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Whilst a word study repays the time given, the theological idea of worship is what is of practical value. In this sense we need to see the origins and nature of worship and so we need to know the contexts in which these words are used, an exercise we do not have time for in this study and not even in our limited time in this School.

The Origin of Worship

‘Origin’ is perhaps not the best word. Even so we will use it. Jesus’ great statement, ‘God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth’, is clear enough. God is not seen, for he is unseen. He is not known, because he is ineffable. He is only known when he makes himself known. To worship him in spirit may well be that Man can only worship him by the Holy Spirit (cf. Phil. 3:3), but man must worship God and by his own spirit, and he must see God as the truth, and worship him consonant with the truth, by which we mean God as he is. This is a principle which has been from the beginning.²

Human worship of God, then, originates with the creation of Man. Man is one in communion with God because he is the image of God, and so worship is communion. It is that response to God of the human heart, shown as we have seen, as (i) a response to the glory of God, (ii) a giving of worth to God commensurate with his glory, and (iii) praise and thanksgiving for his creation of Man and his giving of (a) the creational mandate of vocation (Gen. 1:28f.), and (b) of gifts to him.³ All of this was intelligent worship that is of the mind as well as of the affections (Rom. 12:2; cf. Deut. 10:12).

Worship Following the Fall

Since worship is communion with God from a pure heart—which presupposes holy love between God and Man—then the Fall constitutes a break between God and Man. The break does not come from God’s side, but it is there. In addition to the account in Genesis 3, Romans 1:19–25 show us that Man, in rejecting God, lost the intelligence to worship, and devised surrogate objects of worship (cf. Acts 17:28–29). So follows the history of idolatry.⁴

What we have to keep in mind is that God never ceased to provide the means of worship for Man who had disenfranchised himself. The principle of Leviticus 17:11, although stated in the covenant of Israel, is also for all in the covenant of God,⁵ ‘For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the

² R. Martin-Achard’s article ‘Worship’ in J-J. von Allmen’s *Vocabulary of the Bible* (Lutterworth Pr., 1958, pp. 471–74) describes worship as ‘Worship, the occasion of an encounter between the faithful and those more or less impersonal realities which they reverence, becomes a source of renewal, a guarantee of happiness for heaven as well as for earth; it is rarely disinterested, since it presupposes a contract between humanity and divinity; “I give to you, that you may give to me”’.

³ Pure worship can be seen and assessed by the vicarious descriptions of the episodes of worship as seen in the Book of the Revelation. This worship is offered in heaven by both celestial and terrestrial creatures, and so lacks the imperfections always resident in earthly human worship.

⁴ See the study ‘The Battle for Worship’.

⁵ By ‘covenant of God’ we mean the covenant which is innate to creation. All human beings are under this covenant whether they acknowledge it or not. See W. J. Dumbrell’s *Covenant and Creation* (Lancer Books, 1984), and my *Love’s Most Glorious Covenant* (being published).

life'. Here the principle of 'I give to you that you may give to me' is present. This is borne out by an examination of Hebrews 11:4 which speaks of Abel offering his sacrifice by faith, that is, faith in the God who makes propitiation.

This leads us to see that following the Fall, humanity divided into two groups, (i) the people of faith, the children of God (I John 3:10–11; Heb. 11:4ff.), and (ii) those whose hearts were set in rebellion and so in idolatry (cf. Rom. 1:19–25). This means that true worship is not possible to fallen Man unless having come under the grace of God a man or a woman lives the life of faith. Idolatry must mean communion with idols (cf. I Cor. 10:14–22, 'partners with demons'). As love, gratitude, thanksgiving and intelligent motions of worship proceed in worship of God, then idolatry is denying these to God and applying them to the surrogate god, the deities and their idols.

Knowing and Not Knowing God

Luther once said, 'to know God is to worship him', and of course to worship him is to know him, which is the reciprocal life of worship. Romans 3:11 (cf. Ps. 14:1) says no one knows God, and Romans 1:21–25 tells us that Man exchanged the glory of God for idols, exchanged the truth of God for a lie, whilst Romans 1:28 says Man 'did not see fit to acknowledge God'. Man then has shut God off from himself and himself from God. The natural man does have a belief in God and creation but his theology, cosmology and anthropology is not biblical. He knows God but he does not know him. He has an ontological pressure to worship properly but refuses this pressure, hence his inner confusion, awryness, anguish, guilt—and so on. That all have gods is without doubt. Micah 4:5, 'For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its own god'. No one is really an atheist.

God Is Always Revealing Himself

In this brief study we see that to know God is to worship him. Fallen man refuses to know God. God is ever revealing himself. He does this by various media which, in effect, are all his own word. These are the scriptures, the prophets, dreams and visions, theophanies, angelic visitants, the law, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the apostles and the church. Man will not hear because he wills not to hear. God's action in revelation releases those who respond into true worship.

Analysis of This Study For Its Pastoral Value and Application

- (a) All too few understand what worship is.
- (b) What Christian worship is can be obscure for some, and even be idolatrous, though not intended to be so. We can be helpful here when we understand this fact.
- (c) As pastors and elders we need to look at our own communion with God, as also the communion of the flock, since worship is (i) personal, and (ii) corporate.

correctly that both sets of operations are really the one. We will take four elements *ad intra*, namely:

- (a) All Three Persons honour one another—inter-honouring.
- (b) All Three Persons serve one another—inter-serving.
- (c) All Three Persons give to one another—inter-giving.
- (d) All Three Persons receive from one another.⁷

Before looking at these actions let us realise that the four elements constitute love, that is, love in action.

All Three Persons Honour (i.e. Glorify) One Another—Inter-honouring

In John's Gospel it is clear that Jesus seeks to glorify the Father, the Father glorifies the Son, and the Holy Spirit glorifies both. In the Synoptic Gospels, as also in John, the Father and the Son glorify the Spirit.⁸

All Three Persons Serve One Another—Inter-serving

There can be no question about the Father serving the Son in sending him into this world and aiding him in his ministry, for the Son continually applies to the Father. Likewise the Son serves the Spirit in that he is subject to him, and the Spirit serves the Son in that he aids him. Likewise the Spirit is served by the Father and the Son in that he is one with them and draws his ministry from them.⁹

All Three Persons Give to One Another—Inter-giving

The Father constantly gives to the Son all that he needs. Indeed he says he has nothing but what the Father has given him. John 17 speaks so many times of 'the Father has given me'. At the same time the Son renders service and glorification to the Father amidst his life of worship. Likewise the Spirit gives of himself to the Father and the Son.

All Three Persons Receive from One Another

Love that gives and does not receive is not love. Hence the Father receives all that the Son renders to him, all that the Spirit gives in service of the Father, and both

⁷ I refer readers to the study, 'The Study of Relationships—Human and Divine' (NCTM Monday Pastors' Study Group, 4/6/90) available on request. Also the study 'The Trinity and Relationships' of 3/3/91. Our present study is too brief to work out the vast system of the four actions of the Three Persons set out above.

⁸ (i) For the Father glorifying the Son see John 5:22ff.; 13:31–32; 17:1–5, 22. All things are given into the hands of the Son by the Father (John 3:36; Matt. 11:27; John 13:3; II Pet. 1:16–19). (ii) For the Son glorifying the Father see Matthew 9:8; cf. 15:31; John 14:13; 13:31–32. (iii) For the Holy Spirit glorifying the Father and the Son see John 16:12–15. For the Son and the Father glorifying the Holy Spirit see Matthew 12:31–32 where words can be spoken against the Son of Man but not against the Holy Spirit, for such blasphemy will be counted as unforgivable. This rates the Holy Spirit highly.

⁹ For giving of the Father to the Son, the Son to the Father and the Spirit giving to both, see 'glorification' (above). In John's Gospel the verb 'to give' is used 17 times of the Father's giving to the Son. Giving in the biblical situation of the Three Persons presupposes receiving also.

receive the gifts of the Father.

These four elements constitute communion, and so, worship, *all of it in love*. So, then, *there is no true human worship which does not derive from the Triune worship*. That is, Man is not left to devise his own worship.

The Worship We Offer to God Derives from the Triune Godhead

This part of our study is concerned with two things, (i) our worship derives from the Godhead, and (ii) our worship is aided by the Three Persons.

Our Worship Derives from the Godhead

We must remember that in creation Man is in covenant relationship with God. That is the gift of God's creating him, and is not 'of grace', common or special. Within the Godhead what we might call 'the covenant relationship of the Three Persons' is innate. Hence, when Man is created, covenant relationship is innate in him, deriving from the Godhead.

Another way of saying this is that by creation Man is in communion with God because he is made in the image of God, and that communion—that image—is the basis and reality of his worship of God. No other creature is in the image of God or has such communion. This means that worship of God is innate in Man.¹⁰ In this sense Man—as created—did not need to learn to worship. It was expected of him. His rebellion at the Fall was a knowing rejection of all elements of worship of God and a transference of them to the idols.

If then our worship derives from the Godhead, we are not left to devise worship and we know it will operate in honouring (glorifying), receiving from, giving to, and serving *both God and Man*. Notice that these elements are all intelligible and so we worship God with reason and not without it (cf. Rom. 12:2; Deut. 10:12).

The Perichoresis–Circumincessio

Before proceeding to speak of the Three Persons aiding us in worship, we need to reiterate that Man was created in union with God, hence his communion, and in that sense, being in the image of God, worship was innate to him. Even so, there is a factor we need to take into consideration, the factor theologians call *perichoresis* or *circumincessio*.¹¹ Here it is not our intention to dwell upon this. It is simply to say that the Three Persons, being in unity, give to and receive from one other the gifts they have. Coinhering in one another they give of their differentiations, which makes for the complementarity of the Three.

The importance of this doctrine for us is that Divine–human relationships derive from the *perichoresis* which catches Man up into the blessedness of Trinitarian being, a process known as *theosis*. That is, Man is made a partaker of the Divine nature, though he is never (and never will be) divine (I Pet. 2:4–5). Man, then, is incorporated into the Divine mystery of the Godhead, and it is from this that he worships God and

¹⁰ This may help us, later, to see why sacrifice—true worship of God—seemed to be understood by Abel in clarity, and Cain in confusion. God expected Cain to offer 'by faith' and so, acceptably.

¹¹ Or *circuminsessio*, the meanings of the two being slightly different.

honours all things of the creation. At this point we are presupposing the work of God's grace.

Our Worship is Aided by the Three Persons

As this is part of our other studies we will not open it up except to say, in brief:

- (a) The Father seeks us to worship him, that is, he initiates worship—'to know God is to worship him'.¹²
- (b) The Son is the minister in the sanctuary and so leads our worship as true High Priest.¹³
- (c) The Spirit aids us in worshipping God in spirit and in truth.¹⁴

We conclude, then, that from these points all worship is Trinitarian.

Analysis of This Study for Its Pastoral Value and Application

It may be that some in our congregations may not be very much aware of the nature of the Triune Godhead. We may be slow to teach them, yet this must be taught simply and livingly. All experience of God is experience of the Three Persons and their relationships. If we sense deficiency in our worship it may be partly because of this lack. We, too, may seek to *devise* worship, instead of recognising the nature of the Living God who is leading it. Often we wish to stimulate the congregation by worship, and that is not what worship is about. If worship is the response to revelation then folk must have this revelation of God.

¹² John 4:21–24, 'For such the Father ever seeks to worship him', reminds us of the prodigal Son. See too, the cry, 'Abba! Father!' in Romans 8:14–17 and Galatians 4:4–7.

¹³ See how the Epistle to the Hebrews fleshes this out, and see particularly Hebrews 8:1–2; I Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:15–16.

¹⁴ See John 4:21f. and Philippians 3:3, and consider the fact of worship beginning at Pentecost, the coming of the Spirit.

in the *perichoresis* of the idol-human relationships. This was death.

Cain and Abel: Worship to Death and Worship to Life

Having been created by God, true worship of him would be known innately. The Fall brought the need of redemption and its first announcement came in Genesis 3:15. The knowledge of God of the two brothers brought forth sacrifices. Genesis 4:1–6 shows Cain worked from death to death, Abel from life to life. Hebrews 11:4 (cf. I John 3:10–11) shows Abel offered his sacrifice by faith and Cain did not. Cain knew what it was to ‘do well’ and the outcome ‘be accepted’, which may be translated ‘Is there not forgiveness?’.¹⁵ This must mean that worship, because of the Fall, needed the propitiatory act of God, and needed it so that Man could know God and worship him.¹⁶ Leviticus 17:11 shows that God makes the provision for true worship for fallen Man.¹⁷ I John 3:10–11 shows Cain to be of Satan. Job 1:5 (et al), shows that sin without propitiation enacted for its guilt results in the sinner cursing God, undoubtedly out of that guilt. Thus worship of God outside of propitiation is not true worship. Worship with propitiation is the way of life.

