

Seven Tracts

—ON—

WORSHIP.

By A. P. C.

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LONDON :

G. COOPER, PRINTER, 24, CLOUDESLEY RD.,
ISLINGTON, N.

WORSHIP AND UNION.



WHAT IS WORSHIP?



“IF THOU knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water” (John. iv. 10). These words tell us of the streams of God’s grace which flow down through the Son, by the Spirit, into our hearts, and just as a river has its eddies, and the water in those eddies flows back again towards its source, so is it with *worship*. It is the outflow of a heart that has known God as a *Giver*; that has known the Son, through whom the gift flows down from heaven; that has tasted of the living water of God

the Holy Ghost ; and having drunk, has found in that Holy Spirit a source of living water within his heart that springs up unto everlasting life, and flows back again towards its source in adoration, worship, and praise (John iv. 10, 14, 21). It is the answer of a soul that has found out that it is by God's will that he is saved and sanctified, that that will has been carried out by God the Son, by a sacrifice that has for ever put away his sins, and given him a perfect conscience ; the Holy Ghost testifying to his heart, " Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more " (Heb. x. 7-17). Such an one will cry, " Abba, Father," which name is revealed to us Christians for the adoring worship of our hearts, and will be one of the true worshippers whom the Father seeks, during this dispensation, to worship *Him* in spirit and in truth (John iv. 23).

But we must go to the Greek Testament, in which language the New Testament was originally written, to

see the exact meaning of the word "worship." Two chief words in the Greek language are generally used to express it, *proskuneo* and *latreuo*. The former word signifies, to do reverence or homage by prostration, to pay divine homage, worship, adore (Matt. ii. 2, 11 ; iv. 10 ; John iv. 20, 21 ; Rev. iv. 10). The latter is used in Hebrews ix., x., rather in regard to the public worship of the sanctuary, and is translated often by the word "serve," "service" (Heb. ix. 1, 6, 9, 14). In other verses, however, it is rightly translated worship (Heb. x. 2 ; Phil. iii. 3). The general idea then is, giving praise and homage to God and the Father for what He is in Himself, and for what He is for those who approach Him. Thus we see that it is the very opposite of prayer, which asks something from God, whereas worship gives to God. Prayer may be truly mixed up with it, and be included in the general thought, but I may pray without one thought of worship, be-

yond the mere acknowledgement of God.

Going to hear an evangelist preach is not worship. The evangelist addresses himself to the world, whereas worship flows back to the Father *from children's hearts*. The mixture, then, of the two together in one service is mischievous, and calculated to destroy the division which God has made between *the world and the church*. Going to hear any kind of ministry is not worship though it may produce it. Ministry flows down from God to the people, whereas worship is what ascends from the people to God.

Alas, alas, the idea of worship is well-nigh lost in Christendom. The world is invited to worship God, the people of God are mixed up with it, and then in the same meeting oftentimes the gospel is preached to the unconverted. The word of God carefully keeps the two things apart; Satan has mixed the two up together, to the great detriment of God's chil-

dren, and dishonour to the Lord ; for it is written, “ The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination ” (Prov. xxi. 27 ; see also Isa. i. 10–15 ; Ps. l. 14–21). But let us look at two or three instances the word of God gives us as to what worship is.

(See Deuteronomy xxvi.) When Israel came into the land of Canaan, they were to bring the first-fruits of that land to the place where the Lord had chosen to put His name, and offer it to the Lord. The offerer was to go to the priest, and to him profess that he was come into the land which the Lord had given to them. How beautiful ! It was as an Israelite already come into the land, and professing it, that he offered his basket of first-fruits to the Lord. It is as a Christian already seated in heavenly places in Christ, and confessing it, that we worship the Father (Compare Eph. i. 3 ; ii. 4–6, 18). Then he was to say to the Lord, “ A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into

Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour and our oppression: and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders, and He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God." Such is worship. The worshipper is himself seated in the heavenlies in Christ and blessed with all spiritual blessings, he gives back to the Father the precious fruits of praise and adoration which

spring from a heart filled with Christ.

We have a beautiful picture of worship in Matt. ii. 1-11. The wise men having found the Christ they were seeking, in the manger of Bethlehem, right outside the religious centre of worship at Jerusalem, they fall down and worship Him, presenting their best treasures as gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Lastly, in Rev. iv., v., we see what the worship in heaven will be, and surely that is what we should follow most closely. In Rev. iv. 11 it is the worship of the Creator: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Not a word of prayer in it. It is the ascription of praise for what God is, and for what He has done. In Rev. v. 9 it is worship to the Lamb for redemption: "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and has redeemed us to God by

Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." Such even now should be the pattern for our worship; but, alas! how few worship-meetings do we find where such worship is expressed. Reader, do you understand what such worship means? Do you find yourself in a meeting where such worship is expressed?

Yet, beloved reader, Christ is made unto all believers sanctification (1 Cor. i. 30); that is, He is the measure of our separation to God. He is set apart for God's use, in His very presence, as the high priest Aaron was set apart for the service of the sanctuary; so are we. We are sanctified through His offering; we are separated to God; we have boldness to enter into the holiest through His blood (Heb. x. 10-19). We are seated in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. ii. 6). Let us give then unitedly, and

all together, the fruits of this heavenly land, an offering to the Lord. Let us own the Lord Jesus in heaven as the only centre of worship, as we see in Rev. v. 6-10, the redeemed saints in heaven will do, and as we see in Matt. ii. the wise men did when He was a young child on earth. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, and say, "Thou art worthy." Reader, do you know what such worship means? Surely if you do, you must see that the general worship that goes on around falls far short of it. Is such worship what agrees with heaven? Will such worship do for the holiest? Are the worshippers that fill the churches of Christendom sanctified ones? Yet you must be that for worship in the holiest. The Lord give the beloved reader to consider what is God's due, and to see that worship is a gift which is to be given to God, and therefore must be perfect to be accepted; lest any should get His rebuke, "If ye offer

the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame or sick is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. i. 8, 14).

" 'Abba, Father,' we approach Thee,
In our Saviour's precious Name;
We, Thy children, here assembling,
Now the promised blessing claim:
From our guilt His blood has washed us,
'Tis through Him our souls draw nigh;
And Thy Spirit too has taught us,
'Abba, Father,' thus to cry."

WHOM DO YOU WORSHIP?



CHRISTIAN, whom do you worship? This may seem a very plain question to you ; but I mean it. You answer, perhaps, "I worship God as everybody else does, of course." "Well," I answer, "if you get to the heart of many of the so-called worshippers, who fill the churches of Christendom, they do not worship at all. God is not in all their thoughts. I know this is not true of the Christian ; but it is on this very account that he should be able to answer the question, Whom do I worship?"

