

The Importance of Worship **In the lives and service of believers in Christ Jesus**

Articles

	Page
Editorial: Worshipers and Witnesses	1
Worship Then and Now	3
Addressing God in Prayer and Worship	4
Christian Worship	5
Family Worship	7
Time and Manner of the Lord's Supper	8
Men of God: Joshua	9

Editorial:

Worshipers and Witnesses

Joel Portman

We are trying to focus this month's publication around the importance of worship in our lives. It seems to be true that one can continue to be intensely and actively occupied with Christian service without realizing that worship must be the spring of all ministry for Christ. Service can serve in many Christians as a substitute for worship, and those who are thus occupied can feel that they are completing all that the Lord wants from their lives by frenetic activities. Many 'christian' organizations exist to serve the poor, disseminate the gospel, and actively engage in other forms of involvement even with the absence of true Christian worship. Paul served his Lord to the point of death because to him, Christ was his life ("For me to live is Christ and to die is gain" Phil. 1:21). Because of a heart that was burning in love for Christ, he was constrained in his service for Him (2 Cor. 5:14). If love and devotion to Christ as the only one who is supreme and who deserves "our utmost for His highest" (E. M. Bounds), service can become only clanging brass or tinkling cymbals (1 Cor. 13:1).

May our hearts be stirred by fervent love and adoration for the One who is infinitely greater than our highest thoughts and more worthy of our utmost service, not because of what He has given to us but because of WHO He is and WHAT He deserves from our lives.

At times we have heard the expression that we are saved to serve. It's hard to fault those words, but the emphasis of the Bible is that we are saved, first of all, to worship. Jesus didn't tell the woman at the well in John 4 that the "Father seeks servants, or witnesses". No doubt

He does. But He said, "the Father seeketh such to worship Him", or "the Father seeks such to be worshipers". We learn, even from Balaam's experience, that God can speak through donkeys (though they cannot usually speak in words as his did!). And even though some tell us that animals worship, I find that doubtful, since in order to worship, one must possess a spirit. Man was endued with that important distinction that sets him off from the rest of creation and has given him the ability and responsibility to worship and witness for His Creator.

Worship is what characterized all of God's witnesses in the past era. Abraham was a worshiper, as was marked by his erecting altars wherever he pitched his tent. When the three men, one of them being one of the Godhead, approached him in Gen. 18, he ran to them and "bowed himself to the earth". That is the first time the word for worship is found in the Bible. Even not knowing (possibly) exactly who these men were, he expressed his attitude of reverential respect for them by bowing down. He didn't bow because of what they had done for him or for what they had given to him. He bowed with an attitude of highest esteem for their coming to him and perhaps because of some sense of their dignity, for who they were. And the result was that he was a powerful witness before those of that country; at Sarah's death, they said, "thou art a mighty prince among us..." (Gen. 23:6).

The sad, recorded history of humanity in Rom. 1 is that man, knowing God (v.21), didn't want to glorify Him as God and the dismal result was that they worshiped created objects rather than the Maker of them. They "worshiped and served the creature more than (rather than) the Creator", (v. 25). It seems that the instinctive desire to worship something lies deep in the human heart and this is witnessed by the variety of objects and activities of all people to worship something, be it images or other objects that represent the cultural or individual concept of whatever it might be. The awful result is that historically, there has been a plethora of imaginative forms of worship, even to the point of human sacrifices, either of adults or children. It is a sad commentary that men don't desire to worship the true God, who is the Giver of all the blessings that have been showered upon all mankind despite his sinful nature and tendencies. God makes no radical demands, expects no extreme sacrifices, nor does He

desire violent acts of worship, but men would rather worship false gods that (in their religion) demand extreme forms of sacrifice to satisfy their requirements and cause them to (supposedly) give blessing. This certainly testifies to the deep-seated need of mankind to worship but with an aversion to worshipping the only One to whom worship should be directed.

Worship is...

We often hear and refer to the Lord's Supper as a "worship meeting" and such it is. Perhaps one might say, correctly, that it is the primary meeting of an assembly that is intended to be exclusively occupied with our worship of the Lord Jesus and our expressions of praise as we remember Him. Intuitively we recognize that it is not a meeting to make requests, to offer intercession for others, or to express prayers for answers to our desires. Whenever we hear a brother doing so, it seems to be jarringly out of place. We come

together for the distinct purpose of obeying the Lord's command to "remember Me" and "show my death" (proclaim the Lord's death).

Worship is the actions proceeding from the attitude of a heart that recognizes and desires to magnify and speak highly of its object. Lexical definitions fail to fully express all that is implied in the word, since they primarily focus on an action of the body when approaching another who is superior. But it implies that the worshiper is acting to recognize the superiority of another and to display reverence in their presence. Worship is not primarily centered on what one receives from another, but it is rather occupied with seeking to acknowledge and express the fact that the object thus addressed is far superior to the worshiper.