Worship Is a Gift of God

There is a great deal of interest in worship today. It has been said that football is a system of worship, of devotion to idols, that there is a priestly structure, devotees and so on. This can go for any system from which human beings seek to derive entertainment, emotional satisfaction and so on. Often in churches we seek to entertain people, to keep their interest and to make sure we are not seen as dull, that sermons are ‘relevant’, not boring, and in doing this worship often springs from Man and not from God. We keep in mind that the Father ‘seeks such to worship him’ and so he is the Initiator of Worship, the Son is ‘the minister in the sanctuary’ and so he leads our worship, whilst the Holy Spirit is the one who aids us to worship God in our spirits in the truth of himself (I John 5:7). Compare this with humanly-led worship and the use of hype, manipulation and the like. Since the Three Persons are essential to true worship then worship must be a gift. Just as ‘we know not what to pray for us as we ought’ so we know not how to worship as we ought. Let us see how worship is a gift.

Worship Is a Gift by Creation, by Covenant and by Redemption

All of creation was God’s gift to Man (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 8:3ff.). This was why Man was to be grateful. Covenant was innate in creation and so man was to worship, covenant-wise. It is clear from Genesis 4:1–6 and Leviticus 17:11 that God always made

¹⁵ Much light is shown in ‘be accepted’ from G. J. Wenham’s commentary on *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Word Books, Waco, 1987, p. 104–106). He translates it ‘is there not forgiveness?’.

¹⁶ See NCTM Monday Pastors’ Group Study ‘Knowing God Through Propitiation’ (NCPI, 3/4/95).

¹⁷ All worship is a gift of God (cf. Rom. 9:4), and Abraham’s statement ‘The Lord will provide’ (Gen. 22:8, 14). Propitiation has to deal with the impediment between Man and God, sin. See Isaiah 59:1–2; Luke 8:9–14.

provision for covenant. The firstlings of Abel's flocks belonged to God. God provided the ram for Abraham's special sacrifice. David's words were, 'All things come from you, O God, and of your own have we given you'. Leviticus 17:11 is a statement set in the midst of the redeemed community—Israel—so that we may conclude that the provision for Israel's worship came from God.¹⁸ Paul says this in Romans 9:4 so that we see in creation, covenant and redemption that all worship derives from God. We have in any case, seen that true worship is innate to Man by his creation by God, as being the very image of God, and so in full communion with God. We take it that even though Abel was a child of the Fall he exercised the faith of grace in God's redemption, and knew that sacrifice was essential for the forgiveness of sins. He did acceptably—i.e. worshipped by faith—and so was forgiven his sins.¹⁹

The Contrast of Worship for Death and Life: Idolatry and Holy Communion

There can be no doubt that idolatry—as described in Romans 1:19–25—is fallen Man's alternative to true worship. Paul showed that there are no such things as idols (I Cor. 8:4)—'we know that "an idol has no real existence" and that "there is no God but one"'—but he also links idolatry with having fellowship with demons (I Cor. 10:19–21). Occultic forces have their part in the worship of idols. By the same token true worship is having fellowship with God. All worshippers are in the presence of God, as God is present in all true worshipping. The idols bring only death, and God brings only life.

At this juncture of our study we take only one point—the sacrifice of Christ. In Hebrews he is shown as (i) the High Priest who offers sacrifice, (ii) as such he was 'the minister in the sanctuary' and yet the very oblation itself, (iii) the priest must offer something, and he offered himself, and (iv) he offered himself as the true oblation—sacrificial victim—and so effected propitiation for our sins. One of the key statements, then, is that his blood has purified our consciences from dead works,²⁰ to worship (serve) the living God (Heb. 9:14). Thus through his sacrifice he has given us the worship of life, i.e. 'living worship'. This idolatry cannot do. It can only seal the worshipper into his 'dead works' and into death.

¹⁸ We cannot pause here to discuss the complex, critical views of scholars concerning the sacrifices in Israel. We must take as given that all sacrifices were prescribed, and no sacrifice outside the prescription was valid. See Leviticus 1:1–9, but note the general principle, 'that he may be accepted before the Lord'. The main point is that the congregation—as indeed Man—cannot be trusted to shape its own worship. This may partly relate to idolatry where Man shapes his worship, and partly to what God sees as the true form of worship.

¹⁹ We are not, of course, saying that all sacrifice is limited to the element of propitiation, for in Israel there were the various offerings called 'burnt', 'whole burnt', 'daily burnt', 'peace', 'thank', 'freewill', 'votive', 'heave' and 'wave', and all were bloody, yet unbloody (perhaps sometimes with bloody) offerings could also have the nature of atonement (see Exod. 29:33). All represented the worshipper's coming near to God, and those which were propitiatory absolutely cleared the offerer of sins, making as 'righteous' or justified. These offerings deserve a study (or studies) on their own to reveal various aspects of sacrificial worship, but the N.T. does not seem to lay much store by such an examination.

²⁰ Note that 'dead works' are the impediment to true worship. They are in fact the sins one has committed (cf. Heb. 6:1) and which have not been remitted. They constitute a terrible mental, emotional and psychical state within the person.

that your joy may be made full' (John 15:11); 'The kingdom . . . is . . . righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 14:17); 'you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory' (I Pet. 1:8).

***'When I Saw Him, I Fell at His Feet As a Dead Man'
(Rev. 1:17)***

See also 'when the people saw it, they trembled' (Exod. 20:18); 'so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth' (Deut. 4:10); 'So the Lord commanded us . . . to fear the Lord our God for our good always and for our survival' (Deut. 6:24); 'Serve the Lord with fear' (Ps. 2:11); 'The fear of the Lord is clean' (Ps. 19:9); 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Prov. 9:10); 'Fear came upon every soul' (Acts 2:43); 'perfecting holiness in the fear of God' (II Cor. 7:1); 'Give praise to our God . . . you who fear Him' (Rev. 19:5).

From these and many other passages it is clear that joy and reverence are not alternative attitudes of worship. Both are simultaneously appropriate responses to the presence of God. Neither are responses to the mercy or holiness of God respectively. David prayed for a heart to fear God's name and in the same breath glorified Him for His lovingkindness towards him (Ps. 86:11–13).

It is clear from the Scriptures that worship is enjoined in man's heart by the goodness of God in creation, in the grace of salvation and the pure judgments of His holy love.

The Joy of Creation

Because of creation's unity (Eph. 1:10) and the nature of the Creator, every part is created and commanded to serve (worship), and to ultimately form a hymn of praise to the glory of God (See Ps. 65:13; 148; 149; Isa. 44:23; 55:12f.; Rom. 8:18ff.; Eph. 1:12, 14).

The Joy Creation Brings

The true response of the human heart to creation is worship (Ps. 8; Rom. 1:18–21). This worship consists of adoration of the Creator, and the free service of all the other members within it.

This joy is not simply man's response to the 'garden', but his response to the Father who is the 'Gardener', and whom he meets there. The primary serenity of Paradise (the garden) was that God and man walked there in communion, not just shared a beautiful place. The worship of creation itself is simply idolatrous escapism.

Worshipping the Creator in Awe

Creation is holy, that is, set apart for God's glory and goal. Therein lies its true awesomeness. 'The whole earth is full of His glory' because the great and Holy One is fully present in all His glory, taking it 'home' to His glorious goal. Let the whole creation stand in awe of these things (Ps. 96:11–13; 98:7f.; Job 40—42; Rom. 1:20).

Let every believer, confronted by the awesome Creator, entrust themselves to Him, for He is trustworthy and none of His workings is capricious (I Pet. 4:19).

The Joy of Grace

The greatest constraint for worship is that God is the God of all grace (Luke 2:10f.; Zech. 2:10; 9:9; Eph. 3:14ff.; Isa. 65:17; Acts 13:47–52). Confronted fully by the glory of God through His presence to redeem and glorify, His people have a heart to worship (Ps. 110).

The means of grace producing joy and reverence include:

- (a) **Covenant**—Psalm 89:1f. (note vv. 15f.); Jeremiah 33:8–11; I Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 10:16ff.
- (b) **Redemption**—Exodus 15:1–18; I Peter 1:13–21; Revelation 5:1–14.
- (c) **Law**—Psalm 119:32, 45, 97; Hebrews 9:11–15.
- (d) **The Temple**—and its service, including the worship leaders, the Levites; there the people had communion with the Living God (II Chron. 5:13–14; Ezra 3:8–13; Neh. 12:43–47; cf. in the New Testament with the people of God—II Pet. 2:1–10; Heb. 12:22ff.).
- (e) **Baptism and the Lord’s Supper**—as they direct people to the power of the Cross, Resurrection and Session of Christ.

The Reverence of Grace

‘The holiness of God is the real foundation of religion; love is but its outgoing; sin is but its defiance; grace is but its action on sin; the cross is but its victory and faith is but its worship’.²² Guiltless, shameless fear issues only from grace. Thus grace is the root of all free (true) worship (Ps. 130:4; Isa. 6:4–8; Titus 2:11–14). The horror of holy love seen in the sacrifices and ultimately in the Cross, leads to the secure joy of holiness in believers (Deut. 27:7; cf. Heb. 9:14). In the Old Testament the solemnity of the sacrifices is linked with the joy of the feast days (Num. 10:1–10; Lev. 23:39–44). In the New Testament the Kingdom issues in righteousness, joy and peace (Rom. 14:17), and a song of glory to all the nations (Rom. 15:8–13). All this brings an awesome knowledge of God (Heb. 12:28; cf. Luke 5:1–10; Phil. 3:3).

Responsive Thrill Or Absolute Obedience?

‘God didn’t save us to make us happy, rather to commune with Him, enjoy Him and serve Him’ (P. T. Forsyth).

Is God our benefactor or our Lord? Is He simply an assistant in my life, a divine helper, or am I His absolute property (beginning with my heart/will)? If the heart is not freed and won by the truth (John 4:24), then worship becomes a purely subjective exercise. Having lost focus it then becomes prey to ‘consumerism’ where the

²² In *The Creative Theology of P. T. Forsyth*, by Samuel J. Mikolaski, Eerdmans, 1969, p. 56.

emphasis is on how it ‘grabs’ and thrills people. So much modern hymnology begins and ends with ‘I’ or ‘We’ feelings.

The more worship is seen as the fruit of something outside of us, the deeper it will go into us to involve and grip us, not for a momentary thrill, but a life of freedom to obey the Father. The heart’s cry, ‘Abba!’, must come not from a mood but from the startling reality proclaimed by Christ that as He calls God Father so may we, that ‘as He is so are we in this world’.

Our worship must be the reasoned ‘amen’ to all we have in Christ. When the heart hears from the conscience the half of this, it no longer needs to be seduced into action, for the ‘dungeon flames with light, the chains fall off’, and we rise, an obedient worshipper. Such a one, such a congregation, is truly prophetic.

Reverent Joy—Prophetic Worship

True worship is prophetic, it ‘speaks’ of the glory of God. The school of the prophets established by Samuel involved the ministry of joy and praise (I Sam. 10:1–8; cf. II Kings 3:15). The Song of the Lord (Exod. 15:1; II Chron. 29:25–29; 20:14f.), probably sung, had a strong ministry to the people of God (see Deut. 31:19–22; Judg. 5:1ff.; cf. I Chron. 25:1–6 where the Levites were always ready to serve the King with worship).

In the New Testament the whole Body ‘bears the testimony of Jesus’ and hence is prophetic in worship. Spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19) and prophetic ministry (I Cor. 14) all flow by the Spirit.

We do not have a great deal of time and space to deal with so vast a subject but we can, I believe, rightfully conclude (i) God's Triune nature is innately covenantal, so that (ii) his act of creation is wholly covenantal. Passages which will help us see something of this are Jeremiah 33:19–26, Isaiah 24:4ff. and Genesis 9:9–17 where the covenant is with all elements of creation.

What we need to keep in mind is that God's covenant—we can call it 'the covenant of God' or 'the covenant of creation'—is with everything in creation and this means for humanity 'with every person'. It is true that Man broke the covenant of God at the time of the Fall, but God did not break it with Man.

