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Prayer Book Revision

SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES IN OUR PRAYER BOOK OF LITURGICAL WORSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, my Lord Bishop, and members of the Conference :

1. Going in to bat as last man places me under certain disadvantages especially after some of the fine scoring earlier on. The temptation is to huddle over the wicket in the defensive manner commonly attributed to Evangelicals—either that, or—to hit out wildly and merrily in hopes of getting a few quick runs before everybody goes home. I am going to assume that there is going to be another innings, or even another match on this wicket, and so, if I may, I'm going to try and play steadily the ball, rather than play to the gallery !

2. As the title of this paper is not an examination question, and has been loosely worded, deliberately, I think, for the weak candidate, I am going to take some liberty with it. I'm going to stick pretty much to the Bible, and to the Old Testament in particular, and leave this intelligent and critical audience to draw their own conclusions and make their own application to our Prayer Book of liturgical worship.

3. Whatever contortions, confusions, ambiguities or obscurities into which I may lead you—the case before us is this. It is to the Bible we must turn for the Truth of God, which initiates the spirit of true worship and which determines its forms. The Old Testament was the Bible of the Infant Church, its place in the synagogue was authoritative, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper against the background of the Passover was in the content of this Jewish Bible worship.

Now for these scriptural principles :

I

The first and most obvious guiding principle to establish is this :

(a) The object of worship for form of worship depends upon the nature of the deity.

Rev. Alan Walker, Riverside Church, New York, in a sermon in a March number of *Christianity To-day*, describes a chapel for meditation at U.N.O. Headquarters. It is a room lined with curtains—table, chairs, and a bowl of flowers. In it are no Bible and no Cross. He raises the question, Is religion of itself sufficient? Are vague ideas about a Supreme Being, and an occasional desire to pray or meditate, enough? We would add, Is scientific knowledge, ourselves, and some emblems of nature all that we require for worship? Surely we must know something about the nature of the deity to whom we address ourselves. Who, or what sort of a God, should we worship?

This is not just a theoretical question—belonging entirely to a study of theology. It is a practical question. It is a basic question for worship.

It has bedevilled the worship of millions. In ancient times the polytheist hardly knew how many gods to worship, and how much to allocate to each. The primitive animist and the pure Buddhist must have his difficulties in expressing worship to a god or gods which cannot be defined. Modern man, as Dean Matthews points out—*God in Christian Thought and Experience*—faces a similar problem (p. 26) : “A purely Immanent Deity turns out in the last resort to be indistinguishable from ourselves, and hence, to be no possible object of adoration and aspiration, whilst conversely a purely Transcendent Deity is one with whom communion would be impossible. Either conception must deprive worship of its justification and prayer of its reality. A philosophy which will justify the religious attitude must maintain that God is Immanent and that He is Transcendent.”

“In Judah is God known, His name is great in Israel” (Ps. lxxvi. 1). It is therefore to the Bible, Old Testament and New, that we turn for a right conception of the God we worship. There we find the record of how a Transcendent God disclosed Himself at sundry times and divers manners, and finally in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Much has been made of the viewpoint that Israel's religion had affinity with that of the Canaanite Asthaarte fertility goddess, and with the local Baals worshipped at so many sacred shrines. Noth, in his *History of Israel*, is at pains to show that the distinctiveness of Yahweh worship lay in its origin at Sinai (126), its contempt in principle for sacred prostitution (143) and its unifying force in creating of a loose confederacy of tribes a people who survived all their contemporaries. “The faith of the Old Testament,” says Rowley, *Faith of Israel* (p. 48), “is not like that of other peoples who took the existence of some god or gods for granted—it is based on the belief that God played a part in Israel's history and had chosen her for Himself and had declared His will to her (p. 48). To Israel God was personal, and His personality was expressed in will—He was active in History and not a mere spectator (p. 57).”

Ps. lxxviii. “Marvellous things did He in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt and in the field of Zoan He clave the sea, and caused them to pass through, and He made the waters to stand as an heap.”

“N.B. This deliverance was first promised, before it was achieved, and then interpreted by the man who had been vindicated in the deliverance” (p. 57, Rowley).

Scripture reference is :

Ps. cv. 8, 11, 12. “He hath remembered His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, saying, unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance, when they were but a few men in number, yea, very few, and sojourners in it. . . .”

