

Christian Worship.

BY THE REV. S. NOWELL-ROSTRON, M.A., B.D.

Vicar of Lansdown, Bath.

THE word "worship" is contracted from "worthship," which comes from the uniting of two Anglo-Saxon words, "weorth" (worth) and "scipe" (ship, a termination denoting office or dignity). So it was used frequently of the honour due and paid to men who were worthy, as well as to God. The chief citizen of the civic community is still accorded the title, as holding by the election of his fellow-citizens a position worthy of honour. It is still used by the bridegroom in his marriage vow, "with my body I thee worship." In the English Bible (A.V.) we find it in the parable of the Chief Seats (St. Luke xiv. 10), "then shalt thou have worship (doxa, glory, R.V.) in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee." A remarkable instance of this use is in Wycliffe's version of St. John xii. 26. "If ony man serue me, My Fadir schal worschip hym."

When the word is applied to man's approach to God there is fundamentally the same idea of "worth," immeasurably deepened and expanded in meaning. It is the *motif* of the ascription in the adoring pæan of praise from the four and twenty elders, who "fall down before Him that sitteth on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne saying, Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power." It is the theme also of the triumphant song of the "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands," "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing." That infinite "worth" of God and of the Lamb, that Holiness without stain, that Power supreme, that Wisdom beyond all earthly wisdom, that "Love divine, all loves excelling," demand from us not merely a casual acknowledgment and salutation, or the honour and respect that man pays to man, they demand worship in its sublimest, profoundest sense; the worship, that is, which a creature offers to his Maker, a sinner to his Saviour, a disciple to his Lord, a Church to its divine Head, a redeemed humanity to its Creator and Redeemer.

II.

We can therefore arrive at a tentative definition of worship. Evelyn Underhill's illuminating and stimulating book on Worship opens with the words, "Worship, in all its grades and kinds, is the response of the creature to the Eternal." The net is cast very widely indeed in that statement, and she proceeds, "There is a sense in which we may think of the whole life of the Universe, seen and unseen, conscious and unconscious, as an act of worship, glorifying its Origin, Sustainer and End." Our use of the word narrows its meaning to mankind, and of mankind, to professing Christians. Of them we can say at once that worship is not a tentative feeling after, a groping search for,

God, it is a response, the response of the whole personality to that revelation of God which has been vouchsafed in Jesus Christ. It is a response that is also a self-surrender. So the Archbishop of Canterbury describes it in his *Readings in St. John's Gospel*. "Worship is the submission of our nature to God. It is the quickening of our conscience by His Holiness, the nourishment of the mind by His Truth, the purifying of the imagination by His Beauty, the opening of the heart to His Love, the surrender of the will to His Purpose; and all this is gathered up in Adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable."

The Christian's worship is radiant with the light of knowledge, and pulses with the gladness of assurance. The Athenians, like the rest of the heathen world, made their altar "To an unknown God." To them St. Paul set forth, with the confidence of one who *knew*, the unveiled truth concerning Him in Whom "we live and move and have our being"; and that not as a matter for doubtful discussion, but as a proclamation of fact. In worship the heart of man is lifted up into the presence of God, Who loved us before we came to love Him. It is our answer to a love shewn in His patient dealing with us and with all mankind, and above all shewn "in the fulness of time," when "the Almighty Word of God," (to quote the daring words of the Sarum Breviary) "leapt down out of His royal throne," and, entering through the narrow gateway of a single human life, lived under human conditions, revealed the divine glory.

III.

If then we ask, what is the essential character of Christian worship? we turn inevitably to our Lord. Nor has He left us without guidance. More truly and clearly even than any of the prophets He saw how pitifully mistaken and inadequate was so much of the worship of those about Him. Some of it was a profane mockery, like that of those who honoured God with their lips, for a pretence making long prayers, though their heart was far from Him, or like those who even in the Temple Courts made merchandise of holy things, or like those who were meticulous about the observance of the Sabbath and the minute regulations of the Torah but callous about deeds of mercy, or like those who were careful not to defile themselves lest they should not be able to keep the Passover yet were even then hounding Him to His death. How saddening are the inconsistencies and hypocrisies that have been paraded as religion, and have degraded its name and those who have been guilty of them! How deeply concerned was our Lord that His disciples should be "true" (*alēthinoi*) worshippers, and that no fatal flaw should make their worship a travesty in God's eyes and a by-word amongst men! With the worship of the Gentile world outside Palestine our Lord would seem to have had little immediate touch. On one occasion, however, not to a Jew, but to a Samaritan, He revealed for all time, for Jew and Gentile alike, His own thoughts, and set a standard of worship for all who should be called by His Name.

