striking and beautiful instances of worship in the whole range of Scripture. The outline that follows is not original. It is a good example of that scriptural ability to really “distinguish between things that differ.”

“Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

“Then saith one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, which should betray Him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

“Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus”

Let us examine this incident negatively, and seek to discover what Mary did not come to do on this memorable occasion. From this negative approach, we can learn much of the positive character of true worship. (1) Mary did not come to hear a sermon Even though the greatest Teacher the world has ever know was there, of Whom it was said, “Never man spake like this man.” It had been her privilege, in times past, to sit at His feet and hear His word. The lessons she had learned had not been forgotten; but this was not her purpose as she came into the presence of the One she loved above all others.

We have before pointed out that the Lord’s Supper, instituted by Christ on the eve of His betrayal and death, exists for the purpose of enabling believers to remember Him, and thus give to Him and the Father the worship of their hearts. Therefore the primary purpose of such a gathering is not to hear an exposition of the word of God by some able teacher, good though this may be on some other occasion; but to spend the time in occupation with the One whose supper it is, and Who said: “This do in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:24) (2) Mary did not come to make a request of Him, as she had done before, “Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died” (John 11:32). Her purpose was not to pour our her soul in earnest supplication before Him who had omnipotence at His command, and could have granted any request she might make.

Though she fully realized the value of prayer, yet this was not the motive that actuated her as she came to Him.

She came not to get, but to give.

Likewise the Lord's Supper does not exist for the purpose of enabling believers to supplicate the throne of grace, invaluable though prayer is. This gathering of believers is for worship which, as we have seen, is distinct from prayer. (3) Mary did not come to meet her fellow believers. There were many there, and she loved them all dearly, for they loved her Lord; but it was not to be occupied with the Lord's people, or to enjoy fellowship with them that was her uppermost thought. She desired to be occupied with the Lord Himself, to the exclusion of every other person and every other thing on earth.

Surely this should be the purpose that should animate the breast of every Christian as, responsive to the word of his Lord, he seeks to gather with his fellow believers for the purpose of remembrance and worship.

Fellowship with Christians is good and necessary, but it is not the greatest thing. The good is often allowed to become the enemy of the best.

It is possible for our fellow believers to loom so large in our consciousness that the Lord Himself is relegated to a secondary place. Fellowship primarily is "with the Father and with his Son," and fellowship with each other naturally flows from this union and communion with Him. (4) Mary did not come to be refreshed by Jesus. Though this might well have been her motive.

After the humdrum round of domestic or business duties, she might have argued that she needed the spiritual relaxation and refreshment that only He could impart, but this was not her motive in coming.

There is surely nothing more refreshing to the believer, weary with his battle with the world, the flesh and the Devil, than to come and sit quietly in the presence of the Lord, there to have his cares dissipated, and the calm of Heaven enter his soul.

Mary's act teaches us that this is not the greatest thing in life.

She came, not to be refreshed herself, but to refresh the Lord and fill His soul with joy! We are all fundamentally selfish in our outlook on things. We think very largely in terms of what this, or that, will bring in pleasure or satisfaction to us. By this act Mary anticipated the cross and its sufferings, and saw to it that her Lord was refreshed on the eve of His redemptive work.

Thus, on this occasion, she did for her Lord what David's men once did for him. At his express desire for the drink of the water from Bethlehem's well, three of his mighty men broke through the surrounding host of the Philistines to gratify their king's request, and satisfy his desire: "And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord. And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men" (2 Samuel

23:15-17).

Mary's beautiful deed surely teaches us that worship is not intended to produce self-satisfaction in the believer, but to give satisfaction to the Saviour. (5) Mary did not come to meet the host Nor even her own relatives in the flesh. We are not told who the host was on this occasion, but Mary had no eyes for him, her eyes were upon Another.

She viewed the Lord as the Host and came to do Him honor.

Christendom, with its special caste of clergy, has very largely eliminated from people's minds the fact that, at the Lord supper, Christ is the Host at His own table, and all the gathered believers are but guests at His invitation. How often the "minister" is allowed to become "the host," or the focal center of attraction; and people consequently are more occupied with his appearance, personality and eloquence than they are with the Lord Himself. Thus, perhaps quite unconsciously, man is allowed to usurp the place that Christ has reserved for Himself, as the Host at His own supper. As the hymn puts it, "The Host art Thou, O blessed Lord, Thy honored guests are we; With grateful and adoring hearts, We would remember Thee.

Lord Jesus Whom, unseen, we love, As thus we muse on Thee; We none would see, save Thee alone, Thou Man of Calvary!" May it be ours to give the Lord His rightful place as the divine Host at His own supper, and refuse to allow any man, however pleasing his personality, however dynamic his leadership, or however gifted his ministry, to rob Christ of His rightful place of absolute pre-eminence. (6) Mary did not come to Him because it was the popular thing to do On the contrary, it was at a time when the pent up hatred of both the religious and political world was about to break upon the Son of God.

Save for a few inconspicuous disciples, mostly of the common class, He was the "despised and rejected of men." The period of His popularity had waned, and the eve of His betrayal and crucifixion was at hand.

It was "six days before the Passover," when the world should stain its hands with the blood of the Christ of God, that Mary came with her love gift to pour on the feet of the Saviour. By this act she proclaimed louder than any words could say, her sincere love and devoted loyalty to the One whom the world would not acknowledge. Thus she took her stand for Him and shared in His rejection. The believer must also be prepared, in loyalty to his Lord and to His word, to brave the contempt of the political world, and even the persecution of false religious systems and political organizations, in order to worship God in a manner pleasing to Him. The path of wholehearted discipleship has never been crowded, or popular. The Christian, who seeks to carry out those scriptural principles of gathering, which are laid down in the Bible, will find plenty of opposition, even from those who claim to be fundamental in their doctrinal beliefs. If however, like Mary, he has a single eye to the glory of Christ, he will "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, his Lord" (Php 3:8). He must be prepared, as a worshipper, to experience something of what Paul calls "the fellowship of His sufferings" (Php 3:10).

He can rest assured that, as in the case of Mary, his faithfulness to the Lord and to His word shall not pass unnoticed, nor remain unrewarded by Him in "that day," when all His own shall appear before the Judgment seat of Christ: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10). (7)

Mary did not come to withhold her best, but poured it all out fully, freely and joyously at the feet of her Lord. Let us note several things in connection with this gift she made, and which so beautifully illustrates true worship. Her gift was a very costly one (v. 3). To secure it she had denied herself many things that would have been perfectly legitimate for her to purchase for her own use. Inasmuch as the laborer of that period received but a penny a day for his services, her gift represented a whole year's salary. Thus it was no inconsiderable gift that she brought. Mary's heart had been so completely won to the Saviour that she did not count the cost of expressing her appreciation of Him.

Love is ever measured by the sacrifice it makes on behalf of its object. Our Lord "loved the Church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). Can we do any less for Him? That worship which costs nothing in the way of time, energy, thought and money is not worthy of the name. Like Mary, each believer must be prepared to pay for the privilege of worship, however great the cost may be.

David could say: "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob" (Psalms 132:4-5). (b) Her gift had been reserved for this special purpose (v. 7).

She had treasured in her heart the words that fell from His lips as she had sat at His feet.

Consequently, she knew He was to be betrayed, crucified, buried and rise again.

Thus, in spiritual discernment, she far surpassed the disciples.

They never seemed to really grasp the full significance of His words, even though He used the plainest of language in describing these momentous events which were to take place, and become the "Center of two eternities, which look, with rapt, adoring eyes onward, and back to Thee!" (See Matthew 16:21; Mark 10:32; etc.).

Mary thus had the signal honor of being the only one who anointed the Lord for His burial; the other women came too late! (See Mark 16:1-6; Luke 23:55-56).

Mary of Bethany had no need to go to the tomb, for she knew that the One, whose word had called Lazarus from death to life, would take up the life He had laid down for her redemption (John 10:17-18).

How good it is when believers come, first as individuals to Him, with their treasured store of the costly spikenard of their appreciation of Him; and then, collectively with their fellow saints, pour out the perfume of their adoration in His presence. Such an offering not only honors the Son, but delights the heart of the Father also. (c) Her gift was all brought to the feet of Christ (v. 3).

Those feet which had walked the dusty and rugged roads of Palestine, and had carried blessings everywhere they went, were indeed "beautiful" to her: "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15).

She knew those feet were soon to carry Him willingly to Calvary, there to be pierced for her transgressions and wounded for her iniquities.

She knew also that, as her Messiah, He should one day occupy a throne and, in resurrection glory, should reign until God made His enemies to become the footstool of His feet: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies" (Psalms 110:1-2).

Doubtless she had all this in mind as she approached Him with her precious gift, which she now unreservedly poured out, in its entirety, at His feet.

- She kept back nothing for her own use, but yielded her all to Him.
- There were no mental reservations with her gift.
- She desired no half measures by which to express her devotion to her Lord.

Unlike Ananias and Sapphira who, to make "a fair show in the flesh," "kept back part of the price," she willingly and gladly gave her all to Him (Acts 5:2). The believer can surely profit by her noble example which, in turn, received Christ's unstinted commendation.

Worship must be whole-hearted if it is to be pleasing to Him. Lukewarm devotion, half-hearted praise, and divided affections, are alike nauseating to Him. (Revelation 3:14-18). He rightly demands, deserves and should receive the place of absolute pre-eminence in every department of the believer's life. May it be ours, like Mary, not to disappoint Him in this respect, but delight His heart with our whole-souled devotion and worship. (d) Her gift was accompanied by an attitude of utter self-abnegation.

We are told that after she had anointed His feet with the perfume, she wiped them with her hair. The Scriptures inform us that a "woman's glory is her hair."

Thus by this act she literally brought her glory to His feet in lowly, yet sublime adoration: "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering" (1 Corinthians 11:15).

What a beautiful picture this is of that necessary attitude of heart humility which should characterize the worship of God's people!

God has distinctly declared that "no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:29). The flesh, whatever form it may assume, should have no place in worship. All the natural glories, or excellencies that man may possess must be brought into the dust in the presence of the God of the universe. Here, brilliant intellect, physical strength and skill, capable leadership, persuasive eloquence, magnetic personality, artistic genius, nobility of birth, the possession of vast wealth, political prominence, or profound learning has no place whatever.

There can be no reason or room for pride in the presence of Deity. We do well to sing Isaac Watt's beautiful hymn, "When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Lord of glory died; My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the cross of Christ, my God; All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood." (e) Her gift resulted in the whole house being filled with the exquisite fragrance of the perfume she had so lavishly poured on His feet. All the occupants of the house shared in the benefits of her munificent gift.

- The Lord Himself was given His rightful place as supreme.
- She herself would long bear the fragrance of the spikenard everywhere she went.
- Each member of that company, as he left that place, would carry on his person, some traces of that sweet perfume.

True there were those who criticized the act, and referred to it as “waste”; but the Lord’s commendation more than compensated her for the adverse criticism she received.

We have seen that Scripture views worship as both an individual and collective act. It is only as each believer in an assembly brings to the feet of his Lord the treasured gift of the perfume of his appreciation and worship, that the whole gathered company of Christian will be affected by it. The sweet fragrance of such a volume of worship will linger pleasantly in the memory of those present. Furthermore, some of its savor will be carried by them to others, who will thus take note that they have “been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

It was when the whole congregation “were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord... that then the house was filled with a cloud... for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God” (2 Chronicles 5:13-14).

These three illustrations from Scripture should surely suffice to drive home the truth, which was stated at the beginning of this particular heading, that worship is giving to God.

~ end of chapter 4 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

05. The Meaning of Worship: The Holy Perfume

CHAPTER FIVE THE MEANING OF WORSHIP: THE Holy PERFUME As we further think of the definition of worship, let us now consider, 6. The Holy Perfume (Exodus 30:34-38) This very beautiful picture of worship is given to us as part of God's revelation to Moses in regard to the Tabernacle, concerning which He had said: "Make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:18). Minute instructions were given regarding the details of its furnishings, and we find God repeatedly saying to Moses: "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount" (Exodus 25:9; Exodus 40:26; Exodus 40:30; Exodus 27:8, cp. Hebrews 8:5).

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight, And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord.

Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people" (Exodus 30:34-38) Three things impress themselves on the mind as one reads this passage regarding the holy perfume. (1) The Exclusive Use of It (verses 37-38) It was reserved solely for use in the worship of God in the sanctuary. God expressly forbade its manufacture for any other purpose. The obvious inference from this is that worship belongs to God alone, and that He will share this honor with none. David, "the sweet Psalmist of Israel," by the Spirit's inspiration wrote: "He is thy Lord, worship thou him... Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool, for he is holy... O come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker" (Psalms 45:11; Psalms 99:5; Psalms 95:6). It will be recalled that the first demand of the law was: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me... for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God" (Exodus 20:3-5).

There is no substitute for spiritual worship. It is the unique right, the sole property, and the exclusive privilege of God Himself and He will not tolerate any rival. Idolatry, in its essence, is simply that by which man seeks to displace God, or which attempts to relegate Him to a position of secondary importance. An idol is anything that a man worships in his heart, to the exclusion of God. It was because of the idolatrous apostasy of Israel that God, - Set Israel aside nationally, - Allowed them to go into captivity, - Scattered them to the four corners of the earth. (See 2 Kings 17:7-18; 2 Chronicles 36:14-17).

We do well to pay good heed to the Divine dictum: "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another" (Isaiah 42:8). He alone claims the title of, "Holy and Reverend" (Psalms 111:9).

There is always the subtle danger of becoming more occupied with, - The visible, than the invisible; - With the temporal, than the eternal; - With an outward and formal ceremony, than an inward and spiritual reality.

There can therefore be no substitute for spiritual worship, - However ornate may be the ritual, - Or gorgeous the vestments, - Or beautiful the building, - Or well phrased the prayers, - Or smoothly conducted the service.

Undoubtedly all this has an appeal to the esthetic senses, and is well pleasing to the flesh, for man is naturally religious; but it is not spiritual, and consequently cannot please God. (2) The Ingredients that Formed it (verses 34-36) Four ingredients, compounded in equal proportions, composed this perfume, and each part was necessary to the whole. These ingredients were stacte, onycha, galbanum and frankincense. Each of these four things has a typical significance which we shall not dwell on now.

Let us think of them as four elements which, when compounded together in the heart of the believer, as he sits in the presence of God, causes the perfume of his worship to ascend to the Father and the Son. The first ingredient is remembrance. It is good for the believer to use his memory to recall what he used to be by nature, and what he now is, by God's matchless grace. The words of Paul to the saints at Ephesus are pertinent to this, "Wherefore remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh... but now, in Christ Jesus... are made nigh" (Ephesians 2:11; Ephesians 2:13).

Let each Christian call to mind his black past, when he was without God, without Christ, without life and without hope. Then let him contrast this with his present acceptance in the Beloved, together with all the spiritual blessings that are now his present and eternal possession. Surely the result of such remembrance will cause him to life his heart in adoration to the One who made this so blessedly actual to his experience. His memory should also be focused on the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Himself. The purpose of the Lord's Supper, as indicated by the Lord Himself is: "This do in remembrance of me." In view of this, worship will become an essential feature of such a meeting, for worship is kindled upon the fires of remembrance. As David puts it: "While I was musing, the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue" (Psalms 39:3).

It is memory that enables us to recall the record of His matchless life, as given in the holy Scriptures. The Christian should therefore concentrate upon, - Christ's wondrous words, - His mighty deeds, - His perfect and holy character, - His absolute obedience to the father's will, - His infinite grace in going to the cross, - His completed work of redemption accomplished by the sacrifice of Himself, - His victorious resurrection, - His glorious ascension, - His present ministry as the great HIGH PRIEST of His people. As he does so, the believer's heart will warm within him, and his worship shall rise to God as a fragrant perfume. The second ingredient is gratitude. As memory recalls all that God is and has done, the heart responds, even as the strings of a harp break forth into song beneath the skilful hands of a master musician. We have before noted that the gratitude of the believer delights the heart of the Father. Socrates, the great Grecian philosopher, declared that gratitude was the greatest of all the virtues, and ingratitude the basest of all the vices. A study of the great worship hymns indicate how great a part gratitude plays in their composition. Hannah Burlington beautifully expresses it thus, "The knowing this, that us He loves, Hath made our cup run o'er; Jesus, Thy name our spirit moves, Today and evermore." The

“Ter Stegen” hymns are amongst the finest we have. One of them, by Ernst C. Homburg, written nearly 300 years ago, is redolent with gratitude, “O Lord, from my heart I do thank Thee For all Thou hast borne in my room, Thine agony, dying unsoled, Alone in the darkness of doom, That I, in the glory of Heaven, For ever and ever might be -A thousand, a thousand thanksgivings I bring, blessed Saviour, to Thee!” The third ingredient is reverence. This is produced as the soul apprehends, in some measure at least, - The greatness of God, - The majesty of His Divine character, - The glory of His unique attributes, As displayed in His - Omniscience, - Omnipotence, - Omnipresence - Immutability.

We are living in an age characterized largely by cynicism, flippancy and lightness regarding Divine things. The modern trend is to humanize Deity and deify humanity, and that has not aided in man’s concept of God. One has only to read the Scriptures to discover that whenever a person was brought consciously into the presence of God, it filled him with a holy awe, humbled him in the dust and produced a deep reverence for God. Moses, the great leader of Israel, was taught this lesson many times. At God’s first revelation to him at the burning bush, the voice of Jehovah said: “Draw not nigh hither; put thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Exodus 3:5). At God’s revelation to him on the mount, in response to his request to see God’s glory, God gave him a vision of Himself. At this august spectacle we read: “Moses made haste, and bowed his head towards the earth, and worshipped” (Exodus 34:8).

Isaiah, whose magnificent concept of Deity has thrilled the hearts of the people of God for twenty-five centuries, had to lay to heart this essential requirement. In chapter six of his prophecy, he describes the vision he had of the glory of God which completely revolutionized his life. This sight not only filled him with a sense of his own littleness, uncleanness and insufficiency, but indelibly impressed upon him God’s greatness, holiness and power.

Daniel, “the man of desires,” tells us that when he saw the majestic vision of God: “There remained no strength in me, for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption and I retained no strength” (Daniel 10:5-11).

We could add others to this list, but these will suffice to indicate how necessary it is that godly reverence accompany all our dealings with Divine things. This reverence must always be present if our worship is to be acceptable to the One who is described as “The high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity,” and who hath declared: “Let all the earth fear the Lord: Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him” (Psalms 33:8).

Familiarity with God can never produce contempt, for those who know Him best, love and fear Him most. The more God impresses the soul with His Person, the greater that individual is filled with holy awe as he stands in the presence of Him, before Whose eyes “all things are open and naked” (Hebrews 4:13).

It should be obvious that humility of mind, sobriety of manner, and sincerity of spirit are essential to and fitting in the presence of the One who said: “Ye shall... reverence my sanctuary. I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:30). The fourth ingredient is amazement.

We have before indicated that worship has, as one of its basic requirements, the element of wonder. He who ceases to wonder, ceases to worship. The hymn writer has put it thus, “I stand amazed in the presence Of Jesus the Nazarene, And wonder how He could love me, A sinner,

condemned, unclean! O how wonderful! O how marvelous! And my song shall ever be, O how wonderful! O how marvelous! Is my Saviour's love to me!"

One of the many titles of Deity is "Wonderful."

Everything about the Almighty takes upon itself this character. As the believer thinks of the wonder of His Person, His creation, His word, His Son, His love, His salvation and of each Christian's blessedness, he is led to exclaim with another, "That Thou should love a wretch like me, And be the God Thou art, Is darkness to my intellect, But sunshine to my heart!" (3) The Purpose of It.

It was for God's pleasure and for His glory. These ingredients, equally compounded together, combined to produce a perfume which ascended to God in a fragrant stream and brought great pleasure to Him. Likewise, when a believer sits in the presence of God, with an equal measure of remembrance, gratitude, reverence and amazement well compounded in his heart, there will undoubtedly rise, from the censer of his soul, a silver stream of humble, reverent, sincere and adoring worship to his God and Father, and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This, in turn, will delight God's heart, for it fulfils His desire for the worship of His people. This was expressed by His Son in these words: "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" (John 4:23) Our last consideration, under the heading of the meaning of worship, is, 7. The Root Meaning of the Word in the Old Testament Those that understand such things have affirmed that the root meaning of the Hebrew word carries the thought of "a dog to its master." As one approaches the town of Hartsdale from the city of New York, he will observe, to his left, an animal cemetery. It is perhaps the most ornate in the world. Beneath marble monuments, some costing hundreds of dollars, like the remains of pet animals and even birds.

Many of these tombstone's bear sentimental epitaphs, such as: "Momsie's only baby."

Others are grotesque, as one over a dog which reads: "He cannot come to us, be we can go to him!" However, there is one epitaph that stands out from them all.

It is of a dog whose master caused to be inscribed: "To the memory of Bruce, the devoted servant, faithful friend, warm admirer, and ardent worshipper of his master." Then follows the name of its owner. Does this not aptly describe what a dog is? Dogs have been described, and not without some cause, as "man's best friend." A cynic once remarked: "The more I know of human beings, the better I appreciate dogs!"

Let us use an illustration to clarify this point.

We will suppose that a man, warmly clad, ventures forth on a blustery and bitterly cold night. The temperature is below zero, and the streets are practically deserted. Presently he sees a poor, neglected, shivering and half starved cur, sheltering behind a telephone pole from the biting wind. Some cruel boys have tied a can to its tail, and it has been kicked from pillar to post, until now it is almost at the end of its tether. It will never survive a night like this on the streets. The man pauses and looks the dog over. What a pitiable sight it is: thin, miserable, frightened, homeless, hungry and on its last legs! His compassion is stirred and, yielding to the impulse of the moment, he stoops down, reaches out his hand and calls to the dog. Suspicious as first, for the dog has good reasons for distrusting mankind, it gradually approaches, until at length it comes under his hand.

The man pats it on the head, strokes it, all the while speaking kindly words. Then, after removing the string and the can from its tail, he lifts it up, opens his overcoat, pops it in, and carries it back to his home. When he enters his home he says to his wife, "I've found a poor starving dog on the street, that will surely die tonight, unless it finds a home.

Please put a sack in the corner of the kitchen and we'll take care of it for at least tonight."

Accordingly, the dog is gently placed on the sack, and a delicious bowl of hot bread and milk is given it, followed by some scraps from the evening meal. For the first time in many days the dog wags its tail in gratitude for this unusual kindness. The next morning it greets its benefactors with another friendly wag of its tail, and they decide to give it a permanent home. A month passes by, and what a wonderful change it produces in that dog! As a result of good food and proper care, one would scarcely recognize the fine looking animal as that miserable starving cur of four weeks ago.

One evening, as the man is sitting in an easy chair, with one hand hanging over the arm of the chair, he suddenly feels something warm and wet on his hand. Glancing down he sees the dog looking up at him with adoring eyes as, again and again, it licks the hand of the one to whom it owes everything. The dog had not come into the room to beg for a bone, or even to be petted. It wanted nothing from its owner but the privilege of sitting in his presence, so that it might look at him with rapt, adoring eyes and, every now and then, to enjoy the privilege of licking the hand of the one whom it loved above all others. This is worship.

Now apply this to the believer, who once was a lost, guilty and helpless sinner, deserving only the judgment of a holy God.

Now, - Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, - By faith in His substitutionary sacrifice and glorious resurrection, - By acceptance of Him as Saviour and Lord, He has been, - Redeemed, - Saved - Brought into a place of acceptance, provision and security.

Surely it is not too much for the Lord to expect that His people, saved as such an infinite cost, will want, like that dog, to come into His presence in order to be occupied only with the One whom, "having not seen, they love" with all their hearts. May it be yours and mine to know something, by experience, of the real meaning and nature of worship, and thus fulfil His purpose in our salvation. The words of Miss C.A. Wellesley will form a fitting conclusion to this section of our study, "Occupied with Thee, Lord Jesus, in Thy grace; All Thy ways and thoughts about me Only trace Deeper stories of the glories Of Thy grace.

Taken up with Thee Lord Jesus I would be; Finding joy and satisfaction All in Thee; Thou the nearest and the dearest Unto me."

~ end of chapter 5 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

06. Part II. The Importance of Worship

CHAPTER SIX II. THE IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP

Having considered, in a somewhat lengthy manner, the meaning of worship, let us now discuss its importance, as seen in both the Old and New Testaments. Since worship is the Christian's highest occupation, it logically follows it must be of much importance. We shall consult the Scriptures and notice a sevenfold testimony to the fact of its importance.

1. It Was the First Commandment of the Law (Exodus 20:1-2) "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" The law is the revelation of the righteous requirements of a God of infinite holiness. Divine righteousness has been well defined as "God's consistency with His own character." Inasmuch as God is infinitely holy, therefore His demands must be consistent with Himself. This law consists of Ten Commandments, which together form one law and not ten laws, as some mistakenly imagine. A reading of these commandments will at once reveal the importance of worship. This, as we have already seen, gives to God the place of absolute pre-eminence. Here God says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (vs. 3). Not only does God claim the first place, but He goes on to reveal His hatred and intolerance of everything that would deprive Him of this position. Later on, in this same book He says: "Thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Exodus 34:14).

Many things may arise in the life of a believer which will tend to draw away his heart from God as the supreme Object of his affection. The example of a backsliding Israel is quoted by the Spirit as a warning of this peril.

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:1-12) It is dreadfully possible for self, in its many and varied forms, to ascend the throne of the heart and displace God in the believer's life, so that little or no worship ascends to Him.

Among the many idols that have been known to turn a Christian's heart from God are: Business, Wealth, Home, Family, Possessions, Talents, Popularity, Power and Pleasure. Later on, we shall look at some of these in detail. The concluding words of John's first Epistle should be soberly pondered by every believer, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21).

2. It is Seen in the Prominence it Receives in the Gatherings of God's People, at the Various Feasts He ordained (Leviticus 23) God gave instructions that His people should periodically assemble themselves together. This was done in order to give them the double opportunity of acknowledging Him as the giver of every good and perfect gift, and of worshipping before Him. In Deuteronomy 12:5-7, both the place and the purpose of such feasts is indicated: "Unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither shalt thou come. And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds, and of your flocks. And there ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye have put your hands unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee." The first place which God selected was Shiloh and afterwards, Jerusalem; but the purpose for which these gatherings were convened remained the same. In brief, the purpose was to worship the Lord God and rejoice before Him. This fact is seen in the opening verses of I Samuel. This book opens with a description of a man named Elkanah, of whom it is said: "And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship, and to sacrifice unto the Lord of Hosts in Shiloh" (1 Samuel 1:3). These feasts of the Lord were seven in number, and are full of rich spiritual significance, as indeed are all the types. The reader will be well repaid by making a study of their typical character. The names of these feasts were the, - Passover, - Unleavened Bread, - Firstfruits, - Pentecost, - Trumpets, - Atonement - Tabernacles. When we turn to the New Testament, we discover that the Lord Jesus made a similar provision for His redeemed people by instituting the Lord's Supper. The purpose of this ordinance is clearly indicated by the Lord's own words: "This do in remembrance of me": "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) At this feast of remembrance, worship becomes the predominant feature, as we have already seen. From Acts 20:7, it seems clear that it was the custom of the early Church to come together each Lord's day to break bread, and thus express their unity in Christ, and their fellowship together in the bonds of Christian love, but it was at a special service where they gathered together for the Lord's table that the bread was specifically broken in remembrance of Him.

Besides the Lord's Supper, other gatherings are mentioned in the Acts. The saints are described as gathering together for prayer, for the ministry of the word, and for a united testimony in the Gospel (See Acts 12:12; 11:22-26; 2:6-12).

Christ's well known words are surely appropriate in this connection: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). At such gatherings of the Lord's people, every believer should seek to be present. He should lay to heart

the exhortation: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is... and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). 3. The Typology of the Old Testament Gives Worship the Prominent Place Dr. Griffith Thomas once remarked that the Old Testament was characterized by three things.

First, it was a book of unfulfilled prophecies; Second, of unexplained ceremonies; Third, of unsatisfied longings. As one turns to the New Testament, these unfulfilled prophecies, which speak of a coming Messiah, are meticulously and wonderfully fulfilled in Christ. The unexplained ceremonies become crystal clear, and scintillate with spiritual significance in the light of Christ's Person and work. The unsatisfied longings of the heart find their complete satisfaction in the One Who said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29).

Two Scriptures will suffice to indicate the value of these types and shadows of the Old Testament.

Concerning the incidents of Israel's history, we read: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition" (1 Corinthians 10:11). These "ensamples" are the Old Testament "types." The other declares: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope" (Romans 15:4). The Epistle to the Hebrews is particularly rich in typical teaching. In thinking of this typology of the Old Testament, which places the supreme emphasis on worship, we shall consider five instances: (1) In the description of the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:10; Exodus 25:23; Exodus 25:31) The purpose of its erection is not left unexplained. God said: "Make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

God gave the pattern, or building plan, of this tabernacle to Moses in the holy mount where he was closeted with Deity for forty days. The first article of furniture that God describes is the ark of the covenant, overlaid with the mercy seat.

Why is this particular thing selected as the first to be described? The answer is obvious.

It was of this ark of the covenant, overlaid with the mercy seat, that God said: "There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat" (Exodus 25:22). Thus the ark and the mercy seat constituted the place of worship, where God and man could meet together and enjoy sweet communion with each other.

Then follows the description of the other furniture of the Tabernacle in the order named, - The table of shewbread, - The candlestick, - The brazen altar, - The altar of incense - The laver.

It is important to notice that this is quite different from the order of our spiritual apprehension of the truths typified by these things.

We begin, as sinners, at the brazen altar. It is here we learn the truth of the substitutionary sacrifice of the Lamb of God. From this, we proceed to learn the value of the other furnishings until, at last, we come to the realization of the spiritual significance of the mercy seat and of our highest occupation, the worship of God.

It is not without the deepest significance that it requires seven chapters, containing 243 verses, to give the description of the tabernacle, whose primary purpose was the worship of JEHOVAH. The

account of the creation of the Heaven and the earth occupies but one chapter, containing only 31 verses. (2) In the order of the camp of Israel (Numbers 1:52-52; Numbers 2:1-2) We are told that "God is not the author of confusion, but of order" (1 Corinthians 14:33). This fact is evidenced very clearly in God's instructions as to where each of the twelve tribes should be located, in relation to the tabernacle.

- The center of the camp was occupied by the tabernacle which, of course, speaks typically of Christ in the midst of His people.

- Those camping nearest to the tabernacle were the priests, the sons of Aaron, whose responsibility it was to officiate in the nation's worship.

- A little farther off were the Levites, whose duties were associated with the service of the Tabernacle.

- Still further off, and forming a circle around the tabernacle, were the other tribes, who constituted the warriors of Israel.

Thus the order of precedence is given by Divine authority.

First the worshippers, Then the workers, Finally, the warriors. (3) In the threefold division of Israel We have before noted this division; the priests, the Levites and the tribes.

It is interesting and instructive to notice the ages at which these men entered upon their various duties. The priests had to be thirty years of age before they were considered competent to engage in the worship of the Lord: "From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation" (Numbers 4:3). The Levites must be twenty-five years of age before they could undertake their duties in connection with the service of the sanctuary: "This is it that belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Numbers 8:24). The warriors from amongst the tribes could enter the army at the age of twenty: "From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies" (Numbers 1:3).

- Worship is thus associated with spiritual maturity.

- Warfare is the characteristic of youth and immaturity.

- Work, of a little later in life; while worship comes still later.

Worship therefore calls for greater spiritual knowledge, deeper discernment and richer experience than work, or warfare; though both these are necessary to the Christian life. (4) In the description of the five principal offerings (Leviticus 1-7) These offerings, which combine to typically set forth the sacrifice of Christ, are given in a certain order. These, as in the case of the furnishings of the Tabernacle, are not given in the order in which we spiritually apprehend their typical significance; but they appear in the order of Divine appreciation. These offerings combine to present the virtue and value of Christ's Person and His sacrificial work in five distinct aspects.

Let us note them carefully. The Burnt Offering, or literally, the "ascending offering" (Leviticus 1). This "sweet savor" offering was consumed, in its entirety, by fire upon the altar. In fact, this offering

gives its title to the brazen altar, for it is called “the altar of the burnt offering” (Exodus 3:28; Exodus 40:10, etc.). The whole of this offering was exclusively for God’s eye, estimation and pleasure. How eloquently this presents to us Christ’s perfect dedication of Himself to His Father for His supreme delight and acceptance. From the stable of Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary, our Lord’s path on earth was marked by His willing submission to His father’s will, His absolute obedience to His father’s word and His perfect fulfillment of His father’s righteous demands. His whole life is summed up in the words: “I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart” (Psalms 40:7-8; Hebrews 10:7-9).

Thus Christ’s sacrifice was primarily for God. Just as the burnt offering was wholly devoted to God, so also is worship. It ascends from the heart of the believer, as did the burnt offering from the altar, to bring delight to God alone.

Thus, first in the order of mention and of Divine preference is this burnt offering, which speaks of worship.

Then follows the description of the other four offerings: (b) The Meal Offering (Leviticus 2). This speaks of Christ’s offering of Himself to God for the service of man. It consisted of fine flour, with oil poured over it, and frankincense placed upon it. This was then offered upon the altar as a sweet savor unto the Lord. This typifies Christ as the Bread of God, in Whom the Father found complete satisfaction. (c) The Peace Offering (Leviticus 3). This indicates that aspect of Christ’s sacrifice by which our peace with God was secured, and fellowship with God made possible, for both God and man shared in this offering. Thus a table was provided, at which God and man could sit, and each enjoy his portion of the offering. In this offering both God and man are seen finding their satisfaction in the Person and Work of Christ. (d) The Sin Offering (Leviticus 4). This illustrates the tremendous truth that Christ died because of what we are by nature -- sinners. By His sacrifice, the believer’s sin, that is, the root principle from which sins spring as the fruit, has been condemned, and put away from before the eye of God: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27) and “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3) and “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). (e) The Trespass Offering (Leviticus 5). This presents the work of Christ in relation to our sins, the evil things we have done, both in thought, word, deed and attitude.

These sins have been borne in His own body, and the full penalty paid by His most precious blood: “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:24) and “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:5-6).

It is good for the believer to realize that the sacrifice of Christ was of such tremendous importance that it required each of these five offerings in order to deal with all its implications. In the order of our spiritual discernment and appreciation of these offerings, - We think first of ourselves and our sin and need, so we approach God by way of the trespass offering.

- Later on, we see that Christ not only died to put our sins away, but to put sin away; that He not only died for what we did, but for what we were. Thus we learn the value of the sin offering.
- Later still, we grasp something of what it means to have fellowship with God because of the peace Christ has made, and come to appreciate the peace offering.
- Still later, we apprehend the perfection of Christ's life on earth and His service to God on our behalf, and come to value the meal offering.
- Later still, the greater aspect of His sacrifice is made clear to us as we study the Word, and we are brought to a fuller estimate of the Godward aspect of Christ's sacrifice, and see how perfectly it delighted the heart of the Father and brought glory to His name.

Thus we enter into the truth of the burnt offering. (5) In the vision of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-3) The call and commission of this man of God was preceded by a vision which further illustrates the importance of worship. In his vision he saw the Lord; "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple."

Above the throne stood the seraphim, each having six wings.