The Practical Significance of the Covenant of God

We cannot here argue the full case but simply state that all men everywhere have an idea (image) of God, of covenant, of the law and of worship. They have images we would call theological, cosmological and anthropological. All these images are wrong, but Man must have them as an ontological necessity because the way he is demands such. Where there is faith in God—this being a gift of God (cf. Heb. 11:4ff.; I John 3:10–11)—then these images can be correct: otherwise not. We should always address others knowing in ourselves that God has them in covenant, even though they reject this relationship. We should recognise (i) that their images are wrong, and (ii) that all outside of God are in idolatry, and the idols have their covenants to bind Man, all of which are strongly contractual and thus tyrannical.

All the Covenants of God

The covenants we here name as (i) of God, (ii) with Noah, (iii) with Abraham, (iv) with Israel, (v) with David, and (vi) through Christ, are each called 'the everlasting covenant'. In theological fact they are all the one, that is within the covenant of God are the Noahic, the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, the Davidic and the New covenants.

What concerns our study is the worship which obtains within these covenants. We have touched upon this matter previously but we can gather that knowing God by creation, what Man abandoned at the Fall, the choice he made, was to refuse to honour God, to be thankful to him and to have a reasonable mind in worship. He deluded himself regarding that wisdom as he used it for idols, and as he exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for corruptible (mortal) forms—idols. In this way he *worshipped* and *served* the creature rather than the creator.

If we take the reverse of what Man did then we arrive at the nature of true worship, namely:

- (a) Honouring God;
- (b) Being thankful: thanksgiving;
- (c) Making reasonable worship;
- (d) Glorifying God;
- (e) Worshipping and serving the Creator.

This, then, was true worship and this will be true worship for all covenants. We saw that the Three Persons worship in unity by honouring (glorifying), giving,

receiving and serving one another. The five points above really comport with the four we have spoken of the Trinity. We thus have Man being in God's image, and so deriving his power to worship and the shape of his worship, by and in his communion with God.

It is reasonable to assume that Cain followed the fallen pattern of worship and he did not 'do right'. Abel did, but he did it by faith. We assume that Abel knew the Fall meant Man must sacrifice to God by faith, through the grace of God. We cannot know for certain the *manner* of the elements of glorification, thanksgiving, worshipping and serving, but they must have been present, and whilst those elements were not directly propitiatory, the fact that God gave the offering (cf. Lev. 17:11) certainly meant it was propitiatory, since Abel's sins were forgiven. Noah's offering to God (Gen. 8:20–22) after the Flood has been a matter of speculation, but since 'the Lord smelled the pleasing odour', it would surely have contained all covenantal elements of sacrifice, and possibly been propitiatory regarding the human race, as well as expressing gratitude to God for salvation from the judgement of the Flood (cf. I Pet.3:18–22).

Patriarchal Worship

It is a fact of history that peoples worshipped gods. Thus Micah 4:5, 'For all the peoples walk each in the name of its God, but we will walk in the name of the Lord [YAHWEH] our God for ever and ever'. Each people had its own sanctuaries, and generally fought other peoples in the name of their gods. Abraham was an idolater (Josh. 24:2–3) but 'the God of glory appeared to [him]' (Acts 7:1–2). When God appeared to each of the patriarchs they built altars or memorials and offered sacrifices, refusing to worship the surrounding deities.

Israel and Worship

Whilst some ancient cults were elaborate, the worship of Israel was different from all and recognised as such.²⁵ Israel was to be the priest nation amongst all the nations (Exod. 19:5–6). It was given the 'apparatus' for such worship—the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises²⁶—and as such had the tent of meeting, the tabernacle, and, later, the temple, all built as the writer of Hebrews later pointed out 'according to the pattern which Moses saw on the mountain' (Sinai), and this was the pattern of the heavenly sanctuary. Rules were prescribed for the formation of the priesthood, for true worship through sacrifices and festivals, for cleansing and sanctification. If for the patriarchs God would appear from time to time, yet in Israel God dwelt in the midst of his people. The tabernacle was the place of his dwelling in the Holy of Holies where there was the mercy seat and the overshadowing cherubim. All Israel was holy, but the place of sacrifice was especially holy, the holy place holy, so to speak, in an ascending order, and the Holy of Holies the place where the Presence dwelt.²⁷

²⁵ See Deuteronomy 4:6–8.

²⁶ Romans 9:4–5.

²⁷ Whilst Israelites were free to worship God anywhere, and not necessarily with a liturgy, yet in the Tabernacle (or Temple) everything was done according to prescription. This left no place for experiment or the intrusion of any worshipper's novel or fancy ideas.

All of this was known as the worship of the Mosaic covenant, and it was exclusive to one people, Israel. No one could take advantage of this worship, unless he were a proselyte.

Worship In and Of the New Covenant

This is a vast subject and needs to be opened fully, although we lack both time and space in this School. It should be known, because often worship is structured in ignorance of the principles of true worship. The heart of true worship with its great High Priest, Jesus, is set out marvellously in Hebrews and this Epistle ought to be taught in detail. To catch up much that constitutes the idea of New Testament worship a quote from James Torrance is here helpful:

The good news of the gospel is that Jesus comes to be the Priest of Creation, to do for men what man fails to do, to offer to God the worship and the praise that we have failed to offer, to glorify God by a life of perfect obedience, to be the One true servant of the Lord, in whom and through whom we are renewed in the image of God and in the worship of God. Jesus comes, as our Brother Man, to be our great High Priest, that He might carry on His loving heart the joys, the sorrows, the prayers, the conflicts of all His creatures, that He might reconcile all things to God, that He might intercede for all nations as our eternal Mediator and Advocate, that He might stand in for us in the presence of His Father, when in our failure and bewilderment we don't know how to pray as we ought, and forget to pray. By His Spirit He helps us in our infirmities.

In that He is the Head of all things, He makes us His Body, and calls us to be a royal priesthood, a corporate priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, that we might be identified with Him and participate with Him in His great priestly work and ministry of intercession, that our prayers on earth might be the echo of His prayers in heaven. Whatever else our worship is, it is our liturgical Amen to the Worship of Christ.²⁸

From this we can proceed to see that Christ as the True Worshipper (see study 4) not only lived in true worship but set up what we might call the structure of New Covenant worship. His was a High Priestly work from the inception of his ministry at his baptism through to his Cross, Resurrection and Ascension. He was, and is, 'the minister in the sanctuary'. It is to the heart of that sanctuary that we now penetrate through Christ (Heb. 10:19–22). He has obviated the old sacrifices, since his death has once for all finished the matter of sin's penalty, pollution and power. He is 'the New Man'; he is the true temple, and has constituted his people as that new temple. He is the glory of God, the true Image, and the Holy Spirit has been given that we might now have what we call 'Triune worship', the very worship within the Godhead, and aided by the members of that Godhead.

As we have said, the Father initiates the worship, the Son is the great High Priest, the minister in the sanctuary, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of worship, so that we whose dead works have been purified, have the new consciousness of God and so offer him spiritual worship. As to modes of worship in the New Testament we are unable here to expand. These will be apparent, overall, through all the studies. Even so, a quotation from Hebrews 12:18–24, and the exhortation of 12:28–29, make a fitting close to this study.

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers entreat that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, 'If even

²⁸ J. B. Torrance, 'The Place of Jesus Christ in Worship' in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, ed. by R. S. Anderson, Eerdmans, 1979, pp. 348–349.

Worship & Covenant

a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned'. Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I tremble with fear'. But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.

Man Cannot Escape the Reality of Being Created

We have seen that Man is a compulsive worshipper, be it God, idols or himself which he worships. When Man is unontological or anti-ontological in worship he can never be fully satisfied, nor will his conscience ever let him be at peace. He trains himself to live without perfect fulfilment, but within there is an ontological pressure to worship aright. We can say, in principle, that for a person to worship God fully, in spirit and in truth, then that person will know full satisfaction. Putting it another way, no person can be really satisfied and conscience-clear in life who does not worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, since such is the creational order. We will have reason to return to this, later.

Man Worships in Rebellion against God and Perhaps in Ignorance

The term ‘ignorance’ is used by Peter in Acts 3:17 of Israel crucifying Christ, and in Acts 17:30 of the pagan’s way of worship—‘the times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent’. It is inferred in Acts 14:16, ‘In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways’. This means that with the coming of Christ and the ministry he exercised, true worship has now come into view by the gospel. No longer is ignorance allowed to obtain, and those who persist in it will be judged. What is clear is that the gospel, when obeyed, will change the worship from false to true.

The Gospel and Worship

The question confronting us is, ‘Will true (Christian) worship in any way change false worshippers to true ones?’. That is, can worship be a form of proclamation? What is clear from Romans 1:5; 15:18 and 16:26 is that the three statements (respectively) of ‘the obedience of faith . . . among all the nations’, ‘obedience from the Gentiles’ and ‘the obedience of faith [of the nations]’ are terms which speak of the Gentiles reversing—as it were—the rejection of the knowledge of God and false worship (as in Rom. 1:19–25) to turn ‘to God from idols, to serve a living and true God’ (I Thess. 1:9). So then, obeying the gospel will bring the new converts into true worship.

Contemporary Public Evangelism and Worship

Now it is true that an unbeliever may enter a Christian assembly, hear the gospel, be converted and so be caught into true worship. In that sense worship is an instrument for bringing the gospel to people without going outside the circle of Christian worship. It is a matter of interest that mass campaigns for evangelism—which is the word used in such crusades—are always held in the context of worship. Hymns are sung, prayer is often said, Bible passages are read and sermons are given—whatever other name we may use for them. Surely the singing of hymns and special solos—all Christian—is proof that the gospel is proclaimed in such a setting. In fact, it may be at the back of the minds of the ‘producers’, that the gospel could not be presented otherwise. The idea of one person standing alone in such a situation and delivering a

gospel address is a rare one.

Much of the apostolic proclamation was in the context of worship. Paul always sought out the local synagogue or the prayer place (as at Philippi) and delivered his message, often—it would seem—starting as a commentary on the lection. So, then, he was in the midst of worship even if it were not specifically Christian worship. It was certainly not pagan worship if Jewish. We suggest that the pagan situations at Lystra and Athens were not conducive to a good reception of the gospel. When the apostolic band proclaimed the gospel at synagogues they had the background of Israel's worship and the prophecies concerning Messiah.

Notice, also, that around many of the synagogues were those called 'God-fearers', that is, those who as yet had not become proselytes, but were attracted and impressed by Jewish morality and teaching. Doubtless many of them would be wide open to the gospel which was for all peoples, without the ritual of becoming a proselyte.

Worship and the Gospel

There is an interesting event and comment on it recorded in I Corinthians 14:22–25:

Thus, tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers. If, therefore, the whole church assembles and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

This passage shows us that probably unbelievers did enter Christian assemblies. It shows that the general use of the gift of glossolalia would convey nothing to the person except confusion. The general use of the gift of prophecy would have a dramatic effect if, (i) he is convicted by all, (ii) called to account by all, (iii) the secrets of his heart are disclosed, (iv) falling on his face he will worship God, and (v) he will declare, 'God is really among you'. In fact, what does this amount to?

It amounts to the fact that the ministry of prophecy—the dynamic teaching of the word—will bring conviction of sin, the opening of the conscience and a sense of judgment (cf. John 16:7–11), so that nothing can be concealed in his heart (Heb. 4:12) and he will fall on his face (cf. Gen. 17:3; Luke 5:12; Rev. 7:11; 11:16), he will worship—an extraordinary matter—and will say that God is present in the assembly (cf. I Kings 18:39; Dan. 2:47; Isa. 45:14; Zech. 8:3). Note, then, that it is in the worship of the assembly, and in particular in the prophetic teaching, that this conversion takes place in the unbeliever (*idiotes*; 'one without understanding').

Entrance to True Worship the Great Dynamic of the Gospel

We come now to the heart of our study. In simple terms it is this: all human persons have an ontological drive to worship God truly, have guilt when they do not, and yet cannot come to true worship of him, especially as that true worship is claimed by Israel to be unique to it. A way which will bring them to true worship has powerful attraction.

