Christian Worship: A Psychological Study

Jonas M. Berkey

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CHRISTIAN WORSHIP:
A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY
by
Jonas M. Berkey

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

Division of Graduate Instruction
Butler University
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INTRODUCTION

"Psychology is the systematic description and critical analysis of human behavior,"¹ "It is the science of mind,"² "Human psychology is an examination of man's spiritual nature."³

"The psychology of religion looks within human experience to understand what religion means to persons ... to explore the meaning of religion in human personality."⁴

The great giant in psychological studies, Sigmund Freud, rejected the idea of God as being a valid idea, and thereby moved psychology in the direction of behaviorism. However, in recent

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² Ibid., p. 20.
years the pendulum has swung back and a number of books have been written stressing the necessity of integration of psychological studies with those of religion.

This thesis is an attempt to move further in that direction - to utilize some of the well-established principles of psychology and psychotherapy by applying them in a study of Christian worship.

The established principles of psychology provide us with accurate descriptions showing a universality of response among men; otherwise psychology could never claim to be a science. The Christian religion witnesses to "Christ the same yesterday, today and forever".

In a recent book synthesizing psychological and religious insight, a large number of writings of religious persons from many faiths and of writings of various schools of psychology were examined. The following observation, as a conclusion of the study, was made:

Whatever the approach, and however complicated the philosophical or theological super-structure
erected upon it, the essentials of the Way whereby Reality becomes transformingly effective in the individual life were found to be identical and universal.¹

And so the thesis of this paper is this: Both Psychology and Christianity are concerned with the well-being or wholeness of the human person. Since God is no respecter of persons, then all men are alike in their basic nature. Psychology bears out this conclusion. Therefore, upon the foundation of this basic agreement psychology may be used effectively in helping to establish a fundamental agreement for the effective worship of Christian men. The scope of this treatment will consider only three of the basic acts of Christian worship - prayer, baptism and the Lord's Supper.

CHAPTER I

BASES OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

"Worship is man's response to God's revelation of himself."¹ It is the response of the creature to the Eternal: nor do we need limit this definition to the human sphere. There is a sense in which we may think of the whole life of the Universe as an act of worship, glorifying its Origin, Sustainer, and End.²

"Christian worship is common worship in which God is accorded supreme worth and honor through Jesus Christ and the way of worship which He has ordained."³ It is not merely thinking about God or feeling reverent toward Him; for worship engages the whole person.

Men worship that upon which they believe they depend. That is, in fact, what worship is: Man's acknowledgement and celebration of his fundamental reliance on what he takes to be reliable, his


trust in what he takes to be trustworthy, his
devotion to what he takes to be the shaping
forces of his destiny.¹

The Christian idea of God is that of a
loving, all-powerful Father who is responsive to
the needs of men through worship. As God is any-
where and everywhere as Spirit, men may worship
Him anywhere, everywhere, any time, all the time.
In God we "live and move and have our being"².

The Christian believes worship to be an
intimate relationship with God. One writer has
said "prayer is worship"³, thus giving the idea
that prayer is a person-to-person relationship.
Though prayer is not usually so broadly defined,
this underlying thought of a vital conscious
contact with God is inherent in worship.

WHOLENESS THROUGH WORSHIP

Man seeks to attain wholeness through
Christian worship.

¹Albert C. Outler, Psychotherapy and the
Christian Message (New York: Harper and Brothers,


³M. C. Powell, Guiding the Experience of
Worship (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1935),
Man seeks holiness or to become whole. Therefore Christian worship includes the whole man, his intellect, his emotions and his will. In the broadest sense, this includes the employment of all those means and methods by which Christian men respond to the revelation of the Almighty God through Jesus Christ.

Because human beings worship in body, they employ some material aid in worship. This brings on the conflict between the purely spiritual and the physical in man's devotions. The human tendency is to build sanctuaries, multiply altars, images, symbols, liturgies, words, incantations, creeds, books, priests, vestments, processions; in fact to multiply and to increase all those devices that impress the eye and ear and hand, or other sense. Against this tendency of human nature the passivists, pietists and mystics have declared their opposition, and have insisted that the closest union with God comes from the absence of all sensuous distractions, from inner meditation and bodily quietude.

The beginner in worship has moments of
God-consciousness. As he progresses, he receives new insights until the mature saint realizes that all of life should be worship. The following statement is an example of this kind of insight:

My life is focused in this one moment. My present task is here and now to fellowship with God on this bed of pain. I am not thinking of tomorrow or the next day, or even of this day's sunset hour. I am concerned only with being this present moment, without sense of tedium, with God. And for me constantly praising God for the joy of moments lived with Him there is no such thing as tedium.

True Christian worship is the identifying of men with the One who created them; even more accurately may it be said, the uniting of men with their Creator. Men identify and unite through the forms of worship that are available to them in the manner of their creation and within its limits.

Jesus gave two limits to worship which might be more fully expressed as channels or ways of identifying or uniting with God:

But the hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit

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1 Phillips, op. cit., p. 379. (As quoted in Kagawa by William Axling.)
and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth.¹

God is a Spirit. Thus the emphasis of man's nature is spiritual, inasmuch as man is created in the image of God. But Jesus identified Himself as the truth; and so the truth includes the physical nature of man. When God created, He pronounced that all His creation was good,² and the Scriptures refer to the human body as the temple of the Holy Spirit for the Christian.³ It follows that when either the body or the spirit is over-emphasized then we have not done the truth. The two are a unity in the living of the earthly life.

To reach the goal of wholeness in our worship we can neither be humanist nor mystic.

THE UNDERLYING PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE IN WORSHIP

Imitation of Jesus Christ is the most sincere glorifying of God possible for the Christian, for

¹John 4:24.
²Gen. 1:31.
³1 Cor. 6:19.
whatever a man worships, so he tends to become. The principle of imitation determines attitudes and goals.

The curse of idolatry lies in imitating that which is not in harmony with our nature. For a man to fall down and do homage before a golden calf is not the truth, for the man has made the calf. For a man to worship that which he has created is to imitate himself and thereby there can be no growth, only death.

God emphasized worship and set forth the principle of imitation in the first of the ten commandments given to Moses in the mount, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Memory holds best the first item mentioned in a series and hence greater importance is accorded the first.

Its extreme importance is also highlighted by Satan's great temptation of Jesus, taking Him to a high mountain and showing Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, saying, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me". Whoever controls worship, controls man.

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1Ex. 20:3.

2Matt. 4:9.
Whatever gains man's attention, gains entrance into his thinking and becomes an integral part of his personality by being stored in his memory.

Whoever a man worships becomes the dominant influence in his life for worship means worthship - "Where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also". Whatever a man worships becomes his god by any name it may be called; and so Jesus was emphatic in replying to Satan, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve".

The Creator, desiring good for that which He has created, commands allegiance to Himself as the only means of harmony. The leaf must keep its allegiance to the tree which bore it. The river is but a dry bed if it is separated from its springs.

The underlying psychological principle and constant force at work in worship is this: A worshipper always tends to become a moral character like the deity he worships. The Christian God is the Perfect Person, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit, who

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1Matt. 6:21.
2Matt. 4:10.
can be worshipped only in spirit and in truth. All intrusions of material aids, expedients, or accessories so enticing to the human senses, yet so ready to monopolize the whole attention of the worshipper, must be reduced to their lowest terms and kept rigidly under control. In such a nice balance between the spiritual and the material does true Christian worship rest.

**WORSHIP IS HEALING**

The Christian believes that God is the Creator and Sustainer of life; that He has all power, all knowledge and all goodness. The Christian believes that he should seek good and avoid evil, and for him seeking good means the closest relationship with God. Therefore God is not only the symbol of the good and wholesome and fruitful life but He is the way of the good life. Worship as conscious contact with God becomes the *sine qua non* of enjoying life as well as the fountain-spring of growth toward the perfect person. In a vital sense, worship provides the only true security of the earthly life, for only
as man is engaged in worship is his disunity healed.

Worship, then, since God seeks man to worship Him, becomes the channel of genuine healing.

Worship has a double function to perform: firstly, it gives the patient some insight into his own personality faults; in this way worship is psychodiagnostic: secondly, worship makes available the power, the ability, the means by which these faults, in measure at least, can be corrected; in this way worship is therapeutic.¹

The Christian worshipper becomes like the Perfect Person he worships as through the principle of imitation, the reason, emotions and will are converted.

Worship is the God-given source of fulfillment, which is the answer to the human quandary - the grim and widely attested human experience of non-fulfillment, in life and selfhood failure.²

From the healing realm of medicine has emerged a specialist known as a psychotherapist who specializes in mental healing. This has been deemed necessary because of the discovery that mental

¹Phillips, op. cit., p. 347. (Quoted from The Place of Worship in Modern Medicine by Howard E. Collier.)

²Outler, op. cit., p. 99.
ills directly affect the body. Fatigue and low-energy levels were found to be more of a psychological problem than physiological and it was noted that various persons gained wholeness of health when conditions at home and at work improved. Most of the fundamental motifs gained and used by psychotherapists as the practical wisdom of science came from the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is of value in examining the bases of worship to consider some of these motifs.

One is the recognition of the SUBPERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL MATRIX OF LIFE. Even the most casual observer of life will note that persons stand in the highest order of life, having their rootage in the lower forms of the universe. First, there is the inanimate earth with its molecular structure; second, the plant life with its organic structures; third, the animal life with its instinctive behavior; and finally, human life with its capacities for reason.