We are expressly told the purpose of these wings: "With twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." As they attended the Lord upon His throne, they cried one to another: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory!" Thus these angelic beings, which stood in the presence of the God of the universe, used four of their wings to indicate their attitude of reverence and worship, and only two to accomplish their service.

These five instances, selected from many others in the Scriptures, should surely serve to impress us with the supreme importance of worship, as seen in the high estimate that God places upon it.

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07. The Importance of Worship: Moses

CHAPTER SEVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP: MOSES

4. Moses Learned the Importance of Worship (Exodus 33:11; Exodus 34:9) Moses, the great leader of Israel, had many and varied experiences in God's dealing with him, but it is doubtful if any could compare with the one described in Exodus 33 and 34. Let us look at for a little while and learn, still further, the importance of worship. (1) Moses had been chosen by God It is perfectly true that Moses chose God of his own volition, for the Scripture plainly affirms, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years [or maturity], refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:24-25).

Yet this choice of Moses was due to God's primary choice of him, even as is the case of every believer. We read that we were "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). The movement of a soul towards God, is but the effect of the movement of God towards that soul. From this we learn that the worshipper is one who has been chosen and called of God.

Isaac Watts beautifully expressed this in a hymn, "Why was I made to hear Thy voice And enter while there's room, When thousand make a wretched choice And rather starve than come?"

"'Twas the same love that spread the feast That sweetly forced me in.

Else I had still refused to taste, And perished in my sin." (2) Moses had been redeemed to God He had experienced the deliverance of the Passover, together with all who had availed themselves of this divine provision for their salvation and security. He had been commanded by God to proclaim to the people of Israel: "The blood shall be to you for a token... When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

Thus he had learned the value of the sprinkled blood of the Lamb to give safety, and the spoken word of the Lord to give certainty to all who took advantage of God's provision in salvation. (3) Moses enjoyed rare intimacy and communion with God We are told that "the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Exodus 33:11).

It was this holy intimacy with God that distinguished Moses from all his contemporaries. At his death he had the unique honor of having God as his grave Digger and chief Mourner. In fact, God not only buried Moses, but also buried his grave and the cemetery; for "no man knoweth of his sepulchre until this day" (Deuteronomy 34:5-6). Over that lonely, unknown grave on Mount Nebo's lofty height, God wrote his epitaph: "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10).

What holy intimacy is implied by these words!

Moses was a man who enjoyed the hallowed privilege of communion with God, with nothing between to mar the fellowship. Communion is one of those words impossible to define, but which,

thank God, each believer may experience.

Blessed indeed is that person who enjoys such intimacy with God, and over whose tomb can be truthfully inscribed: "Here lies the body of a person, with whom God communed face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend." (4) Moses aspired to a fuller revelation from God which should result in his greater appreciation of Deity. The effect of communion with God is an ever-increasing desire for greater communion and an enlarged capacity for Him.

Paul ever kept this before him as the supreme passion of his life. He expressed it thus: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Php 3:10-11).

Notice Moses' two-fold request for this greater knowledge of God.

He desired to know God's way.

"Shew me now thy way that I may know thee" (v. 13). By God's "way" is meant the revelation of the outgoings of Deity, as evidenced by His dealings with men.

David prayed: "Cause thy face to shine upon us... that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations" (Psalms 67:1-2).

David, by the Spirit exclaimed: "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: Who is so great a God as our God?" (Psalms 77:13).

It is here that His infinite holiness, inscrutable wisdom and illimitable power is revealed.

Through God's "way," we are enabled to perceive Deity on the march.

Paul spoke of God's ways and exclaimed: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).

However, the full revelation of God's "way" awaited the coming of the incarnate Son of God, Who said simply: "I am the way" (John 14:6). By this He said, as it were: "Would you see the outgoings of Deity, the revelation of God's character as seen in His holiness, wisdom, love and power? Then look at me. I am Deity on the march. 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.'"

God's answer to Moses' bold request was the gracious promise: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." In other words, God Himself would be the Way, and His presence with Moses would give him perfect confidence and complete rest as to the wisdom of all His dealings with Israel. Thus Moses' supreme confidence should be based upon the assured presence of God in every circumstance of life and all the varied experiences of the journey that lay before him.

He desired to see God's glory (v. 18).

Moses now gets bolder still, and actually asks the God of the universe to show him His glory!

Perhaps the best definition of glory is, "displayed excellence."

It represents those unique prerogatives and excellencies that can be displayed by God alone. "I am the LORD, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another" (Isaiah 42:8).

Moses here says, in effect, "O God, let me see the display of all Thy Divine attributes, the bursting forth of all Thy effulgent brightness, as Thou dost demonstrate the unique excellencies of Thy Person, which distinguishes Thee from all Thy creation!" As God has revealed His "way" in His Son, so also God has displayed all His "glory" in Him. One Scripture, out of many, will suffice to prove this: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Thus all the intrinsic excellencies of Deity are fully seen, harmoniously blended and marvelously displayed, in all their absolute perfection, in the Person of the Son of God.

Christ's own words to Martha should be pondered by every believer: "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" (John 11:40). To believe on Christ, to receive Him, and to observe Him, is to see the glory of God displayed through Him. (5) Moses was granted a rich provision by God (vss. 19-23) Note God's answer to this bold request.

Moses would not be permitted to see His face, yet he was to be allowed to see His "back parts" (v. 23). This expression depicts an "afterglow."

Let us illustrate.

We cannot steadfastly gaze into the dazzling splendor of the midday sun, but we can appreciate its glories by means of a magnificent sunset. Likewise, God's uncreated glory is so surpassingly brilliant that no human eye could bear the sight; but we can appreciate it by the "afterglow" which we were permitted to see as we study His holy word.

Eternity will provide God with the opportunity of displaying to His redeemed people "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7). As we are occupied with the Lord Jesus, there will be an ever increasing apprehension and appreciation of the glory of God on the part of every believer. In order that Moses might be enabled to see this tremendous spectacle, it was necessary that a four-fold provision be made for him by God, apart from which he could not possibly witness this demonstration of His glory. This provides us with a beautiful picture of the still more wonderful provision God has made for each believer in Christ, by which he is enabled both to appreciate the glory of God and, as a direct consequence, become a worshipper of Him.

Moses was first given a place of acceptance before God.

"There is a place by me" (v. 21). By this placing of Moses in a position of acceptance, nearness and dearness to God, he was thereby fitted for the sight he was soon to witness. The Bible clearly indicates that the sinner has no standing before God, or acceptance in God's presence. By nature he is at "enmity to God," and is consequently "not subject to the law of God." While in this condition, he "cannot please God" (Romans 8:7-8).

Thus, by nature, the sinner has no place before God, or right to stand in His presence. When a sinner, in true repentance, puts his confidence in Christ and His finished work, and receives Him

as his own Saviour, he is immediately given a place of acceptance by God which fits him for the Divine presence.

Paul, by the Spirit, puts it thus: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:5-6).

Catesby Paget's well known lines are appropriate in this connection, By nature and by practice far,
How very far from God!

Yet now by grace, brought nigh to Him, Through faith in Jesus' blood. So near, so very near to God, I cannot nearer be; For in the Person of His Son, I am as near as He! So dear, so very dear to God, More dear I cannot be; The love wherewith He loves the Son, Such is His love to me!

We can assuredly gather, from what we have read, that worship necessitates that the worshipper be in a state of acceptance with God, and that this acceptance is based on God's sovereign grace.

Moses was then given a good foundation on which to stand.

"Thou shalt stand upon a rock" (v. 21).

God saw to it that beneath Moses' feet was a solid, substantial and immovable rock.

Though he might tremble as he stood on the rock, he could be certain that the rock would not tremble under him! Of the typical significance of the rock, we are left in no doubt. David sang: "The Lord is my Rock" (Psalms 18:2).

Moses himself, in his grand farewell song, exclaimed: "I will publish the name of the Lord, ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect" (Deuteronomy 32:34).

Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians says: "Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). Our Lord's words to Peter, when he made his memorable confession of Christ's essential and eternal Deity, were: "On this rock, I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18).

Only as we stand on this Rock can we appreciate the glory of God, and become worshippers of Him in Spirit and in truth. The Christian, like Moses, has a Rock on which to stand, which all the storms of earth can never shake.

He rests his all upon the Deity of Christ's Person, on the eternal value of the precious blood He shed, and on the Divine authority and assurance of His holy word and sings, "On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand, All other ground is sinking sand."

Moses was then given a position in the Rock.

"I will put thee in a cliff of the rock" (v. 22). This rock had a cliff in it, and Moses was now placed in the midst of the rock. Thus he was not only on the rock, but in it!

He was surrounded by the rock and, in this way, partook of all the strength and security of his refuge. Is not this a graphic illustration of what God has done for the believer? Not only does the Christian have Christ as his foundation, but also as his habitation, for he is described as being "in

Christ.” In fact, these words, “in Christ,” form the key phrase of the Epistle to the Ephesians which unfolds, as no other portion of God’s word, the eternal blessedness of the believer (see Ephesians 1:1-14). A striking picture of this is seen in Proverbs 30:26.

We are told that the conies (rock rabbits) are a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks. The coney is a feeble creature, and no match whatever for the large beasts of prey but, the moment danger threatens, it runs into the shelter provided by God. The moment it enters the rock, it can laugh in the face of the pursuing foe, for it has learned that to be in the rock, is to be as the rock. Perhaps David had this in mind when he said: “I flee unto thee to hide me” (Psalms 143:9).

Again he said: “Thou art my strong Refuge... Thou art my hiding place” (Psalms 71:7; Psalms 32:7). The story of how Toplady came to write his best known hymn is in order at this point.

Overtaken by a storm, as he walked on a lonely moor in England, Augustus Toplady, knowing the location of a great rock with a cleft in it, ran there for shelter. As he entered the cleft, - The storm broke in all its fury; - The lightning flashed, - The thunder rolled and the rain descended in torrents. In the midst of all this storm, Toplady, in his refuge, was untouched, for the storm exhausted itself on the rock in which he was sheltered. As the storm raged, a verse from Isaiah 26:4 came to his mind, which reads: “Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.” He looked up the verse and saw in the margin the words “rock of ages” and as he thought upon this Scripture, the first two lines of a hymn suggested themselves to him, “Rock of ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.”

Later, he added the other lines, and thus the beautiful and well loved hymn came into existence.

Nineteen hundred years ago, a far greater storm burst, in unparalleled fury, upon the sinless and unprotected head of our Divine Substitute: Christ, the Rock of Ages. All the concentrated judgment of a holy God, because of our sins, fell on Him who bore them all “in his own body on the tree.” In that “lone, dark and mysterious hour,” Christ received the full force of God’s righteous judgment against sin, and thus was cleft for us. On Calvary He accomplished all the work necessary for our salvation. Now risen and glorified at God’s right hand, He ever lives to save all who will hide themselves in Him. Each believer can now, reverently and rejoicingly, sing, “The tempest’s awful voice was heard, O Christ, it broke on Thee!”

Thy open bosom was my ward; It braved the storm for me. Thy form was scarred, Thy visage marred; Now cloudless peace for me.” (d) Lastly, Moses was given a perfect protection while in the rock.

God said: “I will cover thee with my hand while I pass by” (v. 22).

There was no possibility of Moses falling out of the rock, for his security therein was guaranteed by the omnipotent covering hand of Him who later said: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (John 10:27-28).

Thus Moses enjoyed the perfect peace which comes from the assurance of absolute security. He had been given a place of acceptance; under his feet was a solid immovable foundation; around him was his God-provided refuge; and enclosing him was God’s covering hand.

He could now worship, without one disturbing thought that if he did not hold on tight enough, he would slip out of the rock and be lost!

Many of God's dear people are so occupied with their efforts to "hold on to Christ," that they have neither the time nor the inclination to worship!

How much better it is for the believer to rest, in perfect peace, upon His blessed guarantee of eternal security. Thus with "a heart a leisure from itself," he is enabled to worship the One who "doeth all things well." (6) Moses was given a marvellous revelation of God (Exodus 34:5-7) God saw to it that Moses was now in a proper position to appreciate the awe-inspiring spectacle he was about to witness, and which should result in drawing forth his heart's worship and adoration.

- He had a place of acceptance before God to satisfy him; - A good foundation to steady him; - A strong refuge to shelter him; - An omnipotent hand to secure him.

What more could any person want? Before his wondering eyes God now displayed the glory he had asked to see.

We are told that "The Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation'" (Exodus 34:6-7). Moses had asked God to show him His glory, and God's response had been: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee" (Exodus 33:19).

Thus God's glory is His goodness, as revealed in His name, for God's names, in Scripture, predicate His character. God has said: "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another" (Isaiah 42:8).

Surely, in so far as the Old Testament is concerned, this was the most majestic display ever seen by mortal eyes. Compared with this, the most gorgeous spectacle staged by man sinks into utter insignificance.

Here was a demonstration of the One who is described as being: "The King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God," to Whom be "honor and glory for ever and ever" (1 Timothy 1:17).

People have travelled thousands of miles, and put themselves to great expense and trouble to watch the coronation procession of some King, or the inauguration of some president; but Moses was the solitary witness of the incomparable spectacle of Deity in procession!

Yet, wonderful though this sight must have been, a greater was witnessed nineteen hundred years ago, when God came down to earth in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before the eyes of a wondering, yet unbelieving world, Deity was displayed in terms of a perfect human life.

John, the beloved disciple, says of Him: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John

1:14). The Son of God completely satisfied all His father's desire and glorified His name, as never before. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews thus describes His Person and work: "Who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3).

Moses was not permitted to see the face of God, but John, the beloved apostle, speaks of Christ as the One: "Which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life" (1 John 1:1).

Thus all the glory of God has been concentrated in the face of Him whom this world despised and crucified, but whom the Christian loves and honors above all others. (7) Moses gave to God the humble, reverent, and sincere worship of his heart (Exodus 34:8) We are told that the effect of this majestic display of God's glory was that "Moses made haste, and bowed his head towards the earth and worshipped."

There was nothing else left for him to do under such circumstances. This majestic revelation put him where it will put every true believer, low at the feet of the One Who alone is worthy and to Whom worship rightly belongs.

Thus Moses learned, upon the holy mount, the significance of God's glory, as revealed in the display of His Divine attributes, and the importance and necessity for true spiritual worship in the presence of such an august Being. From this demonstration of God's glory and its resultant worship he returned, forty days later, to the camp of Israel a changed man. We are told that the glory upon which he had gazed so long was reflected in his face, for we read: "It came to pass..

. when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone." From this we can surely gather that God will be no man's Debtor. When a believer gives to God the worship due to His name, he will unconsciously reflect that fact as he comes into contact with his fellow men. There will be something about him which will distinguish him from others, though he himself will be unaware of it. Occupation with Christ is the secret of the shining face and the satisfied heart. As the Scripture puts it: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Corinthians 3:18).

5. David Sensed the Tremendous Importance of Worship We shall look at several of his statements in this connection. In Psalms 69:30-31, he declares: "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox, or bullock, that hath horns and hoofs." In these words, David boldly affirms that praise and thanksgiving is of greater value to God than the offering of the most valuable of animal sacrifices. The horns speak of power and the hoofs of separation. Thus he affirms that even a life of power and separation is excelled by the greater value of worship. In I Chronicles 16, is described David's removal of the ark, this time in a scriptural manner, from the house of Obed-Edom to the tent he had prepared for it in Jerusalem. To celebrate this event, David, by the Spirit's inspiration, wrote a beautiful Psalm which was sung for the occasion.

Let us glance at a few extracts from this magnificent hymn: "Glory and honor are in His presence; strength and gladness are in His place. Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto

the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name. Bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness... Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever" (v. 26-29).

Again, in one of his beautiful Messianic Psalms, he writes of the "King's daughter," who is a type of the believer, and says: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for He is thy Lord, and worship thou him" (Psalms 45:10-11).

Notice the progression of thought.

- First there is an appeal for concentration of mind: "Hearken and consider, and incline thine ear."
- This is followed by a call to renunciation: "Forget also thy people and thy father's house."
- The result of this is attraction on the part of the King: "So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty."
- The effect of this is the adoration of the one who has thus been brought into Divine favor: "He is thy Lord and worship thou him."

Thus the close link is emphasized between the acknowledged Lordship of Christ and the believer's worship of Him. To own Him as Lord is to fall at His feet and render to Him the homage that is His due.

One more quotation will suffice to show how David realized the importance of worship. In Psalm 95, where the greatness of God is described, we read: "For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods... The sea is his, and he made the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture," to bow in worship before their mighty Creator, Saviour and Shepherd. The Christian does so, with the added knowledge that the same One who brought all things into being by the word of His mouth, became the Redeemer of His people, and bought them with His own most precious blood.

~ end of chapter 7 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

08. The Importance of Worship: "in Spirit and in Truth"

CHAPTER EIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP: "IN Spirit AND IN TRUTH"

6. The Revelation of the Son of God (John 4:20-24) "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 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 4:20-24) Our Lord's own teaching on the subject of worship, which is recorded in John 4:20-24, is of momentous importance to every believer.

It seems strange that this great subject of worship was discussed with a fallen woman by a wayside well; while the subject of the new birth was propounded to a religious, moral and sincere Pharisee. We would have reversed the order of procedure, but not so our Lord. In His infinite wisdom He, "Who doeth all things well," revealed these wonderful truths to a poor sinner who needed Him. In His conversation with the woman at the well, Christ, in view of His sufferings and the glory that should follow, introduced at least seven great changes regarding worship, as it had previously been revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures. (1) As to the place of worship (vs. 20) This woman, though anything but chaste, was not unwilling to discuss religion and said to the Lord: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, [Gerizim] and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

Note carefully Christ's answer: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in the mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father" (v. 21). In other words, worship was no longer to be confined to any definite place on earth and, least of all, to any building erected by man on earth, however great its historic interest, however beautiful its architectural design, or however ornate the pomp and circumstance of its ritual. Though both the tabernacle in the wilderness, and the temple in Jerusalem, had been erected by Divine command, and their services inaugurated by a demonstration of God's approval in the descending cloud of glory; yet God has done away with both; for they were but "figures" and "shadows," that awaited the advent of the incarnate Son of God (Exodus 40:34; 1 Kings 9:10-11; Hebrews 9:22-28).

After the Tabernacle had served its purpose as the "place" of worship for Israel, it was superseded by the temple, erected in Jerusalem, "the place where God had chosen to put his name." When Christ became incarnate and dwelt (literally, "tabernacled") among us, He fulfilled the type of the Tabernacle: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). But Christ also fulfilled the type of the Temple.

One day, the Jews challenged Him: "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" He replied: "Destroy this temple, and, in three days, I will raise it up." At this, the Jews,

thinking in terms of Herod's Temple, which then stood in Jerusalem cried, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"

Now note the comment that follows: "But he spake of the temple of his body" (John 2:18-21).

Still later, faced by the unjust criticism of the Pharisees, who charged Him with doing unlawful things on the Sabbath day, Christ quoted David's act of eating the shew bread, and of the priests doing service on the Sabbath, and then added these tremendously significant words: "But I say unto you that, in this place, is One greater than the temple" (Matthew 12:1-8).

- All that the Temple stood for, in its provision of a way of approach to God by a Divinely appointed and accepted substitute, was all perfectly fulfilled in Him.

- All that the priesthood stood for, in its provision of a representative to present their worship to God, was fulfilled in Him who, as our great High Priest, not only became the acceptable Offering, but the accepted Offerer.

When, on the cross, He had completed all the work needed for our salvation, God rent the veil of the Temple from top to bottom, in the midst. By this act, He signified that both the Temple and the Levitical priesthood had served its purpose, and was now done away with in Christ. This is the argument of Hebrews, chapter 7 to 10.

Worship is no longer a matter of "place," but of spiritual condition. The believer is just as much at liberty to worship God from the midst of the wilds of Borneo, as from the heart of a nation's metropolis. It matters not whether a Christian is in the kitchen, the barn, the bedroom, the busy mart, or the open air; he can worship God anywhere, providing, of course, he is in the spiritual condition to do so.

He needs no human intercessor to act as mediator, for he has in Heaven a great High Priest, and therefore can go directly to Him. The Scriptures makes it so perfectly simple: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way... and having an high Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:19-22). We have perfect liberty to march right in!

God no longer dwells in buildings made by man, as He did of old in the Tabernacle and the Temple. Paul, in his speech on Mars Hill makes this crystal clear: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing he is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24).

"The house of God," today, is His people. He dwells in the midst of His gathered saints, wherever they may meet in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 18:20).

We are told in Hebrews 3:6, that "Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we"; and by "we" is meant Christians. Whether it be an individual Christian, or a small company of two or three, or a large gathering of believers; each may meet anywhere on earth and worship the Father and the Son. The Christian's "place of worship" is where his great High Priest is -- in Heaven. He enters there by faith, as he lays hold upon the two-fold provision he has in Christ, First, His redemption work, Second, His present ministry at the right hand of God. (2) As to the Object of worship "The true worshippers shall worship the Father" (vs. 23) Israel worshipped the Lord God,

Whose demonstrated holiness, majesty, glory, power and justice at Sinai, filled them with awe and terror. As they stood, trembling and afar off from the fearful spectacle, they said to Moses: "Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die... and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was" (Exodus 20:19-21).

Thus the Lord, at the giving of the law, which revealed the righteous requirements that His holiness demanded, is described as being at a distance, dwelling in darkness and producing dread within the hearts of the people of Israel. Now compare this with Christ's revelation as to the Object of the Christian's worship.

It is "the Father."

He is the same Being as the God of Sinai, for God is unchangeable in His character.

He is equally as holy, righteous and just as He always was, and ever shall be; but He is now revealed, by His beloved Son, in a different aspect, even as "Father."

It is a word that connotes, - Comforting nearness, - Exquisite intimacy, - Assuring dearness, - Warm affection, - Tender care, - Enduring love, - Understanding pity, - Infinite forbearance - Illimitable grace.

God has come forth from the enfolding clouds of darkness and, through "the Son of his love," stands revealed as the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and of every true Christian who has been born into His family through faith in Christ. Creation could but unfold to us God's eternal power and wisdom: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). The law could but reveal God's holiness, righteousness, justice and truth (Exodus 20:1-17). But the Lord Jesus has exposed to us God's heart, a heart filled with infinite love towards those who are undeserving of the least of His mercies.

How good it is for the believer to be able to constantly remind himself that it is to his Father that he comes to present his worship, a Father who has been described as, "Absolutely tender, absolutely true, Understanding all things, understanding you; Infinitely loving, exquisitely near, This is God our Father -- what have we to fear?" (3) As to the relationship of the worshipper Since it is God, revealed as "the Father," whom we worship; it follows logically that only those who have been brought into living and vital relationship with Him, can call Him such and worship Him. In the Old Testament, it was the children of Aaron, by natural generation, that were alone fitted to minister as priests in the worship of the Lord God. In the New Testament, it is the children of God, by supernatural regeneration, that are alone constituted "a kingdom of priests unto God": "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5) and "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. 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 for ever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:5-6). This is why the new birth is such an essential thing. By the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, the believer is made - "Partakers of the Divine nature,"

- Is born into the family of God, - Has the unspeakable privilege of calling God his Father. No wonder John breaks forth in praise and joyously exclaims: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" (1 John 3:1) and Peter's words: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

We have before noted that the natural man is not only dead in his trespasses and sins, but he can neither understand the things of God, nor does he desire to worship Him. He may be naturally possessed of a religious turn of mind, and even evidence a fair amount of morality and respectability, as did Nicodemus of old; but he must learn that: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

It is no longer, as in the case of Israel, the national worship of an earthly people that is in view; but rather the individual worship of God's Heaven-born children, made such "by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:22).

James G. Deck, in his well known and greatly loved hymn, has beautifully stated this fact, "Abba, Father, we approach Thee In our Saviour's precious name, We, Thy children, here assembling, Access to Thy presence claim. From our guilt His blood hath washed us, 'Tis through Him our souls draw nigh, And Thy Spirit, too, hath taught us, 'Abba, Father,' thus to cry." (4) As to the character of the worship It must be "in Spirit and in truth" (v. 24). In other words, it must be spiritual and sincere.

Israel's worship of the Lord God had been largely characterized by the visible and material.

It consisted largely in the offering of animal sacrifices, through the medium of a human priest, who was subject to disease, decay and death. This has now given place to a spiritual worship, through the mediation of a Divine High Priest, who, by the "offering of himself to God," has "perfected forever them that are sanctified."

Now risen and glorified, Christ lives "in the power of an endless life," and thus has an "unchangeable priesthood", "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself" (Hebrews 7:23-27).

It is significant that, at the mock trial of our Lord, a most dramatic incident occurred. The last high priest of an old and passing dispensation, which had been characterized by failure, looking into the eyes of the great High Priest of a new and coming dispensation, which was to be unfailing and unfading, and inquired: "I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the son of God."

Note Christ's answer and its effect.

“Jesus saith unto him: ‘Thou hast said: nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven!’” At this plain and definite declaration, by our Lord, of His essential and eternal Deity, the high priest rent his clothes and cried: “He hath spoken blasphemy” (Matthew 26:57-68). By the rending of his clothes, Caiaphas violated an express command of God. Though doubtless he knew it not, by this act he disqualified himself for the office he held!

God had given a distinct commandment as to this: “And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes” (Leviticus 21:10). “And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people, but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled” (Leviticus 10:6) and “And there was an hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of an habergeon, with a band round about the hole, that it should not rend” (Exodus 39:23).

We have before noted that the Aaronic priesthood, with all its ornate ritual and its many sacrifices, came to an end at the cross. The rent veil bears eloquent testimony to this fact. That which had previously shut men out from the presence of God was done away through the sacrifice of Christ. We are told that “but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26). As Bonar has so beautifully put it, “No blood, no altar now, The sacrifice is o’er! No flame, no smoke ascends on high, The Lamb is slain no more. But richer blood has flowed from nobler veins, To purge the soul from guilt, And cleanse the reddest stains.” No longer is worship a thing of the hand, but of the heart. It no longer consists of an endless procession of lambs, heifers and bullocks, to be slain upon the blood-baptized altars of Jewry. The Christian is now urged to “offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). No longer do we need the mediation of the sons of Aaron, or the sons of anyone else!

Each believer is constituted a priest unto God, and Christ alone is the great High Priest. He it is Who presents the spiritual worship of His redeemed people to HIS Father, in all the virtue and value of His blessed Person and work.

Much of the so-called “public worship,” in Christendom, is merely a form of Christianized Judaism, and, in some cases, thinly veiled Paganism. This fact may easily be verified. One has only to compare the sacerdotalism that obtains in Christendom with the ritual of Judaism to be struck with the deadly parallel that exists between the two. In Judaism there was a separate priestly caste who alone could conduct the worship of Israel. In Christendom a man-made priesthood, called “the clergy,” is essential to its worship, in spite of the plain teaching of the New Testament that all believers are priests. These priests of Judaism wore a distinctive dress, as also does the clergy. Judaism emphasized an earthly sanctuary, or building. In like manner, Christendom makes much of its consecrated “places of worship,” and miscalls the edifice “a cathedral,” and refers to it as “the house of God.”

Jewish priests had an altar on which were offered sacrifices to God. Christendom has erected “altars” in these ornate buildings, before which candles burn and incense is offered and, in many cases, on which a wafer is kept, which is looked upon as the body of Christ!

It is hardly necessary to say that all this copying of Judaism is absolutely foreign to the teaching of the New Testament.

Thus Christendom has initiated its own specially educated and ordained priesthood, whose presence is indispensable to “administer the sacraments.”

These men, robed in gorgeous vestments, from within a roped off “sanctuary,” stand before a bloodless “alter,” with a background of burning candles, crosses and smoking incense, and “conduct the worship” for the laity. With the use of an elaborate prepared ritual, with stereotyped prayers, and responses from the audience, the whole service proceeds smoothly and with mechanical precision. It is a marvel of human invention and ingenuity, with an undoubted appeal to the esthetic; but a tragic and sorry substitute for the spiritual worship which our Lord declared that His Father sought from His redeemed children.

Many years ago Alexander Hislop wrote a book entitled: “The Two Babylons.” In this he proves quite conclusively that much of the ornate ritual of Roman Catholicism was borrowed from the idolatrous practices of ancient Babylon. This book is still obtainable for all who wish to be informed on this subject. (5) As to the time of worship “The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father” (John 4:23).

Israel’s worship of God, as we have already seen in the feasts of the Lord, was confined largely to stated occasions and places. Then again, the Sabbath day loomed large on the horizon of their worship. Our Lord here makes clear that worship is no longer a matter of “days, and months, and times, and years;” for these things belong to the past dispensation of the law. (Galatians 4:10). The New Testament knows of no “holy” days, which calls for more sanctity than other days. The Sabbath, or the seventh day, belongs to Israel, and was a sign of God’s covenant with it as a nation: “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you” (Exodus 31:13). The Lord’s day, or the first day of the week, belongs to the Christian dispensation. It is “the day which the Lord hath made,” and which commemorates the time when God took the Stone “which the builders rejected, and made it the headstone of the corner.” (See Psalms 118:2224; cp. Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10).

Worship is no longer limited to any day of the week, or even to any time of the day. We discover from Acts 20:7 that it was the custom of the early Church to meet together for the breaking of bread on “the first day of the week;” but worship is not confined to this day or occasion. At any time of any day, or night, the Christian can lift his heart in worship to the Father and the Son, in the energy of the Holy Spirit, and know that his worship will be acceptable.

Christendom makes much of special “days” and “seasons;” but the New Testament knows nothing of them. These belong to Israel, and have been done away in Christ.

Paul’s letter to the Galatians was written for the purpose of opposing the false teachers of his day who tried to judaize Christianity, and mix law with grace, to the confusion of the believers.

Every Christian should familiarize himself with this Epistle, until it becomes part and parcel of his being. It is the best antidote against Seventh-Day Adventism, or any other attempt to judaize Christianity, as seen in Christendom. Every day should not be holy unto the Lord.

While the child of God is fortunate indeed to be able to gather with his fellow saints on the Lord's Day for the remembrance of the Lord Jesus and the worship of God; yet worship, most emphatically, is not confined to this day, or occasion, or to any season of the year. (6) As to the energy, or power for worship "They that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth" (vs. 24).

We have already noted that true worship must be spiritual. It must be empowered by, and under the guidance and control of the third Person in the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament He is described as coming upon certain individuals, on particular occasions, in order to accomplish, through them, some specific purpose. Among some of the verses are, "And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Exodus 31:3) "And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:29) "And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him" (Numbers 24:2) [In this case to change the outcome of a curse and change it into a blessing]. "And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them" (1 Samuel 10:10) "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded" (2 Chronicles 15:1) In the New Testament, our Lord taught that the Holy Spirit, who had been with His disciples, would be sent to be within them.

Speaking of the Spirit He said: "For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:17). This promise was fulfilled at Pentecost.

Since that time every sinner, the moment he trusts Christ as his Saviour, is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. By this act of the Spirit's indwelling, each Christian is sealed, or marked out as Christ's property, unto the day of redemption: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13) and "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30). Not only so, but the Spirit imparts to each believer a divine nature, in the power of which he can live a life pleasing to God. The Holy Spirit now seeks, from the word of God, to teach the believer, and thus guide him into all truth: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:13-15). As He is allowed to dwell ungrieved in the believer, the Spirit will so impress him with Christ, that the Lord will become increasingly precious to him. Moreover, He will empower the Christian to offer intelligent, reverent and sincere worship to the Father and the Son.

Thus the only two essentials for worship are, - The word of God in our hands - The Spirit of God in our hearts.

It is possible for an individual believer to grieve the Holy Spirit by his misconduct, and for an assembly of saints to quench the Spirit by limiting His activity through His people, or by an attitude of censorious criticism towards them: "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go

down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:25-32).

Consequently, there is the constant need for the believer to be "filled with the Spirit" for, in this way, he will be susceptible to His guidance and enabled to offer acceptable worship to God, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). (7) As to the importance of worship This is indicated by the words: "The Father seeketh such to worship him" (vs. 23). In the Old Testament, it was the worshipper who sought the Lord. In the present dispensation, it is God, as the Father, who seeks the worship of His children. The importance of salvation is seen in the fact that Christ declared His purpose in coming into the world, as the Son of Man, was to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). This search led Him all the way to the cross. The importance of worship is sensed by the fact that the occupation of the Father is to seek for worshippers, who shall worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

What a tremendous thought this is!

"The high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity," not only condescends to notice a humble believer, but actually desires his sincere worship and seeks for it from him!

It would be incredible, but for the fact that His own beloved Son stated it in words that cannot possibly be misunderstood. This statement alone should be sufficient to prove to every believer the importance of worship.

How good it would be if each believer were to lay to heart the wonderful fact that he can give to God, his Father, to whom he owes everything, that which shall bring delight to His heart!

How tragic it is to think that so many Christians, either through ignorance of, or disobedience to this revelation, are keeping from their Father that which He so ardently desires them to give Him!

One of the concluding questions of the Old Testament is: "Will a man rob God?" and the answer, alas, is in the affirmative. (Malachi 3:8). As Israel robbed Him in tithes and offerings, so many of His own children, for one cause or another, are withholding from God the worship He seeks and has every right to expect.

Thus, in this wonderful conversation with the woman at the well, our Lord made these drastic changes in worship. May it be ours to give good heed to the words of Him who "spake as no man ever spake," and see to it that our worship conforms to the pattern He has given.

Let us ever remember that, - "God is light," therefore we must be true: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5); - "God is love," therefore we must be trustful: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:8); - "God is fire," therefore we must beware: "For our God is a consuming fire"; - "God is Spirit," therefore we must be real and sincere: "God is a Spirit: and they

that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

7. Lastly, the Importance of Worship Is Seen in That it is the Occupation of Eternity (Revelation 4:5) In the last book of the Bible, which forms the consummation of Divine revelation, we are given a glimpse into the eternity to which we are all fast hastening. From this revelation we discover that the worship of God is the chief occupation of the eternal state. In chapter 4, John describes the wondrous vision he was given after the voice said, “Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter” (vs. 1).

Immediately he sees before him a throne in Heaven and One who sits upon it. After describing its Occupant, he tells us of the twenty-four elders who sit before the throne, and the four living creatures who continually cry: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come!” As these living creatures give glory and honour to Him who sits upon the throne, the twenty-four elders fall down before God, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, saying: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.” Here is pure worship, unmingled with any petition whatsoever. It is the ascription of worth because of the intrinsic worthiness of the eternal Godhead. In Chapter five, John goes on to further describe what he saw. A book is produced, sealed with seven seals, and an angel proclaims: “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” No one, either in Heaven or on earth, or under the earth, was able to respond to the challenge and this caused John to weep. At this, one of the elders said to him: “Weep not. Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof.” As John watch breathlessly he saw, in the midst of the throne, a Lamb as it had been slain, Who came forth and took the book. At this, the elders and the living creatures again fell down before the Lamb and, as they bowed, they sang this magnificent hymn of worship. “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.”

Then, round about the throne, the voices of myriads of angels took up the refrain and sang, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing!”

Following this song of the angels, John now heard the united voices of every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, saying with harmonious accord: “Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!” At this, the living creatures responded: “Amen and the elders “fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.”

Thus John, at the very threshold of his marvelous vision of things to come, had impressed upon his heart the vital place and the vast importance that worship has in eternity.

What a glorious day that shall be, when all the redeemed of all the ages shall be gathered together in the presence of the One whose precious blood has brought them there!

What a volume of worship shall rise to the eternal Godhead, unmingled by one discordant note to mar its majestic harmony and exquisite cadence!