If we take the teaching of I Corinthians 14:24–25 we see the case of a person who

comes to Christian worship and discovers within it the way to God, the way to salvation and the way to worship. We must never underestimate the power of this fact. It is common within the church for someone to take a friend to worship services and that person be saved. We do not see the matter fully if we put it down simply to the evangelical message heard, although that is most significant. The worship is powerful. If, further, we think in terms of the life of worship of the friend, the daily life of service-worship, then the impact can be seen to come not only from embodied worship, but the daily worship of the member/s of the church (cf. Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15–16).

The Church, the Body of Christ, Is the New Temple for the New Worship

I Corinthians 3:16f. (cf. I Cor. 6:19) says plainly that the believers constitute the church, the new temple. Ephesians 2:18–22 verifies this. So does I Peter 2:4–10 (cf. Exod. 19:5–6). Christ, then, is the New Temple, and having called the ‘old’ temple ‘my Father’s house’, and ‘the house of prayer for all nations’, we are led back to Isaiah 56:6–8:

And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
every one who keeps the sabbath, and does not profane it,
and holds fast my covenant—
these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.
Thus says the Lord GOD,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel,
I will gather yet others to him
besides those already gathered.

This new temple is one into which the Gentiles can come and worship, and has been certified by Christ as ‘a house of prayer for all nations’ (see v. 7). If to this we add a passage such as Isaiah 2:2–4 then we will see that the Gentiles will seek the worship that is in ‘the house of the God of Jacob’, his paths, his word and his law.

It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the LORD
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,
and many peoples shall come, and say:
‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.’
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

It is worth noting that ‘For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem’ almost certainly are reflected in Luke 24:47, ‘and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name, *beginning from Jerusalem*’.

Conclusion: Worship Is Proclamation and Is Redemptive

What we have not detailed in this study is the enormous drive within Man for worship, and the marvellous relief that Man knows when he ‘turns from dumb idols to serve [worship] the living God’, when his conscience is purified ‘from dead works to serve [worship] the living God’. Truly the need to worship is the strongest drive that Man knows, and it is only in the true Temple of God (Christ’s people) that he finds this worship. John 4:20–24 needs to be studied in detail. Jerusalem is not the centre of true worship, but the New Jerusalem and Christ the true Temple is the centre of that worship. Hence the great evangelical tug to worship in Christ.

I John 4:13f.).

- (b) **Serving us in love.** Hence, Isaiah 58 shows that our true worship focuses on 'other person centred' love.

Christ Honoured His Father & All Men

He said 'I honour My Father' (John 8:49). His obedience was absolute and free. He honours us by being the Leader of our worship (*leitourgos*; Heb. 8:2), and as the mediator of our worship He serves us with a view to the glory of His Father.

Here lies the mystery, the wonder, the glory of the Gospel, that he who is God, the Creator of all things and worthy of the worship and praise of all creation, should become man, and as man worship God, and as man lead us in our worship of God, that we might become the sons of God we are meant to be.²⁹

Such is the wonderful love of God, that he comes to us in Jesus Christ, and in Jesus assumed our life (the life of all men), underwritten all our responsibilities, offered for us a life of worship and obedience and prayer to the Father, taken to Himself our body of death, vicariously submitted for us to the verdict of 'guilty', died our death and risen again in our humanity, so that by the grace of God, His life is our life, His death is our death, His victory our victory, His resurrection our resurrection, His righteousness our righteousness and His eternal prayers and self-offerings to the Father our prayers and offering in the presence of the Father. So we are accepted in the Beloved, and discover our status as sons [and we can add, discover the true horizontal and vertical components of our worship].³⁰

Elements in Honouring Man

These as we would expect are simply domestic, relating to the way we relate in the family and in society. Deane Meatheringham identified some of the following areas in which we are called to give honour:³¹

- (a) **To honour parents is to love life as given by God.** The command of Leviticus 19:1–4 is to the whole congregation, as it is primary in the whole health of the theocracy. If parents are not obeyed (honoured), no other authority will be honoured or obeyed. It is the way of holiness and is linked with the family responsibility of the Sabbath (see notes in study 11). It is the first of the Ten Commandments with a promise (Eph. 6:1–4; Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; 21:15–17; Lev. 20:9; Prov. 30:17; Col. 3:20).

The rejection of the parents' authority is the rejection of God's authority. The parents represent God and give God's orders to their children. To dishonour the parents is to dishonour the law. To blaspheme parents is to blaspheme God. To dishonour parents is to despise the gift of life and its inheritance.

To honour parents is to provide for them (Mark 7:6–13; John 19:26). Abraham lived with Isaac, Isaac with Jacob, and Jacob with Joseph. These children were their heirs. They received the blessings of the covenant in the context of their

²⁹ James B. Torrance in 'The Place of Jesus Christ in Worship' in *Theological Foundations For Ministry*, ed. by R. Anderson (T. & T. Clark, 1979, p. 351).

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 352.

³¹ In *The Wonder of Worship*, NCTM Winter School study guide, 1986.

families. Godly obedience is the best resistance to evil and tyrants.

- (b) **Let marriage be held in honour.** This has to do with fidelity (Heb. 13:4; I Thess. 4:3–8), and obedience to the law of God (Exod. 20:14). The whole universe is ordered by submission to authority. The alternative to submission is exploitation, not freedom, as there is no freedom in anarchy. The husband honours, cherishes, treasures, loves and serves his wife (I Pet. 3:7; Eph. 5:25ff.). This the man learns from the true Bridegroom, Christ. The woman, learning also from Christ, honours Him as true head by honouring her husband in receiving and esteeming his headship (I Pet. 3:1–6; Eph. 5:22ff.).
- (c) **Honour in the family.** Along with (a) above, the aged are to be honoured with respect and courtesy (Lev. 19:32; I Tim. 5:1; Philemon 8, 9).
- (d) **Honour in the Church.** The family of God needs the constant initiative of each member ‘outdoing one another in honour’ (Rom. 12:10), if the self-seeking claiming of rights and meeting of needs is to be avoided (I Cor. 12:22–26; Phil. 2:3; 4:8). Widows are to be honoured (I Tim. 5:3), and strangers also (Heb. 13:2). The Body is to grace the Elders with honour (Heb. 13:17; I Tim. 5:17).
- (e) **Honour in the community.** Employees and employers must honour each other (Prov. 27:18; Eph. 6:5–9; Col. 4:1). All those in authority should be honoured (I Pet. 2:17).

All of this represents the ontological drive in man to be honourable and to honour. The terrible disjunction in our families, churches and communities today may well represent the simple failure of man to ‘honour all men’ (I Pet. 2:17). Paul shows that the refusal to honour God, and thus His whole created order, leads to terrifying confusion and gross idolatry (Rom. 1:21ff.).

The joy of giving due honour to all things is the joy of living in ontological harmony, from which issues the right worship of God and the honouring of His creation.

and his ilk.³⁴ Just as we find variety in forms of worship directed to God so we find variety in the forms of worship in the world. This makes the subject so many-faceted that we can by no means cover it.

God and Worship

It scarcely need be indicated that God requires what was innate to Man at creation, the close communion with himself in his Triune Being. This worship towards God would include the appropriate giving of worth to all creatures and things created. As we have seen in many of our studies this worship of God by his people has many elements. We have seen the place of sacrifice, of memorials and altars, of the sanctuary in Israel of Tabernacle and Temple, leading to the New Temple in the New Covenant and the priesthood down through the ages until the final and perpetual High Priesthood of Christ after the order of Melchizedek, leading on to the people being the Temple of God and then that temple being God and the Lamb, and the people of God being a kingdom of priests or a royal priesthood, this service being unto God. This all too brief survey takes us into a wide realm of worship and to the nature of God and his creation.

Any of this that is denied or attacked constitutes an anti-worship activity, such as we will discuss below. That which is affirmed and followed constitutes true worship.

What should prove valuable is a brief survey of the bases of worship in the Book of the Revelation, for as we have previously remarked, all of this takes place in the full presence of God and in the heavenly sanctuary.³⁵

Revelation 4:1–11

- (a) The setting is the throne of God with its beauty, its emerald rainbow, its translucent and still sea, the sevenfold Spirit, the living creatures and the twenty-four elders.
- (b) Praise and worship is given to God (i) because he *is*, (ii) because he is holy, (iii) because of his eternity, and (iv) because he is Creator. Thus he is accorded ‘glory and honour and power’, for he is worthy of these things.

Revelation 5:8–14

- (a) As the Lamb that was slain, and as the one now holding all history in his hand, he is accorded worship. It is because of his being slain that he ‘is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing’.
- (b) God and the Lamb are accorded these things by the whole of creation.

³⁴ The term ‘the world’ (*kosmos; aeon*) in the N.T. refers to that system which is opposed to God. The created world is never spoken of as evil. God ‘loved the world’ of his own creating, but ‘this present evil world [age]’ is that system within the created world which is headed up by Satan, ‘the ruler of this world’.

³⁵ We must not miss the fact that now we participate with the whole people of God in our worship (cf. Heb. 12:22–24).

Revelation 7:9–17

We miss the import of this passage unless we see it arises from the saving work of the Lamb and of God, including the use of the seven seals opened by the Lamb. The redeemed cry, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!’, whilst the celestials cry, ‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen!’.

Revelation 8:1–5

This passage has to be linked with the previous one, the temporary silence, the offering of the prayers of the saints and the dynamical action of ‘peals of thunder, voices, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake’ are all integral parts of the worship.

Revelation 11:15–18; 14:1–5; 15:3–4; 16:4–7; and 19:1–8

These are all passages which contain elements such as God taking his great authority and reigning, his rewarding of his servants and destroying the destroyers of the earth, the worship of the 144,000, his revelations of judgments and his visitations of these upon evil powers, and especially the judgment upon Babylon and the vindication of the martyrs, all of which heads up into worship for the event of the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb.

When the elements from these nine passages are put together we are shown so many significant elements which bring forth true worship—the praise, worship and adoration of God and the Lamb.³⁶ For the rest—that great sweep of history in which God as Father leads us into the heart of his Fatherhood—that is the heart of true worship, the Father seeking us to worship him, and the children loving the Father, seeking him in all truth and coming to worship him in the response of their love.

The Devil and Worship

Two passages, amongst many others, are Matthew 4:8–10 and II Thessalonians 2:1–12:

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, ‘All these I will give you, *if you will fall down and worship me.*’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Begone, Satan! for it is written,

*You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve.*’

Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him, we beg you, brethren, not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. *Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.* Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out

³⁶ It is of these things we will speak more fully in our last study, ‘The Family At Worship’.

of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming. The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

These passages show us the intent of evil—Satan and his minions—to capture the entire worship of the celestial and terrestrial rational creatures. That he has made great inroads in history is not to be doubted. Satan’s influence is not only out there amongst the gods and the idols—none of which has genuine ontological existence—but within the people of God, whether they are the covenant people of the Old Testament, or the church of the New Testament.

Jesus once told those who considered themselves to be holy Israelites, ‘You are of your Father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires’. These are very strong words. Indeed, the whole passage of John 8:21–59 is intensely powerful, for it delineates what is true and false worship. True worship is to do the will of the heavenly Father; false worship is to do the will of the evil father. That evil father is the one who goes out to deceive the whole world, and one of his deceits is that many who consider themselves godly persons are but the children of the devil. The contrast of children of God and children of the devil is found clearly in I John 3: 4–18.

Whilst occultic forms of Devil-worship may be repugnant as rituals to most of the human race, yet the worship of the Evil One is present in many who would never recognise that what they are doing is worshipping along the lines of the Satanic system. This is simply in seeking glory and honour for oneself. Christ spoke of those who ‘loved the praise of men more than the praise of God’. Praise given to persons by God is a good thing. Those in the Satanic system covet all praise and worship for themselves. What worship they may give to evil powers and idols is ultimately to benefit themselves. A key note to being in evil, and worshipping it, is what John calls, ‘the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life’. Paul puts it succinctly in the first few verses of Ephesians 2:1–3 where he says we follow the course of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit now energising sons of evil to do evil, and speaks of ‘the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind’, thus being children of wrath.

The Battle Against True Worship, from Beginning to End

It all began with the serpent seeking to break the covenantal bond between Man and God. False worship began with Man’s rejection of God in favour of his own freedom—so-called—his autonomy. He became the object of his worship and although he transmuted self-worship into worship of various lords and idols (Rom. 1:19–25), yet it was false worship. The serpent took on more and more power and authority, thus building his kingdom of darkness. He is set out as the red dragon in Revelation 12:9, ‘that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world’. His system seeks to capture all the nations, and one third of the angelic powers followed him in his pursuit (Rev. 12:9). It is the child of the Woman who is to rule the nations (Rev. 12:5; Ps. 2), but the dragon clones himself into the creature called ‘the beast’ in Revelation 13, who in turn has an image or a false prophet, and who

counterfeits himself as the true Christ. As such he is allowed to have power over the nations for a time.