We know that worship is not occupation with what is received when we read the first mention of the word, in Gen. 22:5. The Lord had told Abraham to take Isaac to Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering. So Abraham was acting responsively to that command as an expression of worship. He was giving to God what expressed the place that God had in his heart. Isaac was the blessing that Abraham had received but he was offering that blessing back to the Blessor. So that He who had blessed him was acknowledged as greater than what had been received. The first mention of worship in the New Testament is in Matt. 2, when the wise men came to the house to worship the young child (not the infant) that the star had guided them to. Their worship consisted of falling down before Him and presenting their rich gifts. They didn't travel that great distance, bring such rich gifts, or fall down before Christ because of what they had received. It was an act to honor and magnify this Child for who He was and that act was based on truth that had been revealed to them. So worship is more than thanking God for what we have received, though that may be part, possibly the lowest aspect, of worship. "Worship," as one has said, "is the overflow of the heart in appreciation for all that God is in Christ." But multiplicity of words fails to express the full truth of worship and there are many ways in which worship can be expressed.

Worship must be in Spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24). The Samaritans worshiped in spirit but not in truth, for the place they worshiped was not according to God's Word. In Jerusalem, they worshiped in truth but not in spirit. They had the ritual and activities but no spiritual life. The wise men worshiped in both: spirit had brought them that great distance to worship and they were doing so in response to God's revelation.

Even actions of normal life can be worship. Worship would be an attitude that permeates the entire being, so that it is expressed in one's voluntary subjection to the Lord's will in every decision, joyful occupation with our God and Savior, spontaneous expressions of praise that might burst forth from one's soul, or even in our attitude toward all that we possess

"Truths for our Day"

A monthly publication that is freely available on the Internet and is intended to help believers who appreciate the timeless truths of God's Word and who recognize the unchanging principles of God's will for His people. It is primarily intended to strengthen those who enjoy fellowship in local assemblies of believers who are gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Editors: Joel Portman & Jim Brown

Publisher: Joel Portman

1200 Forest Glen Ct. SE,
Cedar Rapids, IA, 52403

All Correspondence to: mail@truthsforourday.com

All issues of "Truths for our Day" are available by clicking on the link below. This will take you to the index for Truths For Our Day

Please read this notice:

We permit and encourage you to reprint any issue of "Truths for our Day" that you desire, either for yourself, or to share with other believers. However, if you wish to copy an individual article, we will forward your request to the copyright owner of the article to request his permission. For this reason, the format of the publication is locked to prevent unauthorized publication of articles that the author would prefer to reserve. Please do not copy them in any other way. We want to respect the ownership of all those who have written articles.

We also hope you will let others know about "Truths for our Day" and encourage them to subscribe as well. They may do so by simply sending an e-mail to this email address:

mail@truthsforourday.com

Thank you

or receive. It is expressed in one's attitude and behavior when we come to such a gathering where believers are given the collective privilege of functioning as holy priests. We are to be worshipers, and that is not confined to an hour on Sunday mornings. It should be as true at all assembly gatherings as then, and it should be part and parcel of every believer's daily life.

It is possible for a believer to live every day with a conscious sense of the Lord's presence, with that sense constantly moving the soul to respond in those ways that will exalt Him. Our behavior toward others, our priorities and purposes, decisions made subject to His will, and expressions of our lips all display an attitude of worship. The Psalms are full of those expressions of praise and worship that burst forth from the hearts of men who loved the Lord with all their hearts, even as their basis for worship and knowledge of divine truth wasn't as fully developed as for us. Yet, their depth of worship seems to exceed the shallow expressions that sometimes seem to dominate our gatherings. Lack of genuine reverence results in an increasingly shallow form of worship and that shallowness returns in a lesser sense of reverence for Divine Persons. We need to return to that inward awe of the overpowering presence and reality of all that God is so that our worship of Him might be lifted and given greater depth and reality. True worship would even affect our dress and behavior when we come to a gathering where His presence is in our midst. But it seems that in many cases, we have lost that demeanor that realizes that one is in the presence of our Lord.

More could be written, but I close this by quoting men of old who said, "When we cease to wonder, we cease to worship", and that wonder-producing worship is always the result of deliberately determining to spend time in thoughtful meditation on God and all that pertains to His infinitely perfect Person.

Worship Then and Now

William MacDonald

David and the other writers of the Psalms were worshippers. They had great thoughts of God. The marvels of His creation swept them away in rapturous song. When they considered His greatness, goodness, and grace, their minds strained to take it all in. They thought of Him as the Upholder and Controller of all things and were confounded. The writer of the closing psalms was so overwhelmed that he called on all creation, animate and inanimate, to sing the praises of the Lord. All people great and small, old and young, kings and princes, yes, all angels, together with beasts, birds, and creeping things should form a universal choir. He enlists the accompaniment of all kinds of instruments –

harp, trumpets, cornets, timbrels, cymbals, and organs. His subject is so amazing that he summons the sun, moon, and stars to join the anthem. The heavens, earth, sea, hills, mountains, and waters must not be silent. Fire, hail, snow, and stormy winds have their part. The subject is so breathtaking that the Lord is worthy of total praise, (Psalm 150).

