What in Heaven is Jesus Doing?[1]

David Wheaton

> I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
> who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
> born of the Virgin Mary,
> suffered under Pontius Pilate,
> was crucified, died and was buried….
> On the third day he rose again;
> he ascended into heaven,
> he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
> and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
> I believe in the Holy Spirit…the communion of saints….

These clauses in the Apostles' Creed are marked in our liturgical calendar by the festivals of the Annunciation, Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Day, Ascension Day, Advent, Pentecost and All Saints' Day. But there is a significant omission. When do we celebrate the heavenly session? When did you last hear a sermon (or, if a preacher, preach one) on the subject? Add to this the fact that Ascension Day is (correctly) celebrated on a Thursday, and I would venture to suggest that many Christian people have little idea of the Work of Christ between the Resurrection and the Second Coming. Yet the doctrine is one of deep significance for our practical living as well as for devotional observance, as I shall endeavour to show.

Symbolic language

To begin with, we need to recognize that the language used here is symbolic. The fact that the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven when he left his disciples does not necessarily mean that we have to believe in a three-decker universe. The upward action was the only way he could convey to his followers the significance of what was happening. Had he moved horizontally across the earth from them, or vanished from their sight as on previous occasions when he appeared to them after his resurrection, they would have been left expecting him to appear again. Had he descended into the earth below them, that would have given the wrong signal. By ascending into the heavens above them, he

stressed the finality of his withdrawal to his pre-incarnate existence. This was obviously a symbolic action which in no way requires belief in a three-decker universe. We know little of what heaven will be like, apart from Jesus' own teaching and the pictures given us in the book of Revelation, and these portray eternity in terms of our experience of the universe of space and time.

So the writers of Scripture accommodate these deep truths to our life in the here and now. When we have finished a hard day's work, the most natural action on coming home is to sit down to rest from our labours. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has this in mind when writing in the introduction to that letter (1:3b) that 'After he (Jesus) had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs'. That Jesus sat down indicates that he knew that he had finished what he came to do, which he had already claimed in his high-priestly prayer of John 17:4 and in his triumphant cry of 'Finished' from the Cross (John 19:30). That he sat down at the right hand of the Father demonstrates that his work has been accepted.

Implications for Trinitarian belief

Again, this picture language in no way requires us to believe that God the Father is permanently seated on a throne in heaven, withdrawn from his world. Long ago the Psalmist affirmed the omnipresence of God—

> Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast (Psalm 139:7-10).

This is re-echoed in Paul's sermon on the Areopagus—

> The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should

> live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:24-28).

This is a truth which needs to be emphasised in many circles today where it is suggested that Christians are in God's presence only when met together in a church service. It is surprising to find a recent publication called *Leading others into the presence of God*:[2] such a title has dangerous implications. It can be similarly misleading when church services begin with 'Come into his presence singing Alleluia…'. The tune may be cheerful, but the words need explanation and it might better be sung as 'Recognize his presence singing…'. It might be argued that there is biblical precedent for this idea in the familiar words of the *Jubilate*, where in Psalm 100:2 the Prayer Book version exhorts us to 'come before his presence with a song'. However, this Psalm was written for use in Temple worship, and the Jerusalem Temple, like its predecessor the tabernacle, was intended simply to be a symbol of God's presence among his people. Solomon made this plain in his great prayer at the dedication of the building: 'but will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple that I have built!' (1 Kings 8:27). When the people presumed on that presence and tried to localise God in his temple, the prophets were quick to warn them against such presumption (Isa. 66:1; Jer. 7:3; Amos 5:4, 5, etc.). Attachment to, and attendance at, special places must never become a substitute for a relationship with the true and living God. Jesus' promise in Matthew 18:20 is intended as an encouragement for Christian people to meet together, and not to imply that he is not present with them by his Spirit always. We are never out of the presence of God, a fact of which we need to be reminded at church services.

If this is not made abundantly clear, those who lack assurance may be left feeling that they are in his presence only when attending a church service (or, even worse, only when singing certain types of songs: the writer was once at a service when the sermon was followed by an enthusiastic music group leader announcing, 'We shall now lead you back into the presence of God…'). Joining together in public worship is of course an activity which should be used to bring Christian people into an awareness of the presence of the God who is always with us, and those who lead should be careful to reassure congregations that when leaving the building and the fellowship they are in no way leaving

the presence of God. Otherwise in time of temptation they will be encouraged to succumb to the popular myth, 'No-one will see: no-one will know'.