Then I saw another beast which rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and *makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast*, whose mortal wound was healed. It works great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of men; and by the signs which it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast, it deceives those who dwell on earth, *bidding them make an image for the beast* which was wounded by the sword and yet lived; and it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast should even speak, and to cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

With him in inducing false worship is Babylon the unholy city (counterfeit of the Holy City) and its worship is enjoined. It is clear that this city is worshipped by ‘the kings of the earth’, ‘the merchants of the earth’ and ‘the shipmasters and the seafaring men’, all of whom derive their living from her. In the O.T. Babylon is always associated with idols and demonic powers. The Book of the Revelation is to a great degree the revelation of pure heavenly worship in which are included the saints (cf. Heb. 12:22–24; I Pet. 2:4–10), and the impure worship of the red dragon–beast–image, the unholy trinity.³⁷

As we have indicated above, if we go back to the serpent’s temptation to seduce the primal couple from true worship (cf. II Cor. 11:1f.) and follow through from Cain until the evil worshippers of the end-time, we have a history of godly and ungodly worship. The battle in Israel against the idols comes through into the N.T., where so many Israelites are demon-possessed, and the leaders of Israel, many of them scholars of the Scriptures, are called ‘children of the Devil’. So, then, we find the battle is ever strong. When we come into the apostolic age we see the problems of keeping pure the worship which began at Pentecost, and the intrusion of heresy into the church—heresy which always had its unapostolic forms of worship. In the first few centuries and the liturgies which we can even now examine, we often find a divergence from the pure apostolic teaching of grace, into a system of worship and ethics combined, which in turn have *contractual* emphasis rather than the apostolic, covenantal grace elements.

The history of worship from those centuries until now is a complex one. The difference between medieval Catholicism and the worship of the Reformed period was most marked, especially with the liturgy of the Mass and its doctrine of transubstantiation. Lutheran and Calvinist worship had much in common, but there were significant differences, and the developments of Puritan worship were again divergent from their original sources. The encroachment of Arminianism, the Evangelical Revival, the Holiness movement, the development of charismatic worship, and the present spate of ‘contemporary worship’ with its free handling of locations, marketing, management and entrepreneurial skills, show us the immense changes in worship. Changes have also taken place in Eastern Orthodox practices, and so we wonder, in the midst of all of this, how much true worship obtains.

³⁷ See my commentary *The Revelation of St John the Divine* (NCPI, 1993), particularly the essays ‘The True Worship and the Worshippers’ and ‘The Lords of Evil’.

Conclusion: The Need to Examine Doctrine and Worship-practice

If we note, in closing, that doctrine and theology greatly influence worship, then we can also understand that the ‘doctrine’ of the ‘world system’ greatly influences the types of secular worship we have today in the world of sport and entertainment of all kinds, especially in music, lyrics and songs. We have to admit that in the study we have barely touched the edge of our subject, but it should alert us from any complacency we may have, and may help us to realise we must be careful about doctrine and practice, and that we must examine these two in our local congregations.

God's Holiness in the Old Testament

God's Active Holiness

Who is like thee, O Lord among the gods? Who is like thee, majestic in holiness, terrible in glorious deeds, doing wonders? (Exod. 15:11; cf. Ps. 66:5–7).

There is none holy like the Lord, there is none besides thee; there is no rock like our God (I Sam. 2:2; cf. Deut. 32:14–16).

Who is able to stand before the Lord, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us? (I Sam. 6:20; cf. Num. 4:17–20).

Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel, and his power is in the skies. Terrible is God in his sanctuary, the God of Israel, he gives power and strength to his people (Ps. 68:34–35; Deut. 33:26).

The Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness (Amos 4:2).

The Lord of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness (Isa. 5:16).

They will sanctify my name; they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the God of Israel (Isa. 29:23).

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory⁴⁰ (Isa. 6:3).

Glory as the Fire of Holiness

And above the firmament over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness as it were of a human form. And upward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were gleaming bronze, like the appearance of fire enclosed round about; and downward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness round about him. Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about (Ezek. 1:26–28).

For the Lord your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God (Deut. 4:25).

The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire (Ps. 29:7).

Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him . . . the foundations of the world were laid bare, at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils (Ps. 18:8, 15).

In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious . . . when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning (Isa. 4:2–4).

Holiness as the Glory of Majesty

robed in majesty . . . girded with strength (Ps. 93:1).

clothed with honour and majesty (Ps. 104:1).

⁴⁰ Some translations have 'the whole earth is the fullness of his glory'.

clothed with terrible majesty (Job 37:22).
Honour and majesty are before him (I Chron. 16:27).
his glory is above earth and heaven (Ps. 148:13).
the glorious splendour of thy majesty (Ps. 145:5).
how Majestic is thy name in all the earth (Ps. 8:1).

Holiness as Elevation

The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high (Isa. 33:5).
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let thy glory be over all the earth! (Ps. 57:11).
I cry to God Most High (Ps. 57:2; cf. 50:14; 47:2).
the Most High God . . . How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! (Dan. 4:2–3).

Holiness as Fear-inducing Acts and Being

the Lord your God is in the midst of you, a great and terrible God (Deut. 7:21).
O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God who keeps covenant (Neh. 1:5).
Let them praise thy great and terrible name! Holy is he! (Ps. 99:3).
a God feared in the council of the holy ones, great and terrible above all that are round about him (Ps. 89:7).

His Holiness Expressed in His Wrath

Now I will soon pour out my wrath upon you, and spend my anger against you, and judge you according to your ways; and I will punish you for all your abominations. And my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; I will punish you according to your ways, while your abominations are in your midst. Then you will know that I am the Lord, who smite (Ezek. 7:8–9).
God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day (Ps. 7:11).
For all our days pass away under thy wrath . . . Who considers the power of thy anger, and thy wrath according to the fear of thee? (Ps. 90:9, 11).

God's Holiness is Redemptive

Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel! I will help you, says the Lord; your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 41:14).
For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my eyes, and honoured, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life (Isa. 43:3–4).
For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called (Isa. 54:5).

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: 'I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go' (Isa. 48:17).

Conclusion as to God's Holiness in the Old Testament

The seven headings above give us just a glimpse of the holiness of God. We need to see God more fully in creation, in covenant, in redemption, in judgment, in love and in worship. His holiness is to do with all these things, as indeed it is to do with them in the New Testament.

God's Holiness in the New Testament

There are many promises in the Old Testament of the holiness which was to come to God's people in relation to the New Covenant (cf. Ezek. 36:24–28; 37:23; Isa. 4:2–6; Jer. 31:31–34; 33:11). Paul says this plan for our holiness was laid before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:3ff.), a claim which Peter reiterates (I Pet. 1:2). That which was to be born of Mary was to be called 'holy, the Son of God' (Luke 1:35; cf. Acts 3:14; 4:36). Jesus was 'the holy one of God', and came to purify his people as he did those caught in the power of unclean demons, and in the grip of their guilt.

'To save his people from their sins' was to purify them and bring them to holiness, the blood of Christ 'cleansing their consciences from dead works to serve [worship] the living God'. The saving work of the Cross also brought them sanctification as Romans chapters 6—8 (cf. Col. 3:1ff.) so clearly set out.

As we have many instances in the Old Testament where judgment came on those who would profane God in the eyes of people, so we have cases also in the New Testament, the case of the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, and the innumerable examples in the Book of the Revelation, a matter we discussed in a previous study. What we are about is (i) that we should be holy in order to worship in a holy manner, and (ii) what it means to 'worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness'.

Worshipping the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness⁴¹

Before we return to the Old Testament texts dealing with such worship we must recognise that in the New Testament, worship plays a most significant role.⁴² Even so, it is the Book of the Revelation which brings us to that rich worship which the holiness of God demands. It is the Father who has anticipated such worship by sending the Son and through him, bringing us to that holiness by which alone we even dare worship him, and by which we cannot but worship him.

The injunction, 'Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness', is found in the AV in I Chronicles 16:29, Psalm 29:2 and 96:9. In later translations (e.g. RSV) it is translated 'worship the LORD in holy array', or (NRSV) 'worship the LORD in holy splendour'. The NEB has 'Bow down to the Lord in the splendour of holiness'. The first question

⁴¹ At the time of preparing this study I had not been able to use John Kleinig's book *The Lord's Song*, subtitled 'The Basis, Function and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles' (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, ISOT Pr., 1993).

⁴² See Appendix, 'New Testament Worship'.

is, ‘Who is to bow down?’ and the second is, ‘What is the beauty of holiness?’ or, ‘What is the holy array demanded?’.

In I Chronicles 16:29 it is ‘all the earth’ and ‘families of peoples’ who are to so worship. In Psalm 29:1–2 it is ‘heavenly beings’ or ‘sons of gods’ who are thrice exhorted to worship in an appropriate manner. In Psalm 96:9 it is ‘families of the peoples’.

‘The beauty of holiness’ is debated. Is it within the beauty of God’s holiness—God’s beauty *is* his holiness—that worship is to be given, or is ‘holy array’ *the way* in which the worshippers are to worship? It seems best to conflate these two ideas and paraphrase the matter as follows, ‘God’s beauty which is holiness demands worship which is commensurate with it, so all who now worship must do so in the manner prescribed and fitting for this occasion, and this they can do only when they are *in* his holiness’.

This would mean angels must worship in fitting array, and this could mean that the vast hierarchy of celestial creatures should worship in their true array. This form of array we see in the Book of the Revelation where, commencing with celestials, living creatures and then the twenty-four elders, were often joined by myriads of angels, then the redeemed of humanity, and finally every living creature in heaven, on earth and under the earth. A minor description of this we find in Hebrews 12:22–24. Whilst God and the Lamb do not as such join in the worship, they are ‘the beauty of holiness’ in their own being and as such inspire and order ‘the holy array’, and in fact give it its form and completeness. To imagine such worship is beyond the mind’s ability: to sense it is to enrapture the human spirit.

The Holy Array in the Temple

Some commentators take ‘the beauty of holiness’ to mean ‘the adornment of holiness’ and this point interests us. It is clear that in the temple all who led the worship were attired in dress that was prescribed. Priests and Levites dared not go outside those prescriptions. Likewise the ‘array’ or ‘hierarchy’ of them was prescribed. Even so, they were the leaders and not the entire congregation, so in many psalms and songs they called on the congregation to worship with them, this sometimes being done by repetitive singing which followed a cantor’s leading. Instruments were also prescribed. In I Chronicles 16:4–7 we have a picture of prescriptions:

Moreover he appointed certain of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the LORD, to invoke, to thank, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel. Asaph was the chief, and second to him were Zechari'ah, Je-i'el, Shemi'ramoth, Jehi'e'l, Mattithi'ah, Eli'ab, Benai'ah, O'bed-e'dom, and Je-i'el, who were to play harps and lyres; Asaph was to sound the cymbals, and Benai'ah and Jaha'ziel the priests were to blow trumpets continually, before the ark of the covenant of God. Then on that day David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the LORD by Asaph and his brethren.

Again, in II Chronicles 5:11–14 we see prescribed worship and its outcome:

Now when the priests came out of the holy place (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without regard to their divisions; and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jedu'thun, their sons and kinsmen, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with a hundred and twenty priests who were trumpeters; and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the LORD), and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the LORD, ‘For he is good, for his steadfast love endures for

ever,' the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, 14 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

In I Chronicles 25:1–3 it is shown that appointed musicians 'should prophesy with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals'.

Conclusion: Worshipping the Lord in Holy Array Is For All the People of God, Always

God does not change in his holiness. In the New Testament the people of God are commanded to be holy even as God is holy, and without that holiness they will never see the Lord. The pure in heart will see him. The gospel is not simply to save men and women, but to make them holy. The fruit of the gospel is holiness (Rom. 6:22). Indeed, it is the transforming power of God which causes them to worship him in love and holiness, and to order their lives so that they serve him in every detail. Worship is not to be of disorder and confusion, but of order (I Cor. 14:32). The Triune worship which we now know is of such high order as to demand that it be commensurate with God's 'beauty of holiness', and of such order that it is in 'holy array'.