There will be nothing to the trappings of man-made religions then to keep the people of God separated from each other. Our Lord's words shall be fulfilled in their entirety: "There shall be one flock, and one Shepherd" (John 10:16). The desire, which He expressed in His prayer in John 17, shall be wonderfully answered: "That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

J.G. Deck has beautifully expressed this thought in his hymn: "If here on earth the thought of Jesus' love Lift our poor hearts this weary world above, If even here the taste of heavenly springs So cheers the spirit, that the pilgrim sings, What will the sunshine of His glory prove?

What the unmingled fulness of His love?

What hallelujahs shall His presence raise?

What, but one loud, eternal burst of praise!"

Thus the worship, which begins on earth, forms but the prelude to our eternal occupation. May it be ours to form a right estimate of its tremendous importance and, by God's grace, see to it that much of it rises from our hearts during our lifetime on earth! In this way, we shall not only bring delight to the eternal Godhead, but be in harmony with God's revealed purpose and heaven's occupation.

~ end of chapter 8 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

09. Part III. Our Authority For Worship -- "False Concepts"

CHAPTER NINE III. OUR AUTHORITY FOR WORSHIP

Having discussed the meaning and importance of worship, let us now occupy ourselves with a consideration of our authority for it. By this we mean the source of our information on the subject. How are we to know whom, when, how, where and when to worship? The answer to all these questions is found in the word of God.

Just as the way of salvation, together with all the other great doctrines of Christianity, must have their foundation, explanation and final authorization in the holy Scriptures, so also in this vital matter of the believers' worship. It will surely be admitted that we are living in days of confusion regarding this subject of worship. Christendom has become a babel of conflicting voices.

Various rival religious organizations, all claiming to be right, are seeking, with a great deal of zealous and costly propaganda, to gain adherents to their particular beliefs. In view of this confused state of affairs, how is the believer to know what God's desire is for him in regard to worship?

Isaiah's words, in view of a somewhat similar situation, should come with force to the soul of every true Christian: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:19-20). The word of God, and this alone, must be the sole court of appeal on all matters regarding any doctrine. Only a "thus saith the Lord" should carry conviction with the believer.

- We shall first consider some false conceptions of worship.
- Secondly, we shall then examine some wrong estimates of it.
- Finally, we shall seek to show the all sufficiency and authority of holy writ in regard to the matter of our worship.

1. Some False Conceptions of Worship The present confusion in Christendom can be traced to many causes. We shall name and examine four of these. (1) Human tradition. (2) Man-made expediency. (3) The voice of the Church. (4) The dictates of one's own conscience.

Let us look at these in the order named. (1) Human tradition "And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:6-9) "And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to

do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered, and many such like things do ye” (Mark 7:9-13) It is a well known fact that history has a habit of repeating itself. We have already looked into Israel’s history and discovered that it is God’s picture book for the instruction of each Christian, for we are told: “Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, though patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

One of the purposes for which God chose Israel as a nation was that they might be both the recipients, guardians and witnesses of the Divinely-inspired revelation of His word, as found in the holy Scriptures. At the time Christ came to earth the authority of the Scriptures, as the sole court of appeal, had been largely superseded by the imposing array of Jewish traditions.

These, in some cases, were actually allowed to take precedence, as an authority, over the word of God.

These humanly-devised traditions, compiled over a long period of years by their learned teachers, or Rabbis, were gathered together in a book called “the Talmud.” This, in turn, was in two main sections, the “Mishna,” or the “Oral Doctrine,” and the “Gemara,” or the “Matter that is learned.” Little by little, as time went on, this collection of writings and interpretations increased both in size and prestige, until it came to be accepted by the Jews as being of equal authority with the Scriptures; and, in some cases was actually allowed to supersede them. This was the situation Christ faced, and which He roundly condemned, in the plainest of terms, before the Jewish leaders of His day. An instance of this is found in Mark 7:9-13. Christ, addressing the scribes and Pharisees said, “Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said: ‘Honour thy father and thy mother, and whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death.’ But ye say: ‘If a man shall say to his father or mother: It is corban... he shall be free.’ And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father and mother; making the word of God of none effect through your traditions, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.” This instance was but one of many such. This is the situation.

Here was a son whose parents were badly in need of his money for their support. The law of God commanded this son to honor his parents, and thus supply their need with a gift of money. In order to avoid his plain responsibility in this matter, this son took the money, which should have been used to provide for his parents, and designated it as “Corban,” or a gift to the Temple. The religious leaders of the Jews excused this deliberate violation of the direct command of God, because their tradition affirmed such an act was permissible. Christ’s significant words in this connection demand our most serious consideration: “Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mark 7:7; Matthew 15:9). The most scathing words of fiery denunciation that ever fell from the lips of the Son of God were directed against the religious leaders of Israel. In Matthew 23, He used the phrase: “Woe unto you,” eight times and concluded: “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?”

Christ’s appeal was always to the Scriptures. When a lawyer asked Him: “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Christ answered him: “What is written in the law? How readest thou?” (Luke 10:25-26). He affirmed again that: “the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). In His sermon on the mount He said: “Think not that I am come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Matthew 5:17).

Christ “magnified the law” in His life and, by fulfilling it, “made it honorable” (Isaiah 42:21).

He fulfilled, to the minutest detail, all its prophecies regarding His first advent, was obedient to all its precepts, quoted it constantly and loved it with all His heart. He never allowed the traditions of men any place whatever in His life.

Now let us see how history has repeated itself. As in Christ’s day, tradition had been allowed to supersede the word of God as to the sole and final authority in Israel; so today, in Christendom, the same thing, in large measure, has been allowed to take place. By Christendom we mean the sum total of all those religious systems and organizations that name the name of Christ, whether they be good, bad or indifferent. We must ever distinguish between Christendom and Christianity. The former centers itself with a system of belief; the latter is centered in a Person, the Son of God.

There is one great religious system that has practically substituted the Breviary for the Bible, and its clergy would gladly suppress, for obvious reasons, the publication, reading and study of the Bible by the so called “laity.”

Even Protestantism has also been adversely affected by tradition. In some of its denominations the prayer book, with its order of service, is more often seen and used than the Bible. By some, the voluminous writings of the early fathers, who lived immediately after the apostles, are given almost equal authority with the word of God.

It did not take long, in those post-apostolic days, for a mode of procedure to develop into a custom. This, in turn, became a tradition until, gradually, it was allowed to supersede the word of God as the sole basis of authority for both doctrine and life.

Through the years, customs, rules and regulations were introduced, that lost nothing in the repeating and the observing, until the dark mists of traditionalism descended upon the Church and obscured the shining light of Holy Scripture. In view of this condition of affairs, our Lord’s words, addressed to Israel, should come with peculiar emphasis to every believer’s heart: “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” As early as A.D. 107, one of these early fathers named Ignatius wrote: “Let us take heed that we do not set ourselves against the bishop... It is evident that we ought to look upon the bishop, even as we do upon the Lord Himself.” (Epistle to Ephesus). This was the danger that Paul foresaw and concerning which he wrote to the Corinthian assembly: “I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3). A certain bishop, when speaking to a believer about the many innovations which had been introduced into the ritual of his denomination said: “This is all part of the development of the church since New Testament times.” The believer replied: “We call it by a different name, departure!” The tendency of men’s traditions is to transform what was originally a simple Scriptural ordinance into a complicated and ornate ritual, until its primary purpose is completely lost sight of in a host of innovations the Bible knows nothing at all about.

Once the thin end of the wedge of tradition is allowed to enter, there is practically no limit to the extent it can develop until, at last, the tradition usurps the place of the Divinely-inspired Scriptures as the believer’s authority and final court of appeal. The beautiful simplicity of the Lord’s supper has degenerated, through the traditions of men, into the sacrifice of the mass.

What Christ intended to be a simple and beautiful memorial of Himself, has become so encrusted with the accretions of traditionalism, that its original purpose is lost sight of entirely. The old fable of the camel and the Arab's tent is well known. We can surely learn from this that once the camel of tradition is allowed to put its nose into the tent of Scriptural authority, it will soon occupy the whole tent and leave no place for the word of God!

Bunyan, in his allegory: "The Holy War," illustrates this point well. When Shaddai's (God's) army under Captain Boanerges, first attacked the rebellious city of Mansoul, three soldiers of this army (who had volunteered while the army was enroute) were captured. Their names were Mr. Tradition, Mr. Human-Invention and Mr. Human-Wisdom. On being brought before Diabolus (the Devil), they were asked whether they would serve him, or be killed. They replied, "We live not so much by the sense of right, as by the fortunes of war. If you will give us our wages, we will serve you as we once served SHADDAI." Accordingly, they were enlisted in Diabolus' army, and materially helped Mansoul to continue its rebellion against Shaddai! The application is clear.

Before the word of God was given in writing, tradition served the useful purpose of orally handing down, from father to son, the account of creation, the fall, the deluge, etc. Once the Divinely inspired and authoritative written word of God came into existence, tradition was no longer necessary. But alas, the Devil has now enlisted tradition on his side, not only to blind people to the truth of Scripture, but to substitute it for the word of God itself.

However scripturally a company of believers may seek to assemble themselves together, they will need to be continually on the alert, lest long established modes of procedure, gradually come to be looked upon as though they had scriptural authority for their existence. No assembly of Christians is immune from this danger. The confusion which developed in Israel and, later on, in Christendom because of tradition, began by a gradual process. Because it was allowed to continue unchecked, it gathered momentum with the years, until the apostasy set in. We can see its evil fruit today in modernism on one hand and sacerdotalism on the other. Paul's word to the saints in Colosse are pertinent in this connection: "Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

(2) Man-made Expediency "Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims. "And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God. And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah to this day" (2 Samuel 6:1-8)

Another false concept of worship is due to this. Instead of following the Divine directions regarding worship, as found in the Scripture, men imagine themselves to be wiser than the word of God, and seek to introduce various embellishments, which they fondly imagine are an improvement on the

Divine pattern. Such an instance is that which is recorded in 2 Samuel 6:18.

David had the laudable desire of bringing the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, in Gibeah, to a place he had prepared for it in Jerusalem. The ark, as we have already seen, was the central object connected with Israel's worship, for it was the place where God had declared He would meet and commune with His redeemed people. Thus it stood for God's presence in the midst of Israel.

Instead of consulting the Scriptures, which gave explicit instructions as to how the ark should be moved from one place to another, David ignored God's directions and followed the example set by the Philistines some time before, when they sent back the ark to Israel.

"And the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the Lord? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place. And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords. Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: And take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. "And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: it was a chance that happened to us. And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: And they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh" (1 Samuel 6:1-12) Had he searched the word of God, he would have discovered that plain directions had been given therein as to how the ark should be moved.

God had indicated that it was to be born on the shoulders of the Levites, and was not to be touched by any save the sons of Aaron, the priests: "And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation... But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders" (Numbers 4:15; Numbers 7:9) The resultant disaster awakened David to his folly.

It was not until three months later that David followed the Divine directions as to how the ark should be moved.

It was then safely carried to the place he had prepared for it, with great rejoicing: "And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obededom the Gittite three months: and the Lord blessed Obededom, and all his household. And it was told king David, saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of Obededom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obededom into the city of David with gladness. And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings. And David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet" (II Samuel 6:11-15).

We must be careful, of course, not to push this illustration of David's resort to human expediency beyond its proper limits. Articles frequently appear in religious magazines in which the writers solemnly assert that anything introduced into an assembly's activities in the Gospel that does not have a definite "thus saith the Lord" for it, is on the same plane as the new cart on which David placed the ark! For instance, it has often been asserted that the use of a musical instrument to give the correct pitch, tune and time to a gospel hymn, is on a par with David's act in putting the ark on a new cart! It is hardly necessary to point out that this is sheer nonsense. David, by his act, disobeyed a distinct and definite "thus saith the Lord;" but we have no Scripture, either pro or con, regarding the use of a musical instrument.

It will be a great help, in deciding any matters of this kind, if we keep three terms distinct in our minds, - The scriptural, by "scriptural" we mean that which has a definite "thus saith the Lord" for it.

Under this heading would come the preaching of the Gospel; the gathering together of believers in assembly fellowship, in the name of the Lord Jesus, etc.

- The unscriptural, by "unscriptural," we mean that which the word of God distinctly prohibits and condemns. Under this classification would come the unequal yoke of a believer with an unbeliever, etc.

- The non-scriptural. by "non-scriptural" we mean that for which we have no definite scriptural authority, but which does not violate any principle laid down in the word of God. Under this heading would come the use of a worship hymn book, a Gospel hymn book, a Gospel chapel, Gospel tracts, Sunday Schools, a musical instrument, the use of lantern slides, flannelgraph, object talks, the use of Bible charts, correspondence courses, to give believers a better knowledge of the word of God, Bible schools, Bible conferences, etc.

Much time, paper, energy, tempers and money would have been saved, if this simple distinction had been kept in mind.

Often such discussions go to prove the truth expressed by a well known Bible teacher who once remarked: "It is possible, on certain occasions, for believers to appear to be most solemn when, in reality, they are merely being most silly!"

Let us now return to this act of David, in which he mimicked the worldly-wise strategy of the Philistines, the enemy of God's people, instead of consulting the Scriptures to see what God had

to say on the subject. By this introduction of human expediency, God's judgment fell on Uzzah, the worship of God's people was hindered, and David himself was filled with fear. No worship ascended from the heart of David that day.

Instead, there was a sense of distance from God and a dread of God, for we read: "And David was afraid of the Lord that day" (2 Samuel 6:9). Not only so, but by this resort to human expediency, God was robbed of His portion from His people, and His holy word slighted. It was a most unprofitable business, from every point of view.

What a welcome change is recorded three months later!

David had learned his lesson. He now allowed the word of the Lord to be his guide in his worship of the Lord!

We are told: "David, and all the houses of Israel, brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet... And they brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it, and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord" (2 Samuel 6:12-19). Not only so, but David wrote, by Divine inspiration, a beautiful Psalm to be sung on this occasion in which these words occur: "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (2 Chronicles 16:29; See also Psalm 96).

We have discussed the effect of Jewish tradition in Israel. In this instance of human expediency, history has again repeated itself in Christendom. The simple and scriptural form of assembly gatherings, as pictured in the Acts and the Epistles, has largely given place, because of its resort to human expediency, to complex and highly organized systems of religious belief, all claiming to be Christian in their composition. It is difficult, in many of these systems, to recognize any traces of the scriptural pattern revealed in the New Testament. As a direct consequence, there is a dearth of spiritual life which, in turn, is evidenced by a great lack of real spiritual worship. This condition of affairs, as in the case of tradition, was not the work of a moment -- error seldom is -- but was the result of a gradual accumulation of various human expediciencies over a considerable period of years, beginning in the early part of the second century.

It would be well if every Christian would make himself acquainted with these facts by reading a good book on "Church History." Broadbent's "The Pilgrim Church," would be a good start in this direction. The first of these departures from the word of God, was the formation of a special caste amongst Christians, who were designated "the clergy." Gradually, those believers who had been gifted by the Lord to either preach, teach or guide, began to assume a superior air, and claim for themselves a special position, or caste, with exclusive privileges distinct from the rest of the believers. This, in turn, resulted in rivalry amongst this special caste, as each sought to gain the place of chief leader. Ultimately, elections were held, at which the most popular of this class was chosen by a show of hands. He was then formally ordained and placed in charge of the assembly and became "the clergyman."

There were not wanting those who opposed this departure from the Divine pattern, but gradually this opposition gave way to toleration and, finally, this new order came to be accepted by the various assemblies of believers.

Thus the scriptural truth of the priesthood of all believers was substituted for the mediation and rule of the clergy: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Peter 2:5-10) and "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. 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 for ever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:5-6). The gifts of Christ to the members of His body for their mutual edification were now limited, in their expression in the assembly, to one man (1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40). In this way, the evil of professionalism was introduced into the church of God, and what havoc it has wrought through the centuries which have followed! By this distinct departure from God's word, the way was opened for still more innovations, by which to strengthen the hold of the "clergy" over the "laity." In due course came the rise of the episcopacy, or the rule of one bishop over an assembly.

Later, this was extended to the rule of the bishop over a number of assemblies in a district, and thus originated the "diocesan bishop." Rivalry arose amongst these diocesan bishops until finally, around the fourth century, the bishop of Constantinople gave himself the title of "universal bishop" over all the churches on earth! Thus we see that David's innovation in putting the ark on a new cart has not lacked for imitators. His act is a typical example of what has happened in Christendom, the evils of which we can see with our own eyes.

[Alfred P. Gibbs, the author of this work, was a member of the "brethren" congregation, and as such - did not believe in the office of the Pastor - but rather, that all men of the church share equally in the office. Without doubt, I would disagree with his belief in this area and wish to state that for our visitors. What he says, pertaining to the abuses of the ministry, however, cannot be denied. The office of the pastorate, or undershepherd of the flock, is a Scriptural office with it's own qualifications (which every man in the church is not likely to meet) and definite responsibilities -- but like all that is good from the hand of God, Satan has found a way to defile and counterfeit. Without a doubt, also, some men that hold the office of pastor are simply not fit for that position - but that is to the local church to decide, if not the conscience of the one holding the office that "appertaineth not unto him." So, in this area, I would find myself in disagreement with the author -- and still thoroughly enjoying his studies on the great subject of worship! -- BBB] Another invention of human expediency, which has contributed much to the spiritual dearth, and consequent lack of worship, is the false theory that infants, when sprinkled with a few drops of water by a clergyman, are then regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and thus made "children of God, and members of the body of Christ!"

This, of course, is a flat denial of the scriptural teaching that baptism, by immersion, is only for those who have already been born again through their belief in the Gospel message and acceptance of Christ as their personal Saviour: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13) and "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16) and "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19-20) and "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:47) and "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8) et al. The effect of such a departure from the plain teaching of Scripture is the existence of a vast army of people, who call themselves Christians, but who know nothing whatever of the regenerating power of the Spirit of God in their lives. Lacking spiritual life, they are therefore "dead in their trespasses and sins."

While in this condition, they are both unable to understand or impart spiritual truth, to please God, or to render to Him the worship that is His due. As in the case of David's act of putting the ark on a new cart, this evil doctrine of "baptismal regeneration," has resulted in a spiritual tragedy of the worst description. We could cite many other instances of such innovations introduced through man-made expediency, but these two should suffice. One has only to go to certain so-called "places of worship" to see the baneful and tragic effects of such inventions and additions to the pristine glory that once marked the scriptural simplicity of the assemblies of the saints.

One may well ask when attending such a meeting for "public worship": Whence came all these, - Gaudy vestments; - Tinkling bells; - Burning candles; - Smoking incense; - Crosses; - A sanctuary, reserved only for the clergy; - Bloodless altar; - Ornate ritual, with the sing-song intonation of its ready-made prayers, - Ordered responses of the congregation; - Unholy distinction between clergy and laity? By what authority have all these things been introduced? Have they a Divine origin and a scriptural foundation?" The answer is an emphatic negative. They are the results of man-made expediency, which has substituted the inventions of men for the scriptural and spiritual worship which God's word so clearly enjoins.

~ end of chapter 9 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

10. Our Authority For Worship -- "False Concepts Con't

CHAPTER TEN OUR AUTHORITY FOR WORSHIP -- FALSE CONCEPTS CON'T

(3) The Voice of the Church Still another of these false concepts of worship is due to the fact that the decrees of Church councils have been given equal authority, and even precedence over the word of God as the sole authority for worship. Many such Church councils have been convened over the years since the Church was formed. The decisions, at which these councils arrived, have been issued in the form of creeds and decrees that all must receive, hold and maintain, upon pain of excommunication. Not only the Roman Catholic Church, but also some Protestant denominations, insist on the authority of the church, as represented by a central governing body, such as a synod to decide, by a majority vote, their church policy. We need hardly say that such a procedure is not according to the principles laid down in Holy Scripture. The objection may be raised: "What about Matthew 16:19, where Christ said to Peter, 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.' Does not this give authority for the church, both to make and enforce its decrees?"

Dr. C.B. Williams, explains that this passage means, "Whatsoever you forbid on earth, must be what is already forbidden in Heaven," etc. Heaven is not in the business of putting its seal of approval on every foolish and wicked decision made by man, or any company of men on earth. The other Scripture which is often used to bolster the claim of the authority of the Church council or synod to issue decrees is Matthew 18:17. The words of our Lord are: "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man," etc. The context of these words will be quite sufficient to show that no such thing as the church having authority to issue decrees is taught. The matter in question here is purely a personal trespass of one Christian against another, and the mode of procedure he should adopt to effect a reconciliation with his brother. It has been well said that "text, without context, is a pretext!"

We have only to turn to the Bible to confirm this fact. In the concluding book of the Divine revelation, seven letters are addressed to seven distinct churches, each of which was actually existent at that time. It is not without the deepest significance that each letter contains the same phrase. Let us mark it carefully and allow its truth to grip our hearts: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (See Revelation 2:7; Revelation 2:11; Revelation 2:17; Revelation 2:29; Revelation 3:6; Revelation 3:13; Revelation 3:22).

Here then, is the sole authority for worship, and for every other form of assembly or Christian activity. It is not what this Council, or that Synod decrees; but only what the Spirit says that is authoritative for each assembly of believers, and each believer in that assembly. We have, in the completed word of God, all that the Spirit has said to the churches, and we need no other authority than this. The Lord has not left His Church at the mercy and caprice of councils and synods of men, however sincere, or well versed in theology they may be. We read: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2

Timothy 3:16). In view of this, we say: "Away with your councils, synods, decrees, bulls, prescribed order of service, prayer books and books of discipline. We need them not, for we have, in the Divinely inspired word of God, what "the Spirit saith unto the Churches," and this is enough to fully furnish the assemblies of God's people as a whole and each man of faith in particular! The formalism and apostasy in Christendom today is due to the "voice of the Church," being allowed to displace the "voice of the Spirit."

- The "order of public worship" has all been previously arranged.
- The exact wording of each prayer has been determined for each Sunday throughout the year.
- The service proceeds with machine-like smoothness, with its ready-made prayers and responses, and the hearer is impressed with what the Prayer Book saith, and not "what the Spirit saith." No provision is made for the spiritual Christian to engage in voluntary and spontaneous worship, as led by the Spirit of God. He must proceed along these cut and dried lines until the service has concluded. These prayers with their beautifully worded generalizations, may have their appeal to the esthetic nature which is in all men; but they do not belong in the realm of the Spirit. We read, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17). The New Testament knows nothing of an "order of public worship." The Spirit of God delights to lead out the hearts of believers in spontaneous worship as, with holy boldness, they come by "the new and living way," unfettered by "the voice of the church," or the prescribed prayers that someone else has composed for the occasion. This is the spiritual liberty which is the birthright of every regenerated soul, and for which he must be prepared, if necessary, to give his life. The great need today is for more of those who, like the people of Berea, "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so," and then acted on what they found therein, to God's glory in worship, and their own blessing through obedience (Acts 17:11). [Our independent, Bible-believing Churches do follow a general plan of service -- but we certainly do not have prescribed prayers to be read out of a book. A Christian's prayers, as well as his worship, must be spontaneously led by the Lord. Though we have a "schedule" in our services -- never are they etched in some kind of stone, but often a Church service changes the order of the events leading up to the preaching of the Word. The preaching of the Cross is always given the pre-eminence in the service. The preaching is always after the singing of hymns, taking of the offering, and testimony time. On occasion, when a testimony service is especially touching, the time allotted for it is expanded. The only portion of the service that is not subject to spontaneous change is the preaching, unless of course, the Lord changes that pastor's message as he approaches the pulpit, and that time is followed by the invitation and altar call. We are commanded to do all things "decently and in order." But in the high, ecclesiastical "high" churches, the songs, the prayers, and even the message is already written down in a book - months prior to the service - in essence, ushering the Holy Spirit out of the service altogether- BBB] (4) The dictates of one's own conscience.

One often hears the expression: "Each person should be free to worship God, according to the dictates of his own conscience."

While this sounds very well it is, in reality, an entirely erroneous conception of what God has to say regarding true worship. What makes it false is the failure to mention any authority by which the conscience is to be guided and regulated in its choice. While every right thinking person will agree that no one should be forced to worship God according to the dictates of man-made laws, whether

civil or ecclesiastical; yet the conscience, in itself, is no true guide. By the addition of a few words, this false concept can become a true one.

Let us put it this way: "Each person should be free to worship God, according to the dictates of his own conscience, as it is enlightened by, and obedient to the revelation God has given in the Holy Scriptures."

We have only to turn to the Bible to discover what utter confusion results when every person acts according to the "dictates of his own conscience." The Book of Judges contains the sad history of Israel after the death of their great leader, Joshua.

It is a most depressing record of Israel's idolatrous backsliding and punishment, followed by their confession and deliverance, monotonously repeated, time and time again.

"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroath. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. "Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so. And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died, That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Therefore the Lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua" (Judges 2:11-23) The key phrase, in this dismal recital of failure, is found in the last verse of the book: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25 cp. 17:6).

It is hardly necessary to point out that, under these conditions, little worship ascended to God from the people of Israel. The conscience can be likened to a correctly constructed sun dial, which can only tell the time as the rays of the sun are allowed to shine upon it. It would be possible for a person to go to that sun dial at night and, by means of a flashlight, get it to indicate any time he

wanted! The conscience, therefore, must be enlightened by the word of God if it is to be a contributing factor in our worship. An unenlightened conscience will lead a person, as it did Paul, to “do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9).

Thousands of Christians have suffered martyrdom at the hands of religious men who acted quite sincerely, and “according to the dictates of their own conscience!” The fact that a person is sincere and conscientious, while acting contrary to the revelation of the God’s word, only makes the consequences more tragic. It is possible to be quite sincere and, at the same time, sincerely mistaken! The head hunters of Borneo can hunt and kill a man quite conscientiously!

God has not left His people with their conscience as their only guide; but He has given them His word, by which they may adjust their consciences. On the wall that surrounds the Royal Observatory at Greenwich is a large twenty-four hour clock which gives the correct time to the world. Visitors who stand before that timepiece invariably take out their watches, and adjust them to the time indicated by the master clock. Let that great master clock represent God’s word, and the watch, the conscience. Thus we have a good illustration of the place and purpose of the conscience, as described in the Scriptures. It is a guide, only in so far as it is adjusted to, and governed by the word of God.

It is this false conception of things that motivates the oft-given advice to new converts to: “join the church of your choice,” or to indicate, on the dotted line, one’s “Church preference.”

Scripture does not give to any Christian the right to “join the church of his choice,” or to “worship God according to the dictates of his conscience.”

God has given to the believer, in His word, “all things that pertain unto life and godliness.”

Happy is he who rests not until he knows, on the assurance of Divine revelation, that he is where God wants him to be, and that his worship is with a good conscience that has been adjusted to, and is regulated by the holy Scriptures: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:3-4).

2. Some Wrong Estimates of Worship Having pointed out, at considerable length, some false conceptions regarding worship, let us now look at some wrong estimates of it. A false conception always results in a wrong estimate. We shall think of three of these: (1) The materialistic (2) The religious (3) The uninstructed believer (1) The Materialistic (Exodus 5:1-17) When Pharaoh was approached by Moses with the demand: “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness;” the reply of this impious king was: “Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” This is the language of materialism, which stems from enmity to and ignorance of God. Not only did Pharaoh refuse to obey God’s voice, but he made the bondage of Israel more bitter by increasing their burdens.

He gave as his reason for this cruel treatment: “They be idle, therefore they cry, saying: Let us go and sacrifice to our God” (v. 8). Later on he said: “Ye are idle, ye are idle, therefore ye say: ‘let us

go and do sacrifice to the Lord.' Go therefore now and work!" (vs. 17-18). To this king, the expressed desire of God's people to obey the call and worship their God was simply an excuse to avoid hard work, and was therefore an indication of their laziness. He believed their time would be better spent in laboring for him with their hands. Egypt, in Scripture, is a type of the materialistic world, which seeks to live its life in independence of God and His Son. The unbelieving and rebellious attitude of Pharaoh to God and His people, well illustrates the opinion of the man of the world today. To him, spiritual things and the worship of God mean nothing at all, except perhaps a useless expenditure of energy and expense. In fact it is boldly affirmed by some that: "Religion is the opiate of the people." By "religion" they mean anything that relates to the spiritual, as compared with the physical. The cynic views any spiritual effort in the Gospel, or the worship of God's people, as all part of a huge "racket," by means of which money is mulched from a credulous public.

Others adopt the indifferent, "what-do-I-care" attitude of Gallio, the Roman judge. Scripture records of him that he "cared for none of those things" (Acts 18:17).

One can imagine what a worldling, who was accidentally present at a worship meeting, would afterwards report of his impressions to his ungodly friends. He would say: "Why, those people who met inside that building were nothing but a lot of day dreamers! They sat around a table, with their eyes closed most of the time. Every now and then someone would rise and pray, and then, after a while, another would give out a hymn, and thus they wasted a whole hour doing nothing!" The reason for such a wrong estimate of worship is easy to understand, for we read: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). The mind of man, by nature, is "enmity against God." He neither desires, nor can he possibly comprehend spiritual realities. Least of all can he appreciate the tremendous importance and value of the worship of God's people. (2) The Religious "This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law, and in the prophets" (Acts 24:14).

These words were spoken by Paul to Felix in answer to the false charge brought against him by Tertullus. Paul was charged with being: "A pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (v. 5). From this we learn that, in Paul's day, the estimate placed by the Jewish religionists on what was undoubtedly the true worship of God, was "heresy!" To their prejudiced and religion-blinded eyes, Paul was a heretic. They had already formed their opinion of what constituted "worship;" and because Paul ran counterto their warped and totally erroneous ideas, they designated him a "heretic." With this wrong conception of Scripture, they designated him a "heretic." With this wrong conception of Scripture, they persecuted him and would gladly have taken his life.

There is no form of persecution quite so bitter and vindictive as that which comes from religious people. Countless thousands of noble, true-hearted, spiritual, and devoted Christians, have had to seal their testimonies with their own blood, because they: "Dared to have a purpose firm and dared to make it known."

Let not the believer, who has learned what true worship is, and has acted on what he has learned, be unduly surprised if he is called a "heretic," not only by a materialistic world, but by people who

are sincerely and intensely zealous for their own particular religion!

There is actually a religious system in the world today which designates as “heretics” all who refuse to subscribe to its creeds, or bow to its decisions, or join its ranks. In the early days of Christianity, it was pagan Rome that persecuted Christian. In the middle ages, it was religious Rome that did the same thing! This persecution of the spiritual by the religious is as old as Cain’s hatred and persecution of Abel. Cain was a religious man, for he brought an offering unto the Lord; but he refused to come to God in the way God had plainly revealed both to him and his brother.

Cain’s offering was not the worship of a false god, but the false worship of the true God.

It was not long after God had rejected his offering that Cain stained his hands with the innocent blood of his righteous brother (Genesis 4:1-15). “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar” (Matthew 23:35) and “Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1 John 3:12) and “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core” (Jude 1:11) and “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh” (Hebrews 11:4) The Christian who seeks, at all costs, to worship God in the Spirit, and in accordance with the truth found in the Scriptures, may find it necessary to sever his connections with the religious system, or denomination, with which he was previously identified.

Usually these systems do not tolerate any departure from their organized order, traditions, rituals and commandments of men. This severance of his association with them will bring upon him the wrath of his one-time religious associates. They will not hesitate to revile him and stigmatize him as “a heretic.” He will be accused of becoming “a traitor to the faith of his fathers,” and have to suffer a measure of ignominy, contempt and persecution; but the price is well worth paying. Our Lord said: “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake” (Matthew 5:11).

All the popularity, position, power and pelf of this world can never compensate a believer for his failure to obey God’s word in this most important matter of worship. (3) The Uninstructed Believer (Matthew 26:6-13) “Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her” (Matthew 26:6-13) We have already touched on this incident of Mary’s act of devotion. We refer to it again only to draw particular attention to the entirely wrong estimate that even the disciples of Christ placed on this beautiful act of worship which they had witnessed. Their comment was: “To what purpose is this waste?”

They argued that this costly perfume should have been sold, and the money devoted to a more useful and worthwhile purpose, such as a gift to the poor!

They concluded that this exquisite perfume had been merely wasted on Christ! Our Lord's comment on the deed has forever immortalized this woman. He said of her: "She hath wrought a good work upon me... Verily I say unto you: wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her" (vs. 10, 13).

~ end of chapter 10 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

11. Our Authority For Worship -- the Word of God

CHAPTER ELEVEN OUR AUTHORITY FOR WORSHIP -- THE WORD OF GOD

3. The Scriptures Alone Must Be Our Authority in Worship Having considered some of the false conceptions of worship, and examined some wrong estimates of it; we now come to a consideration of what constitutes the believer's sole authority regarding worship. This can be stated in three words: the Holy Scriptures. Just as the word of God alone, without any additions and subtractions, is our only authority for the way of salvation and its assurance; so, in every matter pertaining to doctrine, life and godliness, it must also be the sole and final court of appeal. The need for this will surely be obvious to every right thinking individual. When a person receives an invitation to be presented to a king, or the head of a nation, he immediately consults the regulations governing such receptions in order to conform to the rules of court etiquette. He would be foolish indeed who would argue: "I'll go just when I wish, dress as I please and behave exactly as I want. If the king doesn't like it, he can lump it. I've got my own ideas of how these affairs should be run!" Such a person would soon find himself in disfavor with the king, and quickly conducted outside the palace!

One's conduct in society is governed largely by certain established customs which have been collected and recorded in books of etiquette. Emily Post is the recognized authority on such matters in the U.S.A. All those who desire to succeed in the social world, not only secure, but "read, mark and inwardly digest" all this authoritative information, by which to regulate their social behavior in any given circumstance. One is saved much embarrassment by so doing. Even games must be placed accordingly to definite rules, and the authority most quoted is "Hoyle."

All disputed matters regarding the playing of certain games are referred to this famous authority. The saying: "It is according to Hoyle," is the final word on any mooted question.

Since certain established rules and regulations are necessary to govern our behavior in the presence of a high dignitary, or our fellow men; what shall be said regarding the transcendingly more important matter of our approach to the great God of the universe, and our behavior in His presence? It is essential that there be a recognized authority on this matter, and God has supplied this need in the Divinely-inspired revelation He has given to us in the Bible. We have not been left to our own devices in this regard, but we possess, in the Scriptures, an authoritative source of information regarding this vitally important question. (1) As seen in the Old Testament God's instructions in the Old Testament regarding the construction of the Tabernacle, with which the worship of Israel was closely identified, were given in particular detail to Moses. He was enjoined many times to take great care that all things should be done "according to the pattern"

God had given him (Exodus 25:9; Exodus 25:40; Exodus 26:30; Exodus 27:8; Hebrews 8:5). The last chapter of Exodus records how completely Moses followed these instructed in the design of the tabernacle. Seven times over the phrase is repeated that he did this or that, "as the Lord commanded Moses" (vss. 19, 22-23, 25, 27, 29, 32).

It is not surprising, therefore, that we read: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (vs. 34). It was God's response to a work that had been done according to His directions. (2) As seen in the New Testament When we turn to the pages of the New Testament we discover that worship is no longer connected with a Tabernacle, or a Temple made by human hands. The Aaronic priesthood, with all its elaborate ritual, came to an end at the sacrifice of Christ. By that one sacrifice, which He offered "once and for all," the question of sin has been settled before a holy God. Every sinner, who now rests in Christ's finished work, receives Him by faith as his own Saviour, and owns Him as Lord, is not only saved eternally, but is constituted a priest unto God, with the privilege of coming into His presence to worship.