Yet these psalmists did not have a Bible. They did not know how the Son of God would come down to planet earth and be born in a cattle shed, His crib an animal's feed box. They did not know that wise men would see their God "contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made Man". Nor did they know that in that manger would lie the One "who built the starry skies". Hidden from their eyes was the truth that the babe in the manger would be "the Eternal Word that spoke the worlds out of the womb of nothing, that the tiny arms of this helpless child were the hands of Him who laid the timbers of the universe" (Ian Macpherson).

They did not know that the Architect and Maker of the universe would one day wear a carpenter's apron in a place called Nazareth. Or that He would "wander as a homeless stranger in the world His hands had made". They would have gasped at the thought of God having no place to lay His head, or that He would sometimes sleep under the stars while His followers went to their homes.

Did they realize that God would actually come to earth and heal the sick, give sight to the blind, restore limbs to the maimed, cast out demons, and raise the dead? Or, that in spite of all His kindness, He would be insulted, ridiculed, and driven out of town? It would have been incredible to them that He, the Judge of all, would be betrayed by one of His own, arrested, and put on trial. The civil authorities would find Him innocent, but He would be scourged until His back was like a furrowed field and He was no longer recognizable as a man.

The psalmists did not know in great detail what we now know. At a place called Calvary, men would nail the One who is truly God to a cross of wood. It would be unimaginable to these Old Testament poets. They would have shaken their heads to think that the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His Person, the Maker and Upholder of the universe, was there on a cross, purging man's sins, Hebrews 1:1-3. Frail creatures took the One Who is high and lifted up in glory but instead, lifted Him up on a pole of shame. The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, yet He was bound by nails. Mortal sinners dared to "take Him with wicked hands to be crucified and slain" (Acts 2:24).

Imagine the torrent of heavenly harmony that the psalmist's massed choir would have raised if they could have sung in the words of Charles Wesley:

Amazing love! How can it be
That thou, my God, should die for me?

Or Isaac Watts' hymn that says:

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ my God.

These Old Testament men of God saw through a glass darkly. At times they had brief glimpses of what would happen, but the full revelation was not for them to know. The thought is this. If they, with the limited knowledge they had, could have poured out such torrents of praise, worship, adoration, and thanksgiving to the Lord, how much more so should we, having been born out of New Testament times as the church, with all the additional knowledge we possess about Calvary and of the One who died there for us.

Once we grasp the truth of what our God has done for us, of the sacrifice He made to save us, we will be spontaneous and compulsive worshipers. No one will have to coax or cajole us to praise the Lord. Our tongues will be the pen of ready writers (Psalm 45:1). Our lives will be one unending psalm of praise to Him. In the words of Charles Wesley, contemplation of Christ will "dissolve our hearts in thankfulness and melt our eyes in tears". We will be "lost in wonder, love, and praise, drowned in love's mysterious deep". Like the psalmist, we will call on all creation to join us in singing the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

Addressing God in Prayer and Worship

T. Ernest Wilson

(Our esteemed brother was a missionary in Africa for many years. Some may not appreciate the truth of what he writes but it seems important today.)

One of the features of our modern permissive society, is the tendency to familiarity in addressing the aged or those in positions of authority. It is becoming quite common for children and young people to call old people by their first name. It is one of the results of modern revolt and the break-down of law and order and authority, to drop the old terms of honor and respect in addressing their elders. Conditions in the world usually have a way of manifesting themselves in the church. It is becoming increasingly common to hear God addressed with the familiar "you" instead of the reverential "thou." The argument is that the reverential form is archaic, it was used in Shakespeare's day, and was the common form of speech when the King James version of the Bible was translated in 1611. We no longer use it today in addressing each other, therefore let us drop it in addressing God! It is regarded as a mark of superior education and sophistication to avoid the old forms and use modern language in praying to the Deity. Those who do it, insist that it is not a lack of reverence, but using language that everyone understands. This is

very plausible, but is it true?

The Question of English Grammar

We are told that the old form of the second person "thou", and its use in everyday speech has been dropped. Admittedly, when the King James Version was translated, "thou, thee" etc. were simply singular forms of the pronouns, while "you" was the plural form. The translators followed this rule whether God or man was being addressed. But today the plural form "you" is commonly used as a singular. While this is true, yet the old form of the second person and its reverential use, is a part of our language. We learn it in school in our verb conjugations: I am, thou art, he is, etc. In most languages, reverential forms of speech are used in addressing the Deity. For example, in the Latin languages, such as Spanish and Portuguese, the second person "tu" (thou) is used in a threefold way:

- (1) Endearment and intimacy, between husband and wife, to a child or intimate friend.
- (2) It is used in disparagement to one regarded as an inferior.
- (3) Always in a reverential way in addressing the Deity.

In Bantu languages used in Africa, and among so-called primitive people generally, God is addressed in majestic terms and titles. No African child would think of addressing his parent or an elder by the familiar form, and to speak to Almighty God in this way would be unthinkable!