The psychotherapist attempts the problem of guiding men to accept their place in this order of the universe and of helping them to adjust to the rigor of natural law.

\[1\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 25.\]
God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust". ¹ God has placed man in this world and His laws of the universe follow their impersonal patterns. Their workings bring humility to man and chasten his pride, as he seeks shelter from the elements and food to sustain his body. From this struggle Christ called men to worship:

For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.²

Jesus said that God knows that he has placed men on an impersonal earth and that they need food, clothing and shelter. This is a fact of life that God expects man to accept. But the call to worship is a call for man to assume his proper place in the order of life. His nature is to go higher, according to his creation, not lower. If man attends only to the lower natures of inorganic, organic and animal, then his imitative nature tends to become like the objects of his affection. Man's heart follows his treasure.

Through worship of God man assumes his proper

¹Matt. 5:45b.
²Matt. 6:32,33.
created place and in that harmonious situation finds himself adjusted to the lower natures and is able to share in their fruits.

Man is limited on the one hand by his eternal, spiritual creation in the image of God; hence, the dishonoring of parents and ancestors, lying, stealing, cursing, adultery, killing, etc. are not compatible with this nature. On the other hand man is limited by his finite nature, his bodily creation with its localizing effect upon the activities of life. This finiteness is violated by idolatry, refusal to rest, etc.

Because of the complex problems involved in trying to clearly define man's limits, the Christian can be thankful that true Christian worship does not call attention to man's limits as much as it, through love, keeps his attention upon the Spring of life. "In worship there is achieved a 'pure', unadulterated relation between matter and spirit and the 'wholeness' of that relation is clarified."¹ Man cannot live two lives, a devotional life within the Church and a

life in a civilization where the spirit of worship is threatened with extinction.

'It is a mistake', declared Dr. Temple, 'to suppose that God is interested solely or even chiefly in religion.' Isolated, fragmented worship, existing in a world of its own, is not worship. That which has to be brought to God is the totality of human life, the whole complex of man's existence.¹

A second motif of psychotherapy is RESPECT FOR PERSONS.²

The essential beginning of any treatment is the establishment of a permissive situation in which the person knows himself free to be himself and to be accepted and dealt with as himself.³

One of the primary assumptions of therapeutic practice is the actual intelligibility of the apparently unintelligible in human behavior - and the conviction that self-knowledge is the precondition of cure and health. From this follows the general idea that the basic enterprise in therapy is the quest for insight.⁴

God is no respecter of persons but Christianity declares that God has unlimited re-

²Outler, op. cit., p. 22.
³Ibid., p. 23.
⁴Ibid., p. 27.
spect for every individual person.\footnote{John 3:16} The high fact of Christian worship is that God does not demand it. God seeks for men to worship Him. This does three things. Inasmuch as God seeks worshippers, they know they will be accepted. Inasmuch as God is no respecter of persons, the worshipper knows he will be dealt with as himself on an equal basis with all other men. Inasmuch as God is good the worshipper knows he will be free to be himself.

In consideration of the principle that self-knowledge is the precondition of cure and health, we come to the basic enterprise in therapy, which is the quest for insight. Plato was much concerned with this problem. He arrived at a solution, but discovered his inability to complete his grand idea. His thought was that if a perfect man could be created, then all other men could look to that man and through imitation gain the insight they needed for their
own lives. After his time came Christianity, and with it God's solution for all men's insight, in the Perfect Person of Jesus Christ. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."¹ What greater respect for persons can we find than that God Himself would suffer and die for men! What greater stimulus for insight can there be than Perfect God living and dying in the body as perfect man!

A third motif of psychotherapy is that

NEUROTIC BEHAVIOR IS NEVER MEANINGLESS.²

The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness.³

The Christian belief is that man is created in the image of God. Therefore no act is unimportant or meaningless. A divine nature has divine implications. The modes of neurotic behavior indicate the means of worship needed for healing. "Worship is

¹II Cor. 5:19.
³Matt. 6:22,23.
an integrating force of inestimable power.

Rollo May has called Christ "the therapist for humanity".¹

Humanity cries out for someone or some power that will assist it to transcend the self-destructive contradiction and rise from the hell of neurosis to the level of creativity and happiness.

This, then, is the function of Christ... We are able to put an unconditional trust in him because He is by definition more than human... He is able to help us transcend the contradiction within ourselves and within our society... He is our essential nature, the goodness of human personality...²

WORSHIP AND SYMBOLS

Throughout history human beings have given a central place of importance to worship; yet in the present day, men are inclined to think of the hour of formal worship as a time of escape. Worship has become for many an "escape mechanism" from harsh reality.

However, in the robust periods of religion,

²Ibid.
the forms and symbols of worship were taken from the actualities of daily existence. Worship was an integral part of life as life was actually lived. The symbols were derived from daily experience; washing, eating and drinking, marrying, working, suffering and dying.¹

From this knowledge our attention is drawn to this important fact of worship: A symbol incorporates truth only as long as it validly transmits spiritual understanding.

"According to natural theology, the achievement of spiritual reality is possible only through the medium of material things."² The New Testament bears out this statement by this declaration:

For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity....³


³Rom. 1:20.
Thus God is knowable and known through materialistic symbols.

Jung points out that the value of a symbol does not depend merely on historical causes but that its chief importance lies in the fact that it has a meaning for the actual present and for the future in their psychological aspects.\(^1\) Through symbols, man attempts to comprehend and also apprehend the way for further psychological development.\(^2\)

In Christian worship it is of great importance in the observances of the ordinances that the original meaning of the symbols be preserved in their purity in order that a like-minded fellowship be created and sustained.

A symbol may be defined as a sign, an object or a representation of one thing to express another which is allied to it either by association or by common characteristics.\(^3\)

Symbols are the tools of the imagination. Words are symbols of ideas and so new ideas, new


\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Biddle, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
thoughts and new inventions may require new symbols to represent them. It is in the concept of words as symbols that the average person can best understand the spiritual significance and vital role that symbols play in our worship.

Language is the medium of communication between persons. The word-symbol is a means whereby an idea is transmitted from the mind of one person to the mind of another. Word-symbols control our eating, our work and our play. The use of a few words can actually mean life or death. The words do not perform the action, for that is all done by persons, but they are the medium of the action, just as the river bed is not the river but is the medium of transmission and direction.

In our daily language thoughts are expressed more vividly and interestingly by concrete images than by abstract or general terms; for instance, the various parts of the human body are richly symbolic:

The eye is the window of the soul. The tongue is a whiplash or piercing sword. A person may be hardhearted or have a heart of gold. Hair is a woman's crowning glory and a sign of a man's virility. Teeth and tears are pearls.1

1Ibid.
Human qualities and characteristics are ascribed to inanimate things - the wind whispers or roars; the waves of the sea sob; the country flows with milk and honey. Colors are symbolic - an angry person sees red; the jealous person is green with envy; the coward is yellow; sins may be as scarlet.  

Symbolism, then, may be said to be the identifying in nature of our human qualities and characteristics.

Jesus made frequent use of this symbolism. For example, "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?"

He was the Master-Psychologist who took the symbolisms that men had already established between themselves and nature, and with that relationship showed men their relationship to God through the things that are made. He was able to lead men to the transferring of their habitual attention from material to spiritual things.

On one occasion He identified men as the light of the world, finally concluding, "Even so

1Ibid., p. 74.

2Matt. 5:13.
let your light so shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.\textsuperscript{1}

And then again He tells of the lilies of the field which are more beautifully dressed than even Solomon, the great king in all his glory. He says they were not anxious concerning clothing and so if God so clothes the grass of the field which has such a brief life, then "shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"\textsuperscript{2}

He also tells of good trees that bring forth good fruit and corrupt trees that bring forth corrupt fruit, "therefore by their fruits shall ye know them. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."\textsuperscript{3}

In each case He identifies men and nature and then through nature identifies men and God. Jesus relies on the fact that God saw that everything that He had made was very good. Jesus showed us that

\textsuperscript{1}Matt. 5:16.
\textsuperscript{2}Matt. 6:30.
\textsuperscript{3}Matt. 7:20, 21.
through the goodness of nature, men can be led to the goodness of God.

**FAITH**

It is by relying on the goodness of God as shown in nature that men first come to have faith which is essential in Christian worship.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear.¹

Without faith we could not live. It is necessary in simple everyday living. A complete skeptic would lead a very precarious existence. He would be unable to walk across a floor without testing carefully every step of the way; for without faith everything would have to be tested and proved over and over again. He would have to test every mouthful of food for possible poisoning; even the safety of the air would have to be doubted.² Augustine³ has said that the whole practical life of man is

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¹ *Heb.* 11:1-3.
² *Biddle, op. cit.*, p. 143.
founded on faith. We trust the paper boy, the milkman, the barber, the doctor, the dentist, the airplane pilot and the restaurant cook. Our vast credit system is a matter of faith. Without faith we could have no government and no police protection.

"Faith is the belief in the authority or reliability of someone or something without proof by personal experience."\(^1\) When something has been proved then it is no longer faith but is an experienced fact.

A religious faith in God is developed only through the media of men and material objects. The spiritual is achieved only through the material. When doubts arise about the trustworthiness of men, faith is supported by reliance upon other material things. Experience is the trustworthiness of nature, and then natural law helps to restore the faith of men in man.\(^2\)

There is the solace of the woods, the wide-swept view of an ocean that can make a man feel clean and strong again inside and the comfort of a good meal.

When people are losing faith in others then they are supported by their faith in objects. "The neurotic patient often describes the failure of

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 144.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 145.
some material object as being the 'last straw'.\[1\]

In worship, the offering that we make to God is symbolic of our dedication and strengthens our faith in God. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts..."\[2\]

In summary, the Christian scriptures state that a man cannot worship God without faith:

"...without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him."\[3\]

HOPE

"Reassurance is the most common type of therapy used in psychiatric treatment. It supports both faith and hope."\[4\] The doctor must continuously assure the patient that even the most difficult problems can be solved. The hope of the patient must be sustained through the process of working his

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\[1\]Ibid., p. 147.

\[2\]Heb. 11:4.

\[3\]Heb. 11:6.

\[4\]Biddle, op. cit., p. 143.
problems through to a feasible conclusion; for the best results can only be promoted by helping the patient to develop his own standards of value, instead of imposing those of anyone else upon him.\(^1\)

The therapist recognizes that no matter how right he may be about things which the patient cannot or will not recognize, it is an empty victory to insist upon being right. "The healing value of an insight is directly proportional to the degree in which the patient has made it his own instead of taking it over from another person."\(^2\) If the basis for the worth of a man's existence does not lie within him, then the forces beyond his control can destroy the significance of his life.