This conclusion should cause us to pause and study the way in which we worship. This has to do with the order, content and congregational participation. All elements unworthy of true worship must be eliminated, since we must worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, in that holy array granted by the Spirit of God.

Vincent refers to this rest as ‘The perfect adjustment of things to God’.⁴³ So it is indispensable for the fullness of humanity, not just an ordinance for Israel. ‘The sabbath rest is to free not inhibit humanity.’⁴⁴

- (b) In sanctifying the sabbath rest (see also Exod. 20:11) God set it aside for rest, the rest that man needs in order to be renewed and free to work with joy. Each day is holy in that sense, just set aside for other purposes.

The Sabbath Rest Was Made for Man

It is a great relief and release to do what we are told. To come to commanded rest is a great grace. The frenetic pace of man who is driven by fear to secure himself, through work and the accumulation of money, is apparent today. This principle of rest could very well liberate many of our people, not to mention the pastor!

The ‘Second’ Sabbath Rest

In the New Testament the writer of Hebrews speaks of God’s rest (4:1) in the context of salvation, that is His rest from the completed action of redemption. His rest must have commenced on the Cross when the Son cried, ‘It is finished!’ The cry has to do with the ‘telos’, the ‘ultimate rest’, the ‘promised land’, ‘the garden’ to which all creation is being moved. Hence John says, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord . . . that they may rest from their labours’ (Rev. 14:13).

But is that rest wholly eschatological? Jesus said, ‘Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from Me . . . and you shall find rest’ (Matt. 11: 28, 29).

Hebrews 4:3 says, ‘For we who have believed enter that rest’ (‘Have believed’ is an aorist participle, denoting action simultaneous with the main verb.) M. R. Vincent says, ‘Entering into the rest is a fact which characterises us as believers’.⁴⁵ Calvin interprets this passage to have a now and then application. The believer must ‘abstain from his own works, so as to give place to God to act . . . he cannot work in us until we rest’ . . . the completion of this rest cannot be attained in this life’.⁴⁶

So although the ultimate sabbath rest is ahead, there remains a rest now for the people of God. It is in this rest from the power and pollution of sin that worship commences, in fact life becomes a life of worship.

This does not usher in a state of quietism. Quite the opposite! Where there is the true ‘silence’ of justification and purity, powerful, domestic actions of love flow freely (Rom. 12:1ff.; II Cor. 5:14ff.; Gal. 5:6; I Pet. 1:22; II Pet. 1:1–11). These good works follow us into the final rest (Rev. 14:13; e.g. Acts 7:49f.).

Like the sabbath rest at creation this sabbath rest of faith in which believers live a life of worship has been blessed and hallowed by God Himself. It is ‘His rest’ (Heb. 4:1). He meets us there. The integrity of the rest is guaranteed by the satisfaction of

⁴³ In *Word Studies in the New Testament* (MacDonald Pub. Co., p. 1,111).

⁴⁴ Geoffrey Bingham in *Sabbath Rest Or Human Turmoil?* (NCPI, 1981).

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 1,111.

⁴⁶ In *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews* by John Calvin (Baker Book House, 1979, pp. 98–99).

God with the process that achieved it. The surety of the rest is established by the presence of the Man Christ Jesus being in the bosom of the Father. The application of this rest is intimately, accurately worked in us by the Spirit, from Heart to heart.

In this rest the true flow of refreshing for the life of love (other person centredness) comes to us. Some elements of this are:

- (a) **Recreation.** We are awash with recreationalism, but we do not have the heart for it. Obsessed with it, we will not come to God's rest, so we will never have it. Hobbies, sport, culture, art and literature, 'If used in the midst of simple quietness of mind and body, and along with contemplation and worship, will prove most useful'.⁴⁷ Our prophetic task is to declare the Gospel leading to God's sabbath rest, rather than rail against recreationalism.
- (b) **Meditation.** Current meditation generally looks inwards, but true meditation focuses on three objective things—God, His workings and His Law (Ps. 8; 16:7ff.; 63; 119:27; 145:5; etc.). Meditation proceeds from God's place of rest. Martha's mind was distracted, Mary's able to focus quietly as a learner (Luke 10:38ff.). The Psalmist obviously saw meditation as full-time communion, a life of worship (119:97).
- (c) **Prayer and Confession.** In bringing us into His rest we are brought to conversational communion. He brings us for the first time to true confession (acknowledgment, the life of crying Abba! Lord! Mercy! Sinner! Grace!). Where the guilt of sin remains, prayer and confession will be pitiful, spasmodic attempts to 'get right with God'.
- (d) **Fellowship.** The purity given by grace issues into true relating. The ferment of guilt must be replaced by the freedom of purity. God's commanded rest is the fertile ground of rich intimacy. Sharing our homes, goods, experiences of grace, struggles and joys is true worship (service).

Resting and Worshipping in, Not above, the Battle

As Hebrews makes clear, the battle is against faith. This sabbath rest of faith in which the believer lives and worships is attacked constantly and viciously. Our people must see the difference between 'struggling up to faith' and the battle raging against faith.

The Great Sabbath

So the sabbath rest of God saves us from compulsiveness of all kinds, sets us in the place where God Himself communes with us, liberates us from all our idols, and fashions us after His own Son for works of love (worship).

In this we taste before the Day, something of His perfect sabbath rest waiting to descend as His Holy City, His dwelling amongst us forever, and the place of unending, untiring, un-concocted worship.

⁴⁷ Geoffrey Bingham, *op. cit.*

Dear Holy Sabbath

*Dear holy Sabbath, day of calm,
Calm happy day, one of the seven,
Seventh of seven in the days of making
The rolling universe, the high creation
Of the holy Father; He
Bringing to light the things of light
And charging all time
With the glory of His thinking.*

*Command on command and see
The host of the heavens and the earth,
The world of beauty, and
The worlds of holy happiness:
Joy upon joys, the surging joyousness,
Beauty for contemplating and the myriad
Glorious holy ones, all working
In the rounds of time as set—
Six days for toiling joyfully
And the seventh for rest.*

*Day so mysterious. Day
So filled with contemplation,
Meditation of the greatness,
Until all things, resting in His love
Give vent to joy unspeakable
Give utterance to the praise and honour
Of the high King, the adorable Father,
The immutable Creator, ineffable in holiness
And the substantial splendour
Of His Eternal Self.*

*Day so commanded, command to blessing,
Man resting, unhasting, and unfrenetic,
Building up the holy reservoir, the teeming
Reserves of rich powers. Not merely to while
The empty hours, the boring vacuity,
The flaccid indolence of uncreative thought,
But the incredible joys of human meditation,
Thinking on things so splendid
That the soul surges with newfound powers
And comprehends the eternal purposes
Of the high King.*

*Comes the rebellion,
Comes the dark Satanic and anarchic upthrust,
The graspin at golden godhead, the autonomy
Of imagined brilliance, the curving away
From quiet contingency, the dependency*

*Upon the loving Creator. Man too,
Powerful in glory, full in purpose,
Given the gift of telos, but now
Puny in imagined godhead, taking the weight
Of eternal glory, dizzy with imaginings
That bring no fruit, no essential being
But only the darkness of no purpose, the puerility
Of non-creativity.*

*Guilt grasps the spirit in a cruel bind,
Soul that is soulful soulless finds its soul
Bent on the hastening of its powers,
The frenetic endeavour, the harsh exertion,
The empty nisus, the futile conatus,
Which, not succeeding empasions man
To yet more effort, more futile aim
Until the spirit can no longer rest.
Caught in the ceaseless toiling
Of its own endeavour, the mill-race
Of endless unarriving it seeks
Goal and after goal, and each
Spinning away, haste-borne, unresting,
Until the spirit, dizzy with endeavour
Breaks, shattering down to atomic incoherence,
An anarchy of self
Doomed to pointless effort, unreachable goals,
And inner aching restlessness.*

*Satan the accuser, Satan the critical,
Satan the unseeing of the glory of the sons,
Roves to and fro. On his own confession
Roves to and fro across earth's face
Endlessly seeking, endless burning
The power of his given glory on piffling nothing,
Wild imaginings of greater glory
But earning nothing, slave of his own bondage,
Puerile in dreams, restless with non-cessation,
Goaded by the overplus
Of untranquillity.*

*Man linked with evil, dreaming too
As the evil prince, the worldly god,
The cruel dealer of mortality, the compulsive
Thief of holy tranquillity, imagines
Sheer joys of the occult, gifts
Of drugged tranquillity, promises
Of sure sedation, or imaginings
Of gnostic stimulations, the knowing
That brings assurance of unchanging godhead.*

*In the dizzy heights of his fantasy,
The fevered fancies of psychedelic illusions
The proud mind reaches out for accomplishment.*

*Driven by ambition, grasping nothing
In his nerveless gripping; the spirit
Is driven on. Searching the shrines of demons,
Fashioning the gods of his conceptions
He seeks power, and with that power
Peace that the haunted, frenzied spirit
Cries for in its orgies of endeavour.
Nothing is the answer, nothing is the wind
That the wild grasp holds, the evasion
Of the true tranquillity.*

*Dear holy Sabbath, unhasting,
Gentle in healing, renewing
The hours of endeavour that waste
The spirit of man. Rest from the selfish,
The human futility of unbeing. Sabbath hours
Restore the new man, making newer,
Opening the mind, the spirit and the soul
As refreshment surges
In the deepest depths, the subterranean
Reserves of renewal. A man is wise
Who ceases from futility, from vacuity
And takes the gifts of holiness,
Contemplation and creative meditation.*

*God is his thought, his aim,
His lofty endeavour, and God's world
The brilliant creation, the multi-coloured
The law of love, the anthropos-in-God,
The unique and various forms that tell,
Articulating the marvellous, showing the simple,
Depthing the profundity
Of the depthless creation. On these
Men may think, and contemplating
Grow to maturity, the mysterious gift
Of the Eternal Father Who alone knows giving.*

*Draws then the day to its zenith
And the wearied spirit of man made new
Looks to the horizons of the telos and knows
No apathy of spirit; knows the upsurging
And incessant powers. Knows the new out-flowings
Of perpetual love. Creative powers fill afresh
The once tired spirit: make anew
The true endeavour, the rich conatus,
The knowing nisus, the authentic
Goals of God. Livingly the mind arises
Setting out with the entire humanity,
The caravanserai of the holy community
Moving towards the eternal Sabbath
The dear and sheer delights of Deity,
The true reward of the tranquil minds,
The home of holy endeavour and true*

Obedience.

*Dear holy Sabbath, Sabbath which is the Son
Giving rest from his eternal reservoirs,
The mild yoke of the Redeemer, the destroyal
Of guilt compulsive, sinweight (in a yoke
That crushed the rebellious spirit giving
Only unholy anger, driving restlessly
The unresting, the purposeless passionate
And the ceaselessly compulsive); giving quiet
To the unquiet, the weary whose spirit
Cannot rest, the eternal tranquillity
Wrought in the Cross, the coinage
Of eternal serenity, the peace
Of the home of the Father holy.*

*Such are the true people of God,
The community of the quiet ones.
Such is the renewal of an unchanging
And eternal Sabbath. These are the wells,
The true places of drinking, the commanded
Blessings of God, the mandate of receiving,
The renewing resting, the desisting
From mad endeavour, vaunting ambition
And overworking. This is the Sabbath of God
Commanded from creation and reaching
Into the endlessness of Eternity
The gentle Bosom of the Father,
The perpetual Paradise
Of the unhasting God.*

G. Bingham,
31st March, 1981
(taken from *Sabbath Rest or Human Turmoil?*
NCPI, Blackwood, 1981)

Human Families at Worship

Cain and Abel, in one sense, represented a family at worship, but the worship was diverse. The patriarchs must have led their families in worship. From Joshua 24:2ff. it is clear that Abraham belonged to a family worship which was idolatrous. This changed when ‘the God of glory appeared unto our father, Abraham’. The patriarchs’ worship must have involved the family. Family worship is more fully understood when Israel was constituted as ‘the household of God’, ‘household’ being the word for the continuing family of Israel, with Moses as mediator and priest, and over the household.

We may be correct in seeking the best ways of worship for our own families, and view it as a domestic issue, but we obviously must not confine it to a ‘nuclear family’ operation, since the church is now the household of God.⁵¹ Hebrews 3:1–6 contrasts the work of Moses and of Christ regarding this household.

Therefore, holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession. He was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in God’s house. Yet Jesus has been counted worthy of as much more glory than Moses as the builder of a house has more honour than the house. (For every house is built by some one, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ was faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house if we hold fast our confidence and pride in our hope.