Whom did the Lord Jesus worship? Look at Matt. iv. 10 : "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." See also Matt. xi. 25 : "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O FATHER, LORD of heaven and

earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." The LORD JESUS worshipped God—His Father. Whom did Paul worship? See Eph. i. 3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." He worshipped the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew a God and Father who had blessed him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, and the consequence was that an upward stream of adoration and praise went back to that God who had thus let His streams of grace flow down into his heart.

Whom did Peter worship? Listen to 1 Peter i. 3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of

Jesus Christ from the dead." Peter knew a God and Father who had begotten him again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and this thought so filled him with praise that the upward stream of worship flowed back to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ who had thus so blessed him.

And who is this wonderful Being whom we are called to worship? Hear what a voice answers: "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens open, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him: and there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Mark i, 10, 11). Here the Trinity is revealed: the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; three unmistakable Persons, yet, as He said of old, "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi. 4). The seraphims veil their faces before Him, and say unceasingly, Holy, Holy, Holy (Isa. vi. 2, 3). The

four and twenty elders fall down and worship Him, crying out, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. iv. 10, 11). The Son, however, must have equal honour as the Father, "for by Him were all things created" (Col. i. 16). The Holy Ghost must have equal honour, for "by His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens" (Job xxvi. 13). God is the SAVIOUR God also, who hath saved us, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." See Titus iii. 4, 6. As one of feeble mind (but who had the wisdom of God) once said, when called upon to describe the Trinity:—

"I SEE! I SEE!

WHAT DO I SEE?

THREE IN ONE, AND ONE IN THREE;
AND ALL THE THREE, ARE ALL FOR ME—
ALL FOR ME!"

Reader, here is the God you are called on, not to reason about, but to bow your head to and adore.

But again, What is this God whom the Lord Jesus (as man), Paul, and Peter worshipped and adored, and whom you and I are likewise called to worship and adore?

“God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.” He is a God that cannot have fellowship with evil, so that “if we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (See 1 John i. 5, 6). Is that the God you worship? Then take care you do not walk in darkness yourself, nor worship with those with whom you can have no fellowship.

But again, What is this God whom we are called to worship? “God is love,” and “in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not

that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 8-10). Is this the God you worship? Do you know a God who is in Himself love? who loved you as an ungodly one; who, when you were yet a sinner, gave Christ to die for you; who, when you were still an enemy, reconciled you to Himself by His Son's death? Then joy in such a God fully revealed (Rom. v. 6, 11). Worship Him with full confidence yourself, and in company with those who have the like confidence because they know Him.

But again I ask you, fellow-believer, whom do you worship? The Lord, speaking to the poor woman of Samaria, in John iv., said to her (verse 21), "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship *the Father*." The Father's name was presented to this poor sinner, as the object for the adoring worship of her heart when

renewed by His grace. It drew her on doubtless ; for what is so sweet to an orphan heart as the Father's name ? but still she could not, and did not, understand it then. The hour was coming, however, when she should know it. It was only then known to the Son. Even the disciples, who were the constant companions of Jesus, did not understand the Father's name when revealed to them before the cross (see John xiv. 7, 10), though they had been taught to say it in a *form of prayer* (Matt. vi. 9-13). No, dear reader, Jesus must die and rise again before He can associate any with Himself in this new revealed relationship of children of God ; as He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it *abideth alone* : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). He must die and rise again, I say, before He can appear to Mary Magdalene, and say, "Go to *my brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto *my Father*,

and *your Father*; and to my God, and your God" (John xx. 17). He must also ascend to heaven, and the Holy Ghost come down, before the newly-adopted sons (John xx. 17, 22) could cry, "Abba, Father."

Do you see, dear reader, that the Father's name can only be known and adored by sons? Your natural father's name is only known as such to his own family: so it is only those that are "accepted in the Beloved" who really know the Father's name. His name is only held in honour amongst the sons. Jesus said, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. ii. 12). Are you, beloved reader, worshipping in an assembly in which the Lord Jesus is free to lead His people's praises, and is declaring the Father's name in the midst of the assembled brethren?

“Blest be the God and Father
Of Jesus Christ the Lord,
To whose blest name we gather,
Obedient to Thy word ;
For blest with heavenly blessings
It is in Christ we stand,
And filled to overflowing
We loud Thy praise resound.

“As children now adopted
From Adam’s ruined race,
By Jesus the Anointed
We praise the Father’s grace.
For He it was who wanted
Children to fill His home,
Full graced in God’s Beloved,
Through endless years to come.”



HOW DO YOU WORSHIP?



MANY have no more idea of worship than the poor woman had whom Jesus met at the well of Samaria. (John iv.) And yet it was to this poor sinner that the Lord made known, first of all, the principles of Christian worship. She could boast of the difference between the Samaritan religion and that of the Jews. She could not understand how a Jew could talk or hold fellowship with a woman of Samaria (ver. 9). She could boast of her people's descent from their forefather Jacob (ver. 12), and could talk fast enough as to whether it was right to worship in the mountain of Samaria or at Jerusalem (ver. 20). But alas! with all that religion,

she was living with a man that was not her husband (ver. 17, 18).

Professing Christians, do you know anything more of Christian worship than that poor woman did? If I were to come and ask you, "How do you worship?" would you not answer me, "Well, of course I go to church on Sunday, and I was baptized and confirmed, and I go to the sacrament regularly, and I am not like some people who are always going with Dissenters"? Or, perhaps some one else says, "I glory in being a Wesleyan, and you know Wesley was a good man, and our church is getting on wonderfully in the world. Others may think it right to go with the Baptists; but as for myself, my forefathers followed my church, and I mean to stay where I am." Professing Christian, I mean no offence in thus speaking so plainly; these expressions are by no means uncommon around. I want really by them to arouse your conscience as to whether your religion

is not merely a cloak to cover your sins, just as it was with the Samaritan woman.

But if you tell me, "I am a Christian, this time —— years I was born again; I then rested on the blood of Christ, and I know my sins are forgiven," then, thank God, you can worship God, and oftentimes your heart has individually praised your God and Father. Still, my fellow-believer, I would ask you, How do you worship God in the assembly? Perhaps you answer, "Oh, it does not matter where I worship! wherever I find most Christians I like to go, and wherever there is a godly minister I like to hear him. The Lord said (did He not?) that the hour was coming when it did not matter where one worshipped, and I like to go where I can get most good." Yes, dear fellow-believer, He did say, "*The hour cometh*, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father" (John iv. 21).

This hour was in contrast to what the system of worship was in the day when the Lord Jesus lived. It was then right to worship at Jerusalem; for Jehovah had set His name there, and salvation was of the Jews (ver. 22). But the hour was coming, after the Lord's death, resurrection, and ascension, when a world-wide worship should prevail, and then it would not matter in what place in the world the Christian worshipped.