The woman of Samaria was of those who knew not what they worshipped. Hers was a worship centred on, and associated with, Mount Gerizim, a holy place, as being the traditional mount of Abraham's

sacrifice of Isaac, and of his meeting with Melchizedek, and also as the Mount of Blessing (Deut. xxvii. 12), even as its rival Jerusalem was considered to be by the Jews the religious centre of their faith, and of the whole world. It was assumed by Jews and Samaritans alike that religious worship must have a local centre and habitation. To the woman, setting before Him these rival claims, Christ makes answer, "*The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.*" Already God was seeking those who should break through the trammels of materialistic conceptions. "*God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.*"

IV.

In these words Evangelical worship finds its charter, its guiding principle, its standard, and its touch-stone. Worship is both solitary and corporate. To this declaration of Christ all private and solitary devotions of the Christian, and all forms of worship, and the corporate use of these forms, must be brought. Christian worship must be "*in spirit and truth.*" This is the only kind of worship acceptable to God; these are conditions that every worshipper must fulfil. "*In spirit,*" for whatever accompaniments to worship there may be externally, they are only justified in so far as they exalt the spirit of man into "that highest region where the divine and human meet." (Westcott). "*In truth,*" (joined with "in spirit" as one phrase so that the two conditions are indissolubly united), for worship must be based upon, and express the truth about, God. There can be no escape from the Divine Imperative, "*must.*" The deep divisions of Christendom, the formalism, the puerilities, the superstitions and the abuses of much so-called Christian worship may be traced to neglect in the fulfilment of one or other of these two dominating characteristics of right worship. Sometimes spiritual worship has been obscured and even destroyed by concentration on externals. Sometimes it has been degraded by warped or false teaching and belief. The Incarnation and the Mediation of Christ, drawing together God and man, opening a new and living way to the Father, has made possible for all worship to be "*in spirit*"; that which Christ has revealed of God has enabled worship to be "*in truth.*" Westcott suggests that these two characteristics answer to the higher meaning of the second and third commandments. It is certain that this great declaration of our Lord, so fundamental and vital for the future worship of His Church, was no isolated saying, recorded without special purpose. It corresponds with the whole example and teaching of Christ. Its best commentary is found in the Sermon on the Mount, in all that we know of His own life of worship and prayer, and perhaps especially in the closing chapters of St. John's Gospel, with their record of the words and actions of One, Who is, in Brunner's striking phrase, "God's own Word about Himself."

V.

Worship, then, springs from *personal experience*. Though the initiative and cause of our worship comes from God Who seeks us, worship is not worship till that seeking of God is met by the spiritual movement of man Godwards. The individual response is essential in the worshipper. There is a corporate worship in which the individual

is called upon to share, that of the worshipping Church to which he belongs. But it is a fundamental mistake to differentiate, as some do, between the essential nature of the worship of the individual and that of the Christian community. "It is inevitable" says one writer, of corporate worship, "that the individual worshipper should sometimes feel that it does not exactly express his own emotions and desires. The Liturgy is not designed to express our personal feelings, but the aspirations of the Church." It is true that Christian worship cannot be content with solitary approach to God, and inevitably becomes also the worship of a fellowship. The worshipper is one of the Family, the Household of God, and whether he prays by himself or with others begins his prayer, "Our Father." He is of the Communion of the Saints, the living here and the living there. Therefore he joins with the Church on earth, "with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven," in the Trisagion of adoration. But the value and efficacy of his worship is not that he is caught up in the whole adoring tribute of the mystical Body of Christ, and is swept mechanically into the unceasing current of its offering and self-offering before God, it is in the fact that he is himself one of the redeemed, and finds in the worship of the whole body that which represents his own joy, his own devotion, his own self-oblation, which he brings to swell the great Gloria in Excelsis. Only so can the Church, or the individuals of whom the Church is composed, worship "*in spirit and truth.*"

VI.

Consider then the two characteristics of true worship as Christ has given them to us, with some of their implications.