(b) He is Personal.

But God is not only the Lord of battles and the Sovereign disposer of kings and nations, He is the Lord of Creation. With the occupation of the land went, in many instances, the absorption of the local Baals who gave fertility to the crops. Amos, Hosea and their successors

see clearly that it is Yahweh who brought his daughters Israel and Judah, out of Egypt, who gave them corn and wine and oil (Hosea ii). (Robinson, *Religious Ideas*, p. 58.)

(c) He is Providence.

"Now this god is ethically true and just, quite unlike fickle deities and faithless men, as Hahn points out" (*Old Testament and Modern Research*, p. 105). "Moses' God showed a profound concern for ethical behaviour on the part of His worshippers. It was this ethical element in the religion of Moses which gave Israel's religion its basic character." The God of Moses' religion was not only a powerful ruler, but at the same time lawgiver and judge—Kittel. Because of this, Amos could claim that religious privilege meant religious responsibility, not partiality. "You only have I known of all the families of earth, therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities. This characteristic is אמת—truth, undeviating rectitude on which men may rely, but also a God whose righteous will must be obeyed. Here worship and ethics are married, a fact which has escaped notice in some forms of Christianity.

Again God is so great that "before Him the nations are as a drop in the bucket" (Isa. xl. 15). Yet He is a God of tender mercy, חנּוּן. Thus did God reveal Himself to Moses (Ex. xxxiv. 6), "and the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, a god full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty'" (old strata).

Here then is sovereign transcendence and immanent nearness in God, seen combined together by one who wrote in God's name, "To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal saith the Holy One" (Isa. xl. 25), and wrote also, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, For I am Yahweh thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour" (Is. xliii. 2) (Snaith, *Distinctive Ideas*, p. 80); Ps. xlix or Ps. cxlvii, "He healeth the broken in heart, He telleth the number of the stars."

(d) He is a Father.

Now the important thing to remember is that that belief in one almighty, true and righteous God did not arrive by way of the cultures of Mesopotamia or Egypt, whose trend towards a universal deity never resulted in the absorption of the other gods (Hahn, p. 99). It came through Israel and was in no sense the reflection of the prestige of the nation in the prestige of its God.

For the prophet who most specifically formulates a monotheistic faith was the spokesman of a people in exile; so writes Rowley, and adds, "Her monotheism is not the expression of national pride—it is the gift of revelation, begun in Moses, continued in the prophets, whereby God was making Himself known, first to the people of His choice, and then through them to all His creatures" (Rowley, *Faith of Israel*, p. 73).

The larger doctrine of the Trinity is again by way of revelation registered in human experience. No one sought it or thought it out

in the first instance. "In the beginning was the Word—and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Before He faced the Cross and passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Jesus promised His disciples another Comforter—the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father—He abideth with you and shall be in you.

So then, at the heart of this universe is a God, so great, so mysterious, that even His handiwork in creation is "so immense and so full of mystery that if it were not for His revelation of Himself, we would be as the heathen, worshipping but distorted shadows of the Eternal. This God is a social unit, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Three Persons, a God so high and holy, before whom we cry with Isaiah, "Woe is me for I am unclean," yet One God—a contradiction in terms of mere words, but the acme and pattern for all love and devotion, and for right relationships, and so that we add to the Psalms of Israel's God, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son, etc."

II

NEED OF THE WORSHIPPER—NATURE OF MAN

We live in days when worship of God is on a par with Sunday hobbies of fishing or playing billiards. The assumption is that man has no need to worship, except on the level of a recreation. The fact is that man always has, and always will worship and devote himself to somebody or something greater than himself, and which complements his own creatureliness. Hence he turns, if not to religion, then to superstition or materialism. He seeks some security and some expression for his inherent tendency to worship, either in gloating over an abundance of creaturely things like himself, and or imbibing some occult rubbish from a Sunday newspaper.

Whilst some men may be habituated by circumstances, and others may habituate themselves to live from day to day like a bee or a monkey—and appear to die like a dog—masses of mankind without sophistication or civilised short-sightedness, do worship something other than themselves. Others more fortunate, with wise instruction and a goodly heritage, worship the Triune God.