The Need for Reverence

In addressing a king or the president, or a cabinet minister or a judge on the bench when a law court is in session, it is customary to use respectful terms which we do not ordinarily use; your majesty, your honor, etc. The New Testament sanctions and gives examples of such usages. We read there of an honorable counselor and of honorable women. Luke addresses his Gospel to the "Most Excellent Theophilus," and Paul, addressing Festus the Governor, uses the term "Most Noble." It is a part of the present day decline in respect, to despise dignities and authority. But if one were to use the language of the street or the market place in addressing a judge while he is presiding in a law court, he would be held in contempt of court, how much more the need for reverence and respect in addressing the Creator and Redeemer of the universe!

Another important point is consideration for the feelings of others. From time immemorial it has been the custom to follow the examples in Scripture in addressing Almighty God. But this is not just mere custom or tradition. God said to the wicked in Ps. 50:21, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." It is both the direct teaching and example of Holy Scripture. To hear anyone publicly address God in familiar language, calling Him "you," shocks the feelings of older and sensitive, spiritual people, who are characterized

by the fear of God in their lives and speech. It is altogether wrong to hurt and shock the feelings of the saints in this way.

One would make a distinction between a young person recently saved, who is not familiar with the teaching and language of Holy Scripture, and the mature person who uses this kind of language deliberately. There is a difference between ignorance and arrogance. The first needs teaching, the second, rebuke. much used and abused word today is "communication." Some have the idea that in speaking to the young and immature, we have to use the language and vocabulary of the street corner or the high school. The only way to raise the level of respect and the dignity of personality, is to use simple but dignified language in speaking to them.

Modern Bible Translations

One very serious contributing factor, that has helped along this tendency of disrespect in addressing God, has been some of the modern revisions and paraphrases of Scripture. Two of the chief offenders in this respect are the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, authorized in 1951 by the National Council of Churches and the New English Bible, the New Testament of which was published in 1961. Some of the men on the committees for translation of both of these versions are notorious liberals who do not believe in the deity of Christ, His virgin birth and other fundamentals of the faith. This decided bias comes out in their translation of vital passages. Sometimes in the RSV, the formal address of "thee", "thou" and "thine" is used, while at other times the familiar "you" and "yours" is used. Dean Weigle, the chairman of the revision committee, on page 56 of "An Introduction to the RSV" explains their use in this way: "After two years of debate and experiment, it was decided to abandon these forms, and to follow the modern usage, except in language addressed to God." Note carefully the distinction; the formal address is used in addressing God, and the informal is used in speaking to man. Let us look at one or two examples which illustrate this rule of translation:

The AV of Matt. 16: 16 reads: "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." The RSV reads: "You are the Christ, the son of the living God." Does this mean that Christ is only a man and not God? According to Dean Weigle's explanation, this is the only conclusion we can reach.

The AV of Acts 9: 5 reads: "Who are thou, Lord?"

The RSV reads: "Who are you, Lord?" Did Saul of Tarsus believe that the one who spoke to him from heaven was only a man?

The New English translation follows the same rule. In this version the reverential "thee" or "thou" is never used in the Gospels in addressing our Lord Jesus Christ. This distinction of pronouns has a subtle doctrinal implication, and gives the impression that the trans-

lators are trying to separate our Lord and Saviour from God and so undermine the doctrine of His deity.

Unfortunately many of the teachers in academic theological circles have adopted the use of the familiar "you" in addressing both God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. This has helped to popularize the trend. Young people take their cue from their teachers. They can do no wrong and it sounds educated to imitate them. Leaders and teachers today have a tremendous responsibility to show an example of reverence and becoming humility in speaking to a Holy God.

We would lovingly appeal to all who know and love, Worship and serve our Lord Jesus Christ, and who confess Him, not only as the unique Son of God, but as God the Son manifest in flesh, to avoid any semblance of disrespectful or slang language, either in speaking to Him in prayer and praise, or speaking about Him in the preaching of the Gospel, or in the ministry of the Word. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor and glory and blessing." Amen. Rev. 5:12.

Christian Worship

W. W. Fereday

Worship is the highest activity of the believer. Prayer and thanksgiving to God have their full value, but they are on a lower level. Prayer deals with our needs and presents them to God. Thanksgiving is expressed to God for all that He has given us, and always gives us. In worship, the believer's heart is lifted up to God Himself and lost in contemplation of who He is. Only when we have reached rest in heaven will our worship be perfect and without end.

Before the Coming of Christ

The character of worship has varied over time, according to what God revealed of Himself. In the time of Genesis, God was worshiped as "El-Shaddai," "the Almighty God" (Genesis 17:1). Abraham and the patriarchs had faith in the fulfillment of His promises and trusted Him as the faithful God who is sufficient for everything. Worship then had a family character.

A great change came when Israel was called to be God's people on earth. God wanted to dwell among his people in the tabernacle. This was an inestimable privilege, but it implied the existence of the priesthood, because man, in his natural state, cannot approach God. Sacrifices have always been offered to God, even if they were not precisely defined as in the beginning of Leviticus. The institution of the priesthood necessarily placed the people at a certain distance from God. The worshiper did not come into direct contact with Him.