The net result of seeking the meaning of life by means of acquiring wealth, power, pleasure, popularity, etc.) is deep-seated anxiety... Usually the more desperately one places his eggs in such baskets, the more vulnerable he is... Far too often we strive to meet the problem by having something significant instead of by becoming or being something significant.\(^3\)

Therapy has a moral purpose in that it rests

\(^1\)David E. Roberts, Psychotherapy and a Christian View of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 44.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 48.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 46.
on the assumption that internal harmony and a capacity for personal growth and responsibility are better than emotional conflict, anxiety and self-enslavement. In serving this purpose it is promoting an end which is analogous to religious salvation.\(^1\)

And so in worship the Christian knows he has a personal God who cares and he is able to pour out his deepest troubles to Him, troubles he may not dare tell another person. The reassurance of God for man comes in great part through the scriptures. "That we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope".\(^2\)

However the greatest of hope comes through worship itself. Hope might be called our faith in the future, in life to come. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable."\(^3\)

It is in our worship that we become acquainted with the meaning of spirit, which we

\(^{1}\)Ibid., p. 40.
\(^{2}\)Rom. 15:4.
\(^{3}\)I Cor. 15:9.
are taught in the scriptures, is the true godly life, for in the future we are to have "spiritual bodies".¹

It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body... Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual.²

In worship we are in contact with God who is a spirit; thereby, the more we worship, the more we become like God, the more we are prepared and ready for the hope that becomes strengthened within us, for worship gives reassurance.

This reassurance comes because God is approachable and does not criticize. A person with a problem is seldom seeking advice. The average person can see the solution to the problem, but emotional factors make it difficult to reach a decision, and time is needed to handle this emotional element.

The experience of psychotherapists is this:

the wise counselor must assure the client that he has faith in him, supplies needed information, helps the client to evaluate all

¹I Cor. 15:44.
²I Cor. 15:46.
aspects of his problem and talk it out, but allows him to draw his own conclusions. The sincere person who seeks help will make the right decisions if he is trusted and permitted to weigh his problem carefully.  

With God as the Great Counselor, Christian worship provides all these elements and even more for God has infinite patience with the erring person, and is all things to all men.

LOVE

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hageth, and the prophets.

Jesus makes love the prime essential of the Christian religion. The progression is self-love, love of other humans and finally the great love, the love of God.

The mark that identifies a person from a dog, an ape or a cow is his consciousness of himself, his self-identity. A person is able to

\[1\text{Biddle, op. cit., p. 149.}\]
\[2\text{Rom. 15:5.}\]
\[3\text{Matt. 22:37-40.}\]
say "I am the same person I was yesterday". Every normal man enjoys this unity or union. It is the core of his being.

The basis of it, or foundation of it -- called the 'soul'-- defies detection either by the special senses or by the internal sense that scans the operations of consciousness, as Hume pointed out long ago.¹

Out of this necessary attribute of a man comes the sentiment of self-love, which carries with it the correlates of self-respect, self-regard or self-reverence. In conscious experience this sentiment works to unify the man by quelling his inner discord and subduing his animal nature to his distinctive rational striving for ends...It integrates or makes the man whole.

At the same time this sentiment of self-love or self-respect urges a man to better himself. In order to do this he chooses an ideal. He self-consciously adopts some supreme end or purpose which is reflected in every one of his rational deliberate actions.²

²Ibid.
The person then integrates his many diversities around this unifying end.

This love of self is vitally important, for Jesus bases the love of God and the love of others upon the capacity to love ourselves. We are to love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves.

Psychological studies have shown that our capacity to love others is conjunctive with our capacity to love humanity in our own persons.¹ Our capacity to accept ourselves is a direct measurement as to our ability to accept others.

As this sentiment quells inner discord and integrates or makes the man whole, religious people call the resulting change "conversion". There can be, and are, many, many conversions, depending upon the ideal that has been chosen through self-love.

As every normal person recognizes his fellowmen as being like himself, in order to be self-respecting, he moves out from his own immediate

¹Roberts, op. cit., p. 137.
concerns to regard for others. At first this becomes Justice as formulated in the Golden Rule,1 and then finally love for others. The person's moral world has widened for he has taken in all men as his other selves or as himself. It is from these relationships with his fellows who are equal to himself that the Church and the kingdom of God are formed.

Within this circle of equals, ideals may be selected, but they become temporary, for no man is perfect; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Man, however, being inspired by his self-love, continues to aspire to be a perfect person.

It is at this juncture that religion, and necessarily revealed religion, comes to man, with the Ideal somehow, partially or completely incarnate in a being who unlike equivocal plant or animal nature, is unambiguously a moral being, fit to be an example for spirit beings like himself.2

The Christian finds this supreme Ideal, this supreme object of love, incarnate in the

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1 Holmes, op. cit., p. 41.
2 Ibid.
God-man Jesus Christ, in Whom God came, reconciling the world unto himself. God thereby revealed Himself as the Perfect Person. He showed Himself to be supremely worthy of men's love by making the sacrifice of Himself for sin for all men. He made love of men for Him supremely possible by living a perfect life of love in human form.

Here is the Ideal of all ideals for adoration and praise. One who is perfect man as well as Perfect God. He was tempted in all points even as we and He overcame even as we desire to do.

An important part of the Gospel of love is that God seeks for us to worship Him. He not only is worthy of our love, but He desires it.

Even though we are not perfect, we have the assurance that we are acceptable to Him in worship.

In worship, God is seen first as the Supreme Other, then as our Archetype and wholeness, the Alpha and Omega of all self-hood and other-hood. In the divine love, power and creativeness and all lesser loves are seen to be infinitely complete.¹

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIAN PRAYER

"Prayer in its essence is communion with God. The simplest analogy—that of loving, trustful intercourse between friend and friend—is also the most profound." ¹

The late William James stated that prayer was "every kind of inward communion or conversation with the power recognized as divine". ² Bede Frost thought of it as "an intercourse of the spirit of God". ³ Wieman wrote that "prayer is the conscious attempt directly to adjust one's own personality to God". ⁴

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¹E. Herman, Creative Prayer (New York: George H. Doran Company), p. 21.


"Prayer is the soul of religion...", is the understanding of Fosdick, "Failure in prayer is the loss of religion itself in its inward and dynamic aspect of fellowship with the Eternal."¹

Prayer is a cumulative life of friendship with God... When the Master prayed, he met somebody. His life was impinged on by another life... For prayer is neither chiefly begging for things, nor is it merely self-communion; it is that loftiest experience within the reach of any soul, communion with God. It is a continuous fellowship with God...²

A broader understanding of prayer can come from reading of the prayer life of Jesus as set forth in the New Testament³, rather than to try to gain a full understanding through the formality of definition.

THE COMPOSITION OF PRAYER

Unless God hears and answers prayer, it is a mere incantation in a void. There is no longer any value in burnt offerings.⁴

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²Ibid., pp. 27, 28.


⁴Heb. 10: 6.
Man would probably see no point in praying if he could secure what he needed from his fellows, from physical nature itself or from himself. But man is not able to obtain all his needs from these three. It is notable that each man's conception of God's nature determines the kind of prayer he utters.

The existence of God is not enough alone for a man to believe about God. He must have an idea of some personal relationship. For the Christian there is the personal concept of a Good God\(^1\) and a Loving Father\(^2\). With such a concept there is no ground whereby a rational being may make requests for evil, use magical incantations or grope blindly after powers in order that he might use them in maledictions on others or in benedictions for himself and his friends.

\(^1\)Matt. 19:16.

\(^2\)Rom. 8:28.
Prayer involves the intellect, emotions and will.

Within the composition of intellect of a man are memory, reason, imagination and judgment. From memory comes the basis of prayer wherein the idea of God is retained.

From imagination comes the constructions wherewith means and methods of satisfying the desires and achieving the purposes are composed. It has been said that "the principal function of imagination is to improve on reality".\(^1\) Out of the storehouse of memory, imagination takes the materials of experience and alters them and fashions them into shapes of its own.\(^2\) This wonderful faculty may be used to create visions of improvement or perfection, or serve as a retreat from the constant insistence of reality. From this creative faculty comes the modern skyscraper and the day-dreaming of youth. Imagination does its best service when it gives us a view of the


\(^{2}\)Ibid., p. 128.
possibilities of our own life so compelling that the desire to realize these becomes our absorbing passion.

Its highest service is when it furnishes us with such an enchanting image of the Man Jesus Christ that we follow Him by an irresistible impulse, and our whole existence becomes a ceaseless prayer to be like Him in mind and heart, in speech and behavior.

From reason comes the purposes for the prayer and the judgment whereby the proper words and ideas are selected in talking with God.

Within the composition of the emotional structure of a man are such primary emotions as anger, fear, greed, etc., and such sentiments as love and hate. Since it is the desire or felt-want that is the motive that initiates and sustains prayer; it is equally clear that repetition may soon deaden all prayer.

The sentiment of self-respect or self-love is the basic factor in initiating, sustaining and setting the end or purpose of petitions, for man is and must be first of all concerned of himself. This is not from the idea of selfishness but from

\[1^\text{Ibid.},\ p.\ 139.\]
the idea of self-fulfillment.

Hatred of others will produce maledictions and love will produce benedictions. Entirely emotional is the ejaculatory prayer.

Within the will of a man are attention, choice, and the stimulus of action.