As well as the assurance that they are never out of the presence of God, Christian believers are also promised that they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity. When giving that promise in his farewell discourse, Jesus emphasised that the inter-relationship of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity is so strong, that when the Spirit comes to the believer all three Persons make their home with him or her (John 14:18,23). The promise of Jesus to be with his people always (Matt. 28:20) is fulfilled by the indwelling of the Spirit: as he is the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7 etc.), Scripture can speak of the believer as having 'Christ in you' (Col. 1:27) as well as being indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19, etc.). Jesus' promise in Matthew 18:20 ('where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them') would appear to be a particular expression of the later and more general promise of Matthew 28:20.

However, while we rejoice in the fact that the indwelling Spirit makes the presence of Jesus real in our experience, we should not allow that to detract from the fact that, until his return in glory, our Lord Jesus Christ is pictured as seated at God's right hand. One of the consequences of the Incarnation is that this Jesus having become human, has now taken our humanity with him into heaven. This is attested in Article IV of the Thirty-Nine Articles, *Of the Resurrection of Christ* which states—

> Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature; wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day.

This has profound implications for Christian believers. It is again the letter to the Hebrews which spells these out for us—

> we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with us in our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Heb. 4:15, 16).

and

> because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted (Heb. 2:18).

We can take great encouragement by reflecting that, because the Lord Jesus has been this way before us, he understands how we feel, and we can gain from him the spiritual strength to overcome temptation.

Implications for Holy Communion

Having said this, we must consider in what way we experience the presence of Christ when celebrating the Lord's Supper. Those who taught transubstantiation maintained that in that service the Lord Jesus Christ becomes physically present in the consecrated bread and wine. This was vigorously refuted by the Reformers: in his *Defence of the true and catholic doctrine of the sacrament of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ* Archbishop Cranmer adduces both Scripture and the ancient fathers of the church to prove that 'Christ as concerning his body and his human nature is in heaven and not in earth'.[3] Similarly, Bishop Ridley in his *Brief Declaration of the Lord's Supper* answers the question, 'What kind of presence is to be granted in the Lord's Supper?' with the statement that Reformed writers affirm and say, 'that the substance of the natural body and blood of Christ is only remaining in heaven, and so shall be until the latter day, when he shall come again in his glory, accompanied with the angels of heaven, to judge both the quick and the dead'.[4]

It seems beneficial therefore to regard the Lord's Supper as a time when, rather than bringing the Lord back down to earth in the consecrated bread and wine, communicants are encouraged to enjoy fellowship with him in heavenly places. That makes sense of the way in which in many traditions the eucharistic prayer is introduced with the dialogue, 'Lift up your hearts….We lift them up unto the Lord'. This accords with the apostolic injunction—

> Since then you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:1-3).

Holy Communion, an opportunity to experience our fellowship with the risen Christ, should make real to us the truth expressed in the letter to the Ephesians 'God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus' (2:6). This echoes the apostle's earlier statement that the 'God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ…has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every blessing in Christ' (1:3). On the practical level, therefore, the Lord's Supper invites us, in obeying the command of Christ to remember him, to look in three directions: back to the Cross and Christ crucified for our sins, up to the risen Christ enthroned at the Father's right hand, and forward to the Christ who will come again in glory. For the Communion is an interim rite, 'until his coming again' (1 Cor. 11:26). Thus can communicants obey with satisfaction the invitation to 'feed on Him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving'.[5]

The enthroned Victor

However, the session of Christ has other consequences for our faith and practice. The writer to the Hebrews picks up the theme again later in the argument of his Epistle. Chapters 8-10 set out many reasons to prove that the Lord Jesus Christ as our great High-Priest is far superior to the priests and high-priests who ministered under the Old Covenant. The climax of this reasoning comes when he states—

> Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties, again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, because by one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy (Heb. 10:11-14).

Here there is a clear contrast between the Old Testament priests having to *stand* continually as they offered their repeated sacrifices, and Jesus being able to *sit* after completing his unique sacrifice. This comes as a fulfilment of the Davidic prophecy of 'The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"' (Ps. 110:1 quoted by the writer of the letter to the Hebrews in 1:13), to which Jesus refers in Mark 12:36 and parallels. In Ephesians 1:20, 21 Paul uses the verb καθίζω (*kathizō*—elsewhere used intransitively) as a transitive verb emphasising the Father's role in seating the risen Christ in the place not only of victory but also of authority 'far above

all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in this present age but also in the one to come'. All three synoptic Gospels quote Jesus when on trial before the Sanhedrin as answering the high priest's question as to whether He is the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One with the words, 'I am, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven' (Mk. 14:62; Matt. 26:64; Lk. 22:69). This was enough for the Sanhedrin to convict Jesus of blasphemy.