Speaking generally there is in mankind this inherent awareness of something other than the human in what Otto *Idea of the Holy* describes as a sense of the numinous—a feeling of awe, an awareness of mystery which calls forth wonder and adoration—something of what the wretched Jacob felt in the loneliness of his sin and the defencelessness in which sin can leave a man. "How dreadful is this place—this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

The answer lies in the Nature of Man. Much has been said about his kinship with the beasts. By superior, intellectual equipment he has made his life much more secure and comfortable than theirs. But never can he be satisfied with the meeting of his animal needs, nor even with those men call human requirements. He longs for more than this transitory, limited life can bring. He is painfully aware of his creatureliness. He longs for the protection, nay more, comfort and

companionship of the Creator. It is not just adolescents who are hero worshippers ; it is man in all times and ages.

This is accounted for in the Biblical Revelation. Man was made in the image of God, and to enjoy the fellowship of God. It is the disobedience of man to the will of God which makes worship and fellowship a strained or a strange thing.

“What is man?” says the Psalmist ; the answer is, “Thou hast made him a little lower than God” ; or Heb. ii. 2, “than the angels”. Man shows forth his true nature and destiny when, with angels and archangels, and all the host of heaven, he lauds and magnifies God’s glorious name—evermore praising Him and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

III

The next Biblical principle of worship is :

(a) *The Covenant Relationship.*

In the twenty-third chapter of Exodus v. 12, you find this comment upon the use of the Sabbath (הַשַּׁבָּת) : “Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt keep Sabbath, in order that thine ox and thine ass may rest (his weary bones יָרֵחַ), and the son of thine handmaid and the sojourner may be refreshed or get recreation (רִיפּוּשׁ).”

It would appear that the Sabbath is beneficial at three different levels, and that it may not be expected from the ass or the stranger that they should keep Sabbath. Only the Israelite *in covenant* with his God keeps Sabbath, for this is a divine exercise (Gen. ii. 2). He not only rests, and is refreshed, but he also satisfies his soul on the Sabbath. Are we sometimes trying to scale down our programme of worship to suit the ass and the stranger to God, rather than to bring men into a covenanted relationship with God?

Now this covenant principle cuts across a purely evolutionary understanding of the Bible (Eichrodt’s review of Fosdick’s Guide to Understanding of the Bible. Rowley, *Faith*, p. 16).

Covenant principle speaks of God’s initiative in choosing a people for Himself, manifesting to them His own character and purposes, and in redeeming them from a slavery which meant extermination—rather than that of a people inheriting or selecting a god to whom they eventually added certain theistic and ethical qualities.

Again, this Covenant principle abrogates any claims of a “works theology”, whether of popular or ecclesiastical Christendom, or of the Rabbinic ethics of Judaism. “The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loveth you, and because He would keep the oath which He sware unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the land of Pharaoh, king of Egypt” (Deut. vii. 7).

Amongst the distinctive ideas of the Old Testament, Snaith (ch. v) enumerates this Covenant Love of God. Behind this Covenant Love there is first of all the אהבה unconditional love of God (used also of

human love). "In His love and in His pity He redeemed them" (Is. lxiii. 9). "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. xxxi. 3). אהבה is the cause of the Covenant and the basis of its continuance—the other word is חסד—with loving-kindness have I drawn thee. חסד is covenant love—the means by which אהבה continues to express itself.

There is a third word (חן) which means uncovenanted love poured out by a superior deity upon an inferior poverty, sin-stricken people to whom God is in no way bound by Covenant. Noah found חן—grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. vi. 8), so did the people in the wilderness (Jer. xxxi. 2) Now χάρις grace in the New Testament combines the original אהבה election love of God, which prompts this initiative, also His חסד covenanted mercy by which He binds Himself to His people and the overplus חן of uncovenanted mercy to all as well—all is here for men through the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(b) A covenant is not a commercial bargain or a legal contract, but rather a pledge of loyalty to Him Who had first chosen and saved Israel (Rowley, *Faith*, p. 69). God would never repudiate the Covenant bond from His side—but Israel from her side could break it, and it would be broken.

In the New Testament there is the new Covenant sealed in the blood of the Redeemer, which speaks of a better ransom from a fate more horrible than that of Egypt. "This cup is the new Covenant" (Luke xxii. 20) "in My blood, which is poured out for you." Christ is the Mediator of a new and better covenant based on better promises (Hebs. viii. 6).