Christ is now the believer's great High Priest and, through Him, each believer may come boldly into the presence of God, and offer to Him the sacrifice of his heart's appreciation in praise and worship: "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation... By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 9:10; Hebrews 13:15) and "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

Rather than hard and fast rules concerning worship, we find certain broad principles laid down, to which we shall do well to take heed and follow as a pattern. As one reads and rereads the pages of the Acts and the Epistles, he will be impressed with certain well defined features which characterized the early assemblies of Christians, as led by the Spirit, they sought to gather in the name of the Lord Jesus in assembly, or church fellowship.

These assemblies, which began as a result of God's blessing on the preaching of the apostles and others, multiplied in a remarkable way, as described in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. In due course, letters penned by Divine inspiration were addressed to these various companies of Christians. From these epistles we may also learn much of the order that obtained in these assemblies, and the principles that characterized them. Some of these letters were written to correct abuses that obtained; as, for instance, the epistles to the Corinthians and the Galatians.

Others were written for encouragement, and still others for establishment in doctrine.

Thus we have, in the New Testament, all we need in the way of guidance for the worship and service of God's people today.

Now let us consider, very briefly, some of these distinguishing features which marked these New Testament assemblies of regenerated believers, remembering that this is the Divine pattern which has been left for us to follow. (a) These assemblies were composed of companies of believers where Christ was acknowledged as Lord.

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Corinthians 1:2) Christ was the gathering Center. They met in His name alone: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). They acknowledged His supreme Headship, not only of the Church as a whole, but of each local assembly of believers: "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw

seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle... The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches” (Revelation 1:12-13; Revelation 1:20) and “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 1:22-23).

There was no uncertainty in people’s minds, in that day, as to who was the Head of the Church.

There was no theologically-trained and humanly-ordained “clergyman,” answerable to a synod or diocese, to officiate at the Lord’s Supper, or to “administer the sacraments” and, apart from whose presence, the Lord’s supper could not be celebrated. Christ was the Host at His own supper and all the believers His privileged guests. (b) Each local assembly, wherever it met, was autonomous. That is to say, each assembly was responsible directly to the Lord alone for its existence, order and discipline. Scripture contemplates no such thing as amalgamations, or combinations of assemblies, with one central governing body, such as is seen in Christendom today. No assembly interfered in the affairs of another assembly, but each was a distinct unity. Yet, though outwardly distinct, these assemblies were united to each other by the strong invisible bond of a common loyalty to Christ and His Word. (c) Each believer in an assembly was recognized as a priest unto God, with liberty to exercise this priesthood, as led by the Spirit, the brethren audibly and the sisters inaudibly: “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law” (1 Corinthians 14:34) and “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9) and “And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:6).

There is no mention whatever of any prearranged program which was followed to the letter in their worship meetings. Nothing is said about appropriate prayers composed and selected by a specially appointed committee and recited during the service. No distinction is even contemplated between so-called “clergy” wearing colorful robes, and “laity.” It did not exist in those days. All believers occupied the same position as being “priests unto God.” (d) Each assembly recognized and gave liberty for the exercise and development of each spiritual gift, bestowed by the Lord upon the members of His body: “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12) and “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will... But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all” (1 Corinthians 12:8-11; 1 Corinthians 14:26).

These gifts were not confined, in those days, to one man called “the minister.” There was a multiplicity of gifts which, when exercised under the guidance and power of the Spirit, were used of God to build up the whole assembly and supply all its spiritual needs. (e) Each assembly had room

for all the word of God. No assembly “specialized” in a certain truth at the expense or the exclusion of other truths. Their motto was: “All the truth of God for all the people of God.” There were no “non essentials,” when it came to Divine revelation: “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32) and “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). (f) These assemblies were not divided into a number of different denominations, as we see in Christendom today. There was no possibility, in those days for a convert to be besieged by various denominations, all pressing their claims for his church membership, allegiance and support. There was only one membership of the one body, and fellowship was enjoyed with every member of that body. Each person, when saved, associated himself with an assembly of believers in the particular place or district where he lived.

Paul, by the Spirit, roundly condemned the rise of factions and parties in the Corinthian assembly: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name... And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon” (1 Corinthians 1:10-15; 1 Corinthians 3:1-10). The New Testament contemplates neither denominationalism, nor interdenominationalism, but affirms the great truth of undenominationalism. (g) Each assembly was composed of believers only, or, at least, only those who had professed to believe on the Son of God.

These New Testament assemblies did not consist of a mixture of saved and unsaved, as is seen in Christendom today: “And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) (Acts 5:13-14). The letters sent to these churches were addressed to those who were “in Christ Jesus” (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Php 1:1, etc.). (h) These assemblies gladly welcomed to their fellowship all Christians who were sound in doctrine, moral in

life, or in good standing with the assembly from whence they came. They did not create artificial “tests of fellowship,” but received one another “to the glory of God”: “Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God” (Romans 15:7).

There were no “back seats” for the “dear brother, or sister in Christ,” who was “not in fellowship” with them!

It was recognized that the Lord’s Supper was for the Lord’s people, and that life in Christ, and not light on the Scriptures was the essential basis for fellowship: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).

These assemblies were places where godly discipline could be maintained.

It was the disorders in the Corinthian assembly that brought forth Paul’s letter of rebuke, in which is contained the well known exhortation: “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Overt sin must be judged and dealt with in the assembly, if it is to be the holy Temple God intends it to be: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are... It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-6).

Thus, as has been before stated, The worship of the Lord must be guided by the word of the Lord. The holy Scriptures must be read, meditated in and obeyed implicitly, if both the individual believer, or an assembly of believers, is to offer worship that is acceptable to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Each Christian is responsible to God to “search the Scriptures” for himself, and to “study to show himself approved unto God” in this matter of worship, as also in every other department of his Christian life. His motto should be that of a great man of God who said: “Apply thyself wholly to the Scriptures, and apply the Scriptures wholly to thyself.”

~ end of chapter 11 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

12. Part IV. The Object of Worship. Idolatry

CHAPTER TWELVE IV. THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP - IDOLATRY

Having discussed the meaning, importance and authority of worship; let us now consider the vital matter of the Object of worship, or whom should we worship? The Scriptures give no uncertain answer to this question: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God;" "He is the Lord, worship thou him" (Luke 4:8; Psalms 45:11). The object of the believer's worship is the triune and eternal Godhead. He is described as being, "eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.

Amen" (1 Timothy 1:17).

Though the actual word, "Trinity," is not found in the Scriptures, yet the truth of the doctrine of the tri-unity of the Godhead is clearly evident as one opens the pages of the Bible. The eternal Godhead is revealed as consisting of three Persons, each equal and eternal with each Other: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each Person of the Godhead possesses a distinct Personality, as is seen by the intelligence, emotions and will, which Each evidences; yet these three are but One in essence. There are not three Gods, but one Godhead, revealed in three Persons. This tremendous truth is utterly beyond our finite comprehension, but not beyond our apprehension, for it is plainly declared in the word of God. This fact of the tri-unity of the Godhead is found in the very opening verse of the Bible where we read: "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth." The word "God," in the Hebrew is the uni-plural noun, "Elohim."

Again, in Genesis 1:26, we read that God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," etc. This likeness may have reference to the tripartite nature that man possesses, for he is described as being composed of "spirit, soul and body" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Thus each human being consists of three parts, yet he is but one individual. In the New Testament, the truth of the tri-unity of the Godhead is still more clearly indicated. We will quote seven out of the many references to this fact. At the baptism of Christ, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the shape of a dove, while the voice of the Father testified: "This is my beloved Son." (Matthew 3:17). When our Lord promised His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit, He made a double reference to the Trinity, for He said: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me" (John 15:26). Of Christ's redemptive work, which He accomplished on the cross, we read: "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:13-14). The believer's salvation is due to the work of the Trinity, for we read that each Christian is, "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:2). The Trinity is also seen in our approach to God in prayer, for we read: "For through Him [Christ], we both [Jew and Gentile] have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:18). The Trinity is also prominent in

baptism. Christ's commission to His disciples was: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). The three-fold ascription of praise in the first chapter of Ephesians is addressed, First, to the Father for having blessed us; Then to the Son for His redemptive work; Third, to the Holy Spirit for His sealing of the believer (vss. 6, 12, 14). The beautiful benediction of 2 Corinthians 13:14 will be a fitting conclusion to this short summary: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen."

There are no adequate illustrations of the tri-unity of the Godhead, for it transcends all human comprehension, and defies all analysis.

God is unique and has declared: "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One" (Isaiah 40:25). Many attempts have been made to illustrate the Trinity, but all fall far short of conveying the actual fact.

Nathaniel Wood, in his excellent book, "The Secret of the Universe," sets out to discover this secret, which he affirms is the tri-unity of the Godhead. He proceeds to demonstrate that each man is a tri-unity, for he is spirit, soul and body, yet he is but one individual. Space is a tri-unity, for it is composed of length, breadth and height, yet space is but one. Time also falls into the same category, for it consists of past, present and future, yet it is but one. His book is commended to all who desire to make a study of this particular truth. Scripture generally presents the Father as purposing, the Son as executing the Divine counsel, and the Holy Spirit as energizing and applying the purpose, and making it operative in the experience of the believer. The Father loved the world, and gave His Son. The Son, obedient to the father's will, by the eternal Spirit gave Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice to accomplish our redemption. The Holy Spirit convicts the sinner of his need, leads the soul to trust in Christ and then, on his believing, seals him unto the day of redemption: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise... And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 4:30). The more one contemplates the greatness, majesty and glory of the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the greater he is lost in wonder, praise, adoration and worship. It well becomes us, as our thoughts are occupied with this infinitely holy Being; the eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and immutable God, to stand in awe and humbly bow in the presence of the One whom each Christian has been brought to know as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). As we did when discussing our authority for worship, we shall first consider the object of worship negatively and then view it positively. Let us therefore see what God has expressly forbidden us to worship.

1. What We are Not to Worship Idols. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them" (Exodus 20:3; Exodus 20:5). An idol is anything that a person worships in his heart, and which consequently displaces God as preeminent, or relegates Him to a second place in the consciousness. Idolatry is a deliberate turning away from God.

It is not, as is sometimes represented, an attempt on the part of man to reach God. Romans 1:19-23 makes this very clear. Mark the words carefully: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his

eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” The active agent behind all idolatry is Satan and his host of wicked spirits. We read: “What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils” (1 Corinthians 10:19-20).

Satan’s chief purpose is first to rob God of the glory and worship that is due to His name, and then to set up himself as the object of worship. All idolatry is therefore Satanic in its origin, and evidences the Devil’s desire for worship. His fall was due to this very thing.

He was created by God as one of His most beautiful and wise creatures. Moreover he occupied a position of close intimacy with Him. He was not content with this, but his heart was lifted up with pride and he aspired to be like God Himself. He said within his heart: “How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit” (Isaiah 14:12-15, cp.

Ezekiel 28:11-19). For this act of rebellion, he fell. Not only is idolatry Satanic in its origin, but it is utterly inexcusable on the part of man. This is true also of atheism. God’s reality, wisdom and power has been fully demonstrated in creation. In view of this unmistakable evidence of the reality of the Creator, it can be easily appreciated what abysmal folly it is for a person to take something that God has created, fashion from it an idol, and then bow down and worship the work of his own hands! This is graphically pictured for us in Isaiah 44:9-17. With fine irony and biting sarcasm Isaiah, by Divine inspiration, describes a man making a graven image.

- First, he cuts down the tree that is to form his idol.
- With part of this tree he makes a bonfire and warms himself, thus providing himself with the pleasures of life.
- With another portion he bakes his food, thus supplying himself with the provisions of life.
- With the residue, or what is left over after providing for his own interests, he makes an idol.
- Falling down before it, he worships it and prays to it saying: “Deliver me, for thou art my God!”

We have noted before that one does not have to bow down to a visible and material idol in order to become an idolater. Idolatry is a thing that is more of the heart than the hand. It is possible to commit idolatry while outwardly appearing to be a worshipper of God. Our Lord quoted the words of Isaiah to the religious leaders of His day and said: “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Matthew 15:8).

Ezekiel was given a vision of the idolatrous heart-departure of Israel from God. He was shown a hole in a wall which led ultimately to a door through which he was told to enter. Upon entering, he saw all the abominable idols of the heathen pictured on the walls. Before these pictures, seventy of the elders of Israel stood, offering incense to and worshipping these idols. Then said God: "Hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery?" (Ezekiel 8:7-18). Every person has this secret chamber in his heart, and the furnishings of this room determine his real spiritual status.

Let us have a look at some of these idols, material and otherwise, which are calculated to turn the believer's heart away from God, deny Him the place of absolute eminence in the life and rob Him of the worship due to His name. In this connection, we need ever to remember the closing injunction of John's first Epistle, which was written to Christians: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21). The first idol we shall consider is: Self. The fall of man is directly attributed to this idol. Satan's promise to Eve was: "Ye shall be as gods." Thus his temptation was for Eve to exalt herself at the expense of God, and exchange God's rule for self-government. We have already seen that this was the cause of Satan's downfall.

Self is a very subtle idol, for, - It possesses the ability to intrude itself into our holiest moments.

- It appears in all sorts of disguises, but always for the purpose of displacing God as pre-eminent in every department of the believer's life.

- Its great appeal is to pride, whether it be pride of race, place, face or grace.

- It is evidenced in selfishness of every kind, - Self-exaltation at the expense of others, - Self-esteem of one's abilities - Self-seeking on all occasions.

It even masquerades under the name of humility, so that we can become very proud because we are so humble!

One often hears the expression: "He is a self-made man and he worships his creator"!

We ever need to remember however that, at his best, the self-made man is but a horrible example of unskilled labor!

Though self-preservation may be the first law of nature, it is certainly not of grace; for Christ said: "if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). This deliberate denial, not merely of "things," but of self itself, goes against the natural grain of each person, but it is essential to the spiritual worship of God.

Money. How often this idol has been allowed to turn a believer's heart from spiritual realities! From the worship of almighty God, many have degenerated to the secret worship of the almighty dollar, and thus have become "i-dollar-ters." No wonder, therefore, that Paul wrote: "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:10). The warning of Colossians 3:5 is even more arresting: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." This unholy desire to gain wealth, at whatever cost, is here likened to plain idolatry. These words should be allowed to search all our hearts.

God is denied much worship, because those who have the money at their disposal refuse to part with it in order to send forth missionaries of the Gospel into the regions beyond, that other souls may be saved, and thus become worshippers of the true and living God.

It is tragically possible for Christians to become more interested in stocks and bonds than in the Scriptures.

It is a well known fact that too much interest in “stocks” will inevitably result in “bonds,” and the believer will soon find his spiritual life has been brought into bondage to wealth.

Money often becomes the acid test of the reality of one’s profession of Christianity. It would be well if every Christian tested himself on this score. It is not for nothing that two whole chapters in the New Testament are devoted to the grace of willing, cheerful, systematic, proportionate and bountiful giving (II Corinthians 8 to 9). The words of the wise man are in order at this point: “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty” (Proverbs 11:24). Peter puts it thus: “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10). (c) Business.

Closely allied to money is this idol, which looms so large on the horizon of many believers and which, in altogether too many cases, has been allowed to drain them of their spirituality and consequent ability to worship. God’s word recognizes the necessity for the Christian to be in business, but warns against the danger of business being in the Christian. The Christian businessman is exhorted in the Word to be “not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Romans 12:11). We may well thank God for the noble army of good business men and women, who do not allow their businesses to run them, but who run their businesses for the glory of God and the blessing of others.

Robert Carey, when asked what his business was, replied: “My business is preaching the Gospel and I cobble shoes to pay expenses.” No Christian should become so busy in his business that he is too busy to do business for and with God. Each believer must be prepared to say to his business what Abraham said to the young men: “Tarry ye here... while I... go yonder and worship.”

We must all beware of what has been aptly termed, “the barrenness of a busy life.” Each believer should therefore deliberately take time out for this most important matter of worship. (d) Pleasure is still another idol, before whose shrine thousands of devotees prostrate themselves.

Scripture indicates that one of the characteristics of the last days is that men shall be “Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:4).

It is not an exaggeration to say that the world has gone “pleasure-mad.” The very word “amuse,” simply means to prevent from musing, or meditate. The whole purpose of the goddess of pleasure is to stupefy her victims, and prevent them from thinking about God, Christ, sin, salvation, death and judgment. All her pleasures are of the “escapist” variety, which enables her votaries, for a short while at least, to escape from the vital, the spiritual and the eternal realities of life.

It is sadly possible for a Christian to be carried away from heart devotion to God by these pleasures, and thus lose his ability to function as a worshipper of God. It is to be feared that upon the altar of many a Christian’s heart, from which there used to ascend fragrant worship that

brought delight to the Father; there are now but the cold ashes of formality, and the tragic experience of lost communion through occupation with worldly pleasures. The tendency of the pleasures of this world is to, - Minimize sin, - Encourage lust, - Pander to oneself, - Destroy spirituality, - Hinder worship - Eclipse God. (e) Recreation.

It may seem strange to include this in the list of idols, but often that which is good is allowed to become the enemy of that which is best. No one doubts for a moment the benefits of recreation as a means of maintaining one's physical, mental and spiritual fitness. It is when one's recreations are allowed to encroach on, and even absorb the time and energy that should be spent for Bible study, prayer, service and worship, that it becomes an evil which must come under the category of an "idol."

It has been well said that the "abuse of the best is the worst." The Scriptures tell us that: "Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things" (1 Timothy 4:8).

Time is a precious commodity that must be redeemed (Ephesians 5:16).

We must therefore be careful to see that recreation is used only for the purpose God intended, and not allowed to become the dominating factor in one's life.

Like many other things, recreation can become either a good servant, or a bad master. (f) One's family. This may sound stranger still, yet the fact remains that it is possible to allow one's family to displace God as pre-eminent, and thereby earn His rightful rebuke. Perhaps the classic example of this is Eli, a priest of Israel.

Though he himself was a good man who feared the Lord, yet he allowed his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, to grow up unrestrained by parental discipline, until their vile conduct became a shame and disgrace in Israel. At last God sent a prophet to Eli who rebuked him, and charged him with honoring his sons above God, and said to him: "The Lord saith... Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Samuel 2:27-36).

After this, God spoke to young Samuel and, amongst other things, said of Eli: "I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth: because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (1 Samuel 3:11-14).

Many Christian parents have discovered, to their sorrow, the price they must pay for an undisciplined family. These spoiled children have brought disgrace to their name and bitter grief to their hearts. Instead of honoring God and obeying His word by bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, they foolishly allowed their children to dictate the policy of the home, with disastrous results. They failed to take heed to the words of the wise man when he said: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15).

- They allowed the family to develop "self expression," at the expense of God-impression.
- They failed to insist on and secure that essential obedience to, and honor of their parents, which God declares should characterize an example of godly living, and thus commanding their filial fear and love;
- They ignored God's plain directions to rule the home and allowed the family to rule them. In this way their children were given preference to God and His word. These children, which

should have become blessings to them, were allowed to become idols and developed into a curse. This bringing up of one's family for God is anything but easy; but it is ten thousand times harder to reap the bitter harvest which results from avoiding one's plain duty, both to God and to them. The tragedy of Eli should speak loudly to all Christian parents, and make them sensible of their solemn obligation to God. There should be a holy determination that their children shall not be allowed to become idols to displace God, but be brought up to fear God, to be obedient to their parents, and thus bring glory to God. Each Christian parent should carefully and prayerfully read and re-read the following Scriptures, and be guided by them in bringing up the family for God.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1-4) "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Colossians 3:20-21) "A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him" (Proverbs 17:25) "He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach" (Proverbs 19:26) "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right" (Proverbs 20:11) "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6) "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Proverbs 23:13-14) "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (Proverbs 29:17) "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" (1 Timothy 3:2-5). (g) Possessions. This idol is closely allied to money and, in many cases, is allowed to displace God as preeminent in the life. The evil of possessions lies in their possessive quality.

It is one thing to possess possessions, but another to allow one's possessions to possess him.

Often it is a believer's house that becomes his all absorbing passion, and which demands all his spare time, energy and money to ensure that it contains every modern convenience and comfort; but alas, to the neglecting of his own spiritual life. Surely it will be agreed that "Better Homes and Gardens" is not the most important thing in life. It is also possible for wives to become "house proud" and go to the extreme in the meticulous care they bestow upon their homes, to the exclusion of all else, including the cultivation of their own spirituality.

It is sadly possible for the house to be a marvel of beauty and order; but the heart of its occupants empty of that spiritual furniture which makes for worship.

Sometimes it is an automobile that occupies the limelight and demands all the attention. It becomes the principal subject of conversation, and the object of the most solicitous care. Many an hour is spent cleaning and polishing it, until it scintillates in the sun, a "thing of beauty and joy for ever," the pride of its owner and the envy of all beholders! No expense is spared to ensure that all the latest features are embodied in its construction, and that it is the finest thing on wheels. If only its possessor was as particular about his spiritual condition as he is about his car, what a volume

of worship would ascend from his soul; but, alas, his heart has degenerated into a kind of garage, for every time he opens his mouth, the subject of cars pop out!

Whatever the believer's possessions may be, if they demand a greater place in the life than God, they become idols. Our Lord's own words should be prayerfully pondered by all who name His name. He said, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).

It is possible for "things" to eclipse God. Each Christian should remember that he is but a steward, or trustee. All that he has, he is to hold as a sacred trust to be administered for God. The day will come when he will have to "give an account of his stewardship." Happy indeed is he who shall do it with joy and now with sorrow: "And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward" (Luke 16:2). (h) Power. The apostle John had to speak of a man named Diotrephes, as one "who loveth to have the preeminence" (3 John 1:9). Power, with this man, had become an obsession. Nothing would suit him but the highest place of authority in the assembly. It is sad enough when one sees the mad scramble for power amongst worldlings; but sadder still to see it in a professing child of God, who claims to be a follower of the One who was "meek and lowly in heart"; (Matthew 11:28-29) and "Who made himself of no reputation" (Php 2:7).

Pride, with its love of power and pre-eminence, is not the atmosphere where worship is either generated, encouraged or displayed. Worship belongs to the humble believer, who is content with the place God has given him, and seeks to fill it with loving and loyal devotion. An old Christian used to say: "Why is there such a rush to get to the top of the ladder, when there is so much room at the bottom?"

Science. This is a modern idol which, through Satan's strategy, has turned many away from the worship of God. By "science," in this sense, we do not refer to established facts of creation that are beyond all question, but to the various theories put forth by men that purport to account for creation without God. The Bible rightly terms such: "Science, falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20).

Many a young and uninstructed believer has gone to a place of "higher learning," only to have his faith shaken in the truth of God's revelation. Some worldly-wise and unbelieving professor propounds a theory as though it were a fact, dubs it "science," and then sneeringly belittles the Bible as being "unscientific," because it does not support his theory!

Thus "Science" is elevated to the position of an idol.

- There it sits upon a high throne.

- It has a mortar board upon its head; - An academic gown upon its body; - A diploma for its sceptre, - A halo of letters around its head, as "B.A, M.A, PH.D, LL.D, B.Sc," etc. At the mention of the name of this sacred idol, "Science," all students are supposed to prostrate themselves, own it as the supreme lord of their lives, the arbiter of their destiny, and render to it the worship of their hearts, at least until their graduation! One has only to turn to the sacred page to discover how utterly foolish are these vaporings of ungodly men. Every Christian should carefully read 1 Corinthians 1:17-29.

“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.” From this he will learn what God thinks of the wisdom of this world, as it is divorced from a knowledge of God and opposed to His revelation of Divine wisdom in the Scriptures. An old scientist, who was also a humble believer in God's word, declared that during his lifetime he had seen the rise and fall of over 300 false theories that loudly claimed to prove the Bible untrue. The false theory of organic evolution, in spite of the fact that there is no scientific evidence to support it, is still put forth as though it was an established fact, and thousands of gullible young men and women swallow it whole because it bears the magical name of “Science,” spelled with capital letters! A young Christian in an infidel college was much shaken in her faith in the integrity of Holy Scriptures. She decided to shut herself up in her room until she knew where she stood in regard to these matters. At the end of several hours she emerged with the conviction of the truth of Divine revelation. On the flyleaf of her Bible, she had written the words: “Can time undo what once was true?” If the word of God was once true, it will always be true, for truth is unchangeable and eternal.

Some of the greatest real scientists, both of the past and the present, are true Christians, who have declared they see no contradiction whatever between what God has been pleased to reveal in His word, and the established facts of science. We have by no means exhausted the list of idols, but surely enough has been written to show that whatever it may be which displeases God, or which hinders our worship of Him is, to that extent, an idol, which we must not tolerate for a moment.

~ end of chapter 12 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

13. The Object of Worship. Idolatry. Men, Angels, and Nature

CHAPTER THIRTEEN THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP - MEN, ANGELS, AND NATURE Now let us consider some other things which we are specifically warned not to worship. (2) Men.

“And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man” (Acts 10:25-26) “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy... And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God” (Revelation 22:8-9) Not only is the worship of idols prohibited, whether they be literal or figurative, material or immaterial, but we are also warned against the worship of men. Cornelius the Roman Centurion, was taught this lesson. When Peter, in response to his invitation, came to his house, we read that Cornelius made to worship at the feet of Peter. Peter, however, forbade him saying: “Stand up; I myself also am a man.”

There is always a subtle danger of taking one’s eyes off God and getting them on man; of allowing the seen to obscure the unseen and of permitting the temporal to eclipse the eternal.

God’s word to Israel was: “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?” (Isaiah 2:22). Our Lord’s own words to His disciples were even more forceful: “Beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils,” etc. (Matthew 10:17).

It is not for nothing that we are warned: “The fear of man bringeth a snare, but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe” (Proverbs 29:25). By nature man has ever been a hero worshipper. He has always been prone to give to man the titles, praise, honor, worship and glory which he denies to God Himself. Part of God’s indictment of man is that he has “changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever” (Romans 1:25). The day is coming when the world, which despised, rejected and crucified the Son of God, will welcome as its king, “the man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all the is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). The number of this man of sin is deeply significant, for it is the number of a man, six hundred, three score and six, or 666. In the meantime, man largely fills the horizon of the world’s thought.

They think in terms of humanity: what man is, thinks, says and does: instead of in terms of Deity: what God is, thinks, says and does. At the head of one huge religious system of Christendom is a person to whom the title of “holy father” is actually given. In other circles the titles of “reverend,” “right reverend,” “very reverend,” and “most reverend” is commonly addressed to men. The title, “reverend” is only found once in the Authorized Version, and it is reserved for God alone. We read: “He sent redemption unto His people. He hath commanded his covenant for ever: Holy and

Reverend is his name” (Psalm 119).

Elihu’s words are particularly appropriate in this connection, for he said: “Let me not, I pray you, accept any man’s person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away” (Job 32:21-22).

One wonders what Elihu’s reaction would be today when he heard men addressed as: “holy father,” “reverend,” “right reverend,” “very reverend,” and “most reverend!”

Neither do we have any warrant whatever for addressing prayers to men or women and, least of all, to a few so-called “saints,” who have been dead for years. The believer is directed to pray to the living God alone, through the sole mediation of Christ, as guided by the Holy Spirit, through the Word. Our Lord addressed these words to His audience: “How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” (John 5:44). Of these same people it is recorded: “They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:43). The worship of men, whether alive or dead, is thus directly forbidden by God, as also undue reverence paid to man, together with the use of flattering titles, appropriate only to Deity. Like Peter, the Christian must firmly take his stand on the issue and boldly affirm: “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). (3) Angels “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Colossians 2:18) - Angels and spirit beings, created by God to fulfil His purposes and accomplish His service, “Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:” (Psalms 104:4).

- They are described as “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Hebrews 1:4). As created and intelligent beings, they worship their Creator: “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Revelation 5:11-12).

These angels are classified in various orders. We read of, - “Michael, the archangel” (Jude 1:9); - The “angel Gabriel” (Luke 1:19; Luke 1:26); - The “cherubim and seraphim” (Genesis 3:24; Isaiah 6:2); - The “host of angels” (Revelation 5:11-12); - The “thrones, dominions, principalities and powers,” all of which were created by Christ (Colossians 1:16). The study of angels is most interesting and instructive, for they have played a large part in the Divine program in the past. Though unseen to human eyes, they are active now in the present, and shall be associated with God’s purpose in the future, as is clearly indicated in the Book of Revelation. The apostle Paul had to combat the false philosophy of Gnosticism, which taught that Christ merely belonged to a higher order of angels, and was not the unique Son of God, equal and eternal with the Father and the Spirit. He wrote: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head [Christ]” (Colossians 2:18-19).

We must keep in mind that angels, however great, wise and powerful, are only created beings. The worship of them is absolutely forbidden by God. In the light of this, it seems strange to hear people addressing prayers to them and crying: “Michael, help us!” or: “Hear us, O Gabriel!”

Prayers addressed to angels are therefore a direct violation of the expressed will of God as seen in His Word. (4) Nature We hear a great deal today about certain people who are called: “nature worshippers.”

Such people affirm they do not desire to attend “Divine worship in a building made by human hands;” or to read and study a book called the Bible; but much prefer to take a walk in the country, in order to “worship the god of nature.” As an aid to their devotions, many of these devotees take a fishing rod, others a set of golf clubs, etc. One may see these “worshippers” at their devotions by the hundreds each Sunday! In fact, to many, a “Sabbath day’s journey” seems to consist of going around the golf course three times!

While we may rightly admire the beauties of God’s handiwork in nature, which combines to reveal His wisdom, power and eternal Godhead; yet to worship His creation is folly in the extreme.

God has anticipated this tendency in sinful man to allow creation to obscure the Creator.

“And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto Heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of Heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole Heaven. But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day” (Deuteronomy 4:14-20) In spite of these plain words, we read that Israel turned aside from the God of Heaven to worship the sun god, Baal, and paid the price for its apostasy by being taken into captivity (I Kings 18).

Amongst the pagan people of the world today, there are still people who worship the sun, moon and stars. David had the right view point when he said, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained: what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?... O Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!” (Psalms 8:3-4; Psalms 8:9).

Job referred to the heathenish custom of nature worship that obtained in his day when people, on looking at the sun, kissed their hand as a token of their worship of it: “If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above” (Job 31:24-28) ~ end of chapter 13 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

14. The Object of Worship -- God the Father

CHAPTER FOURTEEN THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP -- GOD THE FATHER

2. God is to be the Object of our Worship Having viewed this division of our subject negatively, and learned that God prohibits the worship of idols, men, angels and nature; let us now consider the subject positively and discover, from the Word, whom we are to worship. We mentioned, at the beginning of this division, that Scripture enjoins us to worship the eternal Godhead, consisting of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We shall now look particularly at each Person of the Godhead. To the regenerated believer, God is not some far off Deity, too high and holy to take notice of him, but He is revealed as a loving Father, into Whose family he has been born, to Whom he has been brought near, and Who has blessed him with all the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3; John 1:12-13). The title, "Father," as we have already noticed, suggests intimacy, dearness, love and care. In response to His disciples' request to teach them to pray, our Lord answered: "When ye pray say: 'Our Father, which art in Heaven,'" etc. (Luke 11:2-4). In His conversation with the woman at the well, Christ unfolded the great revelation that: "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" (John 4:23).

Let us note three reasons why we should worship the Father. (a) We should worship the Father because of what He is The New Testament reveals Him as Father in many aspects. He is: (i) The Holy Father: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (John 17:11).

He loves righteousness and hates iniquity: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Hebrews 1:9). Never was this holiness of the Father more clearly demonstrated than when, at the cross, He forsook the One who bore our sins and visited all His righteous judgment upon our Divine Substitute: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Psalms 22:1-3). (ii) The Righteous Father: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me" (John 17:25). By the righteousness of God we mean God's perfect consistency with His own character.

Whatever God performs, He does it on a perfectly righteous basis, either in saving the believer, or condemning the unbeliever. This is Paul's great argument in the Epistle to the Romans. (iii) The Father of glory: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Ephesians 1:17). By glory is meant displayed excellence. God has displayed all the many perfections and excellences of His

character in His Son, and recorded them for us in the holy Scriptures: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). (iv) The Father of lights: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

We are told that “God is light.” Light is that which “makes manifest” (1 John 1:5; Ephesians 5:13). To Him “all things are open and naked”; for “known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Hebrews 4:13). He is the Father who has manifested Himself, and whose outshining glory is seen “in the face of Jesus Christ.” (v) The Father of mercies: “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3). As such, He is also the “God of all comfort.” David sang: “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him” (Psalms 103:13). As the Father of mercies, He knows all the frailties, fears, failings and faults of His people, and their constant need of His correcting and restoring grace. Truly: “His mercy endureth for ever” (Psalms 107:1). Every need of His children is not only anticipated, but abundantly supplied “according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Php 4:19). (vi) The Father of all: “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:6). This does not mean that God is the universal Father of all humanity, and that all people are His children. The false theory of “the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man,” has no foundation whatever in Scripture. The reference here is to the fact that all regenerated believers have “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” In other words, there is no aristocracy in His family. All God’s children are equally near and dear to Him, so there is no occasion for spiritual pride, or the exhibition of snobbery amongst Christians. (vii) The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort... Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ... Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3).

What an inexpressibly precious title this is! He is not only the Father of the whole family of the redeemed; but He is also the Father of the One whose precious blood has made such a family relationship possible! Christ is the “only begotten of the Father.” This phrase, “only begotten,” means that He is “unique,” or “the only one of His kind.” The term “eternal Father” necessitates an “eternal Son;” and an “eternal Son” necessitates an “eternal Father.” We cannot have one without the other. For all eternity He was the Son of God, equal in every respect to the Father and the Holy Spirit. When Christ became incarnate and was born in Bethlehem, He did not enter into existence, but only unto another form of existence, that of man. Thus Deity became Humanity and “without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16). As the incarnate Son of God, He lived His life as a Man on earth, in voluntary submission to all the will of His Father. This will led Him all the way to Calvary, where He accomplished perfectly all the work the Father gave Him to do. The Father indicated His complete approval of this work of redemption by raising His Son from the dead, and glorifying Him at His own right hand. Every sinner, trusting in His finished work and receiving Him as Saviour, is that moment, by the Spirit’s regenerating power, born into the family of God. From thenceforth he is called - A “child of God,”

- An "heir of God,"

- A "joint heir with Christ" (Romans 8:14-17).

Thus we have the unspeakable privilege and honor of addressing God by the same name as did His Son while on earth, and we may now call Him, "Father." Our Lord, in resurrection, associated Himself with all who loved Him and said: "Go to my brethren and say unto them: I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God" (John 20:17). (b) We should worship the Father because of what He has done (i) He has loved us: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Why He set His love upon us is a mystery we shall never solve, but we rejoice because of its glorious reality. God's love is described as being, Eternal: "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:3), Revealed: (John 3:16), Manifested: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9), Bestowed: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (I

John 3:1), Believed: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16), Reciprocated: "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19), Inseparable: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39). (ii) He has given the unspeakable gift of His Son: "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14). The greatness of God's love can only be estimated by the gift He gave, for love is ever measured by the sacrifice made on behalf of its objects. We do well to sing, "Blessed be God, our God! Who gave for us His well beloved Son, That Gift of gifts, all other gifts in One!

Blessed be God, our God!" (iii) He has chosen us in Christ: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Ephesians 1:3-4).