The context in which Jesus quotes from Psalm 110 is very interesting. On the Tuesday of Holy Week Jesus was in the Temple at Jerusalem when various groups of opponents came to try Him out with different questions. At the end of this grilling, he turns the tables and puts a question which Matthew tells us no-one could answer (Matt. 22:44; Mk. 12:36; Lk. 20:42). Both Matthew and Mark draw attention to the fact that Jesus claims that, in writing this Psalm, David is Spirit-inspired, and Jesus uses the prophetic statement to point out that David is foretelling one who would be a descendant of his, yet calling that person his Lord. Thus he draws attention to the fact that the long-expected Messiah would be both human and Divine—the Son of Man, descended from the human line of David, as well as the Son of God. On the day of Pentecost Peter quotes from this Psalm as evidence for the fact that the risen Christ is now exalted in this way, and in his first letter (3:22) there is an allusion to the same fact.

We know from contemporary practice in the first-century Roman Empire that it was the custom for victorious generals to be granted the privilege of a 'triumph'. This allowed them to lead their troops through the Imperial capital city followed by prisoners from the captured nations bringing the booty captured from them. In much the same way the vessels from the Jerusalem Temple would have been carried away to Babylon as recorded in 2 Chronicles 36:18.

The New Testament portrays Jesus in similar terms returning to heaven as the victor over sin and death. In Ephesians 4:8 Paul quotes Psalm 68:18 as prophetic of Jesus' triumphant re-entry into heaven leading captives—these most likely being the principalities and powers He had defeated, dethroned and disarmed.[6] Interestingly Paul's quotation makes a significant change from the original by saying that while the Psalmist's victor *received* gifts from men, Jesus *gave* gifts to them. Commentators have various theories about this change, but for our purposes it suffices to note that it was the victorious return of Jesus to

heaven that paved the way for His gift to His people of the Holy Spirit with His attendant gifts. This forms a useful parallel to the Jewish tradition which at Pentecost celebrated the fact that Moses both received the Law from God and gave it to His people.

When is Jesus standing?

Significantly, there are only two references in the New Testament to the risen Christ standing in heaven. The first is in Acts 7:56. Here Stephen is facing the wrath of the Sanhedrin, who are about to drag him out of the city to stone him. '"Look" he said, "I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."' This action on the part of the ascended Christ would appear to be a special revelation to demonstrate His concern and support for His faithful servant. On the other occasion in the book of Revelation (ch. 5) the Lamb is 'standing in the centre of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders' (v. 6). Here again it would appear that there is a purpose behind the change of posture. The chapter begins by portraying 'a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals' in the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne. When the angel asks who is worthy to break the seals and open the book John (writing as an onlooker) weeps because no-one was found worthy to do this. One of the elders then tells him to desist from weeping, as 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah , the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals' (v. 5). So Jesus has risen from His seat at the right hand of the Father in order to break the seals and open the scroll.

Later in the book of Revelation (14:1-5) this same Lamb is portrayed as again standing, but this time on Mount Zion in company with the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. Commentators place this vision on the heavenly Mount Zion (cf. Heb. 12:22), given to reassure the faithful after the terrible prospects of persecution in chapters 12 and 13, but the point of His standing here again would be to make Him the focal point of the worship of the redeemed (14:5 suggests a link with the 'new song' of 5:9).

As the book of Revelation draws to its close with a further picture of heaven there is twice portrayed the 'throne of God and of the Lamb' (22:1, 3), while in concluding the letter to the church at Laodicea the risen Christ says, 'To him who overcomes I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne' (Rev. 3:21). These

references would suggest that we are to picture the position of Christ in heaven as normally seated in glory at the right hand of the Father. Having been granted this privilege after his victory over sin and death, Christ is willing to share it with those who share that victory.

What is He doing there?

So, to return to the title of this article, what is the Lord Jesus doing in this interim period while He is waiting for the moment of his return? The writer to the Hebrews tells us that 'he always lives to intercede for [those who come to God through him]' (7:25). This is endorsed by Paul in Romans 8:34, where he answers the question, 'Who is he that condemns?' with a resounding 'Christ Jesus, Who died—more than that, Who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us'. Some early Christian piety (in the mosaics of the catacombs) represented Jesus as an *orante*, standing ever before the Father and with outstretched arms and strong crying and tears pleading our cause in the presence of a reluctant God. In his book *The Ascended Christ,* Professor H. B. Swete[7] points out that the New Testament picture is rather of a throned Priest–King, asking what he will from a Father who always hears and grants his request. For this reason, while we can welcome the renewed popularity of Charitie L. de Chenez's hymn 'Before the throne of God above' with its modern tune, it again has misleading imagery. The guarantee of our salvation does not lie in the fact that 'while in heaven he *stands*…', but while in heaven he *sits*, and because he is not *before* but *beside* the throne of God above.