In the Prayer Book Baptism has been described as a choice between two theories—the Covenant principle or "a shot in the arm"—so says Mervyn Stockwood. With him we choose the Covenant principle. In this Sacrament, as in that of Holy Communion, God has taken and does take the initiative with sinners, not because of what they are or because of what they do, and brings to them privileges and blessings which are entirely the outcome of His own grace. Because of His inherent love for mankind, He redeemed us, and adopts us into the redeemed community; as Abraham and also his infant son Isaac received the circumcision sign of the Old Covenant, so believers in Christ enter with their children through Baptism into the Grace of God in the New Covenant. Furthermore, they are nurtured in this new blood redeeming Covenant by continual partaking of Christ, and by becoming epistles of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone (like the code of the old Covenant as external commandments) but in tables that are hearts of flesh. Here is Jeremiah's new Covenant of the new heart and new spirit implemented for those who are baptized into Christ, and who spiritually partake of the benefits of His death and passion.

Well may they worship and praise the Lord, Who hath visited and redeemed His people—for preparing a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of His people Israel. . . . So we give Thee humble and hearty thanks for that Thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of Thy grace and faith in Thee. . . . And we, Thy humble servants,

entirely desire Thy fatherly goodness, mercifully to accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, most humbly beseeching Thee to grant that by the merits and death of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, and through faith in His blood, we and all Thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His passion . . . as our reasonable service or part in the Covenant of Grace, we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice.

IV

THE DISCIPLINE OF WORSHIP

(a) *Festivals*. In ancient Israel, the great occasions of history, or rather of God's dealings with her, were commemorated by religious celebrations or ceremonies.

The Ecclesiastical year was planned to include: The Feasts of *Passover*, and of *Unleavened Bread* in the first month, abib (March/April), recollecting the Exodus; *Pentecost*, thanksgiving for the food of the Promised Land; the *Feast of the Atonement* in September/October in view of Israel's failure to keep the Covenant either in the wilderness or in the monarchy period, the *Feast of Tabernacles* to represent the wilderness wanderings, and the later feasts of *Dedication* (November/December), and of *Purim* (February/March), reviving thoughts of the Maccabbean struggle, and of the possible extermination of the Jewish people during the Persian period (details in the Book of Esther).

If the old Church so needed year by year to be reminded of the mighty revealing, redemptive acts of God, so does the new Israel need such reminder, and to be called on occasions to such a programme of worship or self abrogation as will result in deeper faith and dependence.

(b) *The Sabbath* has always been a criterion by which to judge between those who serve the Lord and those who serve Him not. According to Pedersen's *Israel*, Vol. I, p. 308, "altars, pillars of stone, circumcision and the Sabbath . . . are witnesses to or tokens of . . . the covenant between Israel and its God". It was one of the main storm centres in Nehemiah's great struggle to separate the returning exiles from secular pagan ideas and practices. Snaith, *From Cyrus to Herod*, pp. 78/79, thinks that a new and strange strictness was given to the Sabbath just then, which led to the Mishnah tract Sabbath with its many taboos, and of course to the ridiculous restrictions challenged by our Lord. If we demur at following this trend, I'm sure we can fully endorse the challenge of Amos viii. 6 of those who in the worship of money or pleasure commercialize the Sabbath, and in exploiting the other men's leisure rob them of opportunity to worship. Thus, since Jesus came, we have our great Christian festivals before Trinity which speak of the Divine Initiative in working out man's redemption, to be followed by guidance and instruction after Trinity of the life of godliness in the fellowship of the Church. Throughout the year, the agents whom God has used in extending His redemptive love, and revealing it in human life, come before our notice, in what we call Saints' Days, and Sunday by Sunday we remember the Victory of our Lord and Saviour

over sin and death by His Resurrection, and that in Him we are raised to a new and eternal life here and hereafter.

(c) *Leadership* in worship and instruction was part of the discipline of Old Testament times. So fully accepted was it that it became a closed system, to the detriment of a new and radical spiritual force like Jeremiah—for said they, "Come and let us devise devices against Jeremiah, for the law shall not perish from the priest nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet" (Jer. xviii. 18).