Unless a man has the will power to attend to his idea of God he is less than a man and cannot pray. Habit has the tendency to relieve the will of attending to its processes so that repetition and reading of prayers tends to an automatic manner of prayer.

Mere repetition of words often makes a mockery of prayer. G. Campbell Morgan tells of a visitor to a prayer meeting who had been praying for twenty minutes and who

had been giving the Almighty information of which He had been in possession long before the man was born, at last he said, "And now, O Lord God, what more shall we say unto Thee?" An old man who knew how to pray audibly replied, "Call Him 'Feyther!'; mon, and ax for summat".1

Man's will operates also in his choosing

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1G. Campbell Morgan, The Practice of Prayer (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1906, p. 120.)
whether he will pray or not and as to what he will pray about. To force either an adult or a child to pray is only to make a mechanical act. A man may choose to pray privately anytime, anywhere.¹ However, for public prayers the time and the place must be set. From this necessity have arisen holy days and holy places. Jesus' teachings should have freed men from such limitation for He taught that God was a Spirit and that men must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Man's will operates instantaneously and harmoniously to produce physical action within the body whenever a thought is framed in the mind. The lips, the vocal organs or the muscles of the body are moved automatically in prayer. But we know from the New Testament that God is not interested in the posture or attitude of the body but rather in the attitude of the mind.² The body should be placed in whatever position will assist the mind in its adoration. In the highest forms of prayer, the body is as motionless as possible.

¹I Thess. 4:17.
²John 4:12.
It is true that bodily actions are helpful in bringing about religious attitudes of mind, such as the postures of the bent knee and the closed eyes. "Nearly everyone feels the helpfulness of closing the eyes in prayer, as this shuts out all irrelevant visual impressions."¹ Attitudes of kneeling or lying prostrate are the natural expressions of humility and help to bring about the humble attitude of mind. Association also plays its part if these experiences of kneeling, closing the eyes and clasping the hands have from childhood been associated with the emotions of reverence and awe; then they should continue to suggest and incipiently to produce these emotions throughout life.²

Some men are aided by either natural or artificial aids in their praying. The sun, moon, stars, mountains, hills, trees, rocks, fish, and animals have all been religious objects.

Men in many places have created their own

²Ibid.
worship aids such as incense, because it ascended as a smoke upward; and because it drowned out the unbearable odors of sacrificial burnings; and various objects because they were believed to contain "mana" or a magical power, such as lye water since it cleansed the dirt from hands.

Image worship and idolatry differ in the adoration of the image itself and in the worship of the god so represented.

The value of mechanical aids is very dubious. The decline of the spiritual and the ascendancy of the physical is marked by written ritualistic prayers, prescribed places, set times, postures, churches, altars, crucifixes, candles, incense, rosaries that keep account of the number of prayers and prayer wheels.

The Lord's Prayer, as the model for Christians, indicates that mechanical aids are not necessary. A part of the composition of prayer is in its subject matter and the arrangement of that subject matter.

The subject matter may be any collection
of thoughts or a single thought which is addressed to God.

The arrangement is usually that of an introduction wherein God is addressed, a central series of thoughts suitably phrased in words which move toward a climax and a conclusion which draws to the point of saying goodbye to God who has been listening to the petition.

On the side of classical mysticism, prayer sometimes called "interior prayer", becomes contemplation or mere fixation of attention without speech, and even without word images. In the opposite direction, that of ritualism, vocal formulae are exactly repeated, as in connection with the sacrifice, under an impression that the formula has some sort of efficacy in itself.¹

Either of these extremes does not include the whole man and hence is not real prayer. The first is negation; and the second magic.

"All the meaning of prayer is lost if by repetition it has become a mere form of words".²

When the ritualistic prayer thus comes to be considered as possessing power in itself, regardless of the mental state of him who says it, it ceases of course to be a prayer at all and becomes exactly a magic spell.³

²Pratt, op. cit., p. 316.
³Ibid., p. 314.
Ritualistic repetition may be compared with bodily postures in their value. The form of words oft repeated may serve from association to stimulate religious attitudes.

THE ENDS OF PRAYER

For what shall men pray?

First of all, men should pray for their desires. "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."\(^1\) The New Testament tells Christian to make requests to God concerning everything which they desire. God wants men to ask Him. Men want the gifts that come from God. Only prayer can bring mutual satisfaction. Thus men should pray for whatever they want. Will they get their request? "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures."\(^2\)

Christian prayer should be asked in the name

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\(^1\)Phil. 4:6.  
\(^2\)James 4:2,3.
of the Lord Jesus Christ which means in accordance with the purposes of Christ. "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through Him." ¹

Secondly, men should pray for an uncountable number of blessings.

Some of these are personal and may be listed as prayers for the true, the good and the beautiful; all of which together make up the person. A person needs to pray for the sustaining and growth of all his essential spiritual parts. A person is never satisfied with anything less than the best as an ultimate goal, and thus always seeks to improve or better himself with perfection as the goal. He uses prayer to secure the aid of God in attaining these spiritual ends. But though we may divide, arbitrarily, a person into the three essential parts of intellect, emotions and will; nevertheless, we realize that every person is just one person. Therefore there must be some ultimate end for the person himself for which he should pray over and above all other ends, thereby making all other ends

¹Col. 3:17.
merely means to the supreme end.

What is the supreme end? Man is a moral being. Since man is always seeking the best, he therefore seeks for the perfection of his moral action which we may call moral perfection. He seeks perfect self-control, complete self-knowledge which gives full self-respect, which is the estimate of and treatment of himself, never as a means, but always as an end.

Man is seeking always to become morally perfect and he prays because he feels the need of the help of God in this task. Man is an end in himself but he realizes that he cannot grow toward that end without the help of the Almighty God. Hence the absolute end of prayer, for every rational creature is his own moral perfection, an ideal towards which he can always, under all circumstances move, but which he never, on this earth, finally reaches; and one which he may approximate forever and forever, in a life-herafter of perpetual progress: 1 "and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto

1Col. 3:1-4; 10.
knowledge after the image of him that created him".\(^1\)

Some of the prayers for blessings have social implications, that is, the immediate end of certain prayers is a request for others. For instance, the model prayer, the Lord's prayer, begins with our praying for God, "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done..."\(^2\) The essence of praying for God is in praising Him. Men's prayers directed to this end contain in addition to the expression of his needs, confession of sin, praises and intimate converse with divine. This is the natural outcome of a religious consciousness to which the spiritual world is as great a reality as the material. Just as the natural man needs the society of his kind for his full development, so the spiritual man can only live and grow as he enjoys communion with the divine. The large element of praise found in prayers of communion may be taken as an expression of the right relationship which should exist between the worshipper and the object of his worship.\(^3\)

"Intense joy and thankfulness, for example, express themselves as naturally, and for some persons as inevitably, in prayer, as does the sense of

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Matt. 6:9,10.

crying need.  

There is also the intercessory prayer of praying for our Christian brethren. "Pray for one another", \(^2\) is the admonition of the book of James. This can be done either in private or public prayer.

There is the intercessory prayer of praying for those who are not Christian, as we have the example of the dying Stephen, "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charge". \(^3\)

The supreme end of all Christian prayer is Christlikeness. Herein man's supreme purpose and God's purpose for man become one and the same. Man needs an ideal and a perfect guide in his striving. For this purpose of revealing an ideal person and in order to show men how to realize Him in themselves, God manifested Himself in the form of a man in Jesus Christ, the Perfect Person, in whom now man can find an example of the moral perfection which he is seeking.

If man prays for the supreme end of

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\(^1\)Pratt, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

\(^2\)James 5:16.

\(^3\)Acts 7:60.
becoming like Christ, he may do so with the full assurance that his prayer is being answered by the very formation and adoption of such a request. We do not know how to pray as we ought, but we can at least pray this one prayer.

THE FUNCTION OF PRAYER

What does prayer do?

The New Testament holds that "the prayer of a righteous man availeth much in its working". Elijah "a man of like passions with us" prayed that it might not rain and it didn't rain. 1

From the personal viewpoint, William Brown states four things that prayer can do for us: 2

1. Open our eyes to the beauties and wonders of the world.
2. Introduce us into a fellowship more intimate and satisfying than human friendship.
3. In prayer we speak to Him and He speaks to us.
4. It can furnish us with supplies of energy which will reinforce our limited powers and make us adequate to meet whatever strain the day will bring.

Prayer brings the emotion or sentiment of

1James 5:16, 17.

peace. This may come through the relaxing of the muscles of the body as well as the elimination of mental conflict.

Some illustrations are (emotional):

1. Peace from release of anxieties, worry, phobias, etc. after counseling with a psychiatrist, pastor or others.

2. Peace from faith and trust in God. "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ". 1

3. Peace of progress toward moral perfection.

Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. The things which ye both learned and received and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you. 2

4. Peace of reconciliation with God. "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ". 3

Jesus three times prayed the same prayer

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1Rom. 5:1.
2Phil. 4:8,9.
3Rom. 5:1.
in Gethsemane and the third time apparently found peace.¹ He reconciled His will to the will of God and found therein an understanding that through His death He would accomplish what He wanted most. "And I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto myself".²

The Apostle Paul found a similar experience through prayer when he prayed that the stake in his flesh be removed. The prayer transformed the messenger of Satan into a shining angel from God. He found that often the poorer the preacher, the greater the credit goes to his message. Paul wanted above all things to have the Gospel preached,³ no matter by whom nor from what motive.⁴ Prayer led him to magnify the message and not the means or the man.

Prayer suggests new ideas.

The word suggestion indicates a process and a product. As a process, suggestion gives

²John 12:32.
³Gal. 4:13.
⁴Phil. 1:18.
persons ideas by association, as "ice" suggests "cold" and "red" suggests "danger". Almost all of our learning by repetition or habit of thought depends upon this process. Ideas direct action and the power of ideas to suggest ideas becomes tremendous in character making and lifts preaching to new heights.