But though this is quite true, it greatly matters *how* the Christian worships; for the hour was coming when the true worshippers should worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him (John iv. 23). After the rejection of Messiah by the Jews, and His ascension to the right hand of God, the system of worship was entirely changed. The Father is now seeking worshippers out of the wide, wide world. They are formed by being born again, by faith in the Lord

Jesus, and by the reception of the Holy Ghost. God has this gift in store for them. It flows down to them through His dead and risen Son; they receive the Holy Ghost and drink, and immediately He becomes a source of living water within them, springing up into everlasting life (John iv. 10, 14). These are the true worshippers, and they are called to worship in spirit and in truth; for God is a spirit, and they must worship according to His mind. Thus we see, dear fellow-believer, that whereas, under Judaism, *Jehovah* called out a nation to worship Him, and godly and ungodly all worshipped together in an earthly sanctuary after a manner that suited the flesh, *the Father* now is seeking true worshippers out of the world. Thus, first of all, only the saved compose the worshippers: secondly, they that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Having received the Spirit of God, they were to find in Him their suffi-

cient power for worship ; and as He flowed down freely into them as a gift of God, so now He was to be the source of life within them to send back to the throne of God the streams of a pure worship, thanksgiving, and praise, acceptable to God through Christ. The people of God were to find in Him their sufficiency for worship, both individually and corporately. God the Holy Ghost dwelt in the body of each individual believer (1 Cor. vi. 19), as also in the assembly (1 Cor. iii. 16), and that was sufficient, But the worship was also to be in truth ; that is, according to the word of God. Judaism and its worship were regulated by the law, Christian worship must be regulated by the New Testament Scriptures. The former system of worship has passed away, the other has taken its place (Heb. vii. 12, 18, 19 ; viii. 13). Thus in Christianity, God, and Him revealed as Father, is the object of worship (John iv. 23, 24). The Christ the

centre of worship (ver. 25) ; the Holy Ghost the power of worship, and the New Testament Scriptures the rule (ver. 10, 14, 23) ; and real Christians alone the worshippers (ver. 23).

But in 1 Cor. xiv. we have an account of the manner in which the worship meetings of the early Christians were conducted.

First of all we see, in 1 Cor. xi. 17-26, that when the Christians came together in the assembly (as it is called, ver. 19), when they came together in one place, *it was to eat the Lord's Supper* (ver. 20). The apostle, however, would not allow it was the Lord's Supper, owing to the manner in which they were meeting. He corrects them accordingly (ver. 23). The assembly, when met thus, gathered on the basis of the one body of Christ (1 Cor. xii.), of which breaking together the one bread was the expression, as well as of the communion of saints with the death of Christ (1 Cor. x. 16, 17). The Lord's table

thus becomes the central meeting of Christianity. Every first day of the week the saints met to break bread (Acts xx. 7), as expressing their communion together and membership of one body. The Lord's table being thus the expression of the one body of Christ gathered together, it was the place where the action of that body was seen. And as the Holy Ghost had formed the church and filled it, so He manifested His action in the members when the assembly was gathered together. This is what we see in 1 Cor. xii. The character of that Spirit was love, and this was what was to bind the Christians together (1 Cor. xiii.) Now these Corinthians were taking advantage of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, who had endued many with the miraculous gift of tongues, by childishly displaying these gifts of unknown tongues in the assembly when gathered together (1 Cor. xiv. 23). The apostle shows the great advantage of the gift of prophecy

over the gift of tongues (ver. 1-13). The one was for edification, the other could not be understood. He mentions four things that might be manifested in such a worship meeting—(ver. 14) prayer, (ver. 15) singing, (ver. 16) blessing or worship, (ver. 19) speaking. But the great point was that their prayers, and singing, and worship, and speaking should be with the *spirit*, and with the *understanding* also. But where was the use of Paul's thus addressing them, if their usual way of meeting was by having one man to do the whole service? Ver. 23 plainly shows the perfect liberty that reigned, which was turned into license. Everybody was speaking with tongues, so that an unbeliever coming in would think they were all mad. After exhorting them not all to speak at once, for the spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets (ver. 26 and 32), how does he correct them? Does he appoint one man to do the whole ser-

vice? No; but he says, "*God* is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (ver. 33). That was the corrective power for them to remember that God the Holy Ghost was in the midst of the assembly (1 Cor. iii. 16; xii. 4-13). Now here we find the way how to worship God in the assembly; viz., to *own the presence of God as there*. This was truly united worship in spirit (John iv. 23, 24).

Dear brother in the Lord, are you in an assembly which worships God after this manner? This is the manner for an assembly to worship God in spirit and in truth.

But let us go over again what has been written :

1st. We have seen that every believer composing the assembly should be a true worshipper.

2nd. The *Father's name* is known and adored by these worshippers; and the Christ, the Anointed One, owned as the true centre.

3rd. The presence of the Holy

Ghost in the body of each believer is his power of worship.

4th. The presence of the Holy Ghost is as sufficient for the assembly as for the individual believer. He is acknowledged, rules and guides, in an assembly rightly gathered. For further rules as to Christian worship, see Heb. ix. ; x. 1-30.

“ O Lord, we know it matters not
How sweet the song may be ;
No heart but of the Spirit taught
Makes melody to Thee.

“ Then teach thy gathered saints, O Lord,
To worship in Thy fear ;
And let Thy grace mould every word
That meets Thy holy ear.

“ Thy precious Name is all we show,
Our only passport, Lord ;
And full assurance now we know,
Confiding in Thy Word.”

WITH WHOM DO YOU WORSHIP ?

I GENERALLY go with the Presbyterians; I like their doctrine, and there are many nice Christians amongst them.

B. But, dear brother, where do you find such a name in Scripture? Where do you find a people called Presbyterians?

A. But it is only a name; people must have a name, you know, in religion; they must belong to some church or other.

B. Pardon me, my dear friend, taking a name is not such a light matter. Satan has used these names to divide Christians one from another who are members of the one body of which Christ is the Head. It is

distinctly forbidden in 1 Cor. iii. 4, when the Christians were saying: "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ." They are said to be carnal, and to walk as men.

A. But don't people call you by some name or other? One must belong to some church in this world.

B. There is *but* one body and one Spirit, and the name of Christ is written upon that body (Eph. iv. 4; 1 Cor. xii. 12). Those who meet on the basis of that one body cannot help being called names; but if they think the name of Christ is written upon them, they cannot help rejecting such names as Plymouth Brethren, &c., lest they should dishonour *the name of Christ*. Surely that name is sufficient to hold together Christians; for the Lord Jesus said Himself, "Where two or three are gathered together unto *my name*, there am I in the midst of them." You are not ashamed of that name when you think of it in regard

to your salvation. Why should not the name of Christ, the Anointed, be as sufficient for the assembly as that of the Lord Jesus is for your individual salvation?