Much argument has been bandied about as to how and when Levites became segregated into priests, and lesser clergy. Osterley & Robinson consider priests and Levites identical in Deuteronomy. Manley, p. 105, *Book of the Law*, holds this is not so. In his view he is supported by Bentzen, vol. ii, p. 44, who considers the authority of the priests in Deuteronomy there to be exalted above even kings and prophets. They certainly became dominant from Ezekiel and after, but must have held a highly significant place earlier, in that a high standard of conduct was expected from them (as in the problem of Eli's sons). The wise men represent the thinker and teacher who sought to relate generally accepted ethical principles to the lives of common men and to show that fundamentally ethical laws express the mind and will of an ethical God. As educationalists they were also godly and were unlike philosophers in this, that they appealed not so much to intellect as to the common motives and instincts which affect human behaviour. Their descendants, the Scribes of our Lord's day, were mostly the amanuenses of other men's thoughts.

The prophets trace their pedigree to Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 10 ; xviii. 15-18), though Jesus warned Dives that if his brothers heard not Moses *and* the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. The term Moses is used for the Pentateuch, especially its legal parts. Sometimes a priest is also a prophet, as in the case of Samuel, Jeremiah or Ezekiel. Sometimes the prophet is raised up, and in his insistence on truth and righteousness, finds himself in conflict with the established Church and its regular ministry. Such was the position of Elijah, Micaiah, the son of Imla, Amos and Jeremiah. In this apostolic succession was also John the Baptist, and in popular estimation, so was also Christ Himself.

To the Church of the New Covenant the ascended Christ also gave gifts in the form of a variegated ministry. On this point St. Paul was quite clear (Ephes. iv. 11) ; apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering . . . to these may be added, teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, counsellors or organizers, and speakers with glossolalia—"tongues" (1 Cor. xii. 2 and 6). All these forms of leadership are manifestations of the spirit in the life of the Church. Here we must be progressive and be prepared to give a place to such a wide ministry, and loyally accept such ministry for worship and service. Evangelicalism is by no means free of snobbery and suspicion of what is commonly called a lay ministry, even where certain gifts of the Spirit are manifest. Again, we must all be prepared for the intrusion of God from age to age through His prophets, not mere mystics or visionaries, but men who are true to the word and to the testimony.

MINISTRY

Ignatius, faced with faction and schism, called for loyalty to the Bishop, though he omits the Bishop of Rome from his correspondents. Irenaeus and Tertullian developed the argument that Churches were Catholic and orthodox who had a succession of bishops from the apostles (Greenslade, *Schism in the Early Church*, p. 169). By the time of the Reformation, "apostolic doctrine" comes to be that which an "apostolic ministry" teaches, rather than an apostolic ministry, that which teaches the apostolic faith, (p. 206). The Reformers believed that "whatever the pedigree of its bishops, Rome had lost true apostolicity . . . and . . . the only course was to repudiate the ministry as it was then embodied and to stand by the faith"—though Greenslade is hesitant to say they acted rightly. Norman Sykes summarizes the views of Jewel, Whitgift and Hooker, even in his later books, as amounting to this, that there is no one certain kind of government in the Church, but of the necessity of some form of ordered regimen there was no doubt (*Old Priest and New Presbyter*, p. 20).

As regards "Priest" Whitgift would have it stand for Presbyter and not Sacerdos, Hooker claiming that sacrifice is no part of the Church ministry (p. 43). Even after Launcelot Andrewes, Overall and Jeremy Taylor, "Anglican asserters of Episcopacy generally stopped short of unchurching the foreign reformed Churches and of denying the validity of their Ministry and Sacraments" (p. 69).

(d) The discipline of the Church in terms of leadership is, therefore, interpreted as meaning that a clerical system of some sort is necessary, and that in terms of history and experience, episcopacy is the normal development from Apostolic times, and "would seem of Apostolic origin". No defined form of leadership is expressly noted in the New Testament for all times and places, and so our Episcopal Government and ordination is of the *bene esse*, rather than the *esse* of the Church (p. 84)—the *bene esse* being the pre-Tractarian High Church position of Heber (p. 166). Laud held that the cause of the schism of the sixteenth century lay with Rome herself—and Jewel, by implication, held the Roman Church a branch of Christ's Universal Church, albeit in present need of purgation and reform. In other words, the Church, both laity and clergy, needed relating to a scriptural standard of discipline for doctrine and worship. This, of course, Rome has never agreed to do—being, as Barth has rightly pointed out, "engaged in a soliloquy with herself".