Christ is the builder of the house and is the Father’s Son within it. Jesus spoke of this house in John 8:31–36, saying that sinners were slaves in the house, but that he was the Son in the house who would free them to become more than slaves. Paul spoke of ‘the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth’. In this sense the idea of members of the church being ‘brothers and sisters’ in the family of God is present and ‘brotherly love’ does not arise from an ordinary domestic situation, but from the family of God, God being its Father. In the New Testament families are really components of the full and true family, the Church. Whilst worship in individual families is of importance, the primary worship lies in the gathering together of the saints. We may assume that the families were strengthened by worshipping as the one family, and that that family was strengthened by the godliness of the families themselves.

Our conclusion is, then, that the primal family knew the worship of God, that families were either those of ‘the people of faith’, i.e. ‘the children of God’,⁵² or they were those who worshipped their family gods. Abraham’s monotheistic creed ‘the LORD God Most High, maker of heaven and earth’, must have been a splendid family worship statement.

God’s Fatherhood and the Household of Israel

Israel was called ‘my son’ by God (Exod. 4:22) and the Israelites were called ‘the sons of God’ (Deut. 14:1). God is certainly known as ‘the Father’ in the sense that is expressed in Numbers 12:7, ‘Moses . . . is entrusted with all my house’. Deuteronomy

⁵¹ The whole issue of our children worshipping with the congregation, living within it and not being segregated from it must be examined, with also our responsibility for family worship.

⁵² See Hebrews 11:4ff., and I John 3:10ff., where the people of God and the children of God appear to commence with Abel.

32:6–9 asks a number of questions, one of which is, ‘Is he not your father who created you, who made you and established you?’, and mentions ‘the number of the sons of God’, which has been variously interpreted as ‘angels’ or ‘the sons of Israel, and thus of God’. A number of passages also refer to the Fatherhood, such as in Isaiah 63:16, ‘For thou art our Father . . . O Lord thou art our Father, our redeemer from of old is thy name’. Isaiah 64:8 has, ‘Yet, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay and thou our potter; we are the work of thy hand’. In Jeremiah 3:4, 14, 19 God says, ‘Have you not just called to me, “My Father, thou art the friend of my youth”?’ and God says, ‘Return, O faithless children . . . I thought how I would set you amongst my sons . . . and I thought you would call me, My Father’. In Malachi 2:10 Israel asks, ‘Have we all not one father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?’.⁵³

Our point in speaking of the household of God and God as Father—even if understood as ‘Covenant Father’—is to show that in regard to worship, God is rarely, if ever, spoken of as Father. The brilliant depictions of God, especially in respect to worship, do not appear to rise from the idea of God’s being Father. All seems to await the coming of the Son, before God’s Fatherhood becomes intelligible, and God is worshipped as Father.

God’s Fatherhood and the New Testament

Without doubt the idea of the Fatherhood of God occupies a large portion of the text of the New Testament. In the Gospels Jesus is called ‘the Son of God’ prior to his birth, at his baptism and transfiguration—‘this is my beloved Son’—and is acknowledged as such by the unclean spirits and by the centurion at the Cross. His prayer to the Father shows him to be uniquely Son of the Father, and his statement in Matthew 11:27 not only shows he is the Son, but says the knowledge of him as Son is confined to the Father. His use of ‘your heavenly Father’ in the Sermon on the Mount opens up this relationship where there is faith in God.

In John’s Gospel the material is most profuse. Jesus does not hesitate to claim that uniquely he is the Son of the Father, and shows that there is no way to the Father apart from him. He is *the* way to *the* Father. He denies that some Jewish leaders are even the true children of Abraham, let alone children of the Father. He insists that their father is the devil. That is why they seek to kill him, the Son of God. His death is given this meaning by John, ‘that Jesus should die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad’.⁵⁴ As we shall later see, Jesus gave teaching on worship and the Father.

In the Epistles the doctrine of God’s Fatherhood is well established. Even if we ignore the Acts of the Apostles in which much of this revelation must have been given, we know that the people of the New Covenant are deeply entrenched in the knowledge that God is Father and, we must say, in a way which was not seen in the Old Testament. For example, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, there is not a chapter which does not speak of the Father. It is an interesting exercise to put together all the references to the Father in just this one Letter: they amount to quite a signifi-

⁵³ Some have commented that ‘one father’ refers to Jacob, and ‘created’ to the nation of Israel. On the whole the verse is understood as referring to God as Father.

⁵⁴ John 11:51–52; cf. Isaiah 43:6–7.

cant doctrine. The idea of the people of God being the sons of God⁵⁵ and the children of God in worship, sprang from Christ himself, and we will trace this idea below; but if for the moment we look at the Book of the Revelation we see that the 144,000 in 14:1 have the name of the Lamb and of the Father written on their foreheads, a reference to 7:3 as the seal of the 144,000. In Revelation 22:4 we see that the name of the Father shall be on their foreheads, that is, all will be sealed by, and into, the Father.

The Family Worships Together

Jesus' Introduction to Worship

The passage of John 4:19–25 gives us Jesus' doctrine of worship. The One we worship is the Father. He is the true God (cf. John 17:3) and we must know him truly, or know him as the truth. In our spirits we worship him, doubtless by the inspiration and aid of the Holy Spirit. The One who is in the Holy of Holies, who dwelled on the mercy seat, and who could only be approached fully once a year in the sacrifice of the Atonement was—and is—the Father! The Son is the only way to the Father, for he who has seen the Son has seen the Father. He is the way *to* the Father, the life *of* the Father and the truth *concerning* the Father. The way to the heart of the Holy of Holies is the Son, our great High Priest who has offered himself in his body as the one true, full, sufficient and perfect sacrifice for the sins of men and women for all time. We therefore have boldness to enter into the true sanctuary and worship him, knowing we have this faithful high priest *over the house of God*.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus showed that true prayer is in the closet where we pray to the Father, in secret, and that our worship-giving is to be seen by the Father and not others. In fact all elements of life are in relation to the Father, the true Giver. So he prescribed the liturgy of what we call 'the Lord's prayer'. In Luke 11:1ff. the disciples seeing their Lord at prayer asked to be taught to pray, when, in fact, they had learned to pray in their childhood, but doubtless the quality of this prayer, and its intimacy with the Father, set up a hunger in their own hearts. They were told to say, 'Our Father . . .'

The Family is One

As we saw in John 11:51–52 the death of the Cross was to bring all the children of God scattered abroad into one family. In Hebrews 2:9–10 that death was 'to bring many sons into glory' and to make them brethren with the Son—the Elder Brother—together. The passages of I Corinthians 12:12–13, Galatians 3:28 and Colossians 3:9–10 speak of a people who are wholly one. Race, culture and religion are no longer barriers to this divine unity. In the passage of Ephesians 2:11–22 the Cross has made all to be one in the New Man who is Christ. Jew and Gentile, by faith, have access to the Father by one Spirit. Thus, essentially, we are all one family, all brethren, and have one worship.

In Romans 8:14–17 and Galatians 4:4–7 we are shown as the sons of God having the Spirit cry within us, 'Abba! Father!'. We through the same Spirit give that same

⁵⁵ In this study we have not paused to speak particularly of 'adoption' or 'regeneration', but they both need examination.

cry. At last we know who we are and where we are, and how we worship.

We cannot help comparing the worship in Israel with all its magnificence and beauty with this simple and marvellously new worship. The worship wall of division has been abolished, the curtain that held us back from the inner sanctuary has been torn asunder, and the Son has led us to the feet of the Father. How wonderful!

The Ultimate Worship of the Family

We have seen the beauty of worship in heaven, the worship in ‘holy array’! How beautiful it is, and how deeply satisfying. Yet the full story is not told until we take up the passage of Romans 8:18–25 where the ultimate is seen, the sons of the Father shall be revealed in all their glory—the Father is ‘the Father of glory’—and the whole creation shall be liberated *from* the bondage to corruption to which it has been subjected. What will it be released *to*? It will be released into ‘the liberty of the glory of the children of God’. What then is this ‘liberty of glory’? It is surely ‘participation in the Divine nature’,⁵⁶ that is, induction into the Triune God Himself.

What do we mean by such a statement? We mean that as worship is innate to the Trinity and, as such, worship was innate to created Man but was lost; and as redeemed Man now worships from the Fountainhead of worship, the Triune God himself, now the family of God will be one with the Holy Family, the Triune God Himself. To have the name of the Father and the Lamb on their foreheads means that by the Spirit of worship—the Spirit of the Father and the Son—they shall be one, caught up into the eternal *perichoresis* that is Divine, and shall worship as one with the God who brought them from Eden into the new Paradise.⁵⁷ This is the ‘liberty of the glory of the children of God’. This is what worship is ultimately about, intimate worship beyond our richest dreams.

Conclusion: God and the Lamb Are the Holy Temple

When we follow the theme of the temple and then the new temple in the New Testament, we see firstly that Christ is the new temple, and at the same time that the Church is the new temple. In the Book of the Revelation, we see time and again, that somehow the throne of God and the temple are the one. It is in 21:22 that we find the amazing statement, ‘And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb’. Where has the temple gone? It has not gone. *God is the temple*. All worship is in him. That may take some fathoming, but this is how it is, it will be.

We conclude our studies on Worship by saying that we ought to look to the origins of worship in the creation, in the primal couple, the connection of worship and covenant, and see that all that was authentic at the beginning was but the beginning of the end, and all that is at the end is but the end of the beginning. We much teach our

⁵⁶ In this last study we have but touched upon what we might call ‘eternal worship’. To speak, as does in II Peter 1:4 of being participators in the Divine nature, does not mean we will be gods. Divinisation of Man (theosis) does not give us Deity but draws us to participate in that Deity, and God being Father is no metaphor, but is the ontological reality as creation and redemption have made it to be.

⁵⁷ Another way we could have gone about our study would have been to speak of the Marriage Supper of the Bride and the Lamb, and we could have seen that the Son brings his Bride to the Father and she is welcomed into the Divine home, forever. Thus all in her participate in the Godhead.

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churches more and more *about* worship, and we must all be more and more *in* worship.

Contemporary Worship: Late Twentieth Century

We are aware that changes have taken place. There has been cross-fertilisation of the six general modes of worship indicated above. Open and Charismatic Worship have penetrated into the churches which used mainly liturgical worship. Perhaps there has been some traffic both ways. What, then, are we to say about these things? This mixing of worship has been greatly divisive, whatever useful stimulation and contribution may have come from it. Some congregations resent changes to their forms of worship and have become divided because of the changes. What criteria do we use for worship, and what should be the ways of going about changes in modes? These questions are vital to us all, and it is not always easy to provide answers.

In regard to music, songs, lyrics, abbreviated choruses and the like, along with the idea of dancing and dramatic presentations, we have difficulty in making decisions. The introduction of rock music and instruments also presents a problem in deciding modes of worship. We will attempt to set forth criteria for true worship. These criteria presume this main reality, that we have been ushered by Christ our High Priest and Advocate into the Presence of God (Heb. 10:22), and that we have been purified from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. 9:14; Rom. 12:1–2).

Criteria for True Worship

- (a) God always takes initiative in worship. All worship comes from, centres in and works towards, the Presence of God amongst his people.
- (b) All worship is Triune as it issues from God, (i) the Father ever seeks us to worship him in spirit [Spirit] and in truth (John 4:23, 24; cf. I Cor. 14:24–25); (ii) worship is by the Spirit (John 4:23–24; Phil. 3:3; Eph. 5:18–20); (iii) Christ is the minister in the sanctuary (Heb. 8:2); and (iv) worship is always in the context of the entire church (Heb. 12:22–34).
- (c) Worship is not of confusion but of order (I Cor. 14:33, *passim*).
- (d) All worship should fit the criteria of the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ (Gal. 5:22–23).
- (e) God’s presence is known in the Word, the worship and the sacraments (ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper).
- (f) If we take heavenly worship, as seen in the Book of the Revelation, then we will see worship is in some sense hierarchical—first the living creatures, then the elders and after them angels and humans, but all being one in utter adoration and for reasons specified.