1. *Worship "in spirit."*

The heart of man, not any one spot deemed more sacred than another, is the trysting-place where God and he meet. There is in my house a reproduction of a well-known picture, called, I think, "The Presence." It is a constant reminder of this truth. In a great Church the High Altar is ablaze with light. Two figures alone shew through the gloom of the vast nave. One is a woman, dimly shewn, kneeling in the attitude of humble supplication at the very back of the Church, not daring to lift up so much as her eyes to heaven. The other is the radiant figure of the Master, standing beside her *there*, with hands outstretched to pardon, to comfort and to receive. There may be the most splendid ceremonial and the finest music that can be rendered, but if the soul be blind, the heart unmoved, the mind closed, there can be no realized Presence. For one who is truly Christ's, He is ever fulfilling His promise, "Lo, I am with you all the days." Everywhere, Church, home, street, workshop, all the path of daily duty, is holy ground, and a place therefore for worship and prayer.

Yet in insisting upon this as a cardinal truth, there must be a recognition of the facts of the nature of man. Man has body as well as soul, sense as well as spirit. Worship is of the whole man. Hence there have always been set apart special places for worship; and worship needs, and has always found, some embodiment, some outward and visible and audible expression, often some form or liturgy, that has tended to stereotype its formal presentment, and

has provided for its transmission to other generations. Christian worship of the first days in Jerusalem consisted of "the breaking of bread" and of "prayers." The latter obviously, and the former possibly, included opportunity for free and spontaneous devotions, but the liturgical traces in the New Testament, and those early liturgies of which we have examples, shew how inevitable was the movement towards recognised and canalized forms of worship, generally accepted by a particular group or community for corporate use. It is obvious then that Evangelical faith must clarify and understand its relationship to this fact. Evelyn Underhill analyses carefully the expression of worship, and finds in it four main elements: 1. Symbolism. 2. Ritual. 3. Sacraments. 4. Sacrifice. These demand close consideration. Here it is only possible to touch upon them. For the sake of brevity, and because the two strands are so intimately interwoven, we may take Symbolism and Sacraments together.

VII.

(a) SYMBOL AND SACRAMENT.

Symbols are used of necessity in the ordinary commerce of life for the interpretation and representation of invisible ideas, facts and realities. They speak a language that all can understand. Sometimes they are just tokens, as a simple gift of child to parent, or friend to friend is an indication of love, or the raising of the hat is a mark of esteem. But at other times they are more than tokens, they are "sure witnesses and effectual signs," and pass into the sacramental, fulfilling a mediating relationship between the sign and the thing signified, and becoming a means whereby this itself is received.

For instance, a flag to one person is an ordinary, it may be a dull and meaningless, piece of bunting, but to another person it will be a sacred and inspiring sign, thrilling him to deeds of utmost heroism, ministering strength and ardour to his patriotism. A cheque is an effective symbol. It is not money, though it is the earnest of money, and *if* it be presented and honoured, it can be converted into cash. A photograph is not the person, but the likeness of the person, representing the living form and face. In all these cases there is a potential and conditional ability to convey something, but the outward sign is not itself the thing conveyed. The appropriation and stimulus and enjoyment of the latter depend on the person who receives or interprets, and on the train of ideas set in motion, or the experience recalled and strengthened, or the faith that stirs into action. Without that personal movement the symbol is of no avail to him. Illustrations and analogies break down at some point or points, and none is perfect, but these may serve to elucidate in some measure the sacramental idea.

In one sense, everything is symbolic of spiritual and unseen realities. The Universe is as the garment of the invisible God. Nature points beyond itself to its Creator. All life in its fleeting outward show witnesses to the unseen and the eternal. The sacramental principle must be fully and frankly recognised. Every meal, every conversation, every task is sacramental. The Bible is the sacrament of God's word. "Christ," says Berulle, "is the major Sacrament." The Church of England recognises only two Sacraments because they