Loyalty and discipline in relation to leadership has never been in the Church a substitute for spiritual responsibility and privilege of the rank and file. Every member of the Covenant peoples was called to consecrate himself in a real sense to God—this is implicit in the statement that Israel was called to be a kingdom of priests" (Rowley, *Faith of Israel*, p. 135). Scriptures: Exod. xix. 6; Isa. xliii. 20, 21).

This, too, is clearly set forth in I Peter ii. 5-9, as the status of those who, whatever their origin, through faith in Christ, became the people of God. All too belatedly, and largely through the sheer necessity of evangelism, this precious truth of the priesthood of the laity is being

rediscovered (*Towards the Conversion of England*, 1945, p. 61). Precious indeed, for Christian worship and Christian work go hand in hand.

V

(a) THE CONTENT OF WORSHIP

(a) *Place*. It may be argued that with the God of heaven and earth, no place is more sacred than another. "God being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts xvii. 24). Solomon recognized this, but was none the less moved to build and consecrate a House of God, as a place of prayer for God's people (I Kings iv. 27f.); a special place, or a special building, is no necessity with God, but is certainly a convenience to men who desire to seek God in worship and prayer.

(b) *Focus*. Most religions appear to have developed some symbol or image or focus point in their places of worship (except Islam). Even the synagogue has the Ark with the Sacred Scrolls before which burns the *נר תמיד*—the Perpetual Light of Revelation.

In the town of Drogheda in Eire is a large Roman Catholic Church with three altars of equal size. Behind each is a larger than life-size figure—on the left Joseph, on the right Blessed Virgin Mary, and Christ in the middle. This is the Trinity which appears before the worshipper. In practice I found that, apart from two men before the figure of Joseph, all the rest prayed before the Virgin. In the city of York I visited an Anglican Church where I found more images of saints than worshippers.

The Jew, more than any other race, learnt through bitter experience the price to be paid for tampering with the Mosaic injunction: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is under the earth, thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them." The tragedy of Israel was Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin with his golden bull calves—which most interpreters of the Old Testament hold were not heathen emblems, but supposed to represent Yahweh Himself as a god of might.

The notes in the Douay Bible with characteristic casuistry claim that Exodus xx is an injunction against heathen idols, but images, etc.—in the house of God—so far from being forbidden, are expressly authorized, e.g., the cherubim and the brazen serpent. The cherubim, screened in the Holy of Holies, could not affect public worship, and the brazen serpent, when it became a focus of worship was destroyed.

Let the focal point of worship continue to be a Holy Table set and arranged, as near as may be, to represent that Last Supper in the Upper Room, so that if from the pulpit should sound out another Gospel, then the last ministry of a dying Saviour and His invitation to partake of Him, may show men wherein is life for dead souls.

(c) *Form*. Corporate worship must necessarily take on some form or pattern, and thereby express a central idea, around which is grouped certain related ideas or conceptions of religion. The ideas or conceptions may be a secondary rationalization of a ritual pattern, or

what is equally likely, religious concepts and ideas create certain patterns. It is important that the relationship of form and ritual to theological concept should not be left just to take care of itself or, worse still, that unbiblical religious ideas should eventually result in the formulation of types of worship which are serious deviations from true Christianity.

As he tells the story of the expansion of Christianity in his eight volume *History, Labourette*, in period after period, gives a chapter on the effect of Christianity upon its "environment" followed in each case by a most important chapter on the effect of its environment upon Christianity. Between 500 and 1500 the accentuation of the position of the Pope, with other factors such as political disintegration in the West, led to a drifting apart of Greek and Latin Christianity, and to a crystallization and unification of doctrine and ritual. Of the latter there developed many local forms in connection with wells and other such places held sacred by pagan cults (Vol. II, p. 413). Saints, evidently in conflict with Druids and other such personages, worked greater miracles than they, so that a cult of saints arose. Aristotle's philosophy put a permanent stamp on Roman theology, and the Sacrament of Holy Communion was explained and expressed, since Thos. Aquinas, in a philosophic rather than a Biblical sense. The Virgin Mary became honoured more than all the saints, some think to express a popular, undefined hunger for an embodiment of female virtues in the deity (Vol. II, 425). Hymns and prayers to her honour followed, as did Lady Chapels in the vast churches and cathedrals of the Middle Ages, which were reared to house the Sacramental Christ. All these developments in doctrine and worship, then and since, do raise the question, What do we mean by Christianity? Are they to be traced to the original sayings and doings of Jesus in the context of Old Testament religion, and are they legitimately derived therefrom?