The priests of Israel acted on behalf of the people. They presented the blood of the sacrifices and the incense before God in the sanctuary. When Christ came, everything changed. God is no longer hidden behind a veil. He has revealed Himself completely in the person of His beloved Son, so that those who believe in Jesus know Him as their Father. The work of His salvation has been accomplished. Their Savior has been lifted up to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God.

Jesus' Teachings to the Samaritan Woman

Let us first pause at the Lord Jesus' wonderful conversation with the Samaritan woman near the well at Sychar (John 4). He speaks first to her heart, then to her conscience. Feeling the rebuke of his words, she tries to avoid their sharpness and turns the conversation to the subject of worship (v. 20). The Lord then reveals to her the great change that was taking place at that moment. The woman mentions Mount Gerizim, where the Samaritans had their own temple and celebrated worship with the rites of Judaism. She mentions that the Jews say "that in Jerusalem is the place where one must worship." The Lord replies, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (vv. 21-24).

First, the Lord completely rejects the worship of the Samaritans, considering it false and evil: "You worship what you do not know." Then, he affirms that Judaism is true and of divine origin: "We worship what we know" and "salvation comes from the Jews." Finally, he declares that the time has come to set both aside, and that something better must be established. In Christianity, it is no longer a matter of holy places where God must be worshiped. To recognize now a holy place on earth, in which worship must be rendered, deprives souls of the joy of typically Christian privileges. Unfortunately, this is often ignored today.

True worshipers worship "the Father." This implies closeness to God and affection for him. Thanks to the work of Christ, we now stand before God as children. And we can lift up our hearts to him in worship, enjoying this relationship and in complete freedom. What a contrast to the fearful and anxious approach that many Christians feel today! Groaning because the weight of their sins oppresses them, they beg God not to impute their faults to them and not to hold His wrath against them.

True worship necessarily excludes those who are not truly children of God. They cannot in any way worship God or join with those who worship him. The

gospel of grace is available to them. And until they receive it in faith, they cannot participate in the worship of the Father.

"The Father... seeks worshipers"—what a precious thought. But He seeks worshipers who worship Him "in spirit and in truth." For this to be so, the inner man must be guided by the Holy Spirit. Revealed truth must be known by those who worship and must guide them. This is in stark contrast to religious forms. These do not need God's truth or His Spirit, and they contribute nothing to worship.

It does not simply say that the Father desires worship "in spirit" and not ritual worship, but the Lord pronounces here a solemn "it is necessary": "Those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." God has revealed himself fully in all his nature, in all that he is. And what he asks of his own, what he has a right to receive, he now tells us. Those who approach him according to religious rites, attitudes, gestures, or words treat him in a manner unworthy of him. The Christian who has come to know God, who has been born of him, understands that worship in spirit and in truth is the only kind that suits him. May it be our joy to offer him that worship, guided by his Spirit and his Word!

The Teachings of the Epistle to the Hebrews

This epistle presents believers as being in the wilderness and on their way to God's rest. We have many weaknesses, but Christ helps us with his service as high priest (2:17-18; 4:14-15; 7:25). As for worship, we have "freedom" (in the French J.N.D. version it says: "complete freedom," 10:19) to enter by faith into God's presence, thanks to the work that Christ has accomplished. This is another aspect of the truth.

Let us now look at an essential passage from this epistle: "Therefore, brothers, having freedom to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus Christ, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the veil, that is, from his flesh, and having a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart, in full assurance of faith, our hearts purified from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (10:19-22).

We have complete freedom to enter into God's presence. This is in stark contrast to what happened previously with the Israelites under the law. Worshipers could approach, but they could never enter into God's presence. The veil prevented them from passing through. Now, there is no obstacle. God's rights were completely satisfied on the cross. The veil has been torn (Matthew 27:51). The way to the Holy of Holies is completely open to us.

Furthermore, our hearts are cleansed from a guilty conscience. We can be at peace before God. We have the certainty that the offering of the body of Jesus Christ made once and for all (10:10) has wiped away all

our sins. "By one offering he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (v. 14). The place Jesus now occupies, at the right hand of God, is proof that the matter of sin has been definitively resolved. If we do not have this assurance, we cannot worship God. A person who is unsure of his position before God and who is uncertain about his salvation is not in a position to worship God.

Christ suffered for us, and his work is finished. The way to God is open to us. Every believer can approach him "with full assurance of faith." This full assurance that faith gives us glorifies God. Unfortunately, there are believers who are constantly in doubt and fear, depriving themselves of the great blessing of Christianity. If our salvation, our acceptance by God, depended on ourselves, we might be trembling. But since all our Christian privileges are based on the work of the Lord Jesus, we dishonor Him if we harbor doubts or concerns about our eternal salvation.

It is very true that our present condition is imperfect. To be "perfect" in the sense of verse 14 quoted above—or to be made "perfect in conscience," according to the expression in verse 9 of the previous chapter—does not mean to be perfect in every sense of the word. As long as we are in our present bodies, we are marked by weakness and will always fall short of what God wants for us and what we ourselves desire. I am not speaking of our obvious sins, but of our weaknesses. And in this sense, the priesthood of Christ comes to our aid (4:14-16). We have "a great priest over the house of God" (10:21). And we ourselves, "as living stones," are "built up as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). He presents them to God on our behalf, accompanied by the excellence and fragrance of his person and his work. And so they are acceptable to God. What encouragement! We depend completely on the Lord Jesus, whether for the needs of our journey on earth or for our service as worshipers.