A. Well, it does seem a beautiful theory, but it seems to me in practice to be impossible. What could we do if we had no one to preach to us?

B. Why come together to break bread every first day of the week, as the early Christians, whether a Paul was there or not (Acts xx. 7); and if no one uttered a word, except in silence, it would honour the Lord Jesus, who has given authority thus to come together; "For where two or three are gathered together *unto my name*, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). Remember, what God wants is the adoring *worship* of your heart, which is almost unknown in a corporate sense in Christendom. Worship is His due, and if you give Him His due, He will surely respond to your need by send-

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ing the needed ministry at the right time.

A. But with whom then am I to worship? I don't see clearly yet.

B. Because you don't see that Christ and the assembly, His body, are one. That is why I have dwelt more on His person and His name, that you might see that He is the life and sufficiency of the assembly, His body, and that you might see that I am not speaking of a sect, or of anything outside Christ. But this, of course, limits me to worshipping only with those who are the members of His body; and only those are members of that body who have been baptized by the Holy Ghost into it (See 1 Cor. xii. 12). They are members, not of Presbyterians or Methodists, or of any other sect, but of the body of Christ.

A. But where do we see that body now? I own to being a member of the body of Christ, but that is invisible.

B. Its invisibility proves that the

Church is in ruins; for, on the day of Pentecost, we read that all who repented, and were baptized, received the gift of the Holy Ghost, to the number of three thousand souls; and they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, "*and all that believed were together*" (Acts ii. 38, 42, 44). This was a visible assembly, was it not? and expressed by breaking the one bread (1 Cor. x. 16, 17). So the apostle, addressing the assembly of God at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 2), says, "Now ye are the body of Christ" (1 Cor. xii. 27). They were all together. A letter now addressed to the assembly of God at N——, would go into the dead-letter office.

A. But then if I owned the body of Christ as an existing thing, and that it was a visible assembly, it would separate me from all I love, and from many dear Christians; for if that membership is the only mem-

bership, then all sectarian membership must be wrong.

B. It would separate you, dear brother, but you would have Christ with you, even if you were alone, and you would be in a position whence you could truly love all the children of God, because you own that membership and the Holy Ghost as the only bond between Christians.

A. But did you say the other day, that all Christians were priests, and that we ought to worship owning the truth? How does that bear on the subject?

B. Yes, dear brother, all Christians are priests, and it is *as priests* we draw near to worship God. The priests were separated in the Jewish economy for the service of the sanctuary, and their office was to offer the sacrifices on the altar, and to offer incense, a beautiful type of worship (See Ex. xxviii., xxix.; 2 Chron. xiii. 10, 11). In this dispensation all Christians are washed in Christ's

blood, and made kings and priests to God (Rev. i. 5, 6 ; 1 Peter ii. 5), and a true worship-meeting should be composed of such worshippers, and their true attraction should be Christ the Great High Priest, who is set down on the right hand of the Majesty in heaven (Heb. viii. 1). The one man system of Christendom has destroyed this idea of worship-meeting. It is a going back more or less to Judaism, where the people were kept afar off, and only could approach God (who was hid behind a veil) by the priests.

A. Oh, but that is not true of Protestants; that is only true of Romanists !

B. Then why, dear brother, supposing the minister should not come, is there no service? Surely any sensible man would say that that congregation could not worship God without a minister. Is this not after all a modified form of the Roman system? Why should not the Chris-

tians be satisfied with Christ? And besides, the majority of worshippers in the churches are composed of unconverted people who have not a purged conscience. They do not know whether their sins are forgiven.

A. What is a purged conscience?

B. Why, dear brother, that is one of the chief contrasts brought forward in Heb. ix., x., between the worshippers of Judaism and those of Christianity. The sacrifices of Judaism could never make the comers thereunto perfect (Heb. ix. 9, 10; x. 1). So being imperfect themselves, they needed constant repetition and constant applications to the worshipper. But now the blood of Christ perfectly purges the conscience from dead works to worship the living God. Christ having offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God, and that sacrifice applied to the conscience perfects it for ever (Heb. ix. 13, 14; x. 12—14). The Holy Ghost then testifies, “Your

sins and iniquities will I remember no more." This gives the character of the worshippers of Christianity, who are to draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith. Such are not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, but to exhort one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching (Heb. x. 22-25).

A. But I always applied that text to those who talked to me about leaving my church. I see now it has a totally different meaning. Oh, how blind we all are!

B. The Lord give to you, dear brother, to enjoy communion *with blood-sprinkled* worshippers, and to be content with the Great High Priest as your Centre, the Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man (Heb. viii. 1, 2).

WHAT IS YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP ?

ISRAEL'S place of worship was the tabernacle in the wilderness, and the temple in Jerusalem.

The Christian's place of worship is heaven, into which Christ has passed, and of which the holy places of the tabernacle were faint pictures (see Heb. ix. 23, 24). But the shadows and figures are beautiful ; they are often God's picture-books for His young children, to instruct them in His truth.

Let us look, then, for one moment at Israel's history. It was not till they were redeemed out of Egypt, and brought to God at mount Sinai, that the tabernacle—their place of

worship—was set up. Has this no lesson for us, dear young Christian? Does not this at once shut out from the worship of God all, except those who are brought to God?

But there were three great steps in Israel's history before their place of worship was set up. What were they? First, they were set right with God (Exod. xii.), and saved from the judgment of the Egyptian first-born, by the blood of the passover lamb.

Secondly, they were delivered from Pharaoh, king of Egypt, by the passage of the Red Sea, and sung the song of redemption and salvation outside Egypt (Exod. xiv., xv.)

Thirdly, they were brought to God at mount Sinai (Exod. xix. 4).

Are not these wondrous types of God's dealing with your soul?

1st. As a needy, ungodly sinner, you found the value of the blood of the Lamb slain, and were justified by His blood (Rom. iv. 5; v. 6-9).

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2nd. You found that your greatest enemy was an evil principle of sin within you, and which pursued you, as it were, after you were justified, till you found deliverance from sin, the world, and Satan, by the death and resurrection of Christ. Now, as having died with Christ, and Christ living in you, you sing the song of salvation outside the world (Rom. v. 12—viii.)

3rd. You have found that Christ died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring you to God (1 Peter iii. 18). You stand now in God's presence without fear, because in a new creation (2 Cor. v. 17), in the light as God is in the light (1 John i. 7). You are not come, however, to a mount burning with fire, &c., as mount Sinai was; but to a God of grace, of which mount Sion is a picture (See Heb. xii. 18–24). Neither are you come to Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, holding the tables of the law in his hand, requiring from you what

you ought to do, under the penalty of death, but you are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, who is the exhibition of God's grace, who has fulfilled in Himself all demands of the law, died to it in His death,* and has taken His seat in the glory, the Mediator of a new covenant entirely of grace, the High Priest of the Sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord hath pitched, and not man.