James shows in his Principles of Psychology how suggestion works in the association of ideas by contiguity, recency, repetition, intensity, and feeling or emotional-tone both in reasoning and productive thinking and in musing or ruminating.

Meditative praying involves this kind of association which often brings to mind unexpected ideas from the past and suggests new ideas never thought of before.

There is also the process of suggestion which may be called reflection in prayer, beginning with the relative judgments of the relative values of things we have learned haphazardly to want. It

examines, judges and arranges our wants in a hierarchy from the least to the highest. Such a process not only makes character but an organized character coming to a climax in the highest.

Prayer through suggestion inspires and directs bodily action.

The influence of prayer upon our ideas exercised by ordinary psychological association is but the beginning of what suggestion can and does do through prayer.

All such suggestion rests finally upon the fundamental psychic principle: Every impression made upon the nervous system brings an expression in muscular contraction, molar or microscopic. This means that what a man thinks he will eventually do. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he".¹ In this fundamental principle of character making involved in prayer, both psychology and the Bible agree.

¹Prov. 28:7.
communication of a proposition from one person, or persons, to another in such a way as to secure its acceptance with conviction, in the absence of adequate logical grounds. This brings belief based upon the Apostle Paul's reasoning with and persuading men. By gaining this intellectual acceptance, volitional conduct is the expression.

Suggestion may also be defined as to the behavior it brings about. In this sense it is acting without due deliberation upon an idea to act in a particular way. It is this dramatic exhibition of suggestion that is known to the general public.

Since every idea and emotion automatically carries with it the impulse to some action, every prayer is in fact a suggestion to the person who makes it and to all that hear and understand it. Suggestion both inspires and directs bodily

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3Coe, op. cit., p. 121.
It is important that we see in all suggestion that it is a mystery. We do not know what makes it happen. We can only describe what happens. Thus we must not exclude God from this mystery. We can say that here is a great power given to us which we can use or misuse to great advantage or great detriment. We cannot create nor fully control it. Suggestion is God-made and God-controlled.

James held that hypnotizing was a normal operation whose mechanics have been comparatively well explored, though within it are still many mysteries.¹

Our interest in suggestion is not for purposes of hypnotizing but as to how this tremendous power of suggestion which is used in hypnotizing can be used in prayer so that it can give us new power and faith.

Due to suggestion, the subjects which are mentioned in prayer affect not only God

¹James, op. cit., Vol.II, Chapter xxvii.
who is addressed, but have a reverse effect upon the person who is doing the praying. This is known as auto-suggestion.

The process by which this is attained is assuredly one of auto-suggestion, but to say this is not, as is often supposed, to eviscerate prayer of all objective spiritual content. It is certainly not necessary to eliminate the idea of the operation of the spirit of God, because we find in auto-suggestion the mode in which, or the channel through which His Spirit works. It is now universally recognized that God can reveal Himself to men in the operation of the ordinary physical laws of nature, quite apart from what used to be called super-natural interference.\(^1\)

The suggestion that is made to others is known as alter-suggestion. Alter-suggestion operates not only in prayer but as an essential feature of psychoanalysis, psychiatry, salesmanship, advertising, and evangelism as well as many others.

The effect of all kinds of suggestion varies in its power according to certain conditions. McDougall shows that there are at least four

\(^1\)Selbie, *op. cit.*, p. 222.
dominate human conditions in which suggestibility is increased: ¹

1. Abnormal states of brain, as fatigue, hypnosis, hysteria, sleep, etc.
2. Deficiency of knowledge or conviction relating to topic in regard to which the suggestion is made.
3. Impressive character of the source of the suggestion.
4. Peculiarity of character and native disposition of the subject.

Thus it appears that from this analysis prayer is most effective to help others at times of man's extremities.

In stating conditions such as McDougall's, we should realize that we are merely describing what happens and when it happens. Certainly we recognize that these are human conditions, but we can't fully explain the why. It must be reiterated at this point that in suggestion we find a power that is superhuman. There is always a power operating which men cannot create nor fully control. It transcends man's power to define except in the way it functions; by the way it operates in specific cases.

Suggestion is a familiar phenomena. Who has not felt desire elicited from the print and pictures of a mail-order catalogue? How many are there who have not desired to be like the hero or heroine of a movie? Who can explain the authentic cases of stigmatization except by auto-suggestion of the suffering of Jesus coming by meditating on the Crucifix? 1

1See the following for examples of suggestion:


William McDougall, Outline of Abnormal Psychology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), Chapters iv, v, xv.


Coe, op. cit.


Suggestion enhances our physical powers. We have many instances of men and women suddenly finding unexpected power within themselves. There is the case of the man who lifted a tree trunk off his companion who had been pinned by its fall. The next day he could not budge the trunk. There are many cases of men and even women moving such items as pianos from the house in cases of fire.

Prayer through suggestion can affect other people besides the person praying. All that has been said previously about suggestion applies to intercessory prayer when the person being prayed for knows that others are praying for him. His knowledge becomes a suggestion to him.

It may further be possible that thought is transferred from mind to mind without any prior knowledge and that the power which is suggestion is set in motion by a prayer for another person, with the idea ascending to the mind of God and descending to the object of His mercy. In all prayer God is involved.
Suggestion is then a gift of God to be used by men. No man can create it nor fully control it. Certain conditions must be met before it will operate. Hence it is a power of God, not isolated, but operating in all mental elements as sensations, perceptions, ideas, emotions and volitions.

In prayer which is cooperation of man and God, this power of suggestion appears. It is useful to man but is controlled and limited by God. Though it is powerful it will not break through fixed sentiments, will not murder a man at a distance nor dominate trained minds except as they permit it. Prayer can both give and nullify suggestion.

THE VALUE OF PRAYER

What is prayer worth?

Prayer is not an end in itself but is a means to an end. It has value then in so much as the end is good that is sought by the petitioner and as the prayer is efficacious.
Truth being the satisfaction of the desire for maximum unity, prayer brings a man truth in unifying his purposes in life by impelling him to reflect upon the supreme thing that he wants. A praying man will eventually be able to define the supreme end of life clearly.

A person is an end in himself as we conclude from the way he makes use of every created thing for his own improvement. Yet since every man can imagine himself to be better than he actually is, and feels the ever-enduring urge to realize that better self stage by stage, he aspires to be a perfect moral man.

The praying man will eventually find the perfect man that he wants to be, exemplified for him in Christ, the God-man who lived a life of prayer.

Prayer is practical. It unifies both persons and societies. Socially it sets the
Kingdom of God as the only government possible for all men and aids men to cooperate with God in bringing all men into that Kingdom.

...the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to his saints, to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we proclaim, admonishing every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ; whereunto I labor also, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.¹

¹Col. 1:26-29.
 CHAPTER III

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

Baptism is the ordinance or sacrament placed at the entrance of the Church, the community of the people of God. It is ordained by Christ.1

It is the first act of worship of a man that can be truly called Christian in the full sense of the word, for it is the initiation of the believer into the Church, the body of Christ.

And when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.2

And Philip opened his mouth and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water, and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? ...for he went his way rejoicing.3

1Matt. 28:19.
2Acts 8:12.
3Acts 8:30.
THE SIMPLICITY OF THE ACTION OF BAPTISM

In the early days of the Church we find that baptism was a simple act of worship in response to a man's belief in Jesus Christ.

In the case of the eunuch we read of an example that may express baptism in its purest and simplest form. Here was a man traveling a desert road, reading the Scriptures. The Christian Philip was sent to explain to him about Christ. The eunuch upon hearing, believed and asked to be baptized. Philip baptized him and he went on his way rejoicing.

The case of the Philippian jailor is almost as simple. Asking what he must do to be saved, he was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and having the word of the Lord spoken to him, he was baptized in the same hour of the night, with the same result of rejoicing greatly.

These acts of baptism show worship of the highest order - the spontaneous response of a man to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ with the
resulting emotion of joy.

THE SYMBOLIC ACTION OF BAPTISM

"Worship is an act: a thing done. The Baptismal rite does not argue about regeneration; it proceeds with the action, as mysterious, as pregnant as the planting of a seed in the ground."¹

Jesus said, "Except one be born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God".²

In the Creation the waters were the source of the first living creatures;³ the mother of the bodily life. Today water composes the greater part of the earth, and as in the beginning, water is necessary for the physical life of plants, animals and men.

Water sustains all forms of life upon this planet, but in all and through all it is God who gives the increase that makes the water effective.⁴

¹Peck, op. cit., p. 34.
²John 3:5.
³Gen. 1:20.
⁴I Cor. 3:7.
The body of man is almost entirely composed of water and yet for a man to do without water for a few days means death. Though man is so largely composed of water, for him to be submerged in water for only a few minutes, means death also. Either lack of water or an over-abundance of water is a curse for man. Water truly represents the poles of both life and death.

Water because of its high solvent action has great power as a cleansing agent. Men use it for daily cleansing away of the impurities of the body, helping to heal wounds and as a therapeutic agent in certain bodily ailments. Bathing has a refreshing effect on the body. Water is the essential agent in bodily functions. It gives fluidity to the blood and to the lymph that bathes the body cells. It is the agent of transfer in bringing new food to the cells and in carrying away the impurities of the body.

Jesus, in John 7:37 identifies Himself with water, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and
drink";¹ and then goes on to identify water and the indwelling Holy Spirit:

He that believeth on me as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: because Jesus was not yet glorified."²

A similar identification was made in

Speaking to the harlot at the well:

Everyone that drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up into eternal life."³

Jesus said that before a man can enter into the Kingdom of God he must be born again of the water and of the Spirit, again identifying water and the Spirit of God.

Man, through the pangs of thirst and through both the daily external and internal cleansing of his body with water, of necessity identifies himself symbolically with water in its life-saving power.