Before the world was called into being by His creative word, and flung into space to follow its predestined orbit, the believer was foreseen and chosen in Christ. This is a stupendous and breath-taking thought.

It would be incredible but for the fact that God has told us so in plain, unmistakable language. (iv) He has saved us by His grace: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:12-13).

What a marvellous translation and transformation God has wrought in the life of each believer!

How can Christians possibly estimate the depth of sin, degradation, and spiritual darkness from which they have been mercifully delivered by God's matchless grace! It becomes them, therefore, to sing, "Great God of wonders! All Thy ways Display Thine attributes Divine; But the bright glories of Thy grace, Above Thine other wonders shine, Who is a pardoning God like Thee? And Who has grace, so rich and free?" (v) He has blessed us: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

How can we possibly enumerate these blessings, or "name them one by one," seeing they are innumerable? Our Father is not only the "blessed God," but He also is the God of blessing. The believer's wealth is untold, for God has said that all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. There is not a blessing we possess that has not come to us from the loving hand of our Father in Heaven. With the hymn writer, we can lift our voices in worship to Him and sing, "Praise ye the Father -- Source of all our blessing, Before, whose gifts earth's riches boons wax dim!

Resting in Him, His peace and joy possessing, All things are ours, for we have all in Him!" (vi) He has made us His children: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (1 John 3:1).

How wonderful it is to think that we, who "were sometimes alienated and enemies in our mind by wicked works," are now not only reconciled but, by the regenerating power of the Spirit of God, actually made the sons and daughters of the Lord God almighty! (Colossians 1:21; 2 Corinthians 6:18; John 1:12) Thus we have the inestimable birth-right privilege of calling Him, "Abba, Father": "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and jointheirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:15-17). As "the Father" He revealed Himself in the Scriptures as the One, - Who knoweth our needs: "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matthew 6:8); - Who loveth us: "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16:27); - Who keepeth us: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (John 17:11); - Who comforteth us: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work" (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17); - Who heareth and answereth our prayers: "That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:4). (vii) He has made it possible for us to worship Him: "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). Not content with all the other things He has done for us, He now both seeks and appreciates the worship of His children. To this end "a new and living way" has been provided, by which each believer, by faith, may enter the holiest of all. In His blessed presence, he may now fall before Him and worship Him as the Father. May each one of

us seek to take full advantage of this privilege and thus fulfil the father's gracious purpose in our redemption and regeneration: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Hebrews 10:19-22).

~ end of chapter 14 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

15. The Object of Worship -- God the Son

CHAPTER FIFTEEN THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP -- WORSHIP THE SON, BUT NOT THE Holy Spirit

(2) We are to worship the Son “And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints... And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever”

We have already drawn attention to the tri-unity of the Godhead, and seen that each Person in the Godhead possesses full Deity and Personality, and each is equal and eternal with the other. There is abundant evidence in Scripture that the Son of God is to be worshipped. The Father Himself has declared it, and issued the decree: “And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him” (Hebrews 1:6) It is important to notice that our Lord, during His lifetime on earth, as Son of Man, received the worship of men. At His birth: “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh” (Matthew 2:11); during His ministry: “And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean... While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live... Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God... Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me” (Matthew 8:2; Matthew 9:18; Matthew 14:33; Matthew 15:25) and “But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him” (Mark 5:6) and “And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him” (John 9:38); at His resurrection: “And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him... And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted” (Matthew 28:9; Matthew 28:17); at His ascension: “And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Luke 24:52). He now receives worship in Heaven: “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth... Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (Revelation 5:9-10; Revelation 5:12-13).

He shall receive worship in the future: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" (Php 2:10). He Himself claimed equal honor with the Father, and declared that "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (John 5:23; cp. John 14:10-11). (a) We should worship the Son because of what He is (i) He is the Son of God. As such, He is equal with the Father. He possesses full and absolute Deity, for we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). In this magnificent prologue to John's Gospel, three things are affirmed of Christ.

First, the eternity of His Being: "In the beginning."

Second, the distinction of His Person: He was "the Word."

Third, His essential Deity: "The Word was God." In Hebrews 1:8 we find the Father speaking to the Son and addressing Him as Deity: "But unto the Son He saith: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom." (ii) He is the Creator of all things: "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

Though the apostle's creed may affirm: "I believe in God the Father, Maker of Heaven and earth," yet the New Testament puts the emphasis for Creation, not on the Father, but on the Son as the One who created all things. We read: "For by him [Christ] were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16).

It was His hands that fashioned man from the dust of the earth and gave him life. The universe around us came into being by His creatorial power and all things are now sustained and held together by Him. (iii) He is the alone REVEALER of the Father: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). The invisible God has become visible in Christ. All that can be seen of the Father is in the Son. In fact, Christ Himself declared: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father" (John 14:6-11).

He is described as being the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His Person: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3).

Josiah Condor, in his magnificent hymn, has caught something of the glories of the Person of the Son of God.

"Thou art the everlasting Word, The father's only Son, God manifest, God seen and heard, And heaven's beloved One. In Thee, most perfectly expressed The father's glories shine, Of the full Deity possessed, Eternally Divine.

True image of the infinite, Whose essence is concealed; Brightness of uncreated light, The heart of God revealed.

Throughout the universe of bliss, The center Thou, and Sun, The eternal theme of praise is this, To heaven's beloved One.

Worthy, O LAMB of God, art Thou, That every knee to Thee should bow!" (b) We should worship the Son because of what He has done (i) For His incarnation: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Timothy 3:16) and "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). From the infinite heights of eternal Godhead, He came to the simplicity of a human body, and thus Deity clothed Himself with Humanity! No finite mind can possibly comprehend the wondrous mystery and miracle of the incarnation; but we can believe and, believing, fall at His feet in worship as did the wise men of Matthew 2. By His incarnation God became Man, nor part God and part Man, but wholly God and wholly Man. Thus absolute Deity and perfect humanity were combined in one Person, when the Son of God became the Son of Man.

"Thou wouldst like sinful man be made, In everything but sin; That we, as like Thee might become; As we, unlike had been." By His incarnation the Lord Jesus bridged the gulf that separated man from God.

Six hundred years before His advent, Isaiah wrote concerning Him, - "Unto us a child is born;" here in His humanity.

- "Unto us a son is given;" here is His Deity (Isaiah 9:6).

Conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, the mighty Creator became the Babe of Bethlehem. No wonder His birth was accompanied by the heavenly demonstration of a multitude of the angelic host who praised God and chanted: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" (Luke 2:14). As God, He fulfilled all the obligations that perfect righteousness demanded. As Man, He met the deepest and direst need of lost humanity and, by the blood of His cross, secured their reconciliation to God.

It truly becomes us to sing, "Worthy, incarnate Word, to be adored!

All things were made by Thee, and for Thee, O Lord!

Yet Thou didst leave Thy bright throne for earth's shame And, clothed with humanity, our Saviour became!" (ii) For His holy life of perfect obedience, by which He glorified the Father on earth. He could say: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

During His earthly sojourn He displayed those perfect moral qualities and glories that so delighted the heart of His Father, and which brought from Heaven the testimony: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Our Lord could say: "And he that sent me is with me, the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). The father's eye rested on the Son of His love in absolute complacency as, for thirty-three years, He perfectly translated all the will of His Father into the terms of a sinless, holy and harmless life. What infinite humility and gracious condescension marked His steps as He moved in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, which neither desired nor appreciated the beauty of His holy character! Think of Him as "He went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). He gave, - Sight to the blind,

- Cleansing to the leper, - Healing to the sick, - Hearing to the deaf - Even life to the dead.

Such was the character of His spoken ministry that those sent to arrest Him returned empty handed and testified: "Never man spake like this man!" (John 7:46). By His holy life, His matchless words and His marvelous miracles, Christ demonstrated His essential and eternal Deity. At the same time, He evidenced His perfect humanity. Thus essential Deity and sinless humanity were harmoniously blended and perfectly expressed in the Person of our blessed Lord. His whole life was redolent with the glory of God. One has only to read the inspired account in the four Gospels, which combine to give us a fourfold view of Him as - Israel's King, - Jehovah's Servant, - The Son of Man - The Son of God. To be carried away with wonder, praise and worship, and exclaim with the hymn-writer, "What grace, O Lord, and beauty shone Around Thy steps below!

What patient love was seen in all Thy life and death of woe! For ever on Thy burdened heart A weight of sorrow hung; Yet no ungentle murmuring word Escaped Thy silent tongue.

Thy foes might hate, despise, revile, Thy friends unfaithful prove; Unwearied in forgiveness still, Thy heart could only love." These moral glories of our Lord have been the subject of countless books. One of the best of them is by J. G. Bellett and is entitled: "The Moral Glories of our Lord Jesus Christ." This little book, which can be read at a sitting, beautifully presents the perfect combination of the Deity and Humanity of Christ, as seen in His life on earth. It has been used to lead many to a fuller appreciation of the earthly life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. (iii) For His voluntary and substitutionary sacrifice on our behalf. This was the supreme purpose of His incarnation. He clothed Himself with humanity in order that He might die for man, His creature's sin. We read that He was made "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death" (Hebrews 2:9).

He informed His disciples of His purpose to be a vicarious and substitutionary sacrifice and said, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). On another occasion He declared: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17-18). The Cross was ever before Him. At the outset of His ministry He said: "The Son of Man must be lifted up."

He allowed no person or circumstance to turn Him aside from His lonely path to Calvary. He exclaimed: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11).

"It was a lonely path He trod, From every human soul apart; Known to Himself and God alone, Was all the grief that filled His heart.

Yet from the track, He turned not back, 'Til where we lay, in sin and shame, He found us -- blessed be His name!" The classic passage on this subject is Php 2:5-8, where we read that Christ: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

It becomes us therefore to adore Him for His redemptive work and sing, "Worthy, O Lamb of God, worthy art Thou, Low at Thy blessed feet, Lord Jesus, we bow! For Thou wast slain for our sins,

blessed Lord; And Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood!" As the believer things of Calvary, and of the holy Son of God, who had no sin, knew no sin and did no sin, being made sin for him; there can be no room for pride, but only for humble and reverent worship of the Saviour.

It becomes Him to sing with Isaac Watts, "When I survey the wondrous cross, On which the Lord of glory died; My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride."

All alone, in that "dark, mysterious hour," despised and rejected of men and forsaken of His God, our blessed Lord bore our sins and drained, to its last, dark, bitter drop, the awful cup of God's judgment. By that one sacrifice, which He offered to God, He has satisfied, once and for ever, all the demands of a holy God against the believing sinner, who can now testify, "Because the sinless Saviour died, My sinful soul is counted free; For God, the Just, is satisfied To look on Christ, and pardon me!" The substitutionary sacrifice of Christ is the basis of all the believer's blessings. As he concentrates his mind's attention and his heart's affection upon the Son of God, who loved him, and gave Himself for him, worship is generated in his soul.

F. Allaben's beautiful hymn seems to sum up this appreciation of the believer's heart, "Life, life of love poured out, fragrant and holy!

Life, 'mid rude thorns of earth, stainless and sweet!

Life, whence God's face of love, glorious, but lowly, Shines forth to bow us, Lord, low at Thy feet!

Grief, grief of love, that drew hate's every arrow!

Grief that Thy suffering heart only could meet.

Grief, whence Thy face of love, shining in sorrow, Draws us, adorning, Lord, low at Thy feet!

Death, death of stricken love, wrath's sea exploring!

Death, life's mysterious death -- meeting deep; Death, whence Thy bursting heart fills ours, outpouring All, all in worship, Lord, low at Thy feet!" (iv) For His glorious resurrection and ascension We must ever link, in our thoughts, "the sufferings of Christ" with "the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:11). We do not worship a dead Christ, but One who rose again triumphant, and now is glorified at God's right hand. As the believer thinks of this he sings, "Rise, my soul, behold, 'tis Jesus!

Jesus fills thy wondering eyes, See Him now, in glory seated, Where thy sins no more can rise!" To John, the glorified Lord made the triumphant proclamation: "I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore!" (Revelation 1:18). The transaction at Calvary will never be repeated, for we read: "Christ, being raised from the death dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: (for all) but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (Romans 6:9-10). Not only did Christ rise, henceforth to live in the power of an endless life, but He ascended to take His place "on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3).

More wonderful still, He has declared to the believer: "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). Thus he unites all His redeemed people in Himself, and secures for them and assures to them the prospect of their eternal glory with Him. (c) We should worship the Son of God because of what He is doing. (i) As the Advocate, Intercessor and great High Priest of His people.

Having accomplished all the work necessary for our salvation by His death and resurrection; He now ever lives at God's right hand as the Intercessor, Advocate and great High Priest of the believer. He sits upon the throne in order to make good in us all He accomplished for us on the Cross.

- As the Advocate, He represents us before the Father: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

- As the Intercessor, He pleads for us with the Father: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

- As the great High Priest, He presents our worship to the Father: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: 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. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer" (Hebrews 8:1-3). Hence we sing, "Much incense is ascending Before the eternal throne; God graciously is bending To hear each feeble groan; To all our prayers and praises Christ adds His sweet perfume, And love the censer raises, Its odors to consume.

O God, we come with singing, Because our great High Priest, Our names to Thee is bringing, Nor e'er forgets the least, For us He wears the mitre, Where holiness shines bright, For us His robes are whiter Than heaven's unsullied light." (ii) As Head of the Church, which is His body.

Christ is now the "Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). As such, he lives to supply every need of the members of His body on earth. For this cause He gives gifts unto men. In the beginning of the Church's history He gave: "apostles and prophets." Now he gives, "evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:8-12). By these gifts from the risen glorified Head, "The whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:15-16).

These gifts are the reason that the Church is built up for the Lord. As the Head, He is described as walking in the midst of the local churches, appraising the true spiritual worth of each: "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle" (Revelation 1:13).

He graces, with His presence, each gathering of believers who meet in His name (Matthew 18:20). He is the Host at the table of remembrance, and invites each blood-bought one to eat of the bread and drink of the cup saying: "This do in remembrance of me." The Lord Himself revealed to Paul that "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). When His saints, in scriptural simplicity, gather in His name alone to thus remember Him; what hallowed experiences are theirs as they sense the presence of the Lord in their midst!

“What food luxurious loads the board When, at His table, sits the Lord! The wine how rich, the bread how sweet, When Jesus deigns the guests to meet!”

Believers are called upon to worship the glorified One, at God’s right hand, for all He is doing on behalf of those He has made forever His, at such infinite cost. (d) We should worship the Son of God for what He is yet to do The remembrance feast points forward to a time when the Lord shall return, for we eat the bread and drink the cup only “till he come.” The great hope of the Church is the literal and personal coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a significant fact that about one-sixth of the New Testament is taken up with this great event and its far reaching consequences to the Church, to Israel and to the world. We shall concern ourselves only with the first. We are left in no doubt as to the certainty of His coming, for we have a three-fold testimony concerning it.

First of all, there is our Lord’s own proclamation to this effect: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1-3).

Next, there is the angelic confirmation of it: “And while they looked stedfastly toward Heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven” (Acts 1:1011).

Third, we have the apostolic revelation concerning it: “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) and “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:51-58).

These Scriptures alone are sufficient to prove the truth of the literal and personal second coming of Christ. Nor are we left in doubt as to the purpose of His advent. In our Thessalonians passage above, the bodies of those Christians who have died, shall be raised and reunited to their spirits which are already with Christ. This is called the first resurrection.

Those Christians who are alive at His coming shall have their bodies changed, and then be caught up to be with Christ. This is referred to as the rapture. This is the event to which every true Christian looks forward with the keenest expectation and sings, "O joy! O delight! should we go without dying, No sickness, no sadness, no dread, and no crying; Caught up through the clouds with our Lord into glory, When Jesus receives His own!"

Think what this will mean for the Lord!

He will have, in His presence, and clothed with bodies "like unto his glorious body," all those for whom He suffered, bled and died! (Php 3:21). The believer's corrupt nature, called "the flesh," will be left behind for ever, no more to hinder communion with Him. All the redeemed shall then appear before His judgment seat for review and reward: "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (I

Corinthians 3:12-15); and "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:10-12) and "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). In that day the Lord shall present "to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:27). Throughout the vast, eternal ages, the redeemed shall worship the Lamb that was slain and that liveth again; and He, the Lord of all, "shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied!" (Isaiah 53:11).

Whether we think of what our Lord is, in Himself, or what He has done, or what He is doing, or what He will yet do; every aspect of our Lord's Person and work calls forth, from the believer, the worship and adoration of his redeemed spirit. It well becomes us to sing, "Lord of glory, we adore Thee, Christ of God, ascended high!

Heart and soul we bow before Thee, Glorious now beyond the sky, Thee we worship, Thee we praise, Excellant in all Thy ways!

Lord of life! To death once subject; Blessor, yet a curse once made; Of Thy father's heart the Object, Yet in depth of anguish laid, Thee we gaze on, Thee recall, Bearing here our sorrows all.

Royal robes shall soon invest Thee, Royal splendours crown Thy brow; Christ of God, our souls confess Thee, King and Sovereign, even now!

Thee we reverence, Thee obey, Own Thee Lord and Christ always!"

Sometime ago we were informed that, among certain circles of Christians, it was being taught that prayer, praise and worship should never be addressed, directly to the Lord Jesus Christ, but should only be addressed to the Father through the Son. To combat this erroneous idea, a pamphlet was issued, bearing the title: "Direct Address to the Lord Jesus." This has now been

added, as an appendix, to this book and should be consulted at this point. May God be pleased to use it to clarify the mind of each believer as to the Scripturalness of addressing the Lord Jesus Christ directly in prayer, praise and worship! (3) We are not instructed to worship the Holy Spirit. There is no precept, or example in the Scriptures, either for addressing the Holy Spirit personally in prayer, or of directly offering to Him our worship.

We are enjoined to pray in the Spirit, that is, as guided by the Spirit; but are not told to pray to the Spirit. Our worship is to be in the Spirit, but we are not told to offer it to the Holy Spirit, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:18) and "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" (John 4:23). Apart from the Holy Spirit's leading, we can neither pray as we ought, nor worship as we should.

He alone makes both these possible to the believer. We shall deal more fully with this subject later, under the heading, "The power for worship." A great deal of misconception as to the Person and work of the Spirit of God is due to incorrect hymnology. Many hymns present the Spirit's WORK as though He were outside the believer, and as One who must be entreated to come in. The Scriptures plainly indicate that the Holy Spirit indwells the believer the moment he trusts in Christ, and thereby seals him unto the day of redemption: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:13-14) and "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I

Corinthians 6:19-20) and "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16-17) and others.

While there is no precept or example, either of prayer or worship to the Spirit, this does not, for one moment, mean that He is less important, or that He occupies a subordinate place to the Father and the Son. On the contrary, He is equal and eternal with both. The Son of God, for the purpose of securing our redemption, became incarnate. As the Son of Man, He voluntarily submitted Himself to a life of absolute submission to the will of His Father, of complete obedience to the holy Scriptures, and to the empowerment and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, in this present dispensation, the mission and delight of the Holy Spirit is to occupy the believer with Christ, and to draw forth from the Christian's heart, worship to the Father and the Son.

There is no jealousy in the eternal Godhead.

Each Person in the Trinity delights to glorify the other. When we worship the eternal Godhead, we therefore include, in our thought, each Person in the Divine Triunity. That grand old doxology can and should be sung by each believer, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost!"

We have learned, for the Scriptures, that the object of our worship is the Father and the Son, as empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit, and guided by the word of God. The words of our Lord Jesus seem fitting to conclude this particular section of our subject: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

It is one thing to have light on this subject and be perfectly orthodox in our views; and another to live in the good of it, and to experience the great privilege and joy of worshipping the Father and the Son in the power of the ungrieved Holy Spirit. May each of us know much of this!

~ end of chapter 15 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

16. Part V. The Ground of Worship

CHAPTER SIXTEEN V. THE GROUND OF WORSHIP

We now come to a consideration of the ground, or basis of worship. In this, as in everything else pertaining to life and godliness, we should know just where we stand. We shall think of three things which are fundamental to worship: redemption, relationship and representation.

1. Redemption The infinite holiness of God demands that all those who approach Him, with a view to worship, must be acceptable to Him. Holiness possesses two qualities, a love of righteousness and a hatred of iniquity: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Hebrews 1:9).

We read that God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13). His intense hatred of sin is revealed everywhere upon the pages of Scripture. Because of His intrinsic and absolute holiness He must punish sin. We read that: "The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" and that: "He can by no means clear the guilty" (Romans 1:18; Exodus 34:7). In view of this, the question may well be asked: "How can a person, who is both a sinner by nature and practice, be made fit to stand accepted in the presence of a holy God, and offer worship that delights His heart?" The answer, in one word, is redemption.

God has revealed in His word, that the only way a sinner can approach Him, and be accepted before Him, is on the ground of a God appointed, scripturally presented, and divinely accepted substitutionary sacrifice. This fact is everywhere evident in Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation.

Over the pages of the Old Testament are written the words: "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11). Over the pages of the New Testament appear the words: "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

There can be no approach to God, no standing before God, no acceptance with God, no pardon from God and no worship to God, apart from an acceptable substitutionary sacrifice which bears the sinner's sins, takes his place, died in his stead and is accepted by God on his behalf. No person can ever be accepted before God on the basis of his own merits, such as his morality, good works, religious observances, prayers, or good resolves.

Both my nature and practice, every person is a sinner and, as such, deserves only eternal banishment from God's presence. A beautiful illustration of this necessity for and the provision of God's redemption is found in Exodus 20:22-26. The law had just been given from Mount Sinai, consisting of ten commandments, which combined to reveal the righteous requirements of Deity. God well knew that the people of Israel were incapable of keeping this law, in spite of their proud avowal: "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do" (Exodus 19:7-8). On God's instructions, Moses then re-ascended the mount, and received a further revelation from the Lord. This gives us a

beautiful picture of both His holiness and grace.

Mark carefully the words God spake, "An altar of earth shall thou make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen. In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." The meaning of this is plain.

God knew that Israel would never be able to approach Him, or be blest by Him, on the basis of their law keeping, or because of human merit. Therefore, in His grace, He provided a means by which they could approach to Him, be blessed by Him and worship before Him. This trysting place between God and Israel was an altar. On that altar a substitutionary sacrifice was to be offered, by which the offerer was to be accepted by God in his offering. Thus he was enabled to worship God, not on the basis of his own efforts at law keeping, but on the ground of the sacrifice God had provided for him.

Notice God's desire for His people's blessing: "I will come unto thee and bless thee."

There could have been no blessing for Israel then, nor can there be any for us now, if this blessing is to be conditioned on our obedience to the law, or on the ground of human merit.

Blessings can only flow out from God to man on the ground of a substitutionary sacrifice. Let us illustrate. Here is an Israelite who has broken the law. He realizes that God is holy, righteous and just, and that his sin must be punished, unless he approaches God in the way He has indicated in His word. He therefore comes to the altar with a lamb for a substitutionary offering.

- He kneels down and places his hands on the head of the lamb, thus identifying himself with his offering and transferring, in picture, his guilt from himself to the offering. That lamb is now viewed by God as bearing the sins of that sinner.

- He next takes a knife and slays the lamb. As he watches the blood flowing from the spotless sacrifice, he can truthfully say: "Though I am a sinner, and therefore condemned by the law to die for my sins; yet that lamb has borne my sins, taken my place and died for me, to be accepted by God on my behalf."

- He is now in the position to worship God because of his acceptance before Him on the basis of redemption by the blood (or death) of the lamb. The language of Scripture is: "It [the offering] shall be accepted for him" (Leviticus 1:4).

Thus the offerer is accepted in and through his offering.

We have drawn attention from only one of very many pictures, or types of Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures. It required all these types and offerings to illustrate the great work which He, as the Lamb of God, accomplished on the altar of Calvary. It was there that "once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

Upon that Cross Christ willingly allowed Himself to be crucified, for He knew it was the only way by which a just and holy God could righteously pardon a guilty, but repentant and believing sinner.

Each person who comes to God upon the SOLE BASIS OF Christ's substitutionary sacrifice, rests simply in the finished work of Christ, and receives Christ as his own Saviour and Lord is, that

moment: “Justified freely by his [God’s] grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24).

Let every reader make certain that his is the only ground upon which he approaches God to worship, for there is no other way. Albert Midlane wrote a hymn that clearly and beautifully presents this glorious truth, “The perfect righteousness of God is witnessed in the Saviour’s blood; ‘Tis in the Cross of Christ we trace His righteousness, yet wondrous grace.

God could not pass the sinner by, His sin demands that he must die; But in the Cross of Christ we see, How God can save us righteously. The sin is on the Saviour laid, ‘Tis by His blood the debt is paid; Stern justice can demand no more, And mercy can dispense her store. The sinner who believes is free, Can say: ‘The Saviour died for me!’ Can point to the atoning blood, And say: ‘This made my peace with God’.”

2. Relationship The second essential, or ground for worship, is relationship.

Those who approach God do so with the word, “Father,” upon their lips. Our Lord taught His disciples to say: “Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9). It is “the Father” that seeketh worshippers, and the worshippers are those who have become “the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26). This relationship, as we have previously seen, is brought about by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. We read: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Peter 1:23). In the Old Testament, it was Aaron and his sons who were called upon the act as priests in connection with the place of worship; first, in the Tabernacle and later, in the Temple.

It was their relationship to Aaron that qualified them for this privileged position. In the New Testament, it is “the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty” who are called, fitted and privileged to worship. Over “the new and living way,” which leads into “the holiest of all,” are written the words: “For the children of God only!”

Happy indeed are those who have come to know what it means to “have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

Such are assured, by the Word, that they have been born from above, and that this birth was “not of blood [heredity], nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13).

It is as “brethren,” or those in the family of God, that we are said to have “boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Hebrews 10:19). The Christian comes not to a strange cold, distant and impersonal God to worship, but to One whom he knows and loves as his Father. One of the evidences of regeneration is that the believer received the spirit of sonship, whereby he cries; “Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). Thus between God and those who worship Him, is the precious and permanent link of Heaven-born relationship.

3. Representation The third essential for worship is representation. This means that the worshipper must have a High Priest as His REPRESENTATIVE in the presence of God for him. Through the mediation of this great High Priest, his worship is presented and made accepted to God.

Once more we must turn to God's picture book, the Old Testament, to learn from the "types,"

"figures" and "patterns" which God has given, just why the mediation of Christ, as our great High Priest, is absolutely essential if our worship is to be acceptable unto God. The two Old Testament books to read and study in connection with this truth are Exodus and Leviticus. The true significance of these, in turn, cannot possibly be understood apart from the New Testament book, the Epistle to the Hebrews. Should the reader desire a fuller knowledge of these truths, he will find George Soltau's: "The Tabernacle, The Priesthood, and the Offerings," a veritable gold mine of spiritual profit.

C.H.M.'s "Note on Leviticus," and "Notes on Exodus" will also yield its quota of wealth.

After God had redeemed His people by the sprinkled blood of the Passover lamb, and delivered them from Egypt's power through the divided waters of the Red Sea, He gave instructions to Moses to prepare a Tabernacle, by means of which He might dwell in the midst of the people of His choice. Elaborate instructions were given in regard to this Tabernacle and its furniture, and also concerning the selection, clothing, consecration and anointing of Aaron, together with a description of his varied duties.

Aaron was the Divinely selected, called and appointed High Priest of this Tabernacle. While in this capacity, he acted as Israel's representative before God. Associated with Aaron were his sons, who acted as priests. Minute directions were also given as to the various kinds of offerings, and the ritual in connection with each, as it was brought before and offered to God. The last chapter of Exodus records the erection of the Tabernacle, the installation of the Aaronic priesthood, and concludes with God's approving response to all that which had been done in obedience to His instructions. We read that: "A cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle... The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys" (Exodus 40:34; Exodus 40:38).

What we wish to draw particular attention to is the high priestly ministry of Aaron, as he performed his duties, as Israel's representative, in the presence of God. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ, as "the great high Priest of our profession," is contrasted with Aaron, and compared with Melchisedec. In fact, the key word of this Epistle is "better."

Christ is seen as superior to Aaron in every respect, both as to His Person and His work.

Christ offered, - A "better sacrifice" (Hebrews 9:23), - By which He brought in a "better covenant" (8:6), - Of "better things" (12:24), - Resulting in a "better hope" (7:19), - Leading to a "better country" (11:16).

Undoubtedly the outstanding event of the year to the children of Israel was the great day of Atonement, which is described in Leviticus 16. On this occasion all the sins, transgressions and iniquities of the nation were brought to remembrance, and a substitutionary sacrifice was offered for them by means of which an atonement, or covering for them, was made. This was the only day of the year that the High Priest was allowed to pass through the veil and enter into the holiest of all. The ceremony connected with this day of Atonement is full of spiritual significance.

First of all, Aaron had to make an atonement for his own sins, before he could do anything on behalf of the people whom he represented before God. Accordingly, he took a young bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. After laying his hands on the bullock, he killed it at the brazen altar. He then took his censer which was filled with burning coals and placed incense thereon. With the blood of the sin offering, he now entered within the veil into the holiest of all. With the incense rising in clouds, Aaron proceeded to sprinkle the blood both on and before the mercy seat seven times, and thus made atonement for himself. After this he took two goats and presented them before the Lord at the door of the Tabernacle.

Next, he cast lots upon the goats, one lot for what was called "the Lord's goat," and the other for what was termed, "the scapegoat." He then slew the goat of the Lord and, with its blood and his censer, again entered the veil and sprinkled the blood seven times on and before the mercy seat, and thus made atonement for the people. After this, he returned to the gate of the Tabernacle, laid his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, and confessed over it "all the iniquities of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins," and thus transferred them, in picture, to the head of the scapegoat. This goat was then led away, by a fit man, into the wilderness and there turned loose, to return no more. This ceremony, like all the others in connection with the worship of Israel, is utterly meaningless apart from the New Testament. When we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, all this involved ritual becomes beautifully clear and redolent with Christ. The fact that Aaron had to present an offering for his own sins is used to show, by contrast, the superiority of Christ as our great High Priest. We read: "He needeth not... to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's, for this He did once, when he offered up Himself" (Hebrews 7:27). The two goats constitute a double type of Christ's sacrifice, illustrating the fact that He not only died for our sins to meet every claim of a holy God, but also bore them away from God's presence for ever. The infinite superiority of Christ's sacrifice to that of Aaron's is further seen in the fact that the Lord Jesus is not only described as the Offerer, but also the Offering.

Moreover, this offering on the day of Atonement had to be repeated each year, so that there was a continuous remembrance of sins (Hebrews 10:3). In contrast to this we are told that: "Once in the end of the world hath he [Christ] appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

We are further assured that believers "are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).

We are further informed that there had to be many high priests in Israel, "because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this man, [Christ, the great High Priest] because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable Priesthood" (Hebrews 7:23-24).

Just as Aaron, with the atoning blood and the fragrant incense, entered through the veil into the holiest of all, as Israel's representative, and sprinkled the blood before and on the mercy seat, thus satisfying all the demands of God's holy throne; so Christ, by virtue of His own blood has "entered in, once [for all] into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:11-12).

Now, as our Representative, He ever lives in the presence of God on behalf of His people, with all the eternal virtue and value of His divine Person and perfectly accomplished redemption! Not only has our Lord entered Heaven to engage in His work as our great High Priest, but He has also

opened up the way for all His redeemed people to enter into the holiest through Him, there to engage in their highest occupation -- the worship of God. Just as Aaron, within the holiest, caused clouds of incense to rise before the blood-stained mercy seat; so now Christ, our great High Priest, because of the eternal virtue and value of His Person, and the efficacy of His precious blood, causes the incense of our worship to rise before God's holy throne and be acceptable unto the Father.

Mark carefully what God has to say in this regard: "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified... Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:14-22). No wonder the inspired writer, as he contemplated the super-excellency of the priesthood of Christ, as contrasted with Aaron, said simply: "Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum: We have such an high Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Hebrews 8:1).

WHAT KIND OF HIGH PRIEST DO WE HAVE?

What a wealth of meaning is compressed into those six monosyllables: "We have such an high Priest." The whole Epistle is taken up with this theme, - Christ is described as being a powerful High Priest, for "In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18).

- He is a merciful High Priest, for He knows all the frailties of His people, and meets their every need (Hebrews 2:17).

- He is a faithful High Priest, both to God and man. Unlike Aaron, He is incapable of failure. He never fails in the fulfillment of His promises, or in the execution of His duties. He never slumbers nor sleeps, but ever lives to accomplish His gracious purposes (Hebrews 2:17).

- He is a sympathetic High Priest, for He is touched with all the "feeling of our infirmities"; and was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Christ was "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). He knows what it means to be weary, to hunger and thirst, to be betrayed and forsaken, to suffer agony and to die. The child of God is therefore assured of both a sympathetic ear and an understanding heart from his Representative.

- He is an ever-living High Priest. "Death hath no more dominion over him" (Romans 6:9). He lives in "the power of an endless life;" and is therefore untiring and unceasing in His activities on behalf of His own. Thus His people are being "saved to the uttermost" through His ceaseless intercession on their behalf (Hebrews 7:25).

- Then He is an exalted High Priest, for He is described as "a great high Priest," and One who has been "made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 4:14; Hebrews 7:26).

How great He is, no finite mind will ever comprehend, "The Father only -- glorious claim -The Son can comprehend."

- Lastly, He is an eternal High Priest, for He is made “an high Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Hebrews 6:20). HIS HIGH PRIESTLY MINISTRY

It is grand indeed to see how full and complete is this high priestly ministry of our Lord, - His heart is occupied for us, for He loves His own with a tender and unceasing sympathy: “When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!” (John 11:33-36).

- His mind is occupied for us, for His people are the subject of His constant thought: “But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God” (Psalms 40:17).

- His eyes are constantly upon us, to anticipate and provide for all our needs, for “He that keepeth... shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Psalms 121:3-4).

- His hands are busy for us, guarding, guiding and protecting the sheep of His pasture: “But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one” (John 10:26-30).

- His ears are ever open to His people’s cry: “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry”.

- His lips are constantly used as He pleads for His people and, by His ceaseless advocacy and intercession, maintains their cause before the father’s face: “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25) and “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

- His feet are not idle, for He companies with His own, and promises never to leave or forsake them. The two disciples on the Emmaus highway discovered, to their delight, the blessedness of the Saviour’s companionship: “And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them” (Luke 24:15). Yes, we can truthfully testify: “We have such an high Priest!”

Christ is thus our divine Representative in the presence of God for us. He has secured our redemption by His own most precious blood. He has made our relationship actual with God. He now, “in the power of an endless life,” as our great High Priest, represents us before the father’s throne.

Thus, the three-fold ground of worship, which the holiness of the triune God demanded, has been perfectly and gloriously provided. The redeemed child of God need not stand outside in fear but, with holy boldness, may draw near into the holiest of all. He is assured that his Representative, the great high Priest, will present his worship before the Father in all the perfection of His own Person. All believers may now reverently and adoringly repeat: “We have such an high Priest!”

~ end of chapter 16 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

17. Part VI. The Power For Worship

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN VI. THE POWER FOR WORSHIP (John 4:23-24)

We have noted the meaning, importance, authority, object and ground of worship. We now come to a consideration of the power for it. How is the believer to be made spiritually capable of true worship? The answer is simple: The power for worship is the Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Godhead.