alone are "Sacraments of the Gospel," with the special authority of Dominical institution. So it deliberately puts aside from the same order those others that were commonly called Sacraments, and are so regarded in the Roman Church, some of which it affirms, have "grown of the corrupt following of the Apostles." But the sacramental idea, so defined and limited, must all the more be brought to the test of spiritual religion. As a distorted view of nature may produce idolatry on the one hand and pantheistic aberrations on the other, so in sacramental worship there are dangers of gross materialism on the one hand and of shallow emotionalism on the other. The Evangelical finds his safeguard against both in our Lord's declaration that all worship must be "*in spirit*." Therefore, though he regards the Sacraments as a veritable means of grace, he cannot accept an "*ex opere operato*" view of them. Between the effective representation of spiritual truth and its power to mediate spiritual strength to the soul of a believer, and the automatic conveyance of divine grace, there is a great gulf fixed. It is a vital divergence, dividing all Christendom in twain. Evangelical thought and practice cannot therefore follow the inferences of Evelyn Underhill's impressive presentation of the Sacramentalism for which she so ably argues. Writing of the Sacraments as a proclamation of the Divine Transcendence (as indeed in part they are), she describes them as "a bridge, an ordained path along which the Eternal Perfect may penetrate time and the things of time. Here," she adds, "man is pressed by God immanent to prepare the matrix: but it is God transcendent Who pours into it His quickening love to cleanse, feed, and transform. . . Here men can be sure of laying hold of spiritual reality, truly present in its own right. . ." In other words, it must be effective "*ex opere operato*" if it is to meet the creature's deepest need."

Is it not just this against which our Lord has warned us? The localizing of the Presence of the Deity is an essential prelude of idolatry, the deadly peril which St. John saw clearly to be that not of the pagan world only, but also of the Christian Church drawn out of it. Has not the story of the centuries, and of the cleavages within the Church, shown only too startlingly how much that warning has been needed, and how little it has been heeded? When symbol passes from Sacrament to an end in itself, and into identification with what it symbolizes, the danger line is crossed. That which should be but a "sure witness and effectual sign" of the utterly Sublime and the infinitely Holy, the seal and operative symbol of the unseen realities that transcend time and space and all the visible world, lifting the thoughts and prayers of the worshipper into the heavenlies till it is itself lost in his contemplation and adoration of God, becomes in itself the centre of the soul's reverence, and often the object of the soul's worship.

VIII.

(b) RITUAL.

The same test must be applied to those ritual observances that inevitably accompany worship. "Ritual" writes Evelyn Underhill "weaves speech, gesture, rhythm and agreed ceremonial into the worshipping action of man." Some Christian communities, like the Quakers, reduce ritual to its barest minimum. But in others, from

the general pattern of a Salvation Army meeting, or the free, but nevertheless typical, worship of bodies without a set liturgy, to the most highly developed and "stylized" liturgical services in Christendom, ritual has its place, always its importance, sometimes its grave peril. How should the Evangelical regard this universal phenomenon, and how so use it as to find in it no hindrance but a help?

That there is a right use of Ritual there can be no question. Whatever be the worship, in the Sanctuary, or in private, all things must be done "decently and in order." There is value in habitual worship, in reverence of gesture and posture and mien, in seemliness and cleanliness, in fitness of dress, in all the ordering of worship, in the quality of its music, the dignity of its conduct, in that which ministers to the sense of the awfulness of the majesty of Him Whom we approach. The ministry of holy things must be carried out with every care, and be the very best that can be given in the highest of all human occupations.

But the snare of formalism is a deadly one. How easy it is to mistake the service perfectly rendered for true worship, and to concentrate on the exact performance of the minutiae of the rite, regarding that as all that is necessary! Was it not this that made David feel, after his great sin, that no external sacrifice or ceremony could bring cleansing or peace?

"For Thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it:

Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offerings.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

Only then would the ritual sacrifice be of avail. Was not this "the vision that Isaiah, the son of Amos, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem?"—the nation satisfying its religious conscience with sacrifices, "temple-treading," and ritual, but in heart and life rebellious, careless and wicked?

The prophetic and the priestly, as the days of Ezra and Ezekiel so vividly demonstrated, have always been in seeming opposition, the priest insisting on the performance of ritual and ceremony as the essential thing, the prophet ever recalling his people to the spiritual values that formalism so surely destroys, and to a life and character that must first be reached and influenced. In Christian worship the same two elements are found, and there is the same conflict. It is traceable in the development of the liturgical life of the early Church. It comes into violent clash in the Reformation. It is seen in any use of liturgical formulæ or of ritual that leads the worshipper to find in them the full satisfaction of religious duty, and to put mechanical performance of services in the place of inward spiritual experience. Where, to use Dr. Heiler's words, "Ritual is a fixed formula which people recite without feeling or mood of devotion, untouched in heart and mind," it must meet the condemnation of Him Who has laid it down that all Christian worship must be "*in spirit*."