At the end of verse 22 of Hebrews 10, there is an allusion to the consecration of Aaron and his sons in their priestly functions. The expression "their hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and their bodies washed with pure water" reminds us of the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice on the priests and the washing with water performed at the door of the tabernacle of meeting at the beginning of their priestly service (Leviticus 8:4-24). This sprinkling and washing are figures of what happened at the beginning of our life as believers: the new birth. Thus, we are pure in God's eyes, and no sin can be imputed to us.

May God strengthen our souls more and more in the truth and teach us to worship Him by allowing ourselves to be guided by His Spirit!

Family Worship

Franklin Ferguson

There can be nothing of more importance in a Christian household than the daily reading of the Holy Scriptures, followed by prayer. Morning and evening seem to be the appropriate times. It is most suggestive that God ordained for His ancient people Israel the offering of two lambs of the first year, day by day continually, one to be offered in the morning and the other at evening. Likewise sweet incense was burned each morning and evening before the Lord (Exo. 29:38-39; 30:7-8). Incense is associated with the prayers of saints (Rev. 8:3). The lambs speak of Christ (1 Pet. 1:19). If we wish for "the days of heaven upon the earth," then let us give attention to family worship (Deut. 11:18-21). Nearly all the troubles and sorrows befalling families are traceable to the neglect of it.

The best time, generally, is immediately after breakfast and after tea, before anybody rises from the table. The reading need not, and should not be prolonged, lest it become irksome to the child and its interest is lost. The father should take the Book in hand and reverently read the allotted portion, make a few simple comments suited to the intelligence of the children, and afterwards pray, all kneeling down. The Lord should be spoken to in a way that becomes us in addressing One so holy and so great, yet so full of love to us—he Friend that is above all others. Command attention and reverence, for in this brief while we are approaching God. Instil into the young minds that ourselves and all we do should be committed daily to Him, thus fixing in the heart "that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

Family worship is the only true preparation of the child for the dangers, snares, difficulties and trials of life, that it may meet them successfully. "train up a child in the way he should go" (Prov. 22:6) is God's all-wise appointment. No one is justified in being too busy to take a short while in bringing before the mind spiritual realities. Time is not lost but saved thereby, and things will go well throughout the day.

Let Christian parents guard this keystone of the family arch, and thus insure the future well-being of their sons and daughters. Looking around about on the community in general, the condition of the rising generation is clearly appalling; for they know not the restraining power of the Word of God, being brought up in ignorance of it. Into this atmosphere our families are daily thrown. Therefore maintain at all cost the family worship; once a day is better than not at all, but it seems to be the mind of God that it should be "morning and evening."

Time & Manner of the Lord's Supper

C.H. Mackintosh

Having now considered, through the Lord's mercy, the nature of the Lord's Supper; the circumstances under which it was instituted; and the persons for whom it was designed; I would only add a word as to what scripture teaches us about the time and manner of its celebration.

Although the Lord's Supper was not first instituted on the first day of the week, yet Luke 24, and Acts 20, are quite sufficient to prove, to a mind subject to the word, that that is the day on which the ordinance should specially be observed. The Lord broke bread with His disciples on "the first day of the week" (Luke 24: 30); and "on the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20: 7).

These scriptures are quite sufficient to prove that it is not once a month, nor once in three months, nor once in six months, that disciples should come together to break bread, but once a week, and that upon the first day of the week. Nor can we have any difficulty in seeing that there is a moral fitness in the first day of the week, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper; it is the resurrection day—the Church's day, in contrast with the seventh, which was Israel's day; and as, in the institution of the ordinance, the Lord led His disciples away from Jewish things altogether, by refusing to drink of the fruit of the vine, and then instituting another ordinance, so, in the day on which that ordinance was to be celebrated, we observe the same contrast between heavenly and earthly things. It is in the power of resurrection that we can rightly show the Lord's death. When the conflict was over, Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine, and blessed Abraham, in the name of the Lord. Thus, too, our Melchizedek, when all the conflict was over, and the victory gained, came forth, in resurrection, with bread and wine, to strengthen and cheer the hearts of His people, and to breathe upon them that peace which He had so dearly purchased.

If then, the first day of the week be the day on which scripture teaches the disciples to break bread, it is clear that man has no authority to alter the period to once a month, or once in six months. We must be as strictly subject to scripture as to the time for celebrating the ordinance, as we would be in reference to any other point connected with it. And I doubt not, that when the affections are lively and fervent toward the Person of the Lord Himself, the Christian will desire to show the Lord's death as frequently as possible; indeed, it would seem from the opening of Acts, that the disciples broke bread whenever they met. This we may infer from the expression "breaking bread from house to house." However, we are not left to depend upon mere inference,

as to the question of the first day of the week being the day on which the disciples came together to break bread; we are distinctly taught this in Acts 20:7, and we see its moral fitness and beauty. Thus much as to the time.