It may be helpful to take a brief survey of His Person and work, so as to better appreciate how essential He is, not only to the believer's worship, but also in every department of his life. We shall think first of, 1. His Person There is a great deal of misconception regarding the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes He is referred to as though He was merely an "influence," or an "atmosphere," and is often mentioned as "it." Others seem to create the impression that the Spirit is but an emanation from God, and not a distinct and Divine Personality, equal and eternal with the Father and the Son. The personality of the Holy Spirit is everywhere evident in the word of God. Christ's own words should be sufficient to establish this fact.

Mark the personal pronouns used by Christ in referring to Him: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:... When he the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you unto all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he shall receive of mine, and shall sow it unto you" (John 16:7-8; John 16:13-14). In this short passage alone, Christ used eleven personal pronouns to describe the Holy Spirit and the work He should do.

Personality necessitates the possession of three qualities: - Knowledge, or intelligence; - Feelings, or emotions; - Will, or volition.

Scripture bears record that the Holy Spirit possesses each of these qualities, as also does the Father and the Son.

He has intellect, for we are told He - "Knows" (Romans 8:27), - "Teaches" (John 14:26), - "Testifies" (John 14:26), - "Guides" (John 16:13), - "Hears" (John 16:13), - "Speaks" (John 16:13).

He has emotions, for it is said He can be - "Grieved" (Ephesians 4:30), - "Quenched" (1 Thessalonians 5:19), - "Resisted" (Acts 7:51), and - "Despised" (Hebrews 10:29).

He has a will, for He - "Strives" (Genesis 6:3), - "Lusts" (or desires) against the flesh" (Galatians 5:17), - "Reproves" (John 16:8), - "Makes intercession" (Romans 8:26), - "Shows" (John 16:13).

He has many titles in the Word of God. Each title is full of spiritual significance and indicates the various aspects of His character and work.

- He is the “Holy Spirit,” which emphasizes His absolute holiness.
- He is “the Spirit of truth,” because of His perfect trustworthiness.
- He is the “Comforter,” or “Paraclete,” which means: “one called alongside to help.”
- He is “the Spirit of grace,” pointed to the unmerited favor He shows.
- He is “the Spirit of Christ,” indicating His mission to glorify the Son of God.
- He is “the Spirit of glory,” in that His excellencies are displayed in the Word.
- He is “the Spirit of promise,” which points to His sealing of the believer as the guarantee of His eternal blessedness.

These, and many other titles, all combine to show forth the Deity of His Person, the dignity of His character and the glory of His displayed attributes. This brief glance into the Scriptures should be sufficient to clearly indicate that the Holy Spirit is a Person, possessing full, equal and eternal Deity with both Father and Son. How we should praise God for this holy, heavenly Guest, apart from whose presence and power we could never have been saved, or brought into God’s presence, or enabled to worship! Now let us consider, 2. His Work In relation to Creation: “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2).

Here is the first mention of the Spirit. He is seen as moving, brooding, over the face of a chaotic earth, until darkness gave place to light, and chaos was succeeded by order and beauty. Here is a striking picture of His work today in the awakening, conviction and regeneration of a ruined, guilty and helpless sinner! In relation to the Scriptures. We owe the written revelation of God’s word to Him, for we are told: “Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy man of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21). David testified: “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue” (2 Samuel 23:2). Paul declared: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16). The Spirit of God so came upon and possessed these Old Testament prophets that what they wrote, under His Divine control, were the very words of God. The Spirit’s inspiration of the New Testament record is indicated by Christ Himself.

- The four Gospels are accounted for by the words: “He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).
- The Epistles are provided for by the words: “He shall teach you all things” (John 14:26).
- The book of Revelation is taken care of by the words: “He shall show you things to come” (John 16:13).

Thus the entire range of holy Scripture has come to us through the Spirit of God. (3) In relation to Christ. The Holy Spirit is prominent in the life of our Lord. (a) In Christ’s incarnation. Gabriel was instructed to tell Mary: “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:25). (b) In His life on earth. He descended as a dove upon Christ at His baptism (Matthew 3:16). He led the Saviour into His temptation, and empowered Him during His testing, from which He emerged more than conqueror (Matthew 4:1-14). The same was true of our Lord’s

ministry, for we are told it was in the power of the Spirit that Christ spake (Luke 4:18-22; John 3:34). (c) In His death. Scripture informs us it was “through the eternal Spirit” that Christ offered Himself to God (Hebrews 9:14). (d) In His resurrection. Furthermore, it is revealed that Christ was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4). (e) In His post-resurrection ministry. Christ, during the forty days after His resurrection, companied with His disciples. Nor did He ascent back to Heaven until “He, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen” (Acts 1:2). In His relation to the world of men: “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:8-11).

- He was sent to convict it of sin, because of its unbelief of Christ as evidenced by its rejection and crucifixion of the Son of God.

- He convicts of righteousness, because God has indicated, by the resurrection of Christ, that all His righteousness claims have been met by His substitutionary sacrifice for sin.

- He convicts of judgment, because Satan, the prince of this world, has been defeated and judged. The Devil now awaits the execution of his sentence, banishment to the lake of fire.

Thus the Spirit’s work in relation to the unsaved is to produce within them, through the preaching of the Word: (a) A sense of their need, as unbelieving sinners. (b) A realization that God’s righteousness has been revealed in the redemptive work of Christ, in proof of which He has been raised to sit at God’s right hand. (c) That inasmuch as Satan has been judged, all who die rejecting Christ, must share his eternal doom. In other words, - He convicts the sinner of his need, - He unfolds God’s remedy in Christ, - He warns of the certainty of judgment. In this day of shallow preaching and professional evangelism, with its “guaranteed results,” there is a great need to so preach the Word that, through it, the Spirit may do His work of conviction and conversion. (5) In relation to the believer.

He awakens the soul and leads to faith in Christ. “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?... When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth” (Acts 2:37; Acts 7:54). - He opens the ears of the sinner to hear with the hearing of faith.

- He then opens the spiritual eyes of the sinner’s mind to see his guilty and undone state, and the remedy Christ has provided.

- He next opens the heart of the believer to trust Christ’s finished work, and to receive Him as his own Saviour.

- Lastly, He opens the mouth of the child of God to confess Christ as the Lord of his life. This is the Divine “quickenings,” which only the Spirit of God can produce: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:1-2). (b) When the truth of the Gospel is believed and Christ is

received, He indwells the believer, and thereby seals him unto the day of redemption: "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ... And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 4:30) and "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). (c) He enlightens the Christian. This He does by creating a capacity for spiritual things, and imparting spiritual discernment, thus enabling him to understand what previously he could not comprehend: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:10-16) and "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (1 Peter 1:4). (d) He guides the believer into all truth: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come... But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 16:13; John 14:26). As the believer reads, meditates and studies the pages of Scripture, and then seeks to walk in obedience to what he sees written therein; the Holy Spirit will lead him further into the truth of God, so that he will "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." (e) He empowers the Christian for service. Christ's promise to His disciples before Pentecost was: "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8). As the Spirit is allowed to dwell ungrieved within the believer, He will impart power to testify, either privately or publicly, and use him both to bring others souls to Christ, or to lead his fellow believers into a better knowledge of the Word of God. (f) He produces fruit in the Christian's life. As the Spirit is allowed to have His way in the believer, others will see "the fruit of the Spirit" manifested in his life. This fruit has a nine-fold quality (Galatians 5:22-23), - Godward, there will be "love, joy and peace."

- Manward, there will be seen "longsuffering, gentleness and goodness."

- Selfward, there will be "faith, meekness and temperance" (or self control) (g) He glorifies Christ: "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:14). That is to say, He displays to the believer the many excellencies of the Son of God. He takes of the "things of Christ," and so impresses the mind and heart of the Christian with all the virtues and value of the Saviour, that he is carried away and exclaims: "He is the chiefest amongst ten thousand!" Thus it is the Holy Spirit's delight to make Christ more precious to the soul, and thus glorify Him in and through the believer. (6) In relation to the Church We are told that: "By one Spirit

are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13). This is the event which took place on the day of Pentecost. He came, in accordance with the promise of Christ, and united all believers in Christ into one body, the Church.

Paul also likens the Church to a building, and says: "In Christ, all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21-22).

Again, Paul exhorts the saints in Ephesus and says: "... beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

Thus the Spirit of God seeks to lead the people of God to maintain the unity that He Himself has formed. In chapters 12-14 of I Corinthians, the Spirit of God is seen in His relation to the operations of a local assembly.

Here He is described as imparting to, encouraging the development of, and empowering the manifestation of the various spiritual gifts which Christ has bestowed on believers: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:8-16). When these are exercised according to His leading, they will result in the edifying, or building up of the assembly, so that it will present a united testimony for Christ. As each believer responds to His guidance in the exercise of his gift, a spiritual atmosphere is created which will cause an unbeliever, who comes into such an assembly, to fall upon his face and "worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth" (1 Corinthians 14:24-25).

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that spiritual gifts must be exercised in the power of the Spirit of God. Apart from this, all the ecclesiastical machinery in the world is worse than useless.

Scriptural principles require spiritual power for their operation, and this spiritual power comes only through the Holy Spirit of God. (7) In relation to worship The work of the Spirit of God, in connection with worship, is to lead each individual believer, through the word of God, to an ever increasing apprehension and appreciation of the Father and the Son, therefore the need for each Christian to be both a reader and a student of the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Spirit will never lead anyone to believe, or to do anything contrary to the word of God. As the believer is taught by the

Spirit, through the Word, and is obedient to what he learns, the Spirit will lead him on to a deeper knowledge of Divine things and particularly in the matter of worship.

We have already learned that worship is, first of all, an individual matter. It is not primarily something that is to be stored up to be presented at a meeting; but that which should rise continually from the believer's soul, day by day, as he appreciates all God is and has done, as revealed in His Son. When a company of believers, in this spiritual condition, meet together as an assembly, what a volume of Spirit-led worship there will be! The leading of the Spirit is particularly evidenced as a number of believers gather, in a scriptural manner, to remember the Lord Jesus. One can mark the definite guidance of this "holy, heavenly Guest," as He impresses one and another, either to give out a hymn, or to lead the assembly in worship, or to read a portion from the Word.

Each hymn or spoken word is seen to be in perfect harmony with the particular theme of the meeting. This makes for a gradual, but steady progression of worship, which rises higher and higher, until the bread is broken and the cup passed. One has only to attend such a meeting to be convinced of the absolute necessity for, and the reality of the power and presence of the Spirit of God, as He occupies the hearts of the believers with the Father and the Son, and leads them out, as a company of royal priests, in adoring worship.

Each believer must therefore see to it that he does not grieve the Holy Spirit by any misconduct on his part, or else his worship will be hindered. Should he do so, prompt confession of, and the forsaking of that sin will restore the communion. Each assembly, in turn, must be careful not to quench the Spirit. This may be done in many ways. (a) By denying or despising the ministry He would seek to give through one and another whom He has gifted. (b) By being disobedient to His leading. (c) By refusing to welcome to the Lord's Supper each exercised believer who desires to thus remember the Lord Jesus, and who is known to be sound in his life and doctrine. (d) By permitting sin to remain unjudged in its midst. (e) By allowing a sectarian, or party-spirit, to be fostered within.

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:28-30). "Quench not the Spirit.

Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21) "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not

with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:1-8). “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” (1 Corinthians 3:1-5). “Let all things be done decently and in order” (I

Corinthians 14:40). For the gift of the Holy Spirit we do well to praise God. Arthur Cutting’s beautiful and scriptural hymn is appropriate in this connection, “O God our hearts are lifted To Thee, in grateful praise, Responsive to Thy Spirit, A joyful song we raise; For He, Thy gracious purpose In Christ to us has shown, That now, as sons before Thee, His favor is our own. In nature’s darkness shrouded, And dead in sins we lay, Until Thy Holy Spirit Transformed our night to day; Awakened needs within us, Begetting us anew, And by love’s strong compelling, Our souls to Jesus drew.

We trusted Him as Saviour, When rest and peace we sought, And now Thy Spirit seals us, As those His blood has bought.

Made Thine, He ne’er will leave us, For He is pledged to stay, As earnest of our portion, Until redemption’s day.

O may Thy Holy Spirit, Blest unction from on high, With all His rich infilling, Lead us to glorify The risen Christ our Saviour, By loyal witness true, Constraining us to serve Him In all we say and do.” (8) In relation to Service True, Spirit-led worship, will lead the believer to render loyal Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered service for the Lord. The Acts of the Apostles might better have been entitled: “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.” It is He who is seen throughout the entire book, empowering believers for the preaching of the Gospel, and granting them an abundant harvest of precious souls. Believers are described therein as being “full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.”

These Christians knew what it meant, by experience, - To “walk in the Spirit,”

- To “pray in the Spirit,”

- To “live in the Spirit,”

- To be “led by the Spirit.”

Truly, those who worship most will serve God best, and only the Spirit can supply the power for both. In view of these things, may each of us see to it that, by the grace of God, we also shall be included in the number of those who “worship in Spirit, and in truth.”

~ end of chapter 17 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

18. Part VII. The Manner of Worship -- Spiritual and Sincere

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN VII. THE MANNER OF WORSHIP -- SPIRITUAL AND SINCERE By this is meant those inner spiritual qualities which must always characterize the believer if his worship is to be acceptable to God. It is possible for one to draw nigh to God with his lips, and yet be far removed from Him in heart. God had to say of Israel: "This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me" (Isaiah 29:13).

Through His prophet Ezekiel God declared: "They hear thy words, but they will not do them, for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness" (Ezekiel 33:31). The tendency of everything, with which man is in any way associated, is to degenerate, and worship is no exception. In the case of Israel, that which was described in the beginning as a feast unto Jehovah, came to be referred to, hundreds of years later, as a "feast of the Jews", "Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord... And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh" (Exodus 13:6; John 6:4).

Thus, in the process of time, the spiritual emphasis was transferred from God to man.

It will be readily appreciated that anything presented to God must fulfil certain Divine requirements, if it is to meet with His approval. Not only must the offerer and the offering be acceptable to God, but the spirit in which it is offered must also be pleasing to Him. Though correctness of doctrinal belief and outward conformity to certain scriptural principles is necessary, it is not enough. The spiritual condition of the worshipper is a contributing factor, as to whether or not his worship is to be acceptable to the Father.

God taught Samuel this lesson, when He sent him to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be king in place of Saul. As Eliab, the eldest of the family stood before him, Samuel's inward thought was, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before me!" But God said to him: "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:6-7). Our Lord pressed this truth home upon His hearers: Addressing the Pharisees, who were most punctilious in the outward observance of the many ceremonials of their religion, He said: "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

How this should search the heart of every Christian!

It is sadly possible to sing, most melodiously, a beautiful hymn of worship, and even audibly express, in well chosen and scriptural language, the worship of an assembly; and yet fail to reach God's ear, or draw forth Divine approval. The quality of worship is determined by the spirituality of the worshipper.

What may appear to be worship may, in reality, be only a "fair show in the flesh," and, as such, only an "abomination in the sight of God."

Let us, therefore, consider the manner of worship, or those spiritual qualities that must be the essential accompaniment if we are to worship God as we should. We shall think of three of these essential qualities: Worship must be spiritual, sincere and intelligent.

1. Worship should be spiritual Our Lord declared emphatically: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). In these words Christ indicated that only that worship which was prompted, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit would be acceptable to God. It is tragically possible for one who has been born of the Spirit, and who is indwelt by the Spirit, to be anything but spiritual. Paul divided all humanity into three distinct classes.

- First, is the natural man. By this is meant man as he is by nature: unregenerate, and therefore incapable of understanding Divine things, or of pleasing God.

- Second, is the spiritual man. He is one who has been born from above, is indwelt by the Spirit of God, and consequently possesses the capacity for discerning and appreciating Divine truth, and who seeks to live a life well-pleasing to God.

- Third, is the carnal man. This person, though born from above, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, lives his life on earth in the energy of the flesh, instead of in the power of the Spirit.

There were many such believers in the assembly at Corinth and he had to say of such: "I... could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ... for ye are yet carnal" (1 Corinthians 2:14-16; 1 Corinthians 3:1-2).

It is important to note that Paul does not, for one moment, question the salvation of these carnal believers, for he addresses them as "brethren," and as being "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 1:10). What he does draw attention to is the fact that they were not "spiritual." That is to say, they were not living in the energy of the Spirit, or in the enjoyment of Divine things. Their lives were characterized by God-dishonoring manifestations of the flesh, as evidenced by their divisions, indifference, selfishness and lack of spiritual growth. While in this carnal condition of soul, their worship had been adversely affected. The Lord's Supper, which should have been characterized by Spirit-led worship, harmony and power, had degenerated into a thing of shame and confusion. In fact, many of these carnal believers had suffered the extreme punitive discipline of God, for Paul had to say: "For this cause, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep [or have died]" (1 Corinthians 11:23-30). Their carnality had grieved, quenched and limited the Spirit of God in their assembly gatherings, so that little worship had ascended from their midst. Instead of a spiritual atmosphere which was conducive to worship, there was the cold, clammy spirit of formalism and carnality which stifled any spiritual exercise of the soul in worship.

Let us not imagine, for one moment, that this spirit of carnality died with the Corinthian assembly. It is a danger to which every Christian has been exposed since the Christian era began.

It is greatly to be feared that there is altogether too much of it in the present day.

It well becomes each believer to pray as David did: "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalms 139:23-24). The price of spirituality is high. It may cost us all we have, but it is

not too much, for nothing can compensate the believer for its loss. The high cost of spirituality is only exceeded by the higher cost of carnality! The price one pays for spirituality is the same as that of peace, namely, eternal vigilance. We shall note later some of the evidences of carnality under the heading, "Hindrances to Worship."

We have seen that worship, to be acceptable, must be spiritual, and that this necessitates the spirituality of the worshipper. The believer must therefore resolutely and assiduously discipline himself, so as to cultivate his spiritual life on a high plane.

- The Devil and his wiles must be withstood, as the believer stands panoplied in all the armor of God.

- The world, with all its allurements, must be definitely declined.

- The flesh, with all its evil desires, must be constantly denied.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:10-18) and "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17) and "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14).

Thus the Christian must rule himself with an iron hand, saying "no" to self in all its many forms, and "yes" to God in all that He demands. The result of this will be spirituality, in the atmosphere of which he can worship God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

Carnality would fain counterfeit spirituality, by substituting artificial enthusiasm for holy zeal; mere fleshly emotionalism, for the joy of the Lord; organization, for the unity of the Spirit; religious externals, for inward reality; and cold orthodoxy of doctrine, for the warm experience, power and enjoyment of its truth in the soul. The best preventative against artificiality is spirituality.

- There will be no need to pump up worship when the soul is in conscious communion with God, and living in the enjoyment of spiritual realities.

- There will be no call to force oneself to worship. It will rise spontaneously from the soul, even as the smoke of the burnt sacrifice of old ascended to the One to whom it was offered.

2. Worship should be sincere Christ declared it must not only be in “spirit,” but “in truth.” This is to say, our worship must not only be guided by the truth of God’s Word, but it must be presented in a truthful, or sincere way. There must be no sham in worship, or the pretence of claiming a greater spirituality than we really possess. God hates hypocrisy in any shape or form. Our Lord’s reference to the Pharisee’s prayer, with its five capital “I’s” bears eloquent testimony to His detestation of religious humbug (Luke 18:9-14).

Someone has defined hypocrisy as: “pretending to be, what we don’t intend to be.” The word “sincere,” means “without wax.” In the olden days sculptors sometimes used to till up a slaw in the stone images they had carved. When the purchaser exposes this image to the rays of the sun, the wax melted and the imperfection was thus disclosed. Often a dealer in images would proclaim his wares as being “sine cere,” or “without wax.” Thus he guaranteed the purchaser against sham and pretense.

Paul’s desire for the Philippian believers was that they might be “sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (Php 1:10).

God wants the sincere worship of a sincere heart. The history of Israel can again furnish us with an example of how God views the absence of sincerity in worship. In the last book of the Old Testament we find God saying, through His prophet Malachi: “Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts. And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the Lord of hosts. Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen” (Malachi 1:7-14) The prophet Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa, was sent by God to both expose and denounce the apostasy and hypocrisy of Israel. Amongst other things, God said through him to Israel: “I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream” (Amos 5:21-24).

Thus the very feasts which God had given them explicit directions to observe became, through their hypocrisy and double dealing, an offence to Him! Though Israel maintained an outward orthodoxy in their observance of these feast days and the offerings which God had commanded,

yet their unrighteous lives gave the lie to their profession. From it we can surely learn that orthodoxy of belief and correctness of religious observance is a poor substitute for righteous living.

It is possible for a person's head to be in the clouds of orthodoxy, while his feet in the mire of unsavory practices. God's advice to Israel was: "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph" (Amos 5:14-15).

God looks for consistency, - Between standing and state; - Between creed and conduct; - Between lip and life; - Between belief and behavior; - Between profession and expression.

It was this that David had in mind when he said: "Thou desireth truth in the inward parts" (Psalms 51:6).

Through the great prophet Isaiah, God exposed the double dealing of Israel in these soul searching words: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:11-20). This is simply another way of saying: "They that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth." Our Lord twice quoted God's word through the prophet Hosea: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6). The word mercy is literally, "goodness," or rectitude of conduct and decency of life.

Christ quoted it, first in connection with the Pharisees' criticism that He ate with publicans and sinners. The Pharisees were a sect of separatists who prided themselves on their meticulous outward observance of the ceremonial part of the law; but on the whole were utterly inconsistent in their lives. These people were Christ's bitterest enemies. They desired nothing more than to kill Him, because of His searching analysis of their character, and bold denunciation of their hypocrisy. Our Lord's words to them were: "Go ye and learn what that meaning, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice:' for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13).

It was not that God did not desire sacrifices, for He Himself hath ordained them. What our Lord emphasized here was that the act of sacrificing and offering of animals must ever be accompanied by the consistent life and sincere attitude of the offerer, if his worship was to be acceptable. If the choice is to be between strict observance of ritual, and goodness and sincerity of life: then the

latter must always take the precedence.

Christ's second reference to Hosea 6:6 was in connection with the Pharisees harsh and unjust judgment of His disciples, as they plucked and ate some grains of wheat on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees argued that the plucking of these grains constituted "reaping;" and the rubbing of them in the hands constituted "threshing."

They affirmed that both these acts were a direct contravention of their tradition regarding the sacredness of the Sabbath. Our Lord rightly pointed out to them the error of their judgment. From the very Scriptures, which they affirmed were their authority, He showed them the shallowness of their argument and the inconsistency of their judgment. He then added the deeply significant words: "But I say unto you that, in this place, is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,' ye would not have condemned the guiltless" (Matthew 12:1-8). The very fact that this message is given to us three times in Divine revelation, should be enough to cause all believers to seriously ponder its spiritual import.

While the scriptural principles governing the order of worship are important, equally so must be the manner of our worship. One must not be held at the expense of the other, but each should be maintained as the complement of the other. Goodness and sacrifice must ever go hand in hand into the presence of God if we are to worship as we should. If our worship is to be both spiritual and sincere, there must be heart dealings with God.

- All known sin must be mercilessly judged, confessed to God and resolutely turned from with abhorrence.

- All subterfuge, equivocation and hypocrisy must be avoided like a plague. Transparent honesty must characterize the believer, both in thought, word and deed.

- Clean hands, a pure heart and sincerity of purpose, must ever be the necessary accompaniments of the worship of God if it is to bring delight to His heart. The holiness of the One worshipped, demands a corresponding holiness of life on the part of the one who worships. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:13-16) ~ end of chapter 18 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

19. The Manner of Worship -- Intelligent

CHAPTER NINETEEN THE MANNER OF WORSHIP -- INTELLIGENT

3. Worship should be intelligent God places no premium on ignorance. One of the purposes of the holy Scriptures is to make the believer “wise” as to what God has to say, and give him a proper understanding of both his privileges and responsibilities in this matter of worship. Spirituality and sincerity in worship must therefore be accompanied by an intelligent apprehension as to what God has revealed regarding important subject.

Paul, in his epistles, repeatedly uses the expression: “I would not have you to be ignorant” (1 Corinthians 10:1; 1 Corinthians 12:1; 2 Corinthians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; Romans 1:13; Romans 11:25).

It is both interesting and instructive to observe the various subjects on which he would not have the believers to be ignorant. Perhaps one of the greatest liabilities in Christendom today, is the vast number of ignorant Christians, who seem to know little or nothing of the great fundamental truths of their most holy faith. They seem quite content to let others do their thinking for them and decide what they shall, or shall not believe. Particularly is this true in the matter of worship.

Ignorance as to what constitutes worship is evidenced by the hazy expressions of it that one sometimes hears in meetings convened for this particular purpose. This confusion of thought and expression is due to the failure of each believer to read, discover and meditate on what God has to say on the subject.

We are told that: “God is not the Author of confusion, but of order.” The believer who undertakes to study the Scriptures will soon be able to arrive at an intelligent apprehension of what worship really is and govern his words and actions accordingly. In thinking of “intelligent” worship, we must not confound it with a mere theoretical, or headknowledge of its definition. What he have in mind is the believer’s heart apprehension and appreciation of God’s estimate of it, that results in an upward flow of spiritual, sincere and intelligent worship to God.

Paul tells us that mere “knowledge puffeth up” its proud possessor, and imparts to him an exaggerated idea of his own importance (1 Corinthians 8:1). This kind of knowledge is a liability, for it hinders a person from either desiring or acquiring the wisdom that only God can give. Let us think particularly of three ways by which the believer may be enabled to become a spiritually intelligent worshipper. (1) He should acquire an intelligent knowledge of Scripture truth.

This, of course, necessitates both the reading and study of the word of God. This is the price each must pay for spiritual intelligence. While it is good to read expositions of the Scriptures by sound and able men, this must never be allowed to become a substitute for one’s own personal reading and study of the Word. What the believer discovers for himself, as a result of his own Bible searching, will mean much more to him than what others give him. This implies that, He should be clear as to his own position in Christ. That is, he should learn he has been foreknown,

predestinated, chosen, called, saved, justified, sanctified, accepted and “blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.” As he is brought to realize these glorious truths from the word of God, his heart will be turned to sing the praises of the One who has done such great things for him.

He should be clear as to the tri-unity of the eternal Godhead. Many do not seem to be able to distinguish between the Persons in the Godhead.

One sometimes hears believers thanking the Father for having died for them on the Cross, or asking the Holy Spirit to come into them. A knowledge of the Word would enable them to appreciate the distinction of Persons in the Godhead, and deliver them from such confusion of thought and expression. (2) He should seek to get an intelligent grasp of Church truth Surely that which Christ “loved,” and for which He “gave himself,” is worthy of each Christian’s most serious and earnest consideration: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25). Many believers seem to know little or nothing of this tremendous truth, and seem content to live in a haze of uncertainty regarding this great doctrine of the word of God. (a) He should be clear as to his position as a member of the body of Christ, which is the Church of God: “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head of all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all... From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 4:16, etc.).

He should know that he has been joined to this mystical body by the Spirit of God, and thus united to Christ, the Head, in Heaven, and also to every other believer on earth. This is “the unity of the Spirit” which God has made (Ephesians 4:3). As he is brought to realize that there is but one body, with one Head; he will clearly see that there is no need for him to join some other “body” with another “head.” Thus he will endeavor to “keep the unity of the Spirit [which has already been made] in the body of peace.” (b) He should be clear regarding his position as a priest unto God: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:5-9) and “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. 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 for ever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:5-6). As such, he is privileged to offer the “spiritual sacrifices” of his praise and worship to God: “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Hebrews 13:15).

He will realize that the present distinction between “clergy” and “laity” has no foundation in the Word of God, but is purely an invention of man and which has wrought untold evil.

He will recognize that he has been “ordained” of the Lord and, with this assurance, will not only enter into the holiest as a worshipper, but also go forth to witness for Him as a servant and herald: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)” (Hebrews 10:19-23) and “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (John 15:16) (c) He should be clear as to what worship really is, and its place and importance in his life, for this is his highest occupation.

We have already referred to this fact in the previous pages. (3) He should endeavor to gain an intelligent apprehension of the purpose of a meeting convened for the remembrance of Christ and for the worship of the Lord’s people. Many believers apparently seem unable to sense the purpose of such a gathering. (a) He should be clear as to the words he utters.

Words are, or should be, the result of thought. If the thought is hazy, the utterance will be correspondingly so. It surely is not too much to expect that when one rises to express the worship of the assembly, he should know why he is there, and what is the purpose of the meeting.

Anything that does not rightly belong to such a gathering should therefore be left unsaid. (b) He should be clear as to the theme of hymn he gives out. The hymn book may be a very good one, but all the hymns in it are not suitable for the immediate purpose. The selection of the right hymn at the right time therefore calls for spiritual intelligence, so that the hymn fits in with the particular theme of the meeting. Surely one would not give out a marriage hymn at a funeral! Each hymn has a distinct thought, presents a particular message and serves a definite purpose. Therefore the need for an intelligent knowledge and use of the hymn book for, by it, an assembly is enabled to express its own aspiration, praise and worship. (c) He should be clear as to the time the meeting begins, and be there well in advance of that time.

How often such a meeting has been disturbed because of late comers who, by a little exercise of common sense, Christian courtesy, and living consideration, could easily have been there on time. A time of quiet meditation, before the meeting is due to begin, is an excellent preparation for the season of worship that follows. There should be no rushing into the presence of God but, instead, a quiet waiting upon Him, as the believers concentrate their minds’ attention and their heart’s affection upon the One they have come to praise. In Church you should be very quiet before the services start. People come to meditate on the Lord, but when you are loud, they end up meditating upon your business. (d) He should be clear as to his deportment in such a gathering. The very purpose of such a gathering should determine the kind of clothes he wears, and his behavior during the meeting. It is not a dress parade, at which one attracts attention to himself, nor does it exist for the display of gift and, least of all, for irreverent behavior. Especially is this true at the Lord’s Supper. The bread and the cup upon the table should remind all who are present that the One they have come to remember died to make their salvation possible, rose again and

ascended to make it actual. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus is the Host at His own supper. An intelligent grasp of this fact will do much in determining one's deportment at such a meeting. These practical and common sense suggestions regarding worship, and the believer's behaviour in a meeting for these purposes, may appear to be unnecessary to some; but we need ever to remember that "God hath not given to us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). The believer's possession of a Divine nature does not rob him of his common sense, but ennobles it and enables him to use it for the glory of God.

Thus the manner of the believer's worship is not the least important thing in regard to this great subject.

Each Christian should therefore see to it that the worship he presents to God, through Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, is both spiritual, sincere and intelligent.

~ end of chapter 19 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

20. Part VIII. The Hindrances to Worship

CHAPTER TWENTY VIII. THE HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP

Having looked at the manner in which we should worship God, if it is to be acceptable to Him; let us now view the subject in the negative way, and note some of the hindrances to it. Seeing that worship is the Christian's highest occupation, we may be quite certain that, The Devil, the infernal enemy, The world, the external enemy, The flesh, the internal enemy. Will combine to hinder the believer as he seeks to worship God.

It will be impossible to enumerate all these hindrances, for they are legion. We can do no more than name a few of the better known. These hindrances will be experienced, not only by an individual in his own personal spiritual life, but also by a gathering of believers, in assembly capacity.

- The spiritual tone of such a worship meeting is determined by the spirituality of each person present.
- This spiritual tone is difficult to describe, but it is nevertheless very real, and can be readily discerned by spiritual believers.
- There is a sense of the presence of God, of the reality of the unseen but eternal verities, and the hush of reverent awe that quiets the spirit and prepares the soul for worship.

Anything that tends to hinder this spirit of worship in a believer, or in an assembly of believers, should be avoided. Should the hindrance exist, it should be judged, confessed and turned from.

Now let us look at a few of these hindrances.

1. Self-will Self, in all its varied forms, will ever seek to intrude itself into the presence of God, and the Scriptures recognize this fact. In Exodus 28:36-38 we are given the description of the mitre which Aaron was to wear when, as high priest of Israel, he went into the presence of God. On the front of the mitre was a plate of gold, on which was inscribed the words, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." The purpose for this mitre is then given: "And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts, and it shall always be upon his forehead that they may be accepted before the Lord."

What a strange expression this is: "the iniquity of the holy things."

How can iniquity be associated with that which is holy? The answer is quite simple. Everything that man touches, he contaminates. Iniquity is present, even in the Christian's holiest moments.

Peter's grand confession of Christ's eternal Deity was scarcely out of his mouth before the Lord had to rebuke him as the mouthpiece of Satan! (Matthew 16:15-23). The nearer the believer gets to God, the more conscious he becomes of his own unworthiness and iniquity. How good,

therefore, to have One in the presence of God who bears the iniquity of our holy things!

Perhaps the classic example of self-will intruding itself in the worship of God is the case of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron the high priest (Leviticus 10:1-11).

These two men, probably under the influence of strong drink (vs. 9) a sign of their lack of self control, took fire of their own making, placed it in their censers, together with incense which they had manufactured and, in direct disobedience to God's distinct command, offered it before the Lord at the golden altar of incense. God's reaction to this act of self-will was summary judgment, for we read: "And there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (vs. 2). Any objection that Aaron might have offered was silenced by God's word to him, for we read: "This is that the Lord spake, saying: I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified" (vs. 3).

Thus God, by this act of judgment, clearly indicated that there must be no self-will in connection with the worship of Himself. Worship must be in accordance with the instructions He has given in His word. The "strange fire" of self-will cannot be tolerated for one moment. From this we may gather that no person can worship God as he pleased, or act in defiance of the known will of God as revealed in His word, and expect the smile of His approval, or that his worship will be accepted. Self-will is, therefore, definitely out in worship. However cunningly the "strange fire" and incense may be concocted; or however ornate may be the ritual of its presentation; it is doomed to be rejected by the God who "will be sanctified in them that come nigh" Him, and who must be "glorified before all the people." The believer can best worship when he has proposed, seconded and carried unanimously a vote of no confidence in himself.

Both self-will and self-expression have no place in the worship of One who must, because of Who He is, have "the pre-eminence in all things." 2. Worldliness This has proved to be an effectual bar to worship. By the world, in this sense, is meant the sum total of all those things in the world from which God is left out, whether they be pleasures, persons, places or pursuits. Though the believer is "in the world," as to the sphere of his physical life; yet he is most emphatically "not of the world," as to the sphere of his spiritual life: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are... I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:11; John 17:14-16). The worldling is of the world, worldly. He not only lives in it, but he lives for it, and is quite content to live his life with no reference whatever to God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Word of God or eternal realities. He wants nothing better than to be left alone to enjoy its pleasures, popularity, fashions, politics, riches, etc. The moment such a worldling is awakened by the Spirit of God and the Word of God to a sense of his need as a guilty sinner, led to rest in Christ's redeeming work, and receive Him as his Saviour and Lord, a great transformation takes place.

Instead of the world and its vanities being the center of his existence, Christ becomes both the Center and Circumference of his life, and he becomes "other worldly."

- Instead of living for the kingdom of this world, he orders his life in relation to the kingdom of God.

- Instead of living for self, he lives for Christ.
- Instead of living in the realm of the seen and the temporal, he lives in the light of the unseen and the eternal.
- Instead Of his interests being earthly, they are now heavenly.

Thus he is “delivered from this present evil world” (Galatians 1:4).