Yet though this is the clear Evangelical position, it does not mean, as has been already said, that all Ritual is to be condemned. The extravagances attached to the use of Ritual have given the word a sinister connotation. But some Ritual we must have. Let it then

be simple, not distracting, in keeping with the depth and sincerity of our faith, helping concentration, not dividing the attention. It is but the box of spikenard that must be broken if the fragrance is to fill the House of God. The symbols and the ritual alike are to be forgotten in that to which they lead. The worship of the Christian soul, and of the Christian community, can only be guarded from this inherent danger by never-ceasing insistence on its spiritual nature, on the truth that all barriers between man and God have been broken down, that there is no ritual *essential* to our communion with Him, that there is " *nothing between.*"

IX.

(c) SACRIFICE.

Sacrifice is a natural expression of penitence or of love ; sometimes it indicates sorrow, where fellowship has been broken ; sometimes devotion, for where there is love, there will be gratitude for love, and gratitude must ever overflow into gift. So sacrifice must be an accompaniment of worship. It springs from the commendable impulse to set all things right with God, and to give to Him of our best. So it has had many forms—the whole-burnt-offering, the peace-offering and the sin-offering of the Jewish law ; the rendering back to God of the best of the first fruits of the earth, or of wealth ; the building of the great Cathedral, on which all that human skill and devotion can provide is lavished ; the tiny offering, which was yet her all, of the widow in the Temple.

But like all else, if it is to be acceptable to God, sacrifice must be first and fundamentally spiritual. Whatever material offering be made, it is the sacrifice of oneself that it should represent. This, above all, God " seeks " in His worshippers. Not that our sacrifices earn or win us the free gift of God which is life eternal. Like all worship, our sacrifice is part of our response to that gift. It is " our bounden duty and service." But it is all we are and have. " Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering." When I bow beneath the Cross,

" Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

So the real sacrifices we make are the offering of " ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable (logiké i.e. of the " logos," the reason, not mechanical), holy and living sacrifice " to God, and the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving for the benefits of Christ's passion. Whosoever has made and makes such sacrifice can say of all else, with Hudson Taylor, " I have never made a sacrifice," for even these sacrifices we confess we are not worthy to offer, and in the making of them there is a far more exceeding blessing. Christian worship must therefore include the self-offering of the worshipper, as the worshipping Church must express the self-offering of the whole Christian Body, to God.

This indeed is the sacrifice we offer in the Holy Communion. Nor does it seem possible to reconcile this, even in the broadest synthesis and within the wide boundaries of the conditions Christ has laid down, with a view widely stressed and attractive to many, that the Church is in the Eucharist ever sharing in " the ceaseless self-offering in

heavenly places of Christ," still less with that crude materialistic teaching which asserts that in the Mass the Body and Blood of Christ are offered as a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead. Nor can a modified and mystical interpretation of the Eucharistic Sacrifice such as Evelyn Underhill quotes from Dr. James' book on *Christian Myth and Ritual* be left unchallenged. "In every Mass," he writes, "the redemptive process is reiterated, and Christ Himself is born anew after a heavenly and spiritual manner."

The Evangelical view has perhaps never been expressed (outside the Bible) more clearly and fully than in the familiar words of the Consecration Prayer. On the Cross, at a definite time and place in history, Jesus Christ "made there (by His one oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." The phrase "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8), if indeed the latter words apply to the Lamb and not to the Book of Life, must be interpreted as well by other passages in the Book of Revelation as by the whole strong argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews (where there is repeated insistence on the fact of the sacrifice "*once offered*"—(a sacrifice that in its very nature could not be repeated) and also by the general teaching of the New Testament concerning the death of the Redeemer.