Yet this misleading strand of thinking is continued today by those who would claim that when we celebrate the Lord's Supper we are joining with the exalted Christ in pleading or re-presenting before the Father his sacrifice on the Cross. More than a century ago Bishop Westcott in his commentary on the letter to the Hebrews denied this by writing that—

> the modern conception of Christ pleading in heaven his passion, 'offering his blood' on behalf of men, has no foundation in this Epistle. His glorified humanity is the eternal pledge of the absolute efficacy of his accomplished work.[8]

In a monograph long overdue for reprinting,[9] the late Alan Stibbs pointed out that the word translated 'intercede' has the much wider and more general

significance of undertaking a person's affairs, looking after their interests and intervening in their favour. The picture could be that of the court of a contemporary Eastern potentate, where the chief minister of state, the *grand vizier* character, had the right of sitting beside the monarch to bring people's requests to his attention. So when the question is raised in Romans 8:34 as to whether anyone can condemn the believer, the answer is given that Christ is able to intervene on our behalf to ensure our justification and gainsay all who would condemn because he is in the very presence of God, not standing before the Father to plead our cause, but seated at his right hand as the guarantee of the efficacy of his work. This accords with John's assertion that 'if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence—Jesus Christ the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins…'(1 John 2:1, 2).

The language of Common Worship

Those who are familiar with the eucharistic prayers of *Common Worship* will be aware that in two of them[10] the words 'plead…His sacrifice made once for all upon the Cross' are used. In view of what we have said above, this can be misleading, even though the verb is coupled with the phrase 'with confidence', as the word's use in common parlance suggests that the issue in question has not yet been resolved. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'plead' as 'make an earnest appeal' which suggests that the person being entreated has not yet made up their mind. In its law-court connotation the word can mean 'put forward as a plea' in which case the use here could be justified, but that may not be immediately obvious. Christian believers do not need to plead the sacrifice which was made once for all as it has been demonstrably accepted by the Father. For that reason the writer prefers to replace the word 'plead' with 'recall'. So again the hymn mentioned above could well be amended from 'who ever lives and pleads for me' to 'who ever intercedes for me'.

Furthermore in spite of the stalwart efforts of Colin Buchanan[11] a generation ago to avoid the Pelagian emphasis of those who wish to imply that in the Lord's Supper we are offering something to God (other than ourselves as a response after receiving the sacrament), we now have the strange notion that we are 'bringing' the elements 'before' God in prayers E and G. In his commentary on the subject, Paul Bradshaw[12] draws attention to the use of 'plead with confidence' and 'bring before' (God) in the anamnesis as distinctive features of Prayer E. Commenting on Prayer G he admits that it derives from

an original eucharistic prayer composed by the Roman Catholic Commission on English in the Liturgy in 1984 but never authorized for use. Such language reflects Roman rather than Anglican doctrine, and strikes a discordant note at a time when, as we have pointed out earlier, the worshipper's focus should be on what Christ has done and where He is now, rather than on the elements and what we think we are doing with them. If anything needs to be said about the bread and the cup at this stage in the service, the best attempt so far would appear to have been that in the Church of England's Series Three service of the 1970s, which expressed a response to the scriptural injunction by stating 'therefore, heavenly Father, with this bread and this cup we do this in remembrance of him…'.

Implications for daily living

In terms of our practical daily living, the Session of the Lord Jesus should have a profound effect on our behaviour. In writing both to the Ephesians and the Colossians Paul draws attention to this fact. In Ephesians 2 he speaks of the consequences of the new birth as being that God 'made us alive with Christ…, raised us up with Christ, and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus'.[13] This repetition is significant for Christian assurance, as underlining the consequences of our faith-union with the risen Christ. Linking this with what he has already said in the previous chapter,[14] the apostle encourages us to recognize that already, here and now, we share Christ's authority, and can therefore claim His victory in the time of temptation.