And now one word about the manner. It should be the special aim of Christians, to show that the breaking of bread is their grand and primary object in coming together on the first day of the week. They should show that it is not for preaching or teaching that they assemble, though teaching may be a happy adjunct, but that the breaking of bread is the leading object before their minds. This can be done by making it the first thing at their meetings. And there is a moral fitness in this order, as well as in the time. It is the work of Christ which we show forth in the Supper, wherefore it should have the first place (Colossians 1:18 preeminence), and, when it has been duly set forth, there should then be a full and unqualified opening left for the work of the Holy Ghost in ministry. The office of the Spirit is to set forth and exalt the name, the Person, and the work of Christ; and if He be allowed to order and govern the assembly of Christians, as He undoubtedly should, He will ever give the work of Christ the primary place.

I feel that in writing upon such a subject as the breaking of bread at the time when there is such sad confusion among professing Christians, there is a demand for pointed, clear, and lucid statements, to which I am little able to respond. We have but little conception of how entirely the question of the breaking of bread is connected with the Church's position and testimony on earth; and we have as little conception of how thoroughly the question has been misunderstood by the professing church. The breaking of bread ought to be the distinct enunciation of the fact that all believers are one body.

"Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another." Why were they to tarry one for another? Surely, in order that they might the more clearly express their unity. But what would the apostle have said, if, instead of coming together, into one place, they had gone to different places, according to their different views of truth? He might then say, with, if possible, greater force, "Ye cannot eat the Lord's Supper."

It may, however, be asked, "How could all the believers in London meet in one place?" I reply, if they could not meet in one place, they could, at least, meet on one principle. But how did the believers at Jerusalem meet together? The answer is, they were "of one accord." This being so, they had little difficulty about questions of the frequency, place or manner in which they met. They gave expression to their unity, and that, too, in a way not to be mistaken. Neither various localities, nor various measures of knowledge and attainment, could, in the least, interfere with their unity. There was "one body and one spirit".

Finally, then, I would say, the Lord will assuredly honor those who have faith to believe and confess the unity of the Church on earth; and the greater the difficulty in the way of doing so, the greater will be the honor. The Lord grant to all His people a single eye, and a humble and honest spirit.

Coronets are to be laid at the Redeemer's feet. They glitter gloriously when they are set in and surrounded by a crown of thorns. George Whitfield

Men of God: JOSHUA

"Joshua ... wholly followed the LORD" (Numbers 32:12)
Alan Davidson

The book of Joshua is not just about battles and conquests. Wonderful times of blessing and victory are recorded at the crossing of the River Jordan, the miraculous fall of the walls of Jericho, the sun brought to a standstill at the battle of Gibeon. The emphasis is upon the leadership of Joshua as he himself, "wholly followed the Lord" in dependence upon God and God's intervention which brought victory and possession of the land.

The life of Joshua, as presented in the book that is named after him, is that of a great leader. "And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying, Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, Which may go out before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd. And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit" (Num. 27:15-18).

The manner in which God chooses to reveal Himself to a man sets the spirit and tone of his life. To Jacob, He was revealed as the Wrestler (Gen. 32:24-28), making a great change in Jacobs walk. The revelation of God's will to Moses was as a Flame of Fire in a Burning Bush. The vision of the Lord on the Throne, high and lifted up; the theme of seraphims, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts", set the theme for the great prophecies and holy life of Isaiah. It is fitting that the vessel chosen by God for the leadership of His people, should have a vision set before him of, the "Captain of the Host of the LORD". "And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the Captain of the LORD'S Host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is Holy. And Joshua did so" (Josh. 5:14-15).

"The Captain of the Host of the LORD" (Josh. 5:14), is the title of Almighty power, sovereign authority over the nations of the earth and control of creation. Joshua had the Divine mandate to drive out the Canaanites, and purge the land from idolatry and abomination.

As the man of God's choice, Joshua is foremost in the story of the conquest of Canaan. His leadership, for the short joyous period of approximately 30 years, is con-

tained in one of the most encouraging books of the Bible. Joshua led possibly three million people in the conquering of cities with massive walls, defended by giants and mighty armies. Fortified strongholds were overthrown not by the nation of untrained wanders, wearied by 40 years in the wilderness, but by Joshua under the hand of God who said, "Go over", "Go in" and "Go after". "Go over this Jordan" (Josh. 1:2); the lesson of death and resurrection. "Go in to possess the land" (Josh. 1:11). Every victory, was not by military strategy or superior armies but by the supernatural power of the LORD of Hosts. The exception was the attack upon Ai made by human effort which ended in defeat, (Josh. 7:3). "When ye see the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, they ye shall remove from your place, and Go after it" (Josh. 3:3). The Ark before the people of God, speaks of God's presence and the pre-eminence of Christ in His rightful place.