The liturgy of Old Testament times centred round a system of sacrifices, as we know. They have often been decried as crude and even debasing, as borrowings from primitive pagan sources, and so forth. They are presented in the Bible on the interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as not in themselves adequate, which cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper clean, but as shadows of that better Covenant of which Christ is the Mediator and the Great High Priest. The abuses of the sacrificial system do not invalidate it, no more do the abuses of doctrine and practice invalidate our liturgical expression of the sacraments of the Gospel as means of grace.

(d) Even as Judaism without sacrifices is a dry tree of ethical pronouncement and legal formulae, no more is Christianity without the sacrifice of Calvary, and the continual remembrance of it, and the eating of the flesh and blood of the Son of Man. But let us be warned lest departure from Divine Revelation, under pressure of the ancient or the modern, should leave us like Aaron, with a golden calf or with a worship which, not being regenerative, is not even edifying.

The Word of God is part of the worship. The prophet's ministry must always complement that of the priest. Samuel, who was both, declaimed (xv. 22) that to obey was better than sacrifice, and to hearken

than the fat of rams. Indeed, Jeremiah claims that God spake not unto the fathers concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices—but this thing I commanded them saying, “Hearken unto My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people, and walk in the Way that I command you, that it may be well with you” (Jer. vii. 22, 23); or to quote Hos. vi. 6, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”

Writers like Fleming James give up reconciling Deuteronomy legislation with the words of the prophets, saying that the Deuteronomists parted company from the prophets, who treated sacrifice and ritual ordinances as subordinate, if not negligible. The Deuteronomists insisted on details such as the sanctuary, and different forms of sacrifice and the manner of their presentation, so as to show that the way in which worship was conducted mattered supremely.

In hospital a lady said to me, “Why continue these long, dreary sermons in church? Give people the Sacrament, that’s all they need.” My reply was to tell her I received a Bible at Ordination (not a chalice) with the injunction to minister both Word and Sacrament. Furthermore, it is in the Holy Communion service that we have the rubric about a sermon.

We may never find it easy to reconcile the position and ministry of priest and prophet in the Old Testament, or in our own ministry, but whether or not it is clear, the Word of God must interrupt, if necessary, the placid flow of even a laudable liturgy, lest men worship God with their lips, whilst their hearts are far from Him. Preaching must accompany worship, that men may worship God with the heart, and with the understanding also. Worship should be the context of preaching, so as to give men an awareness of God, and that the preacher may become a prophet, one who stands in the presence of God and speaks in the name of the Lord.

(e) *Spirit*. Worship must be in spirit and in truth. Whilst our Saviour discriminated between the Samaritan and Jewish religions, He did make it clear that the place and type of worship had to be tested by this fundamental criterion—that as God is Spirit, He must be worshipped in spirit as well as in truth.

There is what Canon Max. Warren has called a scandal about true worship. It causes people to stumble, “brings them up with a jerk,” startles and convicts them, and puts them in the way of conversion. The C.M.J., in one of their pamphlets, refer to a Jewess who in a mood of enquiry or curiosity, attended a Christian service of worship. She was impressed and convicted by the service itself, and eventually converted. These people were speaking to a God Whom they knew and loved, and to whom they were offering the love and devotion of their hearts.

A congregation to whom the Lord God is almighty and lifted up and Whose glory fills His temple, and with a pattern of worship which is Christ-centred, is sure to be a rock of offence to many, but to many more it meets their fundamental needs as men, creatures in God’s image. If together with that there goes an intelligent, corporate

expression of prayer and praise, coupled with the *κοινωνία* fellowship of the family of God, then not only are men built up in their most holy faith, but such a worshipping community is equipped for the extension of the Kingdom. True worship is not only rendered to the one, true, living God, a primary duty of man, but in its carthartic effects, pride and pettiness give way to a corporate expression of the life of the citizens of God's eternal kingdom. This, rather than an ecclesiastical, esoteric piety is our aim.