Through the new birth, he becomes a “stranger and a pilgrim” in the land of his natural birth. In this way he demonstrates the truth of that Scripture which affirms: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17). As a member of this new creation, he now becomes a worshipper of God. It would be pleasant to record that, having become a new creature, the Christian never again manifests any desire for the world and its ways; but alas, this is not true. That evil nature, the flesh, is still within him, and only requires encouragement to evidence itself in worldliness of thought, word and conduct. This was the tragedy of Demas, one of Paul’s fellow helpers, of whom he had to say: “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Timothy 4:10). The apostle John realized the subtle appeal that the world makes on the child of God. He faithfully warned believers concerning it and wrote: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15-16).

It was the worldliness of the Corinthian saints that prompted the letter of rebuke which Paul addressed to them. Let us not confine worldliness, in our thoughts, to the visible and outward manifestations of it.

- The lust of the eyes, - The lust of the flesh, - The pride of life. May never be outwardly seen in a believer, or even be suspected by his fellow-saints; and yet it may be there, artfully concealed and in abundant measure.

Though a Christian may never outwardly darken the door of a theater, or dance hall, or engage in any of the visible and admittedly worldly amusements, he can inwardly be just as worldly in mind as the one who does.

- The brother in the meeting who sits with his eyes shut, and apparently engrossed in worship, may be planning a business deal in his mind.
- That sister, who sits so prim and proper, and who would never dream of being seen in any questionable place of amusement, or be guilty of doing anything that “simply isn’t done,” may be filled with self-complacency at the high degree of her attainment of “separation,” and be quite proud of her humility and unworldliness of manner!

Worldliness, therefore, may consist of thought and attitude, as well as outward behavior.

One thing is certain, whether it is worldliness of thought or behavior, both combine to hinder the believer from worshipping in Spirit and in truth. Worship cannot function in an atmosphere of worldliness. It the believer is to experience what it means to be, “Shut in with Thee, far, far above The restless world that wars below;”

Then he must also know what it means to be unworldly in thought, attitude and deed.

Before he can be “shut in,” he must “go forth” unto Christ from all that denies Him the place of absolute pre-eminence: “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach” (Hebrews 13:13). The Christian must view the world, in all its aspects, as being “crucified unto him,” and he to the world (Galatians 6:14).

He must take his stand with Christ, in separation from that which is “of the world,” and steadfastly maintain this separation. The child of God must not confuse isolation with separation. A monk may isolate himself in a monastery and yet not be separated unto God in heart and mind. It is not a case of shutting oneself up from any contact with the world and the people of the world, but of keeping oneself “unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). The extent of the believer’s separation will be determined by the measure of his occupation with Christ. As the Lord Jesus is allowed to fill his vision, occupy his thoughts, control his words and actions and satisfy his heart; in that degree the believer will be unworldly, and thus spiritually fitted to offer acceptable worship to God. The poet has expressed it in the following lines, “This the treasure I’ve found in His love That has made me a pilgrim below.”

3. A critical spirit The fostering of a fault-finding attitude of mind in a believer is fatal to worship, for it occupies the Christian with his fellow believers, instead of with God. This critical frame of mind may begin in a small way, but if it is encouraged, and thus allowed to develop unjudged and unchecked, it will ultimately sour his whole life.

It will dry of the milk of human kindness in his heart, blind his vision, warp his understanding and render him useless, either to God or to his fellow believers. When a person looks at things through the spectacles of censorious criticism, everything becomes distorted to his vision. Due to prejudice, he is unable to appreciate the viewpoint of others. Prejudice has been wittily defined as: “being down on what you are not up on!”

Thus, with a warped mind, he imputes ulterior motive to the actions of others.

Instead of looking for something to commend, the critic is always on the look out for something to condemn. Unfortunately, the critic is usually quite blind to his own many imperfections and shortcomings!

He demands from others what he is not prepared to give himself.

He is so intent on removing what he thinks to be a splinter in his brother’s eye, that he does not realize it is but the reflection of a huge plank in his own eye! - What he refers to as “rudeness” in others, he dubs “frankness” and “faithfulness” in himself.

- What he calls “bad temper” in others, becomes “righteous indignation” in himself.
- What he alludes to as “stinginess” in others, is viewed as “sound economy” in his own life.
- What he designates “duplicity” in others, because “diplomacy” in himself!

It is bad enough when only one believer in an assembly is possessed by such a censorious spirit; but it is ten-thousand times worse when all those composing it are similarly affected. It is hardly necessary to say that no worship can rise in such an environment. God’s word says: “If ye bite and

devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Galatians 5:15).

Such a spirit of criticism acts as a corrosive and eats away the spirituality, both of an individual and an assembly. It was this critical spirit, doubtless prompted by envy, that caused Korah and his companions to approach Moses and Aaron with the complaint: "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them.

Wherefore then life ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

God left the people of Israel in no doubt as to what He thought of this act, - First, by vindicating Moses and Aaron with the miracle of the budding rod; - Next, by visiting His summary judgment upon the malcontents (See Numbers 16).

These things, "written for our learning" (Romans 15:4), should speak loudly to all our hearts of the evil of a critical spirit. The remedy for such a spirit is, - First of all a realization of its sinfulness and hatefulness in the sight of God.

- Second, humble and frank self-judgment and acknowledgment of it to God.

- Third, a holy determination never to allow it to have a place in one's life again.

- Fourth, an apology to any who have been grieved by the unjust criticism.

- Fifth, much prayer on behalf of one's brethren. There is no better cure for a critical and jealous spirit than to pray earnestly for God's richest blessing on the one who is the object of the criticism.

- Sixth, a resolve to look for something to commend in one's brethren. We read that "Charity [love] thinketh no evil... beareth all things, endureth all things" (1 Corinthians 13:5-7). We must look at them through the eyes of Christ, and see how much of Him is evident in them.

- Seventh, to put the knife of self-judgment to all the future uprisings of this critical and censorious spirit. The believer must ever keep in mind what he is in himself. This will cause him to be deeply thankful to the Lord that his fellow believers have exhibited so much grace in extending their fellowship to him, and for their great forbearance in putting up with him for so long! The result of such repentance will be a restoration of soul, an enlargement of heart-capacity for God, a freedom of spirit, an appreciation of all Christ is and has done, and a consequent pouring forth of adoring worship to the One who has done all things well. 4. Slothfulness By this is meant the failure to use the means God has provided to enlighten the believer as to the value of worship and to stimulate it in a believer's heart. Many shrink from a study of this subject because of the effort such preparation involves. We have noted, earlier in this book, the high cost of worship.

- Worship is not an easy thing, but is developed as the believer, in holy energy, lays hold of what God has provided for him in Christ.

- Worship is not generated by lounging, nor is it developed in the atmosphere of spiritual apathy and neglect. The fruit of worship does not grow in the field of the slothful, but comes by persistent cultivation, and this necessitates the determined application of mind and will: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a

little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man” (Proverbs 24:30-34).

- The fire of worship needs the constant renewing of fuel if it is to rise, like the smoke of the morning sacrifice to God.

- The fuel needed is the study of, meditation in and obedience to the word of God, plus a life of prayer and devotion.

If this fuel is not forthcoming, then the fire of worship on the altar of the soul will die, and God will be denied the worship He seeks. The awkward and poverty-stricken silences, that sometimes occur in a gathering of believers for worship, is the sad consequence of this particular hindrance of slothfulness. The saints have nothing to give God, because they have not gathered anything from God.

Instead of their baskets being full of their appreciation of God and His Son, as a result of their individual study of the Word; they have neglected their Bibles, wasted their time on trivialities, and consequently appear before God empty. Such Christians often complain that they do not get the spiritual food they desire. The truth is they do not spiritually desire the food God has provided for them. The lack is not in the food provided, but in the lack of appetite for it. Ruth diligently gleaned in the fields of Boaz, with the result she had something to give: “And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not. So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed” (Ruth 2:15-18). As the believer gleans in the rich fields of holy Scripture, and beats out by meditation what he has gathered, there will be no lack of worship in his heart, for he will be full of appreciation of all God is and has done. This spiritual preparation of Bible study and prayer, so essential to worship, calls for both systematic and persistent effort, often of the heroic order.

Life today proceeds at an ever increasing tempo. Business and domestic duties cry insistently for more and more of the believer’s time. Unless he is very careful, the Christian will soon discover that the secular has crowded out the sacred. He must therefore both make time and take time for the cultivation of his own private devotional life.

It may require getting up half an hour before the usual time, and spending that period in systematic Bible reading, meditation, study and prayer. He must jealously guard this period against the encroachment of business or household duties, and devote it sacredly and exclusively to the Lord.

Spiritual laziness must be viewed as the thief it is, for it will steal away the worship that should be offered to God.

Each believer needs to heed the soul stirring exhortation: “It is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand, Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light” (Romans 13:11-12).

Spiritual lethargy must therefore give place to spiritual alertness, if our worship is to be what it should.

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21. The Hindrances to Worship

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE THE HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP

5. IMPATIENCE By this is meant the believer's failure to wait for God and upon God. This, of course, is the opposite of the former hindrances of self will and slothfulness. We are naturally creatures of extremes and quickly swing, like a pendulum, from one side to the other.

While we must avoid the danger of lagging behind God, we must also beware of rushing ahead of Him. There is not only a time when we must be up and doing, but also a period when it is essential that we "rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him" (Psalms 37:7).

There is a verse of Scripture which combines to reveal the two-fold danger of these extremes of impatience and slothfulness. It reads: "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding" (Psalms 32:9). The horse is noted for its spirit of impetuosity. Without any thought of the consequences ahead, it "rusheth into the battle" (Jeremiah 8:6). The mule is famous for its stubborn inertia. The mule draws back when it is urged to go on. God wants neither extreme in His people. He has promised: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalms 32:8). The sad case of King Saul will furnish us with an illustration of how impatience can hinder worship. The prophet Samuel had anointed Saul as king over Israel, and prophesied that the Spirit of the Lord should come upon him, that he should prophesy, and that God should turn him into another man (1 Samuel 10:1-13).

Then Samuel gave Saul definite instructions regarding his future actions and said: "And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do" (v. 8).

Thus instructed, Saul returned to his home, and the signs which Samuel had foretold came to pass. In Chapter 13 we find Saul at Gilgal, waiting impatiently for the coming of Samuel, while the Philistines gathered together to attack the Israelites. Instead of waiting for Samuel to appear, to do what only he could do as a priest unto God, Saul, in his impatience and impetuosity, commanded his servant to bring him the burnt offering and the peace offerings, and he offered them to God.

Scarcely had he completed the task, which he had absolutely no right or authority to perform, than Samuel appeared and inquired the reason for his act. Saul replied that he saw the people of Israel were scattered from him, and that the Philistines seemed about to attack him, and that Samuel had not yet come to him, and ended by saying: "I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering" (1 Samuel 13:11-12).

Upon this explanation Samuel charged him with folly and disobedience and concluded: "But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord has sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee" (vss. 13-14).

Therefore, because of his failure to wait God's time, and do things in accordance with God's way, Saul was rejected for his "forced" worship. God wants no "forced" worship from his people, for worship is essentially a voluntary thing. It rises from the soul of him who waits patiently in His presence and takes time to meditate in His word.

- Saul learned, to his cost, that "the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63).
- Saul, in his impatience, committed the folly of intruding where he did not rightly belong.
- Saul rushed ahead of God and offered that which he was not Divinely qualified to do, and consequently both merited and received Divine disapproval.

Each believer is in the same danger of trying to accomplish, in the energy of the flesh, what can only be done acceptably in the power of the Holy Spirit. That unholy and fleshly impatience, which would prompt the believer to rush unprepared into the presence of God and offer artificial worship, must be curbed and judged in the light of God's word. He must heed the Divine injunction: "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalms 46:10).

Like David, he must say to himself: "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him" (Psalms 62:5).

6. Formalism By this is meant the substitution of scriptural simplicity and the liberty of the Spirit, for a scrupulously meticulous and exact observance of certain outward forms, rules and regulations, without the inward spiritual reality. One does not have to go far to see a demonstration of this in Christendom. In many places, the whole meeting for "public worship" is prearranged from beginning to end and proceeds, with clocklike precision, from the opening hymn to the benediction. - The hymns to be sung are all previously arranged.

- The prayers that are offered are all read from a book and have been composed by persons who have long since died. To add to the confusion, in many cases, the person who conducts this "worship service" has never been born again by the Spirit of God, and is consequently "dead in his trespasses and sins!" What a travesty this is on the pattern given in the New Testament Scriptures! The coming together of believers for worship in those days was marked by spirituality, simplicity, equality, liberty and spontaneity. The result was much worship and much blessing.

It all goes to demonstrate the fatal tendency of the flesh to introduce human regulations as a substitute for God's pattern, imagining, by so doing, that the Divine plan is improved thereby! No company of believers, however scripturally gathered, is free from this danger of drifting into formalism. For instance: a mode of procedure is introduced which, by constant observance over a period of years, comes to be looked upon as being of Divine authority, and therefore "scriptural." This particular mode of procedure may be perfectly all right, but it must ever be kept distinct from what the word of God actually authorizes.

Ritualism can become as great a menace to worship as formalism!

We must beware of forcing our customs on our fellow believers, and depriving them of their "liberty in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 2:4). The tendency of formality is to substitute uniformity, for unity. It seeks to produce, through its rules and regulations, what only the Spirit of God can accomplish when He is given His rightful place. Formality may produce an outward harmony and order, but it

is a mechanical one, and is dependent entirely upon the strict and continued observance of the prescribed form of service. The Holy Spirit, as He is allowed to lead the assembled saints, will produce harmony and order of a vital character. This will result in true worship ascending to God and bringing delight to His heart.

7. An Unforgiving Spirit What a blighting effect this has upon the worship of an individual, or an assembly of believers! Our Lord made a special reference to this hindrance and provided a remedy for it. He said: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23-24). So long as a grudge is cherished in one's heart against a fellow believer, so long will that believer remain in darkness. So wrote John, the apostle of love (1 John 2:11). He goes further and says: "If a man say, 'I love God,' and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also" (1 John 4:20-21).

Paul's words should come home with peculiar force to each believer's heart: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Well did Paul know the fatal effect an unforgiving spirit has upon worship. An old Christian used to say that the best way to kill a grudge in one's heart, was to pray for the person against whom the grudge was formed, and keep on praying for him until the grudge was gone!

We must all beware lest little misunderstandings are allowed to develop into big feuds, which act as a blight upon our worship and hinder our testimony for God.

8. Pride One thing is certain: worship and pride of heart are mutually exclusive, unless it be self-worship, and this is really what pride is. Pride ill becomes a child of God, or an assembly of His people; yet alas, it is often seen, and its baneful effects are only too plainly evident in the lack of spiritual worship.

- Pride is a subtle thing and often exists where it is least expected, for one can even be proud of his humility!
- Pride in one's own personal appearance leads that individual to give undue attention to himself, or herself.
- Pride of gift leads to an ostentatious display of it and a secret craving for applause.
- Pride of position leads its owner to adopt a condescending air to his fellow believers.
- Pride of possession shows itself in self-complacency and boasting.
- Pride of one's ecclesiastical position evidences itself in smugness and sanctimoniousness.

We could add to the sordid list, but enough has been said to indicate what a hindrance these forms of pride are to the worship of either an individual or an assembly. God leaves us in no doubt as to how he views pride, for we read: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble"

(James 4:6). The best cure for pride is to “look unto Jesus,” of Whom it was said He: “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Php 2:7-8). It is only as a believer, or an assembly, in true humility of spirit seeks the face of God, and contemplates the blessed Lord Jesus, that worship will be the inevitable outcome. May we, by God’s grace, see to it that none of these things shall be allowed to hinder our worship to the One who alone is worthy.

~ end of chapter 21 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

22. Part IX. The Place of Worship

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO IX. THE PLACE OF WORSHIP A confused idea exists in Christendom as to the place of worship. Certain buildings, of an ecclesiastical design, are often called “places of worship.” These are duly and formally “consecrated,” and often such a building is referred to as “the house of God.” This, of course, is entirely foreign to the New Testament, which is the believer’s sole authority in the matter of worship, or any other matter on which it speaks. The woman of Samaria was puzzled regarding the matter of the correct geographical location for worship. She said to Christ: “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; [Mt. Gerizim] and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship” (John 4:20). Our Lord’s reply to her makes perfectly clear that the geographical situation, or the kind of building, is utterly immaterial to worship. Mark His words well: “Believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father... 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” (vss. 21-23). In these words our Lord completely swept away the common idea that one locality, or one building, is more sacrosanct than another; or that worship is more acceptable to Him when offered in one place than another. The place, or the building, has nothing whatever to do with worship. It is the spiritual condition of the worshipper, and not his physical location that determines whether or not his worship is acceptable to the Father.

Once this fundamental fact is really grasped by the believer, it will deliver him from a great deal of the misconception regarding this matter that abounds in Christendom. Let us consider this subject of the place of worship under two aspects, the spiritual and the physical.

1. Spiritually, Worship Is In the Holiest of All The Christian worships, spiritually, where his great High Priest is. This is Heaven, or the holiest of all. This fact is set forth for us in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In it the writer uses the illustration of the Tabernacle as the “pattern of things in the heavens” (Hebrews 9:23). He proceeds to describe how Aaron, the high priest of Israel, entered once a year into the holiest of all, with the blood of the sin offering which he had offered for his own sins, and also for the sins of the people of Israel (Hebrews 9:1-10). He then proceeds to contrast Aaron’s high priestly work with that of Christ, the great High Priest.

He says: “But Christ, being come an high Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once (for all) into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:11-12). As the holiest of all, in the tabernacle, was a type of Heaven and the presence of God; so Christ, by virtue of His substitutionary sacrifice, and the eternal value of His precious blood, has entered into Heaven as the great High Priest of His redeemed people. The writer then goes on to say: “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures [or types] of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Hebrews 9:23). Not only has Christ entered into Heaven as our Divine Representative, but He has opened up, for all His people, “a new and living way,” by which

they are enabled, spiritually, to enter the holiest also and pour out their worship in the presence of God.

It will be recalled that the veil of the temple, which shut men out from the presence of God, was rent in twain at the death of Christ. By this God signified that the perfect sacrifice of His Son had met all His holy claims, and that access into His presence and favor could now be the portion of all who trusted in Christ and His finished work. The Word is quite clear as to this fact, for we read: "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 an high Priest over the house of God, let us draw near, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith," etc. (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Thus every born-again believer, being constituted a priest unto God, is both spiritually fitted and Divinely invited to come by faith into the very holiest of all and worship. What is true of an individual is also true of an assembly of believers. As they meet in the name of the Lord Jesus, they form a God-constituted company of priests. As such, through their great High Priest, they may lay hold, by faith, upon God's provision and spiritually enter within the holiest of all, to present their worship to the Father and the Son. Christian hymn writers have beautifully expressed this truth in song, and believers delight to join in the following hymn by J.G. Deck, "The veil is rent, lo, Jesus stands Before the throne of grace; And clouds of incense from His hands Fill all that glorious place. His precious blood is sprinkled there, Before and on the throne; And His own wounds in Heaven declare The work that saves is done. Within the holiest of all, Cleansed by His precious blood, Before the throne we prostrate fall, And worship Thee, our God."

While believers are physically on earth yet, in the energy of faith, they enter spiritually into the reality of this blessed truth. Thus their spirits are bathed in celestial atmosphere, so that they can sing in verity and truth, "Shut in with Thee, far, far above The restless world that wars below; We seek to learn and prove Thy love, Thy wisdom and Thy grace to know." A saintly believer, who lived in the enjoyment of this truth, was once asked: "How far is Heaven from earth?" He replied: "It cannot be far, for I spent half an hour there this morning!"

There is only a veil between Heaven and earth. The child of God may enter within that veil by faith, and prostrate himself before the throne of grace in worship. With his fellow-believers he can truthfully sing, "Through Thy precious body broken, inside the veil; O what words to sinners spoken, inside the veil; Precious as the blood that bought us, Perfect as the love that sought us, Holy as the Lamb that brought us, inside the veil.

Lamb of God, through Thee we enter, inside the veil; Cleansed by Thee, we boldly venture, inside the veil; Not a stain, a new creation, Ours is such a full salvation; Low we bow in adoration, inside the veil!"

Thus, by faith, guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and through the great High Priest of their confession, believers are enabled, spiritually, to enter the holiest of all, and worship God in the beauty of holiness.

2. Physically, Worship May be Anywhere, or in Any Building There are no geographical limits to worship. One can worship just as truly at the North Pole as at the South Pole nor is any building required for this purpose, though such may be a great convenience to a company of believers,

particularly in bad weather. The size, cost and architectural design of such a building has nothing whatever to do with the worth, or otherwise, of worship. Our Lord's words should dispel any false ideas as to the value of one building, or place, as against another: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

It is the presence of Christ, in the midst of His people, that sanctifies the gathering, and not the kind of building that encloses them. The huge ornate and costly buildings that men have erected add not a whit to the value, or acceptability of the worship offered therein. In fact, many of these buildings merely represent a great waste of time, labor and money. In the early days of the history of the Church, believers frequently met for worship in the home of a fellow believer; so that we often read of "the church, which is in his house" (Colossians 4:15; Romans 16:5, etc.). This does not imply, of course, that any old ramshackle building should be erected and used as a meeting place for believers. Such a building should at least meet the requirements of common decency, and be a suitable place to which others may be brought to hear the Gospel.

Thus the physical location of the worshipping believer, or believers, is utterly immaterial. Nor is there any virtue in the physical posture he adopts: whether he kneels, sits, or stands. The believer can worship as he lies upon his bed, as he walks to work, as he rides in the street car, train, bus, or auto, as he works, or as he kneels in his bedroom, etc.

It is the spiritual quality of the worship of the individual believer, or of a company of believers, that determines its worth to God. Nor is the time of day material to worship. Any time of the day or night is equally fitting. It can be offered in the flush of early morning, in the brightness of the noon, in the soft velvet of the evening, or in the blackness of midnight. All times are equally appropriate for this highest of all occupations.

It is not the physical place where, or the time when; but the spiritual how, that is the important factor in worship.

Though physically on earth, the Christian, with Divine fitness and holy boldness, worships in Heaven. May it be ours to experience much of its reality in our own lives!

~ end of chapter 22 ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

23. Part X. The Results of Worship

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE X. THE RESULTS OF WORSHIP

Having discussed the meaning, the importance, the authority, the Object, the ground, the power, the manner, and the hindrances, and the place of worship; it may be appropriate to conclude the study of this subject with a consideration of the results of worship. These results will be seen to be far reaching, affecting both God, the believer, the assembly and the unsaved.

1. God Shall Be Glorified Worship gives to God His rightful place of absolute pre-eminence in everything.

It presents to Him the praise, honor and glory that is His rightful due, by virtue of what He is and what He has done.

It has been well said that: "Man's chief end is to enjoy God and glorify Him forever." As the Christian concentrates his attention upon the triune God, and the exceeding greatness of the Divine attributes, as displayed in creation, redemption and regeneration; he will be lost in wonder, awe, adoration and worship. Thus he displays the excellencies (or glorifies) of the One who has made it all possible. As Robert Hall has finely said, "Were we capable of comprehending the Deity, devotion would not be the sublimest employment to which we can attain. In the contemplation of such a Being, we are in no danger of going beyond our subject: we are conversing with an infinite Object, in the depths of Whose essence and purposes, we are forever lost. This will probably give all the emotions of freshness and astonishment to the raptures of the beatific vision, and add a delightful zest to the devotions of eternity. This will enable the Divine Being to pour in continually fresh accessions of light; to unfold new views of His character, disclose new parts of His perfection, open new mansions in Himself, in which the mind will find ample room to expatiate. Thus we shall learn, to all eternity that, so far from exhausting His infinite fulness, there will remain infinite recesses of His nature unexplored; scenes in His counsels never brought before the view of His creatures; that we know but 'parts of His ways,' and that, instead of exhausting our theme, we are not even approaching nearer to the comprehension of the eternal ALL." God's purpose, behind all the display of His attributes, has been revealed. Mark carefully the Divine utterance: "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people, I will be glorified" (Leviticus 10:3).

There can therefore be no greater occupation for man than the glorification of God, and this is what worship does.

We have already seen that God desires the worship of man, His creature. At infinite cost He has provided a way by which man may be redeemed by Him, accepted before Him, approach to Him, be blessed by Him and become a worshipper of Him. When His blood-redeemed people fall down before Him in worship, the purpose of the triune God is thus fulfilled and He is thereby glorified.

- The Father will be glorified in the revelation He has given of Himself in the Son of His love.

- The Son will be glorified in the work He accomplished by the sacrifice of Himself.
- The Holy Spirit will be glorified, for it was through Him the written revelation came, and His indwelling presence makes possible the worship of the believer.

Thus worship redounds to the glory of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2. The Believer Will Be Blest No one loses by giving to God, for God will be no man's Debtor.

He will pour multiplied joy into the heart of the worshipper, in "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together and running over" (Luke 6:38).

God delights to give, and reveals Himself as possessing both the ability and willingness to "do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20).

God is described as "the blessed God." Consequently, all who bless Him in worship are blessed by Him in return.

Luke's Gospel concludes in a very beautiful way. After describing the ascension of our Lord we read: "And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:52-53).

Notice the close connection between their worship of Christ, and the resultant great joy of their own hearts! The worship of God ever results in the great joy of man. The worshipping believer is a joyous believer, for joy comes through obedience. Christ said: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

Worship enables the believer to know God better, and to appreciate Him more; and this knowledge causes God to become his "exceeding joy" (Psalms 43:4).

He who fulfils God's desire for worship, shall have his own desire fulfilled for joy.

There is no joy so exquisite as that which comes from the contemplation of God, as He has revealed Himself in the Person of His beloved Son. While the believer does not worship God in order to obtain this resultant joy; yet the fact remains that this "joy of the Lord" is but one of the many by-products of worship.

Thus the adoration that ascends to God from the believer, to delight God's heart, will be more than recompensed by the blessing descending from God to the believer, which will rejoice his heart. God's definite promise is: "Them that honor me, I will honor" (1 Samuel 2:30). Not only does worship minister joy to the worshipper, but it results in his deep soul-satisfaction. This is the very antithesis of self satisfaction, which is the result of favorable occupation with oneself. This is exemplified in the Pharisee's so-called prayer (Luke 18:11-12).

Worship occupies the soul with God, and the believer who spends time in the presence of God proves the truth of David's statement: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them to drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light" (Psalms 36:8-9). The "broken cisterns" of this earth can never satisfy the one who has experienced the regenerating grace of God. With the hymn writer he sings, "Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts, Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men; From the best bliss

that earth imparts, We turn, unfilled, to Thee again.”

We might mention other blessings which the believer is caused to experience as a result of worshipping God; but enough has been written to prove that all those who bless God shall be blessed by God. He who from his heart exclaims, “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name!” shall also prove, with David, that: “Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple” (Psalms 103:1; Psalms 65:4). 3. The Assembly Will Be Edified Not only does worship glorify God and bring blessing to the worshipper himself; but a company of believers, who give worship its proper place, is blessed and edified thereby; for it is fulfilling its God-given function.

It will be recalled that God, in the tabernacle and, later, in the temple, responded to the worship of His people by filling the place with His glory: “For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys” (Exodus 40:30) and “So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord” (I

Kings 8:11).

Wherever believers gather together for worship today and, with one heart and voice, join to worship God spiritually, sincerely, and intelligently, they too shall be made to experience what it means for the place to become redolent with the glory of the Lord.

There is no spot nearer Heaven than when the united worship of an assembly of Christians ascend, like fragrant incense, before the face of God.

We have already seen that this calls for spiritual preparation of the highest order, but such an exercise of heart is not in vain. The Divine purpose in constituting each believer a priest will be fulfilled when such, audibly or inaudibly, join as an assembly to present their appreciation to God all He is and has done. When an assembly of believers thus puts “first things first,” the saints are thereby built up in their most holy faith. This, in turn, fits and enables them to fulfil the other purposes God has in mind for His gathered people. An assembly that allows its service for the Lord to crowd out its worship to the Lord, not only comes short of God’s purpose for it, but the effectiveness of its service is curtailed thereby. Both the desire and ability for true service flows from spiritual worship.

It was after Isaiah had seen the glory of the Lord, and been impressed with the majesty of His presence, that the call and commission for service came, and to which he gladly responded, “Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

4. The Unsaved Will Be Reached As the worshipping Christian moves amongst his fellow men, he will unconsciously carry with him something of God.

We are told that Moses, when he returned from the interview he had with God upon the mount, “Wist not that... his face shone” (Exodus 34:29). The Bible points out that “None of us liveth to himself” (Romans 14:7). Each life touches some other life, either for good or evil. Each Christian, by the impact of his personality makes an impression upon others. Only as God, through worship, impresses the believer with Himself, can the believer impress others with God. It is this

unconscious influence that counts for so much in one's contact with the world.

It was when the Lord turned the captivity of His people, and their mouth was "filled with laughter," and their "tongue with singing," that the heathen were moved to testify: "The Lord had done great things for them" (Psalms 126:2). The world is looking for reality, and rightly holds in contempt all religious sham, humbug and pretence. An ostentatious display of sanctimoniousness only awakens its ridicule. The believer, who knows what it means to worship the true and living God, is best fitted to present the gospel to the unsaved, both by commending it in his life and proclaiming it with his lips.

It is not an uncommon thing for the worship of an assembled company of God's people to be used by the Lord to impress unsaved people who happened to be present, of the reality of eternal things, so that they were led to trust the Saviour.

Such certainly are prepared to fall upon their faces, "worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth" (1 Corinthians 14:23-25).

Thus worship is seen to have far reaching and blessed effects, beginning with God Himself, and flowing out to His own people and, through them, to a world that sits in darkness and the shadow of death.

CONCLUSION May the Lord be pleased to use this study of worship to both the awakening, encouragement and edification of His people; so that from each believer individually, and from each assembly collectively, there may flow up, to the triune God, a constant volume of adoring worship which shall bring delight to His heart and glory to His name!

~ end of book ~ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

24. Appendix. "Direct Address to the Lord Jesus"

APPENDIX, DIRECT ADDRESS TO THE LORD Jesus INTRODUCTION THE title of this paper may appear strange to those Christians who, from their conversion, have been rightly taught that it is their scriptural privilege to address both the Father and the Son directly in worship, praise and prayer. It will therefore come as an unpleasant surprise for such to learn that in certain circles there are Christians who would strongly object to a believer directly addressing the Lord Jesus. Some have gone so far, in their erroneous belief, to remove from their hymnbooks all those songs of worship and praise which are addressed directly to the Son of God! The writer recently heard of a company of believers where certain brethren were taken to task because they had addressed the Lord Jesus directly. They were solemnly informed that all worship, praise and prayer must be addressed only to the Father through the mediation of the Son. Such scriptures as John 4:23; John 16:23 were quoted to support the assertion, as though this represented the entire revelation of the word of God regarding the matter of worship, praise and prayer!

Unfortunately, such an incident is by no means an isolated one.

Periodically, this question is raised at Bible readings and conferences of believers, and there seems to be a little confusion in the minds of some as to this question of direct address to the Son of God, in either worship, praise or prayer. In view of this, it will be profitable to look into the matter, and see what the word of God has to say concerning it.

It is well to remember that one of the fundamental principles governing the correct understanding of any text of Scripture is that it must be interpreted in the light of all the other scriptures which refer to the same subject. This is the meaning of 2 Peter 1:21-22, which reads, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This simply means that no single text of Scripture can be interpreted wholly in the light of itself, but must be understood in the light of all that the Divinely inspired word has to say regarding the subject as a whole.

Almost any mistaken theory can be based on an isolated text, or even a skillfully arranged collection of texts, as the claims of scriptural support by false cults will demonstrate; but no wrong theory can possibly stand up to the test of all that the Bible has to say concerning any doctrine. Therefore, in discussing any scriptural theme, the full revelation of it must be taken into consideration ere a right conclusion can be reached. It has been well said, "Learned and gifted men can make what is only a human theory look so like a Divine principle that the honest, but unwary person, is led into a snare without being aware of it." When we apply this sound principle of interpretation to the subject now under consideration, we shall discover that the Bible gives ample authority for the believer to address both the Father and the Son directly in worship, praise and prayer.

We shall begin our study of this subject by a short consideration of the great truth of I. The Tri-unity of the Eternal Godhead The Bible clearly teaches that the Object of the believer's worship is the triune and eternal Godhead, who is described as: "Eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen" (1 Timothy 1:17). The meaning of the term While the word, "trinity," is not found in the Scriptures, yet the truth of the tri-unity of the Godhead is clearly evident as one opens the pages of the Bible. The Godhead is revealed as consisting of three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each equal and eternal with the Other, each possessing all the essentials of Deity, as omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and immutability, and each possessing all the essentials of personality, as intelligence, emotions and will.

Yet these Three are One in nature and essence.

Thus there are not three Gods, but one Godhead revealed in three Persons.

"God is a trinity of Persons in a unity of nature." This tremendous truth is utterly beyond our finite comprehension, but not beyond the apprehension of faith, for we implicitly believe what God has been pleased to reveal concerning this fact. What this tri-unity of the Godhead involves. The late W. E. Vine wrote: "The word, 'trinity,' was used as early as the second century to express conveniently the scriptural doctrine that, in the undivided unity of the Divine nature of the Godhead, there are the personal distinctions of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each possessed of complete and perfect personality." G. Campbell Morgan puts it thus: "In one essential Godhead there co-exists three Persons, co-substantial, co-equal and co-eternal. This mystery cannot be explained, or defined, because it is beyond the grasp of the finite, and no explanation is given in the inspired word." In the fourth century, Athanasius, who so valiantly defended the doctrine of the essential and eternal deity of the Lord Jesus against the attack of Arius, who denied the Deity of Christ, stated his conception of the trinity in this magnificent passage: "We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. There is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit; but the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is all One, the glory equal and the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet there are not three Eternals, but one Eternal. So likewise the Father is Almighty; the Son, Almighty; and the Holy Spirit, Almighty. And yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet there are not three Gods, but one God."

Some attempted illustrations of the Trinity.

There are no adequate illustrations of the Tri-unity of the Godhead, for it transcends all possible human comprehension and defies all philosophical analysis. Many attempts have been made to illustrate the Trinity, but all fall far short of conveying the actual fact.

Nathaniel Wood, in his excellent book: "The Secret of the Universe," declares that this secret is the tri-unity of the Godhead. He proceeds to demonstrate that this tri-unity is reflected in man himself, who was made in the image of God, and who is composed of spirit, soul and body, yet he is but one individual. Space also is a tri-unity, consisting of length, breadth and height, yet space is but one. Time also falls into this same threefold category, for it consists of past, present and future, yet time is but one thing. The distinctions in the Godhead.

Scripture generally presents the Father as purposing, the Son as executing the Divine purpose, and the Holy Spirit as energizing and applying this purpose, and making it operative in the experience of the believer.

- The Father loved the world, and gave His Son.

- The Son, obedient to the Father's will, gave Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice to accomplish our redemption.

- The Holy Spirit convicts man of his need as a sinner, leads him to repentance and faith in the Person and work of the Son of God and, on his trusting in the Lord Jesus, seals him unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 4:30). It has been well said: "All that can be seen of God is through the Son, and all that can be experienced of God is through the Holy Spirit" (John 1:18; John 14:9; John 15:26; John 16:7-15).

We need ever to keep in mind the fact that there is no jealousy in the eternal Godhead. Each person delights to glorify the Other. The Bible does not even maintain a fixed order of sequence when mentioning their names. For the purpose of convenience of identification we usually speak of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as: "The first, second and third Persons of the Godhead."

Scripture, however, varies the order of their names.