Now, dear young Christian, God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but in heaven itself, as Stephen told the Jews. There is your place of worship. There the Great High Priest, the centre of Christian worship, ministers. There is your sanctuary and the true tabernacle, which the

* The law which is written in the heart of Christ, is written on the hearts of His people, according to the new covenant. After the tabernacle was set up it was hid away in the ark a type of Christ in glory.

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Lord pitched, and not man (Heb. viii. 1, 2).

This place of worship (Heb. ix. 11, 24) is put in direct contrast to the Jewish tabernacle (Heb. ix. 1, 2), of which it is said, "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made," divided into two parts; the outer tabernacle was called the holy place, and the inner chamber the holiest of all. Inside this inner chamber Jehovah's presence was manifested, and a veil shut Him in. No one could approach but Aaron, the high priest, and that only once a year, with blood and a cloud of incense. Outside the tabernacle was the brazen altar, on which the daily sacrifices were offered up, in view of all the people. But these applied to the conscience could not satisfy or cleanse it. Under the law, dear young Christian, there was no approach to God, no perfect conscience (Heb. ix. 6-9).

Still, what a beautiful figure of the way in which the Christian approaches God. The first step is to the altar, but that altar signifies Christ's death, which is the step out of Judaism and all worldly religion suited to the flesh (the camp was a type of this) ; for He was put to death outside the gate of Jerusalem. But then we enter by Christ into the true tabernacle (Heb. xiii. 10-15). The veil is rent by His death, we enter in by Christ Himself, and our place is in the holiest by virtue of that same blood (Heb. ix. 24 ; x. 19), with a perfect conscience cleansed from all sin. Dear young Christian, what beauties do you now see in Christ ! Outside, the tabernacle looked plain with its badger's skin covering, but inside all was gold (See Ex. xxv., xxvi). To the sinner outside there is no beauty in Christ. He is despised and rejected of men ; but to the worshipper inside, oh, what glories do we see in His person, the Son of God,

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the Creator of the worlds, yet the perfect man who has opened up for us this place in the very presence of God!

It is related of the queen of Sheba (2 Chron. ix. 1-9), that when she had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house he had built, and the meat at his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers and their apparel; his cup-bearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent, by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit left within her. In the light of the glory of Solomon, all that she was became nothing; and immediately her tongue was loosed to praise Solomon, and to praise the God of Solomon.

Dear young Christian, the way to have the spirit of worship is to be so in communion with the Lord's death, as the fruit of coming into the presence of God, that, nature being in the place of judgment, the life of Jesus may

flow out in worship, adoration, and praise. If consciously dwelling and walking in the light of God's presence, this will be so. And this is your place of worship.

In Heb. x. the altar and the tabernacle are again reproduced: Christ's death setting aside the old altar and sacrifices of Judaism, and the heavenly sanctuary setting aside the earthly one. Our title to go in the presence of God is the blood of Jesus; our way in the Lord Jesus Himself through the rent veil; that is to say, His flesh; our Centre of worship, when inside, the Lord Jesus Himself, the High Priest over the house of God (ver. 19-21).

The blood, applied to us, causes the heart to be sprinkled from an evil conscience as regards *our sins*; Christ's flesh (or the veil rent), applied to us, causes our bodies to be washed with pure water (ver. 22). We have died to *sin*, and we approach God in a new nature by the power of the

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Spirit ; and knowing we have a Great High Priest who is soon coming out to bless us, we hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering (Heb. x. 19-25). There, as brought outside the religious world or camp by the death of Christ, yet brought into the holiest of all, by Him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually ; that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name (Heb. xiii. 10-15).

Let us there anticipate the worship of heaven as pictured to us in Rev. iv., v., and there in company with the four living creatures and four and twenty elders, with the angels, and every living creature in heaven and earth, fall down and worship Him that sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb, and say, "Thou art worthy." Let us own Christ as the alone Centre of worship, and sing together the new song, the peculiar portion of the redeemed, saying, "Thou art worthy : for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed

us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign over the earth."

"The veil is rent—our souls draw near
Unto a throne of grace ;
The merits of the Lord appear,
'They fill the holy place.

"His precious blood has spoken there,
Before and on the throne ;
And His own wounds in heaven declare
The atoning work is done.

"Within the holiest of all,
Cleansed by His precious blood,
Before the throne we prostrate fall,
And worship Thee, O God !"



WHO IS YOUR CENTRE OF WORSHIP?

CHRIST, of course, you will reply. But I want you seriously to think before God whether you are intelligent in the knowledge of this. Many of the Christians even in Paul's day were not intelligent in the knowledge of Christ being Head of His body the Church, and of the power which put Him in this position, which is toward us who believe (See Eph. i. 19-23), that we might walk together as members of that body. He had great conflict for the Colossian and Laodicean saints, that they might come to the full knowledge of this mystery (see Col. ii. 1, 2). And this was when the Church was outwardly one, and all walked together. Still what the apostle desired was intelligence in the matter, and the want of this was the real secret of the departure

of the Church from God, and its original stand-point.

How much more need is there now to be intelligent in this wondrous truth, in order that we may walk together, living as we do in the midst of a fallen Church, that has forgotten her anointed Head and Lord, and yielded herself to worldliness and sectarianism. A return to the confession of the headship of Christ is the alone remedy; and as this is impossible with the mass, it is for each individual to consider whether his position in the professing Church gives a true witness to Christ as Head of His one body the Church, who can neither be joined to the world nor be head of a sect.

Perhaps some dear brother or sister answers to these remarks with indignation, "But I do confess Christ to be my Saviour and Lord; I know I am saved, and what do you want more?" This thought, dear brother, just shows me that you do not under-

stand the headship of Christ. You confound it with the thought of Jesus being your Saviour, and your own individual salvation; but the headship of Christ is more. The disciples were perfectly safe in that room where we find them gathered in John xx., when Jesus came into their midst, proclaimed peace to them, and breathed His own Spirit of life into them. But they were not yet united to Him as members of His body. Christ had died and risen for them, true. All their sins had been put away, the sin of their nature condemned by His death on the cross, and they were justified, and had life in Him the risen Head of the new creation. But two other events had to take place before their full corporate position could be established. The first was, Christ had to be glorified; and second, the Holy Ghost had to come down from heaven, to baptize all who had already believed into one body. These two great events we read of in Acts i.

9; ii. 1-4. The gospels tell us the glad tidings of the eternal Son born in the world, living, dying, and rising again for our salvation. The Acts tell us the additional fact of the formation of the assembly of God, by the ascension of Christ as man to the right hand of God, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. This gives us our full corporate position, and those who are intelligent in the truth are bound to confess together the headship of Christ. He is the alone centre of worship, the minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord hath pitched, and not man (Heb. viii. 1, 2).