¹John 7:37.
²John 7:38,39.
³John 4:14.
Thus Jesus points the way of man's unity with God as being through the new birth.

Birth means to come out of the mother. The mother receives all that is necessary to the child, provides a safe place for the constituting of all its necessary parts and carries the unborn child in a sealed enclosing membrane filled with water until the time of birth comes, when the enclosing membrane is broken and the child is brought forth.

The symbolism of being born again is to be received again and sealed into a water-filled enclosure in a condition of sinful disunity that is spiritual death. In the protective confines of this enclosure the disordered parts are reconstituted by the incoming Holy Spirit and the child of God is brought forth, born anew.

This is the natural symbolism, but the vivid symbolism of this Christian worship is in its action.

Jesus called His death, burial and resurrection a baptism,\(^1\) linking them with His own baptism in the

\(^1\)Mark 10:38; Luke 12:50.
Jordan.

The Apostle Paul gives us the symbolism of this in the 6th Chapter of Romans.

The Gospel is that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." The Gospel is symbolized in Christian baptism. "There is now therefore no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus." So since all men have sinned and reaped sin's wages, which is death, and since Christ died for the sins of all men; then men must enter into Christ, who has overcome death, in order to have His life for themselves.

Baptism is the key, for it is the God-chosen symbol of the new birth. In order to be baptized into Christ, we must be baptized into His

\[1\text{I Cor. 15:3,4.}\]
\[2\text{Rom. 8:1.}\]
\[3\text{Rom. 6:23.}\]
Christ did not receive new life without dying to receive it. Men must necessarily follow the Way of Christ, for He is the Ideal.

Therefore a burial is required to dispose of the old sinful man who is dead. "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into his death."

The enclosing water of baptism is the figure of the tomb of Jesus into which we are placed, "that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life". For if we are united with Him in the likeness of His death, then we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. The old man is crucified with Christ so that the body of sin might be done away.

If a man is not raised from the waters of baptism, he literally is dead. It is a tomb both literally and symbolically. There are many who fear

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1 Rom. 6:3.
2 Rom. 6:4.
3 Ibid.
4 Rom. 6:6.
water because of drowning. But the symbolism of the death ends as the descent of the man ceases with the waters covering him; for there, ending the descent of the body of death, is the undergirding arm of the baptizer, symbolical of the everlasting arms of God. The baptizer, symbolic of God, then raises the candidate and the movement symbolizes the change in the waters from those of death to the living waters of the Holy Spirit with their cleansing power. The man is raised, the enclosing seal of the water is broken and, as the man was united with Christ in the likeness of Christ's death, so now he is united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection, and walks in newness of life, having received the gift of the Holy Spirit. ¹

The dominating characteristic then of baptism is neither that of "sin" nor of "burial" but that of life through death. Action is the keynote of the ordinance rather than the elements of the physical.

¹Acts 2:38.
The ordinance therefore retains the structure of all Christian worship, - a spiritual essence with material accompaniments.

**THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM**

The end or purpose of baptism is to gain a new life through Christ. "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved... I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.""1 "And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins."2

It is in this sense a rational procedure and a fit and suitable manifestation of a spiritual death and resurrection. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."3 "We who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death."4

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1 John 10:9,10
2 Eph. 2:1
3 John 12:24
4 Rom.6:3
THE FUNCTION OF BAPTISM

To satisfy the psychic nature of man, who always wishes to carry out into bodily behavior what he conceives in his mind, is one function of baptism.

A personal practical function is to initiate the believer into the Church, the body of Christ. Initiation is well-known as an ancient practice. A certain definite ritual functions to give a clear-cut and satisfying beginning. There is now no question of "belonging". There is a time when a person becomes a member of the Church, so that every person can know when it happens. That moment occurs at the time of baptism with the receiving of the gift of the Holy Spirit,\(^1\) and God and man are one, fulfilling the prayer of Christ.

Baptism functions to create a fellowship of believers. Having all things in common makes for a true fellowship and by all having been symbolically buried in like manner in water, then

\(^1\)Acts 2:38.
all have the common initiation as a common basis for fellowship. Multiple types of baptism create as many types of fellowships. "There is one Lord one faith, one baptism" and any more is divisive.

The form of a thing is often essential to the thing - is sometimes the thing itself. The silver dollar must have the form of a silver dollar; the paper dollar must have the form of the paper dollar; and in each case must be stamped with the national stamp as giving it meaning and authority to serve in the money market. The wedding ring must have its form. Not every circle is a wedding ring, and yet you cannot have the wedding ring without the circle; and this too must be stamped with a something that gives it authority. Not every immersion is baptism, and yet you cannot have baptism without immersion. You may break or mar the form, but so far you have broken or marred or lost the ordinance in all its glorious import as Christ gave it to us.2

Paul, the Apostle, pleads that "Ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment",3 for even in that early Church there were evidently contentions over baptism.

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1Eph. 4:5,6.
31 Cor. 1:10.
Baptism is extremely important in that it is the first act of the Christian worshipper and a tremendous determining influence intellectually, emotionally and volitionally.

Baptism functions as the answer of a good conscience toward God,\(^1\) because each person knows that he or she has fulfilled all righteousness as far as able; thus following in one other way Jesus Christ, who being sinless, was baptized solely to fulfill all righteousness.\(^2\) Jesus was the obedient Son, and so we are obedient as we offer ourselves, body and spirit, in this act of deep humility to the One who seeks us to worship Him.

Socially, baptism is a witnessing before men. As each person is immersed he has made his overt confession of dying to live in symbolic fashion after the manner of Jesus who died on the Cross and was buried in the tomb, confessing that the power of God would raise Him up on the third day.

\(^{1}\) I Pet. 3:21.

\(^{2}\) Matt. 3:15.
Baptism is preaching the Gospel. The act of immersion preaches the Gospel in such a way that a person who cannot read can understand. Those who saw Jesus die and then saw Him after His resurrection received a terrific emotional impact, such as we know by the witness of the New Testament. Many persons today are seen to weep at the time of witnessing the baptism of a relative or friend.

Baptism is a drama. Here is the stage setting, the persons taking part, the audience. Yet this is not make believe nor entertainment. It is obedience to God through Jesus Christ. It is God's great drama whereby He dramatically impresses men with the truth of life. At the beginning of the Christian era, this great drama was begun at the Cross where the Son of God hung surrounded by witnesses as His life blood was given in death. In death He was placed down in a tomb, but having been obedient unto the end, the final act of the drama was resurrection, witnessed by many. This was a powerful drama for
here was not a criminal but a sinless man. Here was a man whose life was taken not by gangsters but by the prevailing religious group of the country. Here was God Himself, who did not have to die, but because of His great love for men took this way of atonement in order that sinful men might be reconciled in love. No greater love drama has ever been unfolded.

**THE VALUE OF BAPTISM**

Personally, the ordinance gives the candidate an impression of what "conversion" means - dying to live.

Socially, its teaching value is enormous. Baptisms beget baptisms in evangelistic meetings. The dramatic power of inculcating truth is in-calculable.

The central truth of this ordinance is this: Passing from death to life.

Knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the grace, being
multiplied through the many, may cause the thanksgiving to abound unto the glory of God.

Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more, exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.¹

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

The baptism of Jesus illustrates that baptism is in its essence a fulfillment. "For thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."² Baptism is not performed according to the quantity of merit or demerit of a man, but to "fill full" with righteousness.

Though Jesus was sinless, yet He was in bodily form. Though He conceived in His mind of the wholeness or holiness of God, yet as a man He had not carried out this conception in bodily expression. To fulfill all righteousness is to

¹ II Cor. 4:14-18.
² Matt. 3:15.
fulfill all right conduct. Jesus knew that John had been ordained of God to baptise. It was morally correct to submit to the authority of God. God's will and man's will must become one, according to Jesus' life and words.

The truth of His actions were verified as the Holy Spirit descended upon Him from the heavens and the voice of God spoke, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The reception of the Holy Spirit is accorded men with whom God is well pleased. We note that Jesus did not begin His ministry until after His baptism.

Baptism is the expression, both mental and physical, of man's self-offering to God in willing submission. Thus all the action of baptism is the action of God, once man has offered himself.

Baptism is the identifying of man with God who created him; even more accurately may it be said, the uniting of God with man. In response to God's revelation of Jesus Christ, the Perfect Person, man believes, repents and is baptized in

1Matt. 3:17.
the likeness of His death, burial and resurrection. In this intimate communion the desire of the old man to be a new man in Christ is fulfilled as he is born anew in the receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In this ordinance, commanded by Christ, is gathered up and presented as a unit, the conversion of the old man into the new man, born from above, integrated, made whole, by his adoption of one, single supreme aim in life – to become Christlike. The external aspects of Christian Baptism dramatize for the eye this inner change. Without the inner change, the rite becomes either a mutilation or an empty form.

Baptism is one of the most expressive acts showing forth man's love of God and God's love for man. The worshipper comes meek, penitent, expectant and trusting. He is without pride when he submits his body in a public act of the most humiliating nature, being lowered backward into the depths of the water, even as Christ as an executed criminal was laid in the tomb; but in man's love of God, he consciously chooses to allow God's will to be done, believing that God will raise him up into newness
of life, even as Christ; and praying even as Christ, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
CHAPTER IV

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread.1

THE VIVID SYMBOLS

The worship of God that is called the Lord's Supper mediates to the Christian the deepest mystery and the highest joy.

Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves";2 and so to eat and drink the body and blood of Christ has the most vivid symbolic reality.

Every meal of every day we eat of the abundance which is of God. Life is teeming upon the earth. There are many fish in the sea and an abundance of grain. One fish lays thousands of

1 I Cor. 10:16,17.
2 John 6:53.
eggs. One grain of corn placed in the ground grows one-hundred more. One tomato seed produces thousands as it dies and is raised by God and multiplied. Grass covers the earth and is food for the animals. Trees make forests and are food for the birds. But in all and through all it is God who gives the increase. Without God there would be no increase and no growth.