There is a careful progression of thought in the third chapter of the letter to the Colossians.[15] In the previous chapter[16] Paul has reminded believers that by their faith-union with Jesus Christ, they 'died with Christ to the basic principles of this world'. Thus we should no longer be influenced by contemporary thinking and standards: this is important in a day when television programmes and internet connections have the power to exercise so much subliminal influence on the minds even of Christian people. In the contemporary battle for the minds of this generation it cannot be over-emphasised how much non- or even anti-Christian culture can be absorbed by believers. The current emphases on individualism and relativism portrayed by the media can encourage even leaders in the church to believe the lie that revealed, absolute truth and the morality which flows from it has been replaced by 'what is right for me'. The supermarket experience has encouraged the 'pick

and choose' approach to Christian belief and behaviour, and this has in recent years led even some Christian ministers into doctrinal error and moral failure.

However, the consequence of having 'died with Christ' is shown to be that Christians are also 'raised with Christ': this should result in our having not only the motivation but also the ability to overcome the pull of the old nature, steeped in the thinking of the contemporary world. To this end we are told both to 'set your hearts' and then to 'set your minds on things above, not on earthly things, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God' (Col. 3:1, 2). Both verbs are in the present imperative, which indicates that the believer should keep on doing both of these things.

The mind that is centred on Christ in His glory should now have the motivation for putting to death the earthly nature, so much so that the apostle can make the confident assertion 'you are dead, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God' (Col. 3:3). A dead person is no longer responsive to the stimuli of the physical world around them, and so the Christian should be—

> dead to the world and its applause
> to all the customs, fashions, laws
> of those who hate the humbling Cross.[17]

In the light of this mortification we should 'put to death' all the desires which lead to unchristian attitudes and behaviour, which is spelt out in verses 5-11.

In the Christian life the Bible teaches that negatives are always to be replaced with positives, and so the metaphor of death/life now switches to that of putting off and putting on. The patterns of thought and behaviour that have been put to death are to be replaced by the believer putting on the new self like a set of new clothes (vv. 12-17). This can be done only as the heart and mind are focused on the Christ seated at God's right hand in glory and realizing that we have been raised with Him and should therefore share the same perspective on life. This is how the Spirit works to transform Christians into the likeness of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 3:18 Paul makes the same point by stressing that it is as we centre our mind's eyes[18] on the glory of the ascended Lord, the Spirit effects this transformation—a process which will be finally completed only when we too are with him at his glorious return (1 John 3:2).

The doctrine of Christ's heavenly session is therefore no arid theological proposition, but one with profound implications for Christian living. It is important for a right understanding of the significance of the Lord's Supper, which will strengthen the believer's assurance of his or her acceptance before God in the light of the finished work of Christ, and will also provide the motivation and inspiration for sanctified Christian living.

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ENDNOTES

1. The writer owes his initial interest in the subject to a book written by a former Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge. He was informed that *The Heavenly Session of our Lord* by Arthur J. Tait (London: Robert Scott, 1912), is the work for which the writer received his Cambridge degree of DD.
2. Chris Park, *Leading Others into the Presence of God* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2005).
3. Book 3, ch. 3. pp. 358-9 quoted from Vol. 2 of Cranmer's *Remains* published by OUP 1833. For an exhaustive treatment of the implications for Christology, and the way theologians have treated it throughout Christian history, see Douglas Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999).
4. Nicholas Ridley, *Works* (Lewes: Focus Christian Ministries Trust, 1988), p. 13.
5. From the words of administration in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.
6. So John Stott suggests in his commentary *God's New Society* (Leicester: IVP, 1979).
7. H. B. Swete, *The Ascended Christ* (London: Macmillan, 1916), p. 95. Swete was the Emeritus Professor of Divinity at Cambridge.
8. B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Macmillan, 1889), p. 230.
9. A. M. Stibbs, *The Finished Work of Christ* (London: Tyndale Press, 1954).
10. Prayers E and G.
11. When the Series Two Communion Service was published its wording 'with this bread and this cup we make the memorial of his saving passion…' had been adopted as a compromise between those who wished to say 'we offer thee this bread and this cup…' and Buchanan's more Protestant wording 'we give thanks to thee over this bread and this cup…'.
12. *Companion to Common Worship*, vol. 1, Paul Bradshaw, ed., pp.141-3 (London, SPCK, 2001).
13. Vv. 5, 6.

14. 1:20, 21.
15. 3:1-17.
16. 2:20.
17. Quotation from an unknown source that has remained with the writer from his early days of Christian experience.
18. A very graphic word is used here, as the NIV text and margin make plain. Translated variously as 'contemplate' or 'reflect', the original Greek means literally 'mirroring'. In order to reflect successfully, a mirror must obviously be focused on the object it is to reflect, and so here again we have the same message as the Colossians passage and in Hebrews 12:2.