Now let us remember, dear reader, that our subject is worship, and Christ as the true centre of worship. I own ministry after God's order, but the evil thing is to mix up the two subjects together, which Christendom has done.

So in all the places of the New Testament where we have our rules for worship, such as Eph. ii. 18; Heb.

ix., x; and 1 Peter ii. 4, 5, there is no idea of ministry entering into them. In the former passage we worship on the basis that Christ has been exalted as Man to God's right hand, and made Head of His body, the Church (Eph. i. 20-23). We who were dead in trespasses and sins have been quickened together with Him, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him (chap. ii. 1-7). Saved by grace, there is no difference now between Jew and Gentile. The middle wall of partition, consisting of the law and its ordinances, has been broken down by the cross. Jew and Gentile believers see the end of their enmity there, and in resurrection are formed into one new man, peace being made in Christ. He is in heaven the Head, and through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (ver. 18). What a blessed centre of worship to have! If the saints only knew their calling, how could they wish for any other basis of

worship or centre but Christ? He fills the body. He is the life of the assembly. The members are linked to Him and to one another by the Holy Ghost, who draws every member to Him by a common attraction and power.

In Heb. ix., x., we are shown, in direct contrast to Judaism, that we need no one to come between us and God in His worship but Christ. Under Judaism the people were not allowed to approach God. The priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God for them (chap. ix. 6). But even they could not enter the the holiest. A veil shut God out from them. The high priest could only enter once a year (ver. 7). Thus it was a system keeping God and the people apart from one another. It was a worshipping afar off. (Ex. xxiv.) What did it all mean? Why, that the way into the presence of God was not made manifest under that economy (Heb. ix. 8). The sacrifices too that

were offered up could not give a perfect conscience (ver. 9). There was no approach to God, no perfect conscience. An imperfect high priest was their centre of worship too, who had to offer for himself as well as for the people. But now, blessed be God, the sacrifice of Christ has put away sins once for all; the blood applied to the conscience perfects us for ever (Heb. x. 12-14). Christ by His death and resurrection and ascension is the open way into our place of worship. The veil is rent by His death. We enter in with boldness by His blood, and find in Him our great High Priest, our perfect, worthy, and all-sufficient centre of worship, through whom we approach God without fear (Heb. x. 19-21).

He is the living Stone, and Foundation Stone of the building to which we come. Rejected of the Jewish builders, He is laid in death and resurrection a sure foundation. He ascends to heaven, the topmost Stone

of the building, thus uniting heaven and earth together. We come to Him, the rejected Christ of the world, but chosen of God and precious, and are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Where is there an idea of ministry in these passages? In the one case, it is the figure of a body united to a Head. Such is the Church; Christ, as Head of His body, is its all-sufficient centre of worship. 2nd. It is the figure of a great High Priest in the midst of a family of priests all on a level. All approach God on a common basis. 3rd. It is the figure of a building, Christ, the Foundation and Corner Stone, uniting all the living stones together, as well as heaven and earth. With no veil between them and God, the true Aaron and his sons (Christ and believers) worship inside, offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Oh, my dear fellow-believer, I pray you consider Him under these varied aspects! Consider what He is as the risen and ascended Man, placed in heaven by God, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;" how that God "hath put all things under His feet, and given Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body" (Eph. i. 18-20). Consider Him as the Man of God's purpose, set up from everlasting or ever the world was (Prov. viii. 23); born in due time into the world, accomplishing redemption, and in whom God hath purposed in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him (Eph. i. 9, 10). In that millennial glory all in heaven shall be centred around Him, and shall cry, "Worthy is the

Lamb." (Rev. v.) All things on earth likewise; for He shall be King over all the earth, with Israel in the centre (see Zech. xiv. 9-17). Oh, fellow-believer! have you entered into the thought of God's purposes that are revealed about Christ? If it is God's purpose thus to have Christ as the Centre of all things in heaven and earth in the ages to come, know that *now*—that is, between His rejection and coming again to take the kingdom—He is carrying out those purposes by setting Him up in heaven as Head, and gathering out of the world His Church, which is to be His Bride, in His heavenly glory; and that now every believer's place is to be a member of that body, to be attracted to Him as the Head as to a common centre, and to find in that Head the source from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. (Col. ii. 19).

Consider Him, likewise, as the Son of the living God, the One over whom the gates of Hades have not prevailed, the foundation-stone and chief corner-stone of God's spiritual house, as He said, "Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18). Who is this wonderful Person? "The brightness of God's glory, the express image of His person," whom the angels worshipped when He was born in this world, of whom one said, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail" (Heb. i. 3, 6, 10-12). Yes, before the foundation of the world, set up from everlasting, He was there, and when the heavens

and earth are all rolled up as a scroll, He shall be there. Well might the apostle find a refuge in such a person, as the foundation of the Church, when it had all outwardly gone to ruin, and say, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure" (2 Tim. ii. 19-21). Lastly, consider Him as the great High Priest of our profession. Read Exodus xxviii., and see in the High Priest, clothed in his garments of glory and beauty, a faint shadow of the person who is set on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens (Heb. viii. 1). See Him clothed in the garments of righteousness and salvation. See Him holding His people on His strong shoulders, and bearing them on His loving heart; and see there your Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man (ver. 2).

Dear fellow-believer, is this Christ your sufficient basis and centre of worship?

THE
BALANCE OF THE SANCTUARY,
AS TO WORSHIP.

NUMBERS vii. The tabernacle had been set up, the people numbered, each having brought his atonement money, each having told his pedigree, and each tribe having been gathered round their standards. The sacrifices, too, had been all ordered, as the ground of approach to God; the priests consecrated; Jehovah had taken His place in the midst of the people, in the cloud above the tabernacle; when the twelve princes, the representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel, brought their offerings to Jehovah.

Is not this, my reader, a beautiful type of the order of Christian wor-

ship? *We* have an altar; we have a sanctuary; *we* have a priest as our way of approach to God, and to present our offerings of praise to God. But instead of a visible altar, a visible sanctuary, a visible priest, and a visible Presence, all ready to the eye, and all earthly; our altar is Christ offered up on Calvary's cross, a perfect, accomplished, finished work! Our sanctuary is heaven, into which Christ has passed! Our High Priest sits at the right hand of God! There God's presence is manifested! There we have perfect access to God, to present our sacrifices of praise on the ground of His finished sacrifice, and through Him who has entered into heaven (see Heb. x.).