Man himself is created from the dust of the earth. His body and blood are of the same material as the food that he eats. The food he eats is of the same creation as his body. This is the sub-personal and impersonal matrix of life, in that man's body and the body of animals and the structure of plants all are dependent upon the molecular structures of the earth for their sustenance. God created and He sustains. It is His life that empowers the grain of corn to produce one-hundred times over again of itself through its burial.

1I Cor. 3:7.
Jesus identifies Himself with the lowest and most basic forms of life and those which are also the most essential to man's body. He took the daily bread which He had prayed for in the Lord's Prayer and identified Himself with it. "This is my body."\(^1\) This is evidence of man's dependence upon God. It is the manna in the wilderness for without the food which God so bountifully supplies from the earth, man's body will without question or doubt die. Bread is the composition of man's body. The food man eats is the replacement for cells that have performed their function and died and need to be replaced.

Jesus took the wine from the common table; drink as on every man's table, and identified Himself with it, "This is my blood."\(^2\) Drink is the composition of man's blood. The water of life flows through a man's veins bringing new

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\(^1\)Mark 14:22.

\(^2\)Mark 14:24.
food to hungry tissues and carrying away the old and waste materials.

Thus bread was indeed the body of Jesus and wine indeed His blood.

But the power of symbolism was the emphasis of His words, for "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself". 1 It was obvious to the disciples that Jesus was a man like themselves; but also through the great confession of Peter, it had been made evident to them that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and at the table on the evening of the Last Supper they were calling Him "Lord". At that time Jesus identified God with man, not just for these disciples who had been privileged to know Him in the flesh and hear His words and receive special instruction, but for all men of all time. He said that in the breaking of the bread at a man's table, all men were to remember Him. He said that in the drinking of the cup at the table, that all men were to be reminded of the new covenant of God with man, which came through the shedding of Christ's

1 II Cor. 5:19.
blood. "This do". Not the command of a dictator but the command of a loving friend. Man's table and God's table become one and the same. "As often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

His words had this meaning: "Every time you eat bread, remember Me, for I am God's love, shown as only death can make love meaningful. Every time you drink, remember Me, for I am God's love, shown as only the shedding of innocent blood can make a perfect sacrifice, once and for all before the throne of judgment, for the forgiveness of sins for all men."

THE IMPERATIVE OF MEMORY

Through the daily bread and the daily cup Jesus brings God and man together. He, the God-man identifies Himself with them, and bridges the gap. Now through the preserving of a man's physical being, through the powerful drives of hunger and thirst, man also preserves his spiritual being through his memory. Bread and drink remind him of God's mercy and forgiveness.

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1 I Cor. 11:25.
Take away food and drink and the body dies. Forget God and forgiveness dies. Memory is that important. It is basic in the identity of self, a man knowing that he is the same today as yesterday. With the sickness of amnesia, the self dies. With the health of memory, the self knows itself and lives, being transformed from glory to glory, by building on the past foundations of God's love and forgiveness.

Memory thus is the continuing unity a man maintains with not only himself but the continuing unity he maintains with God. Memory tells man that God is the same God to Whom he prayed yesterday. Quite fascinating it is, how memory is rooted in the stimuli that come from the body. If a man's leg is cut off a part of his memory is gone because the stimuli for recollection have been removed.

Thus the observance of the Lord's Table is vitally and urgently symbolic in man's continuing unity with God. Memory is vital to man's salvation.
The memory that Jesus commands as most vital, to be passed down from father to son by the symbolism of the daily bread and the cup, is this: As you will die bodily without food and drink, so you will die spiritually without Christ.

**THE DAILY BREAD**

If we are faithful to the command of Christ, we will participate in the "breaking of bread" each time we eat as did the earliest disciples. Each meal will be an act of worship of the living God. Our worship will be an integral part of daily life with our symbols of worship being not the symbol of symbols, but the life-carrying facts of our daily existence. "Give us this day our daily bread" and "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" indeed go hand in hand, and "the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made".

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1 Acts 2:46.
2 Matt. 6:11,12.
3 Rom. 1:20.
This is the Way that Jesus approves. The simple de-institutionalized way that He followed. God is a God of the living. He wants to associate with all men in all that they do, and does not wish to be confined to the Sanctuary of a modern Church building as He was confined to the Holy of Holies in the Jewish temples. Imperative it is for man, for man cannot separate God from his creation and live. There is an inextricable unity of body and spirit, and so the Way of Jesus is simple and natural. He left a reminder of dying love and forgiveness that even the most ignorant of men can understand; for food and drink forgive hunger and thirst and bring new life to the dying body—a expression of love as truly as the ministrations of the Good Samaritan.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.\(^1\) Man abhors eating by himself. Meal-time almost guarantees that two will be gathered

\(^1\text{Matt. 18:20.}\)
together when at all possible. The gregarious drive of man is the stimulus for the Church, and the sentiment of love is the living power within it. Two men are enough to make a Church, for when they come together in Jesus' name, then He is there also. The Church therefore is present when two Christian people meet in their home for their noon meal and pray the blessing of God upon the food and drink that is set before them in the remembrance of Christ. Here is worship of the highest order and the deepest meaning. This is the robust worship that moves mountains.

VALUES OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Its value lies in the strengthening of Faith. When doubt arises about the trustworthiness of men, then faith is supported by reliance upon material things. The bodily strengthening given by good food and drink, eaten in remembrance of God's love, restores and strengthens the faith of man both in God and in his neighbor as well as in himself.
Its value lies also in the strengthening of Hope; in the reassurance that as bread and drink were provided by God today so will they be provided tomorrow in spite of all problems. As we make each meal the Lord's Table, we find that God is always approachable and that He does not criticize us but rather gives us gifts each day, not only of this basic sustenance, but of many spiritual gifts.

Its value lies in the strengthening of Love, for it continues to remind us of the presence of the perfect person, Jesus Christ, in Whom God came to show His love for the world, and showed Himself to be supremely worthy of men's love by making the sacrifice of Himself for the sins of all men. In worship at the Lord's table we have fellowship with Christ, our Ideal of ideals, not only in prayer, but in this memorable continuing way of identifying and uniting not only in spirit but also through the bodily symbolism.

THE UNDERLYING PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE

Every bit of consciousness, animal or human, always arouses some muscular action within the
conscious subject. A normal man must always express what he believes in some congruent form of behavior, or else suffer the violence of self-disintegration.

Communion with God around His table brings a satisfaction of holiness or wholeness that is the height of worship for man. Man's unity with God as fashioned by the imagination finds kindred expression in the body in the eating of the daily bread and the drinking of the cup of the new covenant. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him." Here is the deepest of symbolisms.

Let us make no mistake about the reality of symbols. The use of the word-symbol "fire" as an order to the death squad is unquestioned reality.

The apostles had difficulty with symbols just as we do today. In response to Jesus statement of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, His disciples began to murmur.

Jesus knowing within himself that his disciples murmured at this, said unto them, Doth this cause you to stumble?...It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I spoke unto you are

1 Holmes, op. cit., p. 42.
2 Ibid., p. 72.
3 John 6:56.
And so the emphasis of the fellowship of the Lord's table is upon the spiritual life. First comes the natural and then the spiritual, but the complete break with the earthly cannot be made until God chooses to relieve us of this veil of flesh.

In the interim, Jesus commands us to worship God, who seeks us to worship Him, not only in the spirit alone but also in truth through the bread and drink that have been made for our life's sustenance.

This way of communion with God is not a memorial of Christ's death only, for without His resurrection from the dead, his death would have been just another instance of horrible brutality in millions. It is not the crucifying of our Lord again and holding Him up to a more open shame; for He offered Himself once and for all. It is not a periodic offering repeated for the sins of Christians; for His sacrifice was perfect and complete, once made, forever efficacious. It is not a mere meal,

1John 6:61-63.
without the consciousness of Christ's connection with it. It is not a mode of doing penance for sins. It is not a mere emotional and sentimental indulgence.

If a man's worship does not have conscious significance, this central Christian worship is degraded to magic.

A man must be conscious that this is a memorial, a remembrance of Christ. He must be conscious that this is a symbolic reality, a drama picturing in visible form God's oneness with the Christian, the witness of continuing unity with God through Christ; the daily reminder of the divine fellowship that is the Christian's in the body of Christ; for He said, "This is my body, which is for you" - the body of Christ, the Church, of which Christ is the head to direct us and lead us in every act of life - the body of Christ in which we can trust and have faith in one another, because we all have the same Ideal. As we eat and drink together in the name of and memory of Christ, we have the assurance that
Christ is with us. Even though we have the rational knowledge from the Scriptures that God dwells in our bodies as the Holy Spirit, we need also for our wholeness of health to have that expression in our bodies, which comes through the assurance of food and drink in the symbolic reality. This strengthens both our faith and our hope.

**CREATING A LIKE-MINDED FELLOWSHIP**

In knowing Christ and patterned our life after His, we are become a like-minded fellowship of people - each likeness cut from the same pattern and thus a true fellowship.

Here is the extreme importance of maintaining the purity of the original action of worship. As a man worships so he tends to become. Like worship creates like persons in the fellowship. We are not to look to fellow Christians for the truth of the way to live but to Christ as the Ideal, the Perfect Person. If one pattern is used in cutting all the sleeves in the production of suits, then all the sleeves of all the suits will be the same size. However if one sleeve is cut from
the pattern, and then that sleeve is used to cut the next sleeve, etc., soon abnormal pieces will be produced which will be entirely unusable and must be discarded.