In raising up Joshua as a leader and a shepherd among the congregation of the Lord, God distinguished their condition in the land from their condition in Egypt. "For every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians" (Gen. 46:34). The Lord Himself when on earth, was moved with compassion when He saw the multitudes, "Because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matt. 9:36). Paul wept with the elders from Ephesus saying; "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29). There is a tremendous need among the assemblies of the Lord's dear people today, for leaders to go before the congregation with shepherd love and care. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1Pet. 5:3-4). We must consider such themes as leadership, faithfulness, courage, obedience, battles fought, obstacles overcome and the land occupied as God used Joshua. There is an urgent need today for exercised young men of spiritual substance to wholly follow the scriptural path leading the Lord's people into the spiritual blessings of our inheritance.

Enabling the Leader

The Power of God

This remarkable man appears for the first time in Exodus 17. "Then came Amalek" (Exod. 17:8). "Amalek" means "war-like". The first and most persistent enemy on the journey reminds us of, "fleshly lusts that war against the soul". The flesh has three kinds of activity; (i) mental – it attacks and tries to conquer the way we think; (ii) emotional – it imposes stress and strain to hinder in the pathway; and (iii) sensual – to overcome and ruin the testimony of the most promising believer in the fleshly act of a moment of time.

God used four men to subdue Amalek. The flesh is never completely conquered or removed; 1) Moses – the praying man, with uplifted hand interceding toward heaven. 2) Aaron – the priestly man, presents the fragrance of worship before God. 3) Hur – the righteous man (his name means "white"), the advocate with holy hands.

In these three men we learn the principles of unwearied prayerfulness, priestly exercise and purity. 4) Joshua – the valiant man. “Joshua discomfited Amalek (prostrated Amalek) and his people with the edge of the sword” (Exod. 17:13). Moses was the man with the rod. Joshua was victorious with the sword. We must be severe with the flesh. Joseph fled the temptation of the flesh in Potiphar’s house. Mordecai boldly confronted an Amalekite and he bowed not. Young believer, if you are to experience the power of God you must begin like Joshua in overcoming the attacks of the flesh, as seen in the relentless attacks of Amalek.

The Word of God

“And he (Moses) took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient” (Exod. 24:7). Moses gave them the law. Joshua followed the law. “And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God. And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you” (Exod. 24:13-14). Moses went alone into the presence of God but Joshua accompanied him onto the mount when he received the book of the covenant. “And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand ... And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp” (Exod. 32:15,17). Early lessons on the mount with Moses taught Joshua to reverence the Holiness of God and the value of the covenant. His observation as to how Moses dealt with the sin of the golden calf taught him how to maintain the holy standards of God’s Word when he later had to judge such matters as Achan and the accursed thing in the camp.

The House of God

“And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp ... Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle” (Exod. 33:7,11). This young man who was raised up as a true leader of God’s people, valued the house of God. Likewise Paul taught the younger man Timothy how to behave, “In the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1Tim. 3:15). Godly leaders are not produced in the colleges of men. They mature in the right ways of God, through the Word of God as taught by the Spirit, being obeyed and practised in the assembly of God’s people gathered to the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ, “without the camp” (Heb. 13:13).

Exploring the Land

At Kadesh-barnea, Moses by the commandment of the Lord, sent twelve men to reconnoitre the land of Canaan. Ten saw giants, two saw grapes. Ten brought back an evil report of the land and said we are not able to go up against the people. “Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh” said; “Rebel not ye against the LORD, neither

fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones” (Num. 14:6,9-10). Of the adult generation in the wilderness, only Joshua and Caleb entered the land. They were in the minority as they walked by faith and not by sight. It is still not an easy or popular path.

Canaan is not a picture of heaven. There were enemies to be faced and battles to be fought in the land. It is a picture of our present spiritual inheritance, constantly set before us in the N.T. epistles. The entrance of redemption and justification leads us into the great blessings of sanctification and blessedness. Satan will do all in his power as a strong adversary to rob us of the spiritual enjoyment of our inheritance. The enemies are described as, principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world. We are well able to possess the spiritual inheritance when we, take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit which is the word of God, and the shield of faith as developed in Ephesians 6:10-18. Peter reminds us that we are, “A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, ... a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1Pet. 2:9).

Entering the Land

Moses brought them out. Joshua brought them in. Moses, under the mighty hand of God led the people out of Egypt and through the wilderness. Moses representing the law, was not allowed to lead them into the inheritance. Joshua (his name means “saviour”) was used to lead the redeemed of the Lord into the promised inheritance. Their key verse is; “So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war” (Josh. 11:23). The Lord’s desire for Canaan was to drive out the idolatrous abominations of the wicked inhabitants and to fulfil His promises to give His people, “Rest” (Josh. 11:23; 14:15; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1), in the land. “For if Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For He that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His” (Heb. 4:8-10). Joshua brought the people into the land but not into a permanent settled condition, a rested state. The teaching of Hebrews is Christ Supreme. God’s rest in creation has been disturbed. The rest in Canaan being dependent upon obedience was temporary. The rest for the people of God in the day of Grace is Christ, a Sabbath rest of peace, tranquillity, repose upon Christ and His finished work.

“Meditation chews the cud, and gets the sweetness and nutritive virtue of the Word into the heart and life: this is the way the godly bring forth much fruit”

Ashwood