The twelve princes were the leaders of the twelve tribes, consequently the representatives of the unity of Israel as God's nation. With us there is but one Leader and Head, *i.e.*, the Christ in glory! and the Holy Ghost came down from Him on the day of

Pentecost, and baptized all believers into one body, and builded them together to be God's habitation. This is the present ground of gathering. When the assembly of God approaches God for worship, as gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus, and breaks the one loaf on the Lord's Table as the symbol of unity; the unity of the body is expressed (see 1 Cor. x. 17, compared with xii. 12-27). When the Lord's Table is ordered rightly, there is one loaf on the table, undivided, uncut. This is the symbol of unity. When broken it represents the Lord's body in death. Consequently, at the Lord's Table two great truths are expressed, viz., first, the unity of the Church; second, the Lord's death, as shown in 1 Cor. x., xi. As the table in any man's home expresses the family gathering, so the Lord's table is set up in the house of God, as the place where the Church gathers to express its unity, and to remember the

Lord's death, having communion there with it.

Whilst, therefore, as to our worship we approach God in the heavenly sanctuary, where the High Priest actually is; in our bodies we gather to the name of the Lord Jesus on earth, where the Lord's table is spread, and there He is (in spirit) in our midst.

When gathered to the Lord at His table, everything is calculated to lead out our hearts to worship; and though the primary object is to break bread in remembrance of Christ, still the symbols on the table are in every way calculated to produce worship. The one loaf, to begin with, reminds us of God's eternal counsels of grace towards us in His Son; broken, we are reminded of His death. I believe the type in Numbers vii. gives the true balance of the sanctuary, as to worship.

The first thing presented by the princes was a silver charger full of

fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering, and a silver bowl full of the same. Silver represents the blessed Lord working out redemption. It typifies the vessel of redemption ; with a spotless life conceived by the Holy Ghost, presented to God.

Dear reader, think of this. The most precious part of the offering presented to God typifies Christ conceived by the Holy Ghost, and with a spotless life tested in every way, offering Himself as the vessel of redemption to do the will of God. God's creation was ruined by Satan and man ; the most precious thing to God was Christ presenting Himself as the vessel to do the will of God, to buy it all back to God by His own blood ; the Church being the special object of His counsels ! (Heb. ii. 9, 10 ; x. 5-7.) In His death the ransom has been paid ; the work has been finished ; God has been glorified in His character in every way, and the consequence is that this man

has been put in the highest glory at God's right hand.

The next thing was the golden spoon full of sweet incense. Gold symbolises the divine nature of the Lord. He was the Son of the Father from all eternity, the creator of the worlds (1 John i. 2 ; Col. i. 16). No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John i. 1-18). The incense was a confection ordered by God, that no other man was to have. The Son, in all the sweetness of affection and love that appertains to the Father's bosom is expressed by it.

Thirdly: one young bullock, one ram, and lamb were presented for a burnt-offering. It is Christ offering Himself up in death without spot to God; He offered Himself of His own voluntary will, in all the willing

strength of the ox, and the submission and gentleness of the lamb to do God's will. The burnt-offering was wholly for God, it was all burnt. It is the acceptableness and obedience of Christ unto death that is in question ; at the same time it was propitiation (comp. Lev. i.) I would have my reader consider this. In all the feasts and offerings of the Lord that I know of, except the day of atonement, and special offerings for sin, the burnt-offering took the first place (compare Numbers xxvii., xxix). In worship God delights to have presented to Him this side of the offering of Christ.

Fourthly: the sin-offering was next offered ; and a goat the expression of it. It was for sin in the abstract, and for the acts of sin (comp. Lev. xvi., iv. ; Rom. iii. 25, iv. 25, viii. 3). A goat in scripture has a thought connected with it in regard to evil and its judgment, which a bullock and a lamb have not (Ezek. xxxiv. 17 ;

Matt. xxv. 32). It typifies the blessed Son of God meeting the righteous claims of God by His blood against sin ! On the cross, during the three hours of darkness, God was dealing with sin ! Oh how that bitter cry, dear reader, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ” tells it out ! There sin in the flesh was condemned in the person of our adorable Substitute ; there “ He bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” In adoring gratitude in our worship meetings we hold fellowship with our God and Father, in these His thoughts about sin and its judgment, and bless Him that His Son is now out of it all in heaven, and that we by grace are made partakers of His salvation.

Fifthly : the peace-offering was the last sacrifice offered. The word in the Hebrew answers to that aspect of the atonement, by the consequence of which we who were enemies are reconciled to God, and brought nigh to Him in perfect peace ; the result is

communion. Christ having fully glorified God on the cross by doing perfectly His holy will, and having fully met the question of our sin, and sins, cried, "It is finished." He offered up His soul in peace to His Father, as He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46). Perfect communion was thus restored in His soul before He died; the forsaking was over; and the result in peace was presented to God as the ground of our peace and communion.

In the peace-offering (Lev. iii.), the fat and the blood were God's part (see ver. 16, 17). The former was said to be God's food, and the blood typifies the ground of our peace and communion. In Lev. vii. 2—end, the peace-offering had the double aspect of a thanksgiving, or voluntary offering. The breast of the offering was for Aaron and his sons; the right shoulder for the priest who offered the fat and blood; the remainder remained to the

person who brought the offering. Thus Jehovah had His part in the offering, the fat and the blood ; Aaron and his sons had theirs, viz., the breast ; and the priest who offered had his ; and the person who brought the offering his. What a beautiful picture, beloved reader, of what the saints gathered in communion at the Lord's table enjoy ! God enjoys there the best part of His Christ, typified by the fat ; Christ and His saints have their portion, the blessed mutual affections of His own heart and love as typified in the breast ; the Christian who offers, all the strength of Him that is typified by the right shoulder ; and the rest all feed together on the death of Christ. " This do in remembrance of me ! " He says. " Is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? " (1 Cor. x., xi.) Beloved reader, are you gathered on God's ground, viz., the unity of the body, to Christ Himself as the Centre ; and at His table, as the result of His accom-

plished work, are you enjoying all the blessed fruits of His sacrifice, feeding on the Lamb slain, and presenting your worship to the Father through Christ by the power of the Spirit, according to the true balance of the sanctuary?



UNION, DIVISION, UNITY.

ROM. xvi.; EPHES. i. ii.

WE ARE here introduced into the family circle, and shown God's delight in His people. The earthly kings of Israel and Judah had Chronicles written for them. God writes chronicles of His heavenly saints. Every one of their characters and deeds are written down in heaven. Not a word is said against them. God is the same God as He was of old. When His earthly people had well-nigh finished their journeyings in the wilderness, and had wandered about for forty years, the Lord could say of them, even at the moment of awful failure: "The Lord hath not seen iniquity in Jacob nor perverseness in Israel." Forty years' murmurings and failures had not changed His heart towards them. If they commit iniquity He will indeed chasten them

with the rod of men, but His mercy will He never take away. So is it here. Faithfulness is chronicled down, but all failure left out. Will the father of a family tell the failures of his child to the world? No; and why? Because he is his child. He will tell of the good, but not of the evil. So does the Father as to His children born from above. He delights to hold forth to the world and the enemies their virtues.