The Holy Communion is therefore primarily a continuance of the perpetual memory of the precious death of Christ, leading the soul that is spiritually prepared to a Communion with the living Lord, to a realisation of His Real Presence in the heart of a believer who comes in humble faith "with boldness" to the throne of grace. A process is at once open to doubt that has to find its justification outside Holy Scripture. To justify the transformation of the simple religious rite of "the Breaking of Bread" of the New Testament into the fully developed and gorgeous Liturgy of the Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Mass, which includes within itself the whole drama of creation and redemption, recourse must be had to a theory of development, to an appeal to "the worshipping instinct of generations" which regards the first services as "a grain of wheat flung into the field of the world." Upon this view the extreme divergence between the elemental simplicity of the Institution and the most ornate Liturgies, where the simple action is overlaid with a vast number of additions, is held to be natural and implicit in the memorial service ordained by Christ, and the localized Presence and the "miracle" of the Mass are not found inconsistent, as they would seem emphatically to be, with the clearly shewn purpose and the original institution of our Lord.

That there is a real and thrilling experience of the worship of the whole Church in heaven and earth no true Evangelical will deny; no: will he neglect or despise so glorious a fact. But the sacrifice on which such worship is based is that once made and accepted by the Father, through which alone we are "accepted in the Beloved." To go beyond, or to claim to add to that, is to introduce teaching and practice for which we have no scriptural warrant. The imagery of the Apocalypse, with its golden altar, and its sacrificial implications, with its golden bowls of incense, which are "the prayers of the saints,"

can hardly be regarded as a picture of the earthly worship of Christian communities of the first century. To take the details literally is to strain impossibly our interpretation of the message of the book. But this at least we can do, we can join in the songs of the redeemed, and can claim the same great Sacrifice of which the golden altar in Heaven is the symbol and the eternal reminder.

X.

II. WORSHIP "IN TRUTH."

The second condition of Christian worship is that it must be "*in truth.*" Worship implies some conception of the object of worship. A false idea of God tends to produce both a warped and perverted character—for all worshippers grow like the God they worship—and a type of worship in itself decadent and debasing. Not only then must there be the sincerity that strikes at all formalism and superstition, but also, fundamentally, a right conception of God.

The story of Christianity is marked (and alas! marred) with many deeds not due to the service of Christ. What excesses, what cruelties have been committed in the name of the King of love from this cause! The bitter cry of Mme. de Staël concerning the French Revolution, "O Liberty, what crimes have been committed in thy name!" has its counterpart in the tragic side of the history of Christendom. The pitiful history of religious persecutions, of misguided zeal and unbridled fanaticism, culminating in the nameless tortures of the Inquisition, as well as the mediæval commercializing of the most sacred ordinances of our faith, as though the favour of God could be bought with money gifts and His grace automatically mediated to men of corrupt life and character by the performance of a rite, bear witness to the extent of this evil in the past. Nor is the story of the Reformed Churches free from stain. Much that passes for, and bears the name of, Christian, even to-day, is open to the same charge, for there must be a strangely perverted idea of God if His sanction be presumed for some of the things we tolerate, or even do, in our so called "Christian" civilization.

The Reformers saw truly that the basis of all Christian character and all Christian worship was the truth about God. Luther with his robust and downright sincerity, his intense desire and rugged stand for truth, Calvin with his insistence on the supremacy of God and His sovereign will, joined with the other leaders of the Reformation in revolt against the travesties that then passed for Christianity, and in their return to the great fundamental truths of the Scriptures they re-discovered the living Word of God, and gave to its ministry its proper place in a worshipping Church. From this they attacked and swept away abuses, and flung off the weight of accretions that had buried the truth for Christendom, and drew men back to a right and pure conception of God, of the contents of the Gospel message, and of those principles and values for which Christ lived and died.

A comprehensive summary of that truth it is not easy to give, but certain great aspects stand out clearly. It is the truth concerning God, His loving will, His holiness, His power, His surpassing glory. It is the truth concerning Jesus Christ Himself, His incarnation, His ministry, His redemptive sacrifice, His resurrection, His exaltation, His abiding presence, His return. It is the truth concerning the Holy Spirit,

as Life-Giver in the Universe and in the soul of man, as Sanctifier, Comforter, Guide, Illuminator. It is the truth concerning man, his helplessness to save himself, his sinfulness in God's eyes, his need of a Mediator, his salvation not by his own works but by justifying faith alone, the immediacy of his access to the Father, his chief purpose in life—to know and glorify God. It is the truth concerning the Church as the congregation of the faithful, as the Body of Christ, invisible, for it is spiritual, yet visible in, though not identical with, the organized Church, joined in closest union with its divine Head, and with those who have "crossed the flood," through which Christ sets forward His Kingdom on earth, and combats the "world rulers of this darkness."