So Christ is the norm for the Christian fellowship and His pure worship the only channel for the true Christian unity. Theological constructs alone are not uniting but divisive, for they deal only in the reason of men and not in the whole person. In worship the whole person participates and grows in the likeness of God. This is the basis of joyous living and loving fellowship. One man can trust another if he knows the second is exactly like himself in the essence of his beliefs. It is of small consequence that his outward appearance is different; that he likes to swim rather than fish; or that he prefers his house painted green instead of white.

But it takes constant like-worship for men to be molded in the image of Christ; constant prayer is enjoined and the daily sacramental part-taking of life-giving food and drink. "Pray with-
out ceasing and "as often as ye do this, do it in remembrance...". Is this too much that God requires of us; does this not make a burden of our daily life and take away its joy?

The answer is the life of Jesus; that if we look upon God as our loving Father, and all of life as a simple outgrowth of the natural, then worship becomes a spontaneous response to the goodness of God.

And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people.  

THE DRAMA OF DYING TO LIVE

The Lord's Supper is the dramatic observance of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The historical fact is that Christ died a literal death in which His body was broken by nails and His blood shed. Christ, Who was perfect man, never having sinned, being the Son of God, was sacrificed.

\[1\] Thess. 5:17.

\[2\] Acts 2:46.
Since God was in Christ this became the final sacrifice for sin. It was the perfect sacrifice for all men, past, present and future. Sin was not done away, but the way of overcoming sin was established.

Before His death, Jesus had said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die it abideth alone"; and so after His burial came the day of resurrection, when He was raised to walk in newness of life. But this was not only resurrection for Himself but for all men, for He had promised, "I am come that ye might have life". Those who accept Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, those who identify themselves with Christ, are promised eradication of their sins in their reunion with God. "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

When a man accepts God as the supreme purpose around which to organize his life, then he has truly died to live. This is the heart of

1 Matt. 16:25.
2 Matt. 10:39.
3 John 12:25.
the Christian religion, and from that heart comes the life-blood that invigorates every form of Christian worship. Dying to live is the true sacrament, "making sacred". God makes us sacred when we accept His Guide of love for our lives as immeasurably superior to our own feeble attempts of self-control.

Thus the dramatic enactment of the Gospel through the Lord's Supper continually reminds us to examine our relationship with God and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. Interestingly, Jesus pointed out that our relationship with God was intimately bound up with our relationship with our fellowmen—that we could not expect, for example, the forgiveness of God unless we were prepared to extend forgiveness to those who had wronged us.1

Moreover, in that picture of the Last Judgment, commonly known as the Parable of the Sheep and Goats, He so far identifies Himself with needy suffering humanity as to state categorically that the way in which men treat each other is in solemn fact the way in which they treat Him.2

**THE CENTRAL ACTION IS THANKSGIVING**

Central in the action of the Lord's Supper

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2 Ibid., p. 39.
is the simple and natural action of our following the example of Jesus - the giving of thanks. Worship in its greatest part is man's response to the revelation of God. We thank God as the Giver of Life which is so literally represented by the bread and drink, but especially do we give praise to God for the forgiving love of Jesus Christ as only death can express its poignancy.

The letters of the New Testament abound not with pious hopes but with audacious certainty. "Now are we the sons of God," "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ," "seated together with Christ" - these are the sort of expression which sparkle on the sea of that early Christian confidence. God is no longer aloof, separate - He is one with His sons.¹

The Eucharist is the celebration of our unity with God. "Thanks be to Thee" is the eucharistic action which is the counterpart of the heavenly adoration as the living creatures and the elders before the throne of God, not resting day or night, say, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and is and

¹Ibid., p. 38.
is to come".\(^1\)

"Worthy art thou, our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power, for thou didst create all things."\(^2\)

There is a joy in the adoration of God that transcends all other worship and this is the reason why down through Christian history, the great occasions of fullness in the Church's life have come when worship was renewed either in a return to the Eucharist as the chief service or as the norm of worship. "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father\(^3\) expresses the joy of God's people in their loving devotion to the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings.

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\(^1\)Rev. 4:8.
\(^2\)Rev. 4:11.
\(^3\)Isa. 9:6.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Christianity is called in the New Testament "the Way".¹

The Gospel of Christ is not a religion, but religion itself in its universal and deepest sense. In a grand and ultimate sense there is only one religion which finds crude expression among the savages, rising gradually through various phases until it finds full and complete consummation in the soul of Jesus Christ. Christianity does not exclude the deep and real messages of other religions but rather includes them.²

Worship is the fountain of all Christian conduct, for it is always an experience with God. Christ said, "The kingdom of God is within you".³

Worship is best thought of by imagining that Christ is here now and we are in conversation with Him or working with Him in the carpenter shop. In this manner we should always conduct ourselves, for God is the ever-present Spirit in Whom we live and move and have our being.

Worship is always conscious. God is a God

¹Acts 24:22.


of the living and not a God of the dead.

Worship is action. Something is always happening in worship. It is not a state, but a vital, living and conscious communion with God.

All acts of Christian worship are communion with God.

Worship is natural. Man was created from the dust of the earth and retains through his body indissoluble bonds with all of the lower forms of the earth; animal, plant and molecular. All nature is the Creation of God, which God pronounced as good. Jesus, the Master-Psychologist, used the symbols of nature to show man his relationship with God. Through the goodness of Nature, men learn of the goodness of God.

All worship is of necessity in a material setting, for the spirit of man is inseparable by man from his material body. Thus even prayer is done in the body. Hence, it is paramount in worship that the physical elements be kept ordered to a minimum, inasmuch as Jesus proclaimed that "God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit"
and truth".1

The spiritual is the heavenly goal and reward of man - to be freed from the encumbering body - but an earthly body requires living harmoniously with the universe.

The channel of truth allows the use in worship of any physical aid which is in symbolic harmony with the spiritual principle involved. This means natural symbolism on man's side and divinely approved symbolism on the other side. The two are harmonious.

Civilized man's great error in worship has been to reject the natural symbolism: reason can be unreasonable when it is not rooted and grounded in the natural.

Christ died for all men. He lived a simple natural life that was sinless. That perfect life is God's own Way for men. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life".2 This Love is One love. Christ lived One

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1John 4:24.
2John 3:16.
life, which assures us that this is the perfect life for every man. It is evident that men have different facial characteristics, different temperaments, etc., but the revelation of God in Jesus Christ confronts men with only One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism. In essentials, unity, in all other matters, liberty: is the expression of love.

Worship gives a valid channel to Christian growth, for worship includes the whole man in his intimate communion with God.

Social integration is not possible without first restoring the integrity of the individual in society, moving as a unit toward his ultimate goal. Each individual can best further social integration by appointing himself as a committee of one to investigate and review his personal relationship with the Supreme Being. Religion must be re-evaluated not as a structure of beliefs promulgated by the various churches, but as a way of life which will help the individual reach his ultimate goal. We have been looking outward, training our sights upon world problems. Now we must look inward. This is everyone's responsibility in the present... No one has the power to improve the whole world through direct influence. It may be worth noting that in the Book of Genesis, God gave man dominion over the birds and animals and fish, but not over his fellowmen. Eventually the power-seeking individual comes to realize that he exercises no authority over anyone else. Authority over others carries with it responsibility for their welfare. The only person over whom anyone exercises any real and permanent power is himself.
By improving himself, however, he can influence others toward good and indirectly improve the world.1

Christ is the norm for the Christian fellowship. The worship of God through the example of the perfection of Christ is the pattern. Through worship, by each man allowing God to cut his life according to the pattern of the Perfect Person, every man will be like Christ and hence every man in his essential parts will be like every other man and a true unity, a true fellowship will be effected. Here is the extreme importance of maintaining the purity of the original action of Christian worship.

The conclusions of this thesis suggest the de-formalizing of some of our present ways of worship and the extending of the practices of worship to envelope a larger area of every day living. Jesus worshipped regularly in the synagogue but He worshipped constantly during the rest of the week as well. There is a place for the institution, but its role is as the fountain and coordinator of daily communion with God in all of life. "Go ye into all the world...", is Jesus command to the

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1Biddle, op. cit., p. 160.
Christian.

Prayer is to be without ceasing.

Wherever men respond to the Gospel, there is a place for their baptism, whether it be in a river, a pond, a lake, a baptistry or even a bathtub in the home; whether it be on Wednesday, Friday or Sunday.

Wherever and whenever men take their daily bread is a fitting and proper time for the observance of the Lord’s Table. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them".1 "This do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me".2

The earliest Christians who had lived with Jesus in the flesh, upon their baptism continued steadfastly in prayer, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart. Wherever they went, they baptized - in a spring in an oasis in the desert or in the Jordan River.

There is natural symbolism for worship that vividly expresses the spiritual truths of the divine nature and through which man harmoniously communes

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1 Matt. 18:20.
2 1 Cor. 11:25.
Men must live their worship individually, for to allow another to worship for him is magic or superstition. Men must worship naturally for the accumulation of paraphernalia is idolatry. Men must accept, each one, their high calling in Christ Jesus, as priests before God, every man having access to the mercy seat of God at every moment of every day.

Men need to realize that God is not a disembodied Spirit - the supposition that troubles many minds - but that He is embodied in His creation; the universe, including the earth and man.

The summation of all Christian worship lies in one supreme fact. Every man was created to be like Christ. He is the ideal, the Perfect Person, that every man supremely longs to be. Around Christ, as the one ideal, every man can organize, integrate and unify his life. Through Christ as the Ideal Love of God, man has conscious communion with God, being first mediated by man's being baptized into Christ and continuing forever through the gift of the Holy Spirit. A Christian has this beginning but no
ending. The Lord's Supper is the symbolic continuing unity we maintain with God as the stimulator of vital memory, refreshing our mind with the truth of the Gospel that Christ died for our sins, and was raised that we might have the present wonderful walk in newness of life with God, which we know through our unceasing prayer.
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