There is a mother (ver. 13), there are brethren (ver. 14), and sisters (ver. 1), and cousins (ver. 7, 11) brought forward here. All of one stock with the last Adam, who is not ashamed to call them brethren. They are bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh, partaking of the same life of the One raised out of the dead. It is not the Church as the body of Christ here. It is the family of God (compare John xvii., Heb. ii. 10-14). Not unity but union. There are different members in a family. Each preserves his in-

dividuality, still it is one family. In the body there is no individuality; there are members, but members working in the one great unity. The assembly, the body, is a unity, not a union. The sisters are especially mentioned here. They may be servants of the Church, like Phebe, succourers of many; helpers in Christ Jesus, like Priscilla, willing to lay down their necks for a Paul, for whom the whole assembly give thanks; they may bestow much labour on the servants, like Mary; may labour in the Lord, like Tryphena and Tryphosa; yea, labour much in the Lord, like the beloved Persis. Nothing is too little to be put down. Epenetus is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ. Amplias is beloved in the Lord. Apelles is approved in Christ. What a bond! The little words "in the Lord, in Christ" are mentioned ten times in the first sixteen verses. They mark the full position of the saints as set forth in this blessed epistle.

That no one may come short of the full blessing who reads this little tract, I would just say that there are two parts of our salvation brought out in the epistle. First, in chapters i.-iv., man is looked at as a guilty sinner, and God as a Justifier. Christ's death and resurrection for the sinner are pressed as the righteous ground on which God forgives and justifies. In the beginning of chapter v. he is seen justified and reconciled to God through Christ's death and resurrection for him. But from chap. v. 12 to chap. viii., man is looked at as born in sin, under its power, consequently lost, and God as a Deliverer, through the gift of Christ. By His death the believer is delivered out of his Adam state, has died for faith out of that condition, and by Christ's resurrection, and ascension, and descent of the Holy Ghost, has been identified with Him in a new life, so that he is in Christ, and Christ in him by the Holy Ghost. My reader, I pray you

mark these words, *in Christ!* It gives the position of every child of God in this dispensation. Every child in the family of God has this common position, and Christ as his life.

In Christ! It means the entire setting aside of the first man, the setting up of the second, and the Holy Ghost come down identifying us with that second Man, who died and rose for us. It is the secret of all union and blessing amongst the saints. Christ is in them all; they are in Christ. They are united in a common life to Him, and to one another. The Spirit of life of the second Adam has been breathed into them (John xx. 22). They are one family. The world has no part in this holy circle. They are outside it all. They are in Christ.

But if they are in Christ, and thus separated, men causing divisions and contentions may still come in. They may belong to the saints themselves, and even arise from the elders (See Acts xx. 28-30). They are to be

avoided. Every saint, even the weakest, is responsible. No gift or office is to hinder the saints in this. The greatest test for the saints is *the doctrine they have learned*, especially as set forth in this epistle. They were to test these dividers by it. Another great sign to find them out is, they serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly. They may have great weight in the professing church, be taken into the service of a king, and paid for it ; but it is, like Balaam, to curse the Lord's people, and, if that is of no avail, to teach the Lord's people to bow down to some system of religion, which becomes an idol, or to commit spiritual fornication, mixing up the world and the Lord's children together. (Num. xxv.) Of such God's people are to beware (see Rev. ii. 14). Alas for the Church when it is full of such people ! In the midst of divisions the saints are thrown on the God of peace. He will bruise Satan, the author of divisions, under their feet

shortly. Different salutations ensue, which close the epistle.

A little appendix is added, in which the mystery of Christ is alluded to.

EPH. iii. 3-11; v. 32. COL. i. 26, 27; ii. 2.

The general subject of the epistle has been to individuals. Their corporate relationships have hardly been touched. These, however, are founded on the truths brought out in this epistle. The doctrine of the assembly is fully brought out in the epistle to the Ephesians. The mystery had been hid up to this time, but was now made manifest in the prophetic Scriptures. Up to Christ, God had been dealing with a nation, good and evil all mixed up together, and shut out from the Gentiles by their legal system. Now the gospel went out to Jew and Gentile alike, and those who received it were saved out of the world, composed of Jews and Gentiles, and united to Christ in heaven by the Holy Ghost, in which unity they formed one body, to be manifested in the world as such

(see 1 Cor. xii. 27 ; Eph. ii. 14-16). Besides having a common life and nature with Christ (see John xx. 22), they were baptised by the Holy Ghost into one body (Acts ii. ; 1 Cor. xii. 13) so that they were more than simply individuals and members of one family. They were one with Christ by the Holy Ghost, and responsible to express it by breaking the one loaf at the Lord's Supper, since they were all members of the body of Christ, the true loaf (1 Cor. x. 17). This was their privilege, and the common privilege of the members of the body of Christ. As united to Christ in heaven, and as owning the presence and power of the Holy Ghost in their midst, who guides the house of God according to the Scriptures, they were privileged to meet.

These two divine Persons, however, give the true character to this unity—the body. Christ as head is the *holy and true One* (Rev. iii. 7). The Spirit who fills the body is the *Holy*

Spirit (John xiv. 26), and Spirit of *truth* (John xiv. 17). The Father too is the *Holy* Father, sanctifying His children through His *truth* (John xvii. 11, 17). Beloved brother and sister in Christ, are you walking worthy of the Lord as one of the Father's family, seeking union, and avoiding division? Are you on the watch against those who divide the flock, avoiding them as you would Satan? And, thirdly, are you endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? Some are seeking to make a unity. The unity is already made. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the source of it (Eph. i. 3). Christ is the head and centre of it (ver. 22). The Holy Ghost is the one who gathers the saints on earth, and the power of it (ii. 22). The saved are the members of it. It was made on the day of Pentecost. Flowing from this seeking to make a unity forms of worship are made; dear saints not recognising that the Holy Ghost

who formed the unity is there also as the power of worship (John iv. 23, 24). A ministry is likewise ordained—men not recognising that the Holy Ghost, already there, is the power of ministry (1 Cor. xii. 4–11). Discipline is likewise formed—saints not recognising that the Holy Ghost is already there as the power of discipline (Acts v. 3–11). Rules are made—saints not recognising that the Holy Ghost, through the Word, has already all the rules written down that are necessary (see especially 1 Cor. xi.–xiv., &c.) Ever since Pentecost Christ has been up in heaven as head of the body, and the Holy Ghost down here as the Spirit of unity in the body. Beloved, though the saints are scattered and divided, yet your responsibility remains to own these first principles, and to take the Scriptures alone of the New Testament as the Spirit's rules for the house of God. He is the orderer of the house, not man.