Evangelical worship must express the truths by which it lives. At its centre is God's exceeding grace meeting man's exceeding need of personal salvation. If this means that such worship is subjective, it is only so in the right sense of that word, and does not imply an introspective pre-occupation with oneself or an unbalanced emotionalism. Such an experience involves the whole personality, the mind, will, heart, imagination, all that is the soul and spirit of man, as well as the body. These deep and massive truths, the pillars of his faith, guard the Evangelical from insincere and untruthful worship. They keep him humble, reverent, aware, confident and cheerful, and keep his worship pure and uplifting. For his worship, so far from being self-centred, is essentially Christo-centric. Therefore his soul is at peace with God, his heart is "at leisure from itself, to soothe and sympathise," and his energies are released and consecrated for the work of the Kingdom of his Lord.

XI.

THE ANGLICAN LITURGY.

Can we relate these principles to the Anglican formularies, and to the systematic and habitual worship of the Church of England? The Prayer Book with its stately diction, its prescribed offices, its regular and seasonal worship does not escape the possibility of criticism from the point of view of worship "*in spirit and truth*." As regards "*worship in spirit*," it might be said to have much in its liturgical services that must be insincere to the average worshipper. As regards "*worship in truth*," it might be held that if the conception of God is lofty and inspiring, it is at times sub-Christian, and that the Prayer Book touches us spiritually in too limited a fashion, being concerned mainly with pardon, protection and comfort, and not too obviously with the life of self-dedication, the practical side of discipleship, and the missionary vocation of Christians and the vision of the world-wide Church.

Into the grounds for such criticism we cannot now enter. But we may affirm positively that the Prayer Book remains not only a superb monument of noble and dignified expression of a strong and wisely-regulated devotional life, but also an outstanding stimulus and guide to spiritual and truthful worship. No liturgy can avoid the reproach of formalism if there is not the active co-operation of the worshipper. Nor can any one liturgy express the entire fulness of spiritual truth. Forms of worship are aids, the moulds in which

it is cast, the words in which it is framed. The Prayer Book has no rival amongst the liturgies of Christendom as an expression of simple piety and scriptural faith.

In the matter of archaisms Prayer Book revision is overdue. But there is that about the structure of its main services, its insistence on sincerity and personal religious experience, its use of a tongue "understood of the people," its emphasis on the part that each worshipper is called upon to fulfil, and its fidelity to, and quotation of the Bible, that is a constant recall to the immediacy of our religion. Its stately and impressive language sets a standard rarely, if ever, reached since it was drawn up, though it does not forbid or quench, outside its liturgical offices, the spirit of freedom in prayer too little exercised to-day; whilst for use in the Prayer meeting there is no book of prayers to compare with it. The ministry of the Word to which it points, and on which it is based, preserves the prophetic note as an essential part of worship, and is joined with that of the Sacraments in its devotional scheme. The Prayer Book still speaks to the deepest needs, and opens up the highest flights of the soul. Penitence, forgiveness, adoration, praise, listening to God's voice, waiting on Him in prayer and, in the Holy Communion, the memorial of Christ's death "till He come," the reception of the "dear tokens of His passion," the self-oblation of the communicant, the sense of the living presence of Christ by His Spirit, and of our fellowship with the whole Family of God, cleanse, satisfy, strengthen and nourish the Christian life in all its aspects.

But no liturgy can do more than bring us to the fountain of living waters. That the Anglican Liturgy has done for countless Christian people, and is doing to-day.

The Supernatural and the Natural.

(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MODERN WORLD).

BY THE REV. E. STEINLY, M.A.

THE Supernatural may be defined as "the world which has values which stir the sense of the holy and demand to be esteemed as sacred." It stands in contrast with the world perceived by the senses, the values of which are merely comparative. The division of environment into Supernatural and Natural is thus the work of religion.

To affirm the existence both of the Supernatural and of the Natural is to affirm that man stands both within, and yet apart from, the flux of his sense-experience. His life floats upon the ever moving stream of time, and yet he is conscious that this is so. Moreover, the possibility of breasting that stream is present to his consciousness because a reality outside the power of its flow bids him in its own right to be more than a mere float.

There are not a few, of course, who maintain that man transcends