- Sometimes the order is: "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

- At other times the order is: "Spirit, Father and Son" (John 15:26).

- Then again, the order reads: "Son, Spirit and Father" (Hebrews 9:13-14; Ephesians 2:18).

- Once more, the order is "Son, Father and Holy Spirit" (II Corinthian 13:14).

Let each reader carefully ponder the wonderful revelation of the Father which His beloved Son gave, as recorded in the fifth chapter of John.

Let the full significance of Christ's own words sink deep into his heart, for it reveals a tremendous truth: "All men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him" (John 5:23).

What does this mean? There is only one answer: it means exactly what it says. The same honor that we give to the Father must be given equally to the Son. In whatever way we honor the Father, then in that same way we are to honor the Son. We shall have occasion to refer more fully to this passage later on. The more a believer contemplates the infinite greatness, majesty, holiness, righteousness, truth, mercy, love and grace of the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the more he will be lost in reverential awe, wonder, praise and worship. It becomes us, therefore, as our thoughts are occupied with such a glorious Being, to prostrate ourselves before Him in humble adoration for all He has revealed Himself to be, and for all He has done in the wondrous work of our redemption.

Each Christian should keep in mind the distinction between the Persons of the Godhead. This will enable him to be spiritually intelligent, not only in his private devotions, but also as he audibly takes part in a gathering of believers for worship or prayer.

Sometimes one hears a believer thanking the Father for dying for him on the cross. This person would never have expressed himself thus if he had been clear in his conception of this distinction of the Persons in the Godhead. Confused thinking must inevitably issue in confused speaking.

While we would not “make a man an offender for a word” (Isaiah 29:21), yet we should heed the injunction to “hold fast the form of sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13). Sound doctrine, when grasped by a sound mind, will result in sound thoughts which, in turn, will find expression in sound words (See 2 Timothy 1:7; 2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:1).

Often the word, “God,” includes in its scope Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their undivided Unity, as Genesis 1:1; Revelation 19:10; Revelation 22:9, etc. Sometimes the word has the Father particularly in mind, as John 3:16; John 4:24; John 5:44, etc. At other times it is the Son of God who is in view, as Romans 9:5; Hebrews 1:8, etc. At still other times it is the Spirit who is emphasized, as Acts 5:4. Let us ever keep in mind the fact that each Person is equally “God,” with all that this term implies.

5. The approach to the Father and the Son The Bible makes it abundantly clear that the believer, as a member of the family of God (Ephesians 3:15), is to approach the Father in worship, praise and prayer through the mediation of the Son of God. See John 14:6; John 4:23; John 14:13; John 16:23; 1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 10:19-22; Ephesians 2:18, etc. The same Divine revelation, however, makes it equally clear that the believer may approach the Son of God directly in worship, praise and prayer, without any mediation whatever. See Luke 24:50-53; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5:9-10; Ephesians 5:19; Acts 7:59-60; Acts 9:5-6; Acts 9:10-17; II Corinthian 12:8-10; Acts 22:10; Revelation 22:20.

Romanism has introduced, amongst other false teachings, the unscriptural theory of the mediation of Mary. They argue that inasmuch as the Father must be approached through the mediation of the Son, therefore the Son must be approached through the mediation of Mary. The scripture reveals that there is no mediator between the believer and his blessed Lord and Saviour. The mediation of the Son has to do with the believer’s relationship with and his approach to “the Father.”

Doctrinal truth must be held in proper balance The truth of God concerning any subject revealed in Scripture, must be held in full revelation of God concerning it. We are all naturally creatures of extremes, and are therefore prone to emphasize one aspect of a scriptural truth to the entire exclusion of the other. This can easily be demonstrated in the twin truths of the sovereignty of God and the free will of man.

Both these truths are clearly revealed in the Bible, yet Christians are sharply divided into two opposing schools of thought regarding the matter, each holding one side of the truth to the entire exclusion of the other! In regard to the subject we are now considering, we could sum up the Scripture teaching as follows: - The believer should approach the Father, in worship, praise and prayer, through the mediation of His Son.

- The Bible also reveals that the Son of God may be approached, in worship, praise and prayer, directly by the believer.

- Thus the word of God teaches both aspects of this truth, and each believer is responsible to be obedient to what God has revealed in His word regarding this matter.

Regarding the true interpretation of Christ's words, as found in John 16:23, "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He will give it you;" I cannot do better than quote Mr. August Van Ryn's comment on this passage, "The whole argument that, from this passage, prayer and praise should not be addressed to the Lord Jesus falls to the ground for the simple reason that the first word "ask" in that verse does not mean asking in the sense of wanting something to supply one's need, but it means to "inquire," or questioning for the sake of learning something one does not know.

Both A. T. Robertson in his critical notes, and W. E. Vine in his "Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words" comment on this fact.

"One has only to look at the context of this verse to realize this fact. The Lord is telling His disciples that, in balance, and in the light of the view of His going to leave them for Heaven, they would no longer be asking Him questions as they had been doing all the while He was with them, as they wanted to do at that very moment. See verse 19. Now that the Holy Spirit would come, the time for asking questions from the Lord Jesus had come to an end. Thus this statement has nothing to do with praying in the normal sense of the word."

It simply means that after Christ's departure, the Holy Spirit would be the "Teacher," as the Lord Jesus had been while on earth. See John 3:2. In this paper, however, we are particularly concerned with the matter of the scripturalness of directly addressing the Lord Jesus in worship, praise and prayer. We shall therefore concentrate on this subject. In reply to the question: "Should the Son of God be addressed directly in worship, praise and prayer?" our answer is a most emphatic, "yes," for the following scriptural reasons, 1. God commands it. Psalms 45:6; Psalms 45:11; Hebrews 1:6-8 There is no doubt whatever of the Messianic character of Psalm 45. It is redolent with Christ and, to make doubly sure that there shall be no misunderstanding as to this fact, it is quoted in the New Testament. Only as we appreciate, in some measure, both the mystery and reality of the eternal Godhead can we understand these words, for here it is God addressing God, the Son, "But unto the Son He saith: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!" No wonder, therefore, that the Divine decree goes forth concerning the Son of God: "Let all the angels of God worship Him!" Nor is this worship to be confined to the angels, for the exhortation of Psalm 45 is also addressed to the "daughter," a type of the Church, and of each believer in it: "Hearken, O daughter and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him" (v. 10).

How fitting therefore, that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which sets forth the infinite superiority and absolute supremacy of the Son of God, is found this Divine command to worship the Son of God, for all He is and for all He has done.

Ultimately, as we know from the Word, universal homage shall be rendered to Him, when every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Php 2:9-11).

Well may each Christian, redeemed by "the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot," bow low in adoration before the Son of God and render to Him what God has

commanded, the worship of his redeemed spirit! We may therefore state that since the Father has glorified His beloved Son, exalted Him to sit at His own right hand, and distinctly commanded us to worship Him, every Christian who does so is acting in obedience to the direct revelation of God Himself in Holy Scripture.

2. Scripture reveals it We shall notice six ways in which this is done. (1) In the vision of Isaiah. Isaiah 6:1-10, cp. John 12:38-41. Who was this glorious Being, who is described as: "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple," before Whom the seraphim worshipped and covered their faces as they cried: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory"?

We are not left in any doubt as to the identity of "the Lord of Hosts," for we read in John 12:41, "These things said Isaiah when he saw His glory and spake of Him." Whose glory did Isaiah see, and of whom did he speak? The context allows but one answer to this question: Isaiah saw the glory of the pre-incarnate Son of God, which glory He had "before the world was" (John 17:5). Shall redeemed Christians on earth deny, to the once crucified, but now glorified Son of God, the worship that Heaven gave Him in Isaiah's day? (2) The Theophanies of the Old Testament. An interesting study, in this connection, are the theophanies of the Old Testament. These theophanies, or appearances of God to men were, in reality, appearances of the pre-incarnate Son of God, for He alone is the visible manifestation of God. See John 1:18. In some of these appearances He is described as "the Angel of the LORD," and is, - Directly addressed as Deity, - Worshipped as God - Petitioned in prayer.

See Genesis 16:1-13; Genesis 21:17-19; Genesis 22:11-16; Genesis 31:11-13; Exodus 3:2-4; Judges 2:1; Judges 6:12-16; Judges 13:3-22, etc.

It is important to know that all that is predicated of Jehovah in the Old Testament is claimed by Christ in the New Testament. How unspeakably blessed it is for the believer to know that the "JEHOVAH" of the Old Testament is the "JESUS" of the New Testament! (3) In the use of the word in the original for "worship."

There are two words that are translated "worship" in the New Testament. They are "proskuneo," and "latreuo," (also translated "serve").

Both these words appear in Matthew 4:10.

Each of these words is used to describe the worship of the Father and the worship of the Son.

-There is "proskuneo" to the Father, in John 4:23-24; Revelation 4:10; and there is "proskuneo" to the Son in Luke 24:52; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5:14.

- There is "latreuo" to the Father in Php 3:3; Hebrews 9:14; and there is "latreuo" to the Son in Revelation 22:3.

Thus what is rendered to the Father through the Son is also rendered directly to the Son of God Himself. (4) In the use of the title of "The Lord."

Mr. W. R. Lewis, of "The Echoes of Service," in his small but excellent pamphlet: "Should the Lord Jesus be addressed in praise and prayer?" points out, "Of the three hundred five occurrences of

the title, 'the Lord,' found in Acts to Revelation, considerably more than half, say one hundred ninety-six, refer to the Lord Jesus. He is spoken of as 'the Lord,' more than in any other way, and the weight of evidence is in favor of taking 'the Lord' in Ephesians 5:19 as referring to Christ, as it evidently does in verse 22... This is not to deny that God is 'the Lord,' but in the New Testament, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the title belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ." We shall notice four things regarding this title. This title of "The Lord" was Divinely given to Christ.

Peter declared: "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). To Cornelius he said: "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, (He is Lord of all)." Acts 10:36.

Paul, by the Spirit affirmed: "For to this end Christ died and rose and revived that He might be Lord, both of the dead and the living" (Romans 14:9).

We have previously seen that God has decreed that the whole universe shall ultimately be made to confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." (b) Salvation is conditioned by calling on the name of the Lord.

Both in Romans 10:9-13 and Acts 2:21, the message is heard: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Think of the countless number of souls who, in all their sin and need have cried, from the heart, "Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee, O, Lamb of God, I come."

All such have discovered, by joyous experience, that salvation, peace, life, light, liberty, pardon, power, righteousness and acceptance are found only in the Lord Jesus. (c) The New Testament assemblies were characterized by the fact that the believers, composing these assemblies, called on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mark this carefully.

Paul, in his letter to the assembly at Corinth wrote: "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours."

Here there is no doubt as to the identity of "the Lord." Each believer, in those days, called upon the Lord Jesus Christ. It was their distinguishing characteristic. The heathen called upon the name of their idols, but Christians called upon the One whose they were and whom they served. (Acts 27:23).

Notice, this was not only true of the assembly in Corinth, but it obtained in "every place" where believers met together in assembly fellowship. Thus they spoke directly to the Lord Jesus. Notice also in 2 Timothy 2:22. Here Paul urges believers to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Here, again, direct address to Christ is indicated. It is interesting to observe that Peter uses a similar phrase in his Epistle and wrote: "If ye call on the Father" (1 Peter 1:17).

Thus the Christians of his day called on both the name of the Father and on the name of the Son. (d) By its use in the institution and observance of the Lord's Supper. The institution of the Lord's Supper was the subject of a special revelation to Paul from the Lord Himself. See I Corinthians

11:23-34. In this revelation the purpose of its institution is plainly stated by the Lord Himself.

“This is My body... this is My blood... This do for a remembrance of Me.”

Thus, at the Lord's Supper, the Lord directs our attention to Himself in a particular way. The sole object of this ordinance is to remember the One who gave His holy body and shed His precious blood to secure our eternal salvation.

How appropriate then, at such a meeting, that worship and praise be addressed directly to the blessed Son of God, as all the redeemed of all the ages shall do in a coming day (Revelation 5:9-13).

Through the years that have intervened since the institution of the Lord's Supper, many spiritually gifted and intelligent believers have composed hymns of worship and praise addressed directly to the Lord Jesus. These hymns form no small part in the worship of God's people as they gather together for the remembrance of their Lord in the breaking of bread. We shall refer, more fully, to this later on. From a study of reliable church history we learn that doctrinal error soon began to manifest itself in the post apostolic church, as Paul had prophesied. See Acts 20:28-32.

Origen (born 185), one of the early “church fathers,” and guilty of propagating much error concerning the Person of Christ, wrongly taught, from John 16:23, that it was improper for Christians to address prayer directly to the Lord Jesus.

Thus this false interpretation had both an early and bad beginning. (5) Both apostles and disciples are described as directly addressing the Lord Jesus.

We shall examine seven of these instances. (a) Thomas, as he saw before him the risen Son of God, with the marks of Calvary still upon Him, cried: “My Lord and My God!” (b) The hundred and twenty disciples, as they met together to choose an apostle to take the place of Judas, the traitor, prayed: “Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all, men, show whether of these two Thou hast chosen” (Acts 1:13-26). (c) Stephen, as he stood before the Council, “saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,” and testified to this fact. Filled with malignant hatred they rushed upon him and stoned him. The Divine record states: “And they stoned Stephen calling upon God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,’ and he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, ‘Lord, lay not this sin to their charge’” (Acts 7:55-60). (d) Saul, of Tarsus, arrested by the Son of God on the Damascus highway, inquired: “Who art Thou, Lord?” On being told: “I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest,” he replied: “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

Thus Saul, for the first time (but certainly not the last time!) in his life addressed the Lord Jesus directly. Paul rejoiced in the fact of the Lordship of Christ, and refers to Him many times as “the Lord.”

- In I Corinthian 9:1, he speaks of Him as “our Lord.”

- In I Corinthian 8:6, he refers to Him in these words: “To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.”

- In Php 3:8, he gives us his own testimony as to what the Lord Jesus meant to him personally: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." (e) Ananias now comes into the picture, as the Lord Jesus gives to him a vision in the which He commissions him to go to Saul. Note, in this account, the naturalness of Ananias' direct conversation with the Lord (Acts 9:10-19). (f) Peter is next mentioned, and in the vision of the sheet let down from Heaven, he replies to the Lord's command to "slay and eat" by saying, with typical impetuosity: "Not so, Lord." (Acts 10:10-16). (g) Paul, when afflicted with "the thorn in the flesh," addressed his prayer three times to the Lord that this physical disability would be removed from him. Far from removing the thorn, the Lord replied to His servant by saying: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthian 12:7-9).

Here, then, are seven instances where the Lord Jesus is directly addressed by His people. It is also most significant that the last prayer of the Bible is addressed to the Saviour. In reply to His promise: "Surely, I come quickly," comes the prayer: "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). Surely each believer can reecho this prayer! (6) The doxologies of the New Testament indicate the direct addressing of praise to the Lord Jesus.

There are sixteen of these doxologies, or ascriptions of praise found in the New Testament. Of these, nine are addressed to the Father, or to God. See Galatians 1:5; Romans 11:36; Romans 16:27; Php 4:20; Ephesians 3:21; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Peter 5:11; Jude 1:25; Revelation 7:12. Two are addressed to the Father and the Son. See Revelation 5:13; Revelation 7:10. The remaining five are rendered to the Son of God Himself. See 1 Timothy 6:16; 2 Timothy 3:18; Hebrews 13:21; 2 Peter 3:18; Revelation 1:6.

While it is true these are couched in the third person, yet so also are the doxologies addressed to the Father. My good friend and brother in Christ, Mr. August Van Ryn, the well known Bible teacher, believes strongly that both Jude 1:25 and 1 Timothy 1:17 should also be included in the doxologies addressed to the Son of God.

If this be correct, then it is not without the deepest spiritual significance that there are seven doxologies addressed to the Father, and seven addressed to the Son. Thus the Father and the Son share equal honors in these ascriptions of praise.

Thus we have abundant authority, from the word of God, for addressing songs of praise directly to the Lord Jesus. Realizing this, spiritual and gifted men and women, led of the Spirit, have written hymns of worship and praise to both the Father and the Son, and these, set to appropriate music, have provided the people of God with the opportunity to sing and make melody in their hearts unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:19).

Let us ever keep in mind the fact that the Lord Jesus is "God," just as much as the Father is God. In fact, Christ is described as being, "God over all, blessed for ever" (Romans 9:5).

John, by the Spirit, testified of the Lord Jesus: "This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5:20). The Father delights to hear worship and praise directed to His Son, even as His Son delights to hear worship and praise directed to the Father; and the Holy Spirit delights to lead the people of God in such worship and praise to both the Father and the Son.

3. The Father Wills It In Christ's own revelation of the Father, as recorded in John 5, He makes the tremendous statement that the Father desires "that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him" (John 5:23). If words mean anything, then the obvious interpretation of our Lord's statement is that it is His Father's will that equal honor is to be accorded to both Father and Son. Whatever honor it may be that is given to the Father, then that honor is equally due to the Son. It therefore follows that, since in our worship we honor the Father by directly addressing to Him our praise, we should also likewise honor the Son by directly addressing to Him our worship and praise and, prayer.

This, as we have seen elsewhere, is what the Bible clearly teaches.

4. The Son of God accepts it We shall think of four things in this connection. (1) He accepted it before His incarnation.

We have already touched on the Theophanies of the Bible, and learned that, as "the Angel of the LORD," He received worship and was petitioned directly in prayer. See Exodus 3:2-6; Jude 6:12-24; Jude 13:3-21; 2 Samuel 24:16; Isaiah 6:1-10. (2) He accepted it in "the days of His flesh" (Hebrews 5:7). This fact can be easily verified by a reading of the four Gospels. We will refer to eight of these instances: (a) At His birth. Matthew 2:11. (b) By a leper. Matthew 8:2. (c) By a certain ruler. Matthew 9:18. (d) By the disciples at the calming of the lake. Matthew 14:33. (e) By the Syrophenician woman. Matthew 15:25. (f) By the mother of James and John. Matthew 20:20. (g) By the demoniac. Mark 5:6. (h) By the man born blind. John 9:38.

- It will be recalled that when Cornelius attempted to worship Peter he was rebuked (Acts 10:25-26).

- John was similarly rebuked when he sought to worship an angel (Revelation 19:10; Revelation 22:8).

- Our Lord, however, accepted the worship offered Him as His rightful due as the incarnate Son of God.

He quoted to Satan: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). He then proceeded to receive the worship from men which, as God, was his rightful due.

If it be argued that only "God" should be worshipped, we agree, and point out that the Lord Jesus Christ is "God," and therefore should be worshipped. (3) He accepted it after His resurrection and ascension. (a) By the women at the sepulcher. Matthew 28:9. (b) By the disciples in Galilee. Matthew 28:16-17. (c) By the disciples after the ascension. Luke 24:50-53. (d) By the decree of God. Hebrews 1:9. (4) He accepts it in Heaven. Revelation 1:5-6; Revelation 5:1-14.

Remember, this was the revelation which John received from the Lord Himself, and which he was commanded to describe in writing (Revelation 1:19).

What a day that shall be when the once crucified, but now glorified Lamb of God, shall be surrounded by His redeemed people and receive their united worship! With undimmed vision and unsinning hearts they shall exultantly sing: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every

kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth!"

Then, as John beheld this wondrous sight, he heard the voice of many angels around the throne, together with the living creatures and the elders, and tells us their number was "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." These now all joined with glad accord, and with one heart and voice to sing, with glorious harmony and exquisite melody: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and honor and blessing!"

Then comes the grand consummation of this glorious scene which John describes in verse 13, "And every creature which is in Heaven, and on earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying: Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!"

There will be no one in that day to raise his voice in objection to this ascription of praise and worship offered directly to the Son of God! Thus, as it was in the eternal past, is now in the present, and shall be in the eternal future, the Son of God is the Recipient of the direct worship of His people, to the glory of God, the Father.

James G. Deck has well expressed it, "If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus' love Lift our poor hearts this weary world above, If even here the taste of heavenly springs So cheers the spirit that the pilgrim sings, What will the sunshine of His glory prove?"

What the unmingled fullness of His love?

What hallelujahs shall His presence raise?

What but one loud eternal burst of praise!" 5. The Holy Spirit leads it (1) The Saviour's revelation concerning His Person.

Mark well the words of the Lord Jesus in this connection, He said, of the Holy Spirit: "When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of (from) Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:13-15).

Thus our Lord Jesus designates the Holy Spirit as His Vicar or Representative on earth.

It is now the Spirit's delight to occupy the believer's heart with the beauties of the Saviour, to guide each Christian into all truth, and to glorify the Son of God as He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. He it is who directs our worship, both to the Father and to the Son. (2) The Holy Spirit's work with the believer.

- He it was that inspired holy men of old, so that what they wrote, under His control, were the very words of God. (2 Peter 1:20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

- He it is who enables the believer to confess the Lordship of Christ, for "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

- He it is who convicts the sinner of his sin, leads him, as a repentant sinner, to put his faith in the Lord Jesus, seals him unto the day of redemption, indwells him and imparts to him a Divine nature, so that the Christian is empowered to live a life to the glory of Christ. See John 16:8-11; Ephesians 1:13; I Corinthian 6:19-20.

Each time a believer's heart is led out in worship, either to the Father or the Son, it is because of the indwelling of this holy and heavenly Guest. Well may our hearts and voices be raised in praise to God for this rich provision for our needs in the gift of the Holy Spirit! (3) We are not instructed to directly address the Holy Spirit in worship, praise, or prayer.

There is no precept or example in the Scriptures for addressing the Holy Spirit, directly, in worship or prayer. We are urged to pray in the Spirit, that is, as guided by the Spirit, but we are not told to pray to the Holy Spirit. Our worship is to be in the Spirit, but we are not instructed to offer it to the Holy Spirit. See Ephesians 6:18; Php 3:3; John 4:23.

Apart from the indwelling Holy Spirit we can neither pray as we ought, or worship as we should.

He alone makes this possible to the believer (Romans 8:26-27). This does not, for one moment, imply that the Holy Spirit is less important, or that He holds a subordinate position to the Father and the Son, for the Bible makes clear that He is equal and eternal with Both.

Let us summarize the teaching of the New Testament as to this.

- The Son of God, for the purpose of obtaining our redemption, became incarnate and voluntarily submitted Himself to a life of absolute dependence upon His Father, obedience to the Scriptures, and the empowerment and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

- So now, likewise, the blessed Holy Spirit, in this dispensation, delights to glorify the Son of God, and to draw forth, from each believer's heart, true worship and praise to both the Father and the Son.

Let us reemphasize what was stated previously: There is no jealousy in the eternal Godhead.

Therefore when we worship "God," we include in our thought each Person of the Godhead, and bow low in adoration before such a glorious Being, and at love, "so amazing and Divine."

Having seen, from the Scriptures themselves, the fact that the Lord Jesus may be directly addressed in worship, praise and prayer, it will not be surprising to know that, 6. The writings of godly, able and sound teachers and poets endorse it The present day believer has a goodly heritage in the many excellent expositions written by Spirit-filled, Spirit-taught and Spirit-led teachers, writers and poets, particularly during the past one hundred and fifty years. Their writings are available to all believers. May each believer both appreciate, desire and take full advantage of these gifts of the risen Head to the members of His body, the Church, for their edification and comfort (Ephesians 4:7-16). (1) The writers.

While we do not, for one moment, base our beliefs upon the writings of men, however godly, gifted and sincere for, as human beings, they are liable to error; yet, insofar as their writings are in accord with the general teachings of the word of God, they are of great profit for the edification of the Lord's people.

How good it is, therefore, to find that this truth of direct address to the Lord Jesus is confirmed in their writings. We think of such writers as, - J. N. Darby, - C. H. Macintosh, - W. E. Vine, - George Goodman, - R. C. Chapman, - W. Kelly, - F. W. Grant, - C. A. Coates, - J. R. Caldwell, - F. B. Meyer, - W. Griffith Thomas, - G. Campbell Morgan, - C. F. Hogg, - H. P. Barker, - C. H. Spurgeon, - Harold St. John, - J. G. Bellett, - George Muller, - F. R. Havergal, - J. B. Watson, - S. Ridout, - George Soltau, - H. A. Ironside, - Erich Sauer, - A. T. Pierson, - Sir Robert Anderson.

Space will not permit quotations from their writings, but their books are available to all believers. (2) The poets.

We can certainly praise God for the men and women whom He has raised up, through the years of the Church's history, to express, in choice poetry and fitting music, the appreciation of the hearts of the people of God, both to the Father and to the Son. As one looks through such hymn books as, - "Hymns of Worship and Remembrance,"

- "The Believer's Hymnbook,"
- "Hymns for the Little Flock,"
- "Spiritual Songs,"
- "Hymns of Light and Love,"

He will be impressed with the fact that practically a third of the worship hymns are addressed, wholly or in part, directly to the Lord Jesus, both in worship, praise and prayer. In some cases, both Father and Son are directly addressed in the same hymn.

It will be obvious, to all sensible Christians, that singing directly to the Lord Jesus is exactly the same as speaking to Him.

Some of the most used hymns at the meeting for the remembrance of the Lord Jesus in the breaking of the bread are addressed to Christ directly. Take, for instance, a few of the following well known hymns and notice to Whom they are addressed: - "Thou art the everlasting Word,"

- "Lord Jesus Christ, we seek Thy face;"
- "Gazing on the Lord in glory;"
- "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds"
- "Lamb of God, our souls adore Thee"
- "Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour Thou; - "Lord of Glory, we adore Thee;"
- "O, blessed Lord, what hast Thou done;"
- "O blessed Saviour, is Thy Love;"
- "O, Lord, Thy love's unbounded;"
- "O, my Saviour, crucified;"
- "Thou life of my life, blessed Jesus;"

- "Through Thy precious body broken;"
- "Thy name we love, Lord Jesus;"
- "What grace, O Lord, and beauty shone;"
- "Worthy, worthy, is the Lamb;"
- "According to Thy gracious Word;"
- "Around Thy table, holy Lord;"
- "For the bread and for the wine;"
- "Saviour, we remember Thee;"
- "Jesus, Lord, we know Thee present;"
- "O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head;"
- "Lord, we would ne'er forget Thy love;"
- "On that same night, Lord Jesus;"
- "To Calv'ry, Lord, in spirit now;"
- "When I survey the wondrous cross;"
- "With Jesus in the midst, we gather;"
- "And shall we see Thy face;"
- "Here, O our Lord, we see Thee face to face;"
- "Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts;"
- "'Tis past, the dark and dreary night;"

- "Lord Jesus, Thou, who only art," etc, etc. Were the writers of these beautiful hymns mistaken when they addressed the Lord Jesus directly in their songs of worship and praise? Would the reader like to see these hymns eliminated from his hymn book? The answer, of course, is an emphatic negative to both questions. These men and women of God were led by the Spirit of God, through the word of God, to write these magnificent ascriptions of worship and praise to the One who they loved, served and worshipped.

Sometime ago, at the conclusion of a meeting for the remembrance of the Lord in the breaking of bread, a young believer approached a visiting preacher and said: "You did something this morning I have never seen done before. You directly addressed your worship to the Lord Jesus." The preacher inquired: "Have you never addressed the Lord Jesus directly?" On his replying in the negative, the preacher asked: "Did you not sing, a few minutes ago: 'O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head,' and also: 'Saviour, we remember Thee?'"

"Yes," replied the young Christian.

“Then who were you addressing in that hymn?” inquired the preacher. The young man thought a moment and, as the light dawned, he remarked thoughtfully: “Yes, I realize now that I was addressing the Lord Jesus. It never occurred to be before.” The preacher, with a smile, continued: “Of course, there is a difference between singing to the Lord Jesus and speaking to Him.”

“What is the difference?” inquired the young brother. The preacher replied: “The difference is the same as that which exists between six and a half dozen!”

7. All Christians should do it From what we have seen in the holy Scriptures, there can surely be only one logical conclusion, and that is for each believer to take advantage of his God-given privilege and address his worship, praise and prayer directly to the Son of God, as he is led of the Holy Spirit. In so doing, the believer will bring pleasure - To the Father, Who delights to hear His Son thus honored; - To the Holy Spirit, Whose joy it is to glorify the Son of God; - To the Lord Jesus Himself, Who is “worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing!” (Revelation 5:12).

How good it is, at a meeting convened particularly for worship, to hear spiritually intelligent ascriptions of worship and praise addressed to the Father through His beloved Son; and also to hear the Son of God directly addressed in worship and praise by those who know, love and adore Him!

B. The Importance Of Maintaining Spiritual Balance In view of what we have been considering, it behooves each Christian to obtain and maintain a spiritually intelligent balance in regard to these scriptural truths relating to the worship of both Father and Son of Solomon. 1. In relation to the Father He should ever remember that, by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, he has been made a member of the family of God. Being such, God is now his Father.

How wonderful is this thought!

He has been brought from slavery to sonship, from poverty to plenitude, from filthy rags to royal raiment! No wonder the believer is directed to give “thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1:12).

We read, in the Scriptures, that as the Father: (1) He chose us in His Son before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:2. (2) He gave His Son to be our Saviour. John 3:16. (3) He has begotten us as His children. James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 3:1-2. (4) He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Ephesians 1:3-6. (5) He loves us. John 16:27. (6) He cares for us, and supplies all our needs. Matthew 6:25-34; 1 Peter 5:7; Php 4:19. (7) He desires us to worship Him through His Son, and also to worship and praise His Son directly. John 4:23; Hebrews 1:9. As the believer meditates upon his privilege of thus being in family relationship with this glorious Being who is revealed as “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” he will approach the Father, with becoming reverence and godly fear, through the mediation of the Son of His love, by whom He has been pleased to reveal Himself in all His infinite holiness and wondrous grace. (II Corinthian 4:6).

2. In relation to the Son The Christian should never allow himself to forget the fact that all his blessedness has come to him through God’s beloved Son, whom he now knows as his own personal Saviour, and owns as the supreme Lord of his life. The Bible bears witness to these facts

regarding the Son of God: (1) In infinite grace, He became incarnate in order to become our Redeemer. (II Corinthian 8:9; Hebrews 2:14-15). (2) As the eternal Son of God, Christ has given a full revelation of the Father, John 1:18; John 14:9. (3) In love to guilty sinners, He willingly offered Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. On the cross of Calvary He bore our sins in His own body and, by the shedding of His most precious blood, satisfied all the claims of a holy God against sin and the sinner. By His death and resurrection, He has provided a free, full and eternal salvation for every sinner who will own his need as a lost and guilty sinner, receive Him by faith to be his own personal Saviour, and confess Him as the Lord of his life. Hebrews 9:11-28; Hebrews 10:5-14; Romans 10:9-10. (4) Now ascended and glorified at God's right hand, He is the believer's great high Priest, ceaseless Intercessor, and Advocate with the Father. By His present ministry in the presence of God He maintains the work which He began in every Christian's life. Hebrews 4:14-16; Hebrews 10:19-25; Hebrews 7:17-27; 1 John 2:1. (5) As the supreme Lord and Master of His servants, He commissions each Christian to be a witness for Him, both by the words he says and the life he lives. Matthew 23:8; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; John 15:27; Mark 5:19-20. (6) At His second coming, He shall raise the bodies of those who died believing on Him, and rapture those Christians who are alive at His coming.

Then, with glorified bodies, like unto their Lord's, the redeemed shall be with and like their Lord forever. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthian 15:51-58; John 14:1-3; Revelation 22:20-21. (7) He may now be approached directly, by His people, in worship, praise and prayer. Luke 24:52; Revelation 5:9-14.

Let no believer fail in taking advantage of this privilege.

3. In relation to the Holy Spirit While the believer is not instructed in the Scriptures, either by precept or example, to directly address or worship the Holy Spirit; yet he must ever have before him the fact that it is the Holy Spirit who alone can make spiritual things vital to him in his Christian experience.

Only as the spirit is allowed to energize, lead and control, can the believer live a life well pleasing to the Father and the Son. Concerning the Holy Spirit we are taught from the Word: (1) He is equal and eternal with the Father and the Son. This is seen in the linking of the names of the Trinity, and the prerogatives of each Person. (2) By His divine inspiration, He has made possible the existence of the Holy Scriptures. 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16; John 14:25-26; John 16:13. (3) Christ's incarnation, life on earth, and His sacrifice was accomplished through His presence and power. Luke 1:25; Luke 3:22; Hebrews 9:14; Romans 1:4. (4) He applies the word of God to the sinner, producing conviction of sin and leading the repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. John 16:8-11. (5) He seals the believer unto the day of redemption, indwells him and makes him a partaker of the Divine nature. Ephesians 1:13; I Corinthian 6:19-20; 2 Peter 1:6. (6) He is the Christian's supreme Teacher, and seeks to guide all believers into the truth of the word of God. He delights to take of the things of Christ and to glorify the Son of God in each believer's life. He also empowers the Christian for a life of service to his Lord and Master. John 14:26; John 16:13-15; Acts 1:8; Acts 1:4-8. (7) He guides the people of God in their worship, praise and prayer to both the Father and the Son. John 4:23-24. How needful, therefore, that each Christian should be susceptible to His leading in this important matter. (Romans 8:26-27).

It is possible for a believer - To grieve the Spirit by his misconduct (Ephesians 4:25-30), - To quench Him by disobedience to His leading (1 Thessalonians 5:19-20), - To limit Him by an attitude of unbelief (Psalms 78:41).

It truly becomes every child of God to lift up his heart and voice in praise to God for this holy Vicar of Christ, and to seek to live his life under His control and empowerment. Only in this way can the believer glorify the Father and the Son.

4. The value of this spiritual balance There are two extremes to be avoided.

- The first consists of concentrating our thoughts on the Person of the Father to the entire exclusion of the Son; - The other of concentrating our thoughts on the Son of God to the entire exclusion of the Father.

Both Persons are to be worshipped: the Son directly, and the Father through the mediation of the Son as these two hymns, which follow, indicate. When these twin truths are held in their proper balance, and exercised in the power of the Spirit of God, both the Father and the Son shall be glorified as true, proportionate, spiritual and intelligent worship shall be given to Each. May it be so in the lives of both writer and reader, for His name's sake!

1. Father, we worship Thee, Through Thy beloved Son; And, by the Spirit, now draw near Before Thy holy throne.

2. We bless Thee Thou art Light, Righteous and true art Thou; Holy and Reverend Thy name, Our hearts before Thee bow.

3. We bless Thee Thou art Love, How vast that matchless grace, Whose breadth and length and height and depth No finite mind can trace! 4. We bless Thee most of all For Him who Thee unveiled; Whose precious blood redemption wrought, And thus Thy heart revealed.

5. For what Thou art, we praise And worship and adore; To Father, Son and Spirit be The glory evermore!

1. "Worthy, incarnate Word, to be adored!

All things were made by Thee and for Thee, O Lord!

Yet Thou didst leave Thy bright throne for earth's shame, And, clothed with humanity, our Saviour became!

2. Worthy, O Lamb of God, worthy art Thou!

Low at Thy blessed feet, Lord Jesus, we bow! For Thou was slain for our sins, blessed Lord; And Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood!

3. Worthy, Thou risen Lord, with glory crowned!

Now, as our great high Priest, exalted, enthroned; Gladly we hail Thee and praise Thy great name, Who art, yesterday, today and ever the same!

4. Worthy, Thou King of kings, worthy to reign!; When, for Thy blood-bought bride, Thou comest again!

Then, 'neath Thy sway, shall the earth be restored, Creation, below, above, shall own Thee as Lord!" THE END <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

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