If we work by these criteria we can see that the egotistical leading by some dominating or entrepreneurial person cannot be desirable worship. The introduction of clamour cannot make for true worship (Eph. 4:31). Worship will never constitute entertainment, as such, although it will be joyful, peaceful and loving. Everything will be determined by the Holy Presence, and our sense of awe and delight which follows from this knowledge. Worship is primarily the whole body worshipping together with all gifts, services and workings (I Cor 12:4–11), but because worship is also service, worship will be happening even if the church is not gathered together. Worship will

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be happening in the whole community.

Lord of lords', and he was the Messiah of the Kingdom.

- (d) The early Christians were aware of the movements of proclamation of the gospel, of the nature of the Kingdom, and thought in terms of moving out to the ends of the earth. Somehow their worship was linked with this. It was a moving church, and insofar as it was this, its worship was not formalised in the way we find it in the next couple of centuries.
- (e) The church was the fellowship of the New Covenant and thus had experience of the forgiveness of sins, regeneration, justification, sanctification and adoption, all of which inspired and conditioned their worship.

New Testament Passages Which Indicate Worship

Acts 2 and 4

- (a) Baptism brought thousands together to worship.
- (b) They attended to the apostolic doctrine,⁵⁸ the fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers.
- (c) Their service to one another was a sharing of their goods.
- (d) They broke bread from house to house, which may have been the beginning of the later, more formalised *agape* or 'love feast'.
- (e) They were people of effective prayer.
- (f) Whilst worshippers met at the Temple for the regular 'times of prayer', yet they also met in homes.

Hebrews 12:22–24, 28

- (a) The corporate nature of worship which involves earthly and heavenly worshippers together.
- (b) The recognition of what it is to 'offer to God acceptable worship'.

Romans 12:1–2; I Peter 2:4–5; Hebrews 13:15, 16.

- (a) The important principle of offering up one's own body—in action—instead of an animal to be killed.⁵⁹
- (b) This is *logike latreia*—'reasonable or understanding worship'. Compare with

⁵⁸ For 'apostles' doctrine' we could understand 'the word of God preached in prophetic life and power'.

⁵⁹ One of the principles of worship in both O.T. and N.T. is the offering of gifts to God, always with the recognition that the worshippers are giving God what he has given them. 'God gives in order to receive'.

I Corinthians 10:31, 'Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God'.

- (c) Worship is the offerings of 'spiritual sacrifices' which in most cases are doing good to others.

Note that such offerings are said to be made through Christ.

Ephesians 5:18ff.; Colossians 3:16–17

- (a) Worshippers were continually to be filled with the Spirit. They were also to let the word of God dwell deeply in their hearts. These two seem to be together as the one.
- (b) They addressed one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, the latter probably being songs which came directly from the Spirit, 'singing in the Spirit', and the others psalms and hymns already known. This could also be called 'admonishing one another with all wisdom'.
- (c) Songs also directed to the Lord.
- (d) Thanksgiving was made to the Father, in the name of the Lord.

Note: In I Corinthians 11:1–16 the place of women in worship is discussed. Women may pray and prophesy but are to do it under the cover of their husbands. In I Corinthians 14:33–36 women are to keep silent in the church and to ask their husbands at home. In I Timothy 2:8–15 instruction is given that a woman should not speak, so that she is not usurping authority over a man. This is a much discussed situation, and may be resolved if what a woman does is under the authority of her husband, and, perhaps, the elders.

I Corinthians Chapters 10—11

- (a) The cup of blessing and the bread broken are a participation in the blood and body of Christ.
- (b) Christian worship should not be linked in any way with pagan rituals.
- (c) Setting forth the bread and wine and participating therein is a showing forth of Christ's death until he comes.
- (d) Eating and drinking in the Lord's Supper must be in conformity with his death, and have the community in mind, since unworthy eating and drinking will bring judgment, even to death.
- (e) There must be true sharing in the love feast or this will be incongruous with the Lord's Supper.

I Corinthians Chapter 12⁶⁰

- (a) Jesus is Lord of the church.
- (b) Three things obtain, (i) varieties of gifts, (ii) varieties of service, and (iii) varieties of ‘workings’ or ‘energising’. They must work as one. These three must work harmoniously.
- (c) All things must work in the body of Christ (the church) as all members combine together to use the gifts given to the church as a whole and to members in particular.
- (d) All gifts are given for worship, and each needs the others.

I Corinthians Chapter 14

- (a) Extensive and comprehensive prescriptions are given for the uses of the various gifts in worship. ‘For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.’
- (b) The variety of elements in worship can be seen in (i) when you come together, and (ii) each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation—all being used for edification. *This seems to be one of the clearest descriptions of worship in the New Testament .*

James 2:1–7

James speaks against partiality being exercised towards the rich and thus discrimination against the poor. This is done in the very gathering for worship and so is most reprehensible.

I Peter 4:7–11

The injunctions here may not only pertain to embodied worship but to all serving within the Christian community.

Other General Elements Linked with Worship

If we take worship to mean glorifying God and honouring all others, then Romans 12:1–2 which we have examined above, will simply be an introduction to the whole worship of the community, such as we saw in Acts chapters 2 and 4. The more we examine the Acts and the Epistles, the more we see that everything is really worship: all life is worship.

Even so, we need to keep in mind the matter of the church not being a democracy, and that there is an hierarchical order of love. There is not just an hierarchical order. It may be shown that love does not exist outside a hierarchy. The gifts, I believe, must

⁶⁰ It is difficult to know whether the three elements—gifts, services and workings—are used only in embodied times of worship, or whether they are distributed across the whole of the lives of the community of Christ. Probably both actions are in view.

work in tandem, and in other senses as the love-hierarchy. The position of elders is essential to the good order, discipline and life of the church, and worship is within the context of these ruling, caring, nurturing and protecting shepherds of the flock.

We must also keep in mind the constant working of the Three Persons in the matter of our worship of the living God, and in the honouring of one another.

Again, if we forget we are the New Temple, the Temple of the living God, and if we forget that true worship is also proclamatory of the gospel with a view to the nations being brought to worship God, then our worship will devolve down into a local, domestic, stereotyped minimal matter, most parochial, most inverted, and not at all the kind of worship where, if a believer enters he is convicted by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed by all, and falling on his face he cries out, 'Of a truth God is in this place!'

Finally, if we forget what we have so many times stated, that worship is of the Triune God, and that it is not of human shaping and human organising, then we will discover 'the way and wonder of worship to be marvellous, life-transforming, and life-energising'.

Dear Holy Sabbath

*Dear holy Sabbath, day of calm,
Calm happy day, one of the seven,
Seventh of seven in the days of making
The rolling universe, the high creation
Of the holy Father; He
Bringing to light the things of light
And charging all time
With the glory of His thinking.*

*Command on command and see
The host of the heavens and the earth,
The world of beauty, and
The worlds of holy happiness:
Joy upon joys, the surging joyousness,
Beauty for contemplating and the myriad
Glorious holy ones, all working
In the rounds of time as set—
Six days for toiling joyfully
And the seventh for rest.*

*Day so mysterious. Day
So filled with contemplation,
Meditation of the greatness,
Until all things, resting in His love
Give vent to joy unspeakable
Give utterance to the praise and honour
Of the high King, the adorable Father,
The unmutable Creator, ineffable in holiness
And the substantial splendour
Of His Eternal Self.*

*Day so commanded, command to blessing,
Man resting, unhasting, and unfrenetic,
Building up the holy reservoir, the teeming
Reserves of rich powers. Not merely to while
The empty hours, the boring vacuity,
The flaccid indolence of uncreative thought,
But the incredible joys of human meditation,
Thinking on things so splendid
That the soul surges with newfound powers
And comprehends the eternal purposes
Of the high King.*

*Comes the rebellion,
Comes the dark Satanic and anarchic upthrust,
The grasping at golden godhead, the autonomy
Of imagined brilliance, the curving away
From quiet contingency, the dependency*

*Upon the loving Creator. Man too,
Powerful in glory, full in purpose,
Given the gift of telos, but now
Puny in imagined godhead, taking the weight
Of eternal glory, dizzy with imaginings
That bring no fruit, no essential being
But only the darkness of no purpose, the puerility
Of non-creativity.*

*Guilt grasps the spirit in a cruel bind,
Soul that is soulful soulless finds its soul
Bent on the hastening of its powers,
The frenetic endeavour, the harsh exertion,
The empty nisus, the futile conatus,
Which, not succeeding empassions man
To yet more effort, more futile aim
Until the spirit can no longer rest.
Caught in the ceaseless toiling
Of its own endeavour, the mill-race
Of endless unarriving it seeks
Goal and after goal, and each
Spinning away, haste-borne, unresting,
Until the spirit, dizzy with endeavour
Breaks, shattering down to atomic incoherence,
An anarchy of self
Doomed to pointless effort, unreachable goals,
And inner aching restlessness.*

*Satan the accuser, Satan the critical,
Satan the unseeing of the glory of the sons,
Roves to and fro. On his own confession
Roves to and fro across earth's face
Endlessly seeking, endless burning
The power of his given glory on piffling nothing,
Wild imaginings of greater glory
But earning nothing, slave of his own bondage,
Puerile in dreams, restless with non-cessation,
Goaded by the overplus
Of untranquillity.*

*Man linked with evil, dreaming too
As the evil prince, the worldly god,
The cruel dealer of mortality, the compulsive
Thief of holy tranquillity, imagines
Sheer joys of the occult, gifts
Of drugged tranquillity, promises
Of sure sedation, or imaginings
Of gnostic stimulations, the knowing
That brings assurance of unchanging godhead.*

*In the dizzy heights of his fantasy,
The fevered fancies of psychedelic illusions
The proud mind reaches out for accomplishment.*

Dear Holy Sabbath

*Driven by ambition, grasping nothing
In his nerveless gripping; the spirit
Is driven on. Searching the shrines of demons,
Fashioning the gods of his conceptions
He seeks power, and with that power
Peace that the haunted, frenzied spirit
Cries for in its orgies of endeavour.
Nothing is the answer, nothing is the wind
That the wild grasp holds, the evasion
Of the true tranquillity.*

*Dear holy Sabbath, unhasting,
Gentle in healing, renewing
The hours of endeavour that waste
The spirit of man. Rest from the selfish,
The human futility of unbeing. Sabbath hours
Restore the new man, making newer,
Opening the mind, the spirit and the soul
As refreshment surges
In the deepest depths, the subterranean
Reserves of renewal. A man is wise
Who ceases from futility, from vacuity
And takes the gifts of holiness,
Contemplation and creative meditation.*

*God is his thought, his aim,
His lofty endeavour, and God's world
The brilliant creation, the multi-coloured
The law of love, the anthropos-in-God,
The unique and various forms that tell,
Articulating the marvellous, showing the simple,
Depthening the profundity
Of the depthless creation. On these
Men may think, and contemplating
Grow to maturity, the mysterious gift
Of the Eternal Father Who alone knows giving.*

*Draws then the day to its zenith
And the wearied spirit of man made new
Looks to the horizons of the telos and knows
No apathy of spirit; knows the upsurging
And incessant powers. Knows the new out-
flowings
Of perpetual love. Creative powers fill afresh
The once tired spirit: make anew
The true endeavour, the rich conatus,
The knowing nisus, the authentic
Goals of God. Livingly the mind arises
Setting out with the entire humanity,
The caravenseraï of the holy community
Moving towards the eternal Sabbath
The dear and sheer delights of Deity,
The true reward of the tranquil minds,*

*The home of holy endeavour and true
Obedience.*

*Dear holy Sabbath, Sabbath which is the Son
Giving rest from his eternal reservoirs,
The mild yoke of the Redeemer, the destroyal
Of guilt compulsive, sinweight (in a yoke
That crushed the rebellious spirit giving
Only unholy anger, driving restlessly
The unresting, the purposeless passionate
And the ceaselessly compulsive); giving quiet
To the unquiet, the weary whose spirit
Cannot rest, the eternal tranquillity
Wrought in the Cross, the coinage
Of eternal serenity, the peace
Of the home of the Father holy.*

*Such are the true people of God,
The community of the quiet ones.
Such is the renewal of an unchanging
And eternal Sabbath. These are the wells,
The true places of drinking, the commanded
Blessings of God, the mandate of receiving,
The renewing resting, the desisting
From mad endeavour, vaunting ambition
And overworking. This is the Sabbath of God
Commanded from creation and reaching
Into the endlessness of Eternity
The gentle Bosom of the Father,
The perpetual Paradise
Of the unhasting God.*

G. Bingham,
31st March, 1981
(taken from *Sabbath Rest or Human Turmoil?*
NCPI, Blackwood, 1981)