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A Study of Christian Praise

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A STUDY OF CHRISTIAN PRAISE

by

Ronald Gene DeBock

A Thesis

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the Faculty of the

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of the Requirements for the Degree

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Dedicated to
the Christian Deaf in Seattle and Tacoma
to whom the author ministered for
more than three years.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

The function of praise has taken so many forms that its place in theology today is unclear. In some circles within the Christian framework it seems to this writer to have been almost unwanted. On the other hand, some of the more exaggerated forms of praise have been associated with emotionalism. The Christian believer who seeks a proper balance in this regard, whether in his private worship or in the worship services of his local church, needs to understand the scope of Christian praise as it is taught in the Scriptures and in common experience.

The Thompson Chain Reference Bible assigns praise under the rubric of "Gratitude;"¹ but The Dickson Bible considers it separately in the topical study.² Clarence Benson and others discuss praise under the heading of "Worship."³ Still others see praise as a part of prayer. One theologian calls it an "audible expression"⁴ while other writers note its silent forms, even to the including of good works.

¹Frank C. Thompson, The New Chain-Reference Bible, Indianapolis: B. B. Kirkbride Bible Co., 1934, p. 55 of Cyclo-pedia of Topics and Texts.

²The Dickson Bible, New Analytical Edition, p. 1509.

³Clarence Benson, Techniques of a Working Church, p. 121.

⁴H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology, vol. III, p. 39.

This study has been undertaken with the hope that an investigation into the area of praise may broaden this writer's understanding of the implications involved. The need was seen to establish, if possible, a Biblical position for Christian praise and to determine its ethical involvements and moral implications.

B. Justification for the Study

Little has been written on praise as a subject in its own right, although it has been widely discussed in connection with worship, prayer, thanksgiving, and hymnology. While gathering material for this thesis at the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., in the summer of 1959, the author could find only two volumes on the subject of praise. One was Charles Olson's booklet entitled "It Pays to Praise." The second was a work of only 35 pages by Helen P. Strong called "The Garment of Praise." The latter was obviously written for use by small children, being profusely illustrated accordingly.

C. The Importance of the Subject

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are filled with admonitions to "praise the Lord" or contain vivid examples of such expression from the hearts of its main characters. The book of The Psalms is primarily a book of praise with each of its five divisions drawing to a climactic conclusion of praise for Jehovah. (See Chart I in the Appendix). Praise became a vital expression of the worship of early Christians as shown

repeatedly in The Acts of the Apostles.

The emotional expression of praise in some groups of believers has caused an unfavorable reaction amounting to indifference and aloofness on the part of spectators. Aspects of praise which are practical and operative have thus gone unappreciated by Christians today partly because of the more extreme forms which it has taken. This is especially true when public worship practices have inadvertently replaced dignity and reverence with disorder and informality.

D. Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To study pronounced human efforts to communicate with God.
2. To discover, as nearly as possible, the place that praise actually had in the early (New Testament) church.
3. To determine what the Biblical concept of praise is; and, therefore,
4. To determine what may be proper expressions of one's praise to God.

E. Personal Reasons for the Study

The author's interest in the subject of Christian praise grew out of at least two convictions: First, that nothing is so important to the life of the Christian as the assurance that he is in the will of God and has the approval of Almighty God. Secondly, that God strongly desires that his people recognize

the Creator and give Him the glory due to His name.

A particular fondness for Biblical poetry and especially for the book of The Psalms has made the study of praise an interesting one. The Psalms were a continual source of joy and strength since high school days.

The author spent three and one-half years ministering to the totally deaf in Seattle and Tacoma. It was here that praise could be seen but not heard. Without voices to sing God's praises, the deaf, nonetheless, worshipped their Lord. The only physical evidences were, perhaps, a glow upon the face or the wiping away of tears with a handkerchief. This association with Christian deaf persons illustrated constantly that there is more to Christian praise than is discernible through some audible media.

F. Definition of Terms Used

Praise While praise may have man as its object or God as its object, little mention was made of the former since the study was concerned largely with that aspect emphasized Biblically, praise to God. For purposes of this study, Christian praise was used in the general sense meaning an expression of worship. Where the investigation revealed elements not ordinarily considered in praise, the reader will recognize this, it is hoped, as the result of a quest for the Biblical concept.

Worship Though broadly defined as "the acknowledgment by some formal act of mind or body of God's supreme dominion,"

worship¹ was interpreted in this study in the light of its limited character due to the teaching and example of Jesus Christ Himself.² References to worship not approved by God were made for purposes of contrast only.

Prayer Essentially a means of communion between God and man, prayer was considered as one avenue, among others, upon which praise travels. It was assumed that prayer was not broad enough to embrace the whole scope of the author's conception of Christian praise.

G. Method of Procedure

The present thesis is the result of several changes both in content and format. The author as first planned to limit the work to an inductive Bible study. But some excellent extra-Biblical material began accumulating in small quantities. It seemed desirable then to allow some modern testimonials from writers on the subject and on the book of The Psalms. Charles H. Spurgeon's two volumes³ entitled "The Treasury of David" were invaluable as source material for the study. Research was made

¹Samuel M. Jackson, The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., vol. XII, p. 433.

²James Hastings, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928, vol. XI, p. 762.

³C. H. Spurgeon, Treasury of David, Grand Rapids, Mich.: (A condensation of Spurgeon's seven-volume exposition on The Psalms), Zondervan Publishing House, ed. by David O. Fuller, two volumes, 1940.

more pleasant and more complete with the use of the best indexes, concordances and commentaries obtainable.

The first task was to meet the problem of communication between man and God. The necessity of considering the broader philosophical framework became apparent since praise, in any context, was a form of communication between humanity and deity. This led to an investigation of man's efforts to know God in worship and to a study of some of the aids and hindrances he has met along the way.

Another chapter was devoted to a study of the early Christian Church's program of worship to discover the New Testament emphasis upon the place of praise in the lives of the early Christian believers. An attempt was made to discover if praise had a real place in this segment of religious life.

A further step in the investigation was a critical analysis of the Biblical concept of praise. This called for a word study of "praise" in its original Hebrew and Greek meanings. A comparison was made later between the results of the Biblical study and the views of Christian praise by well-known theological writers.

The American Standard Version of the Holy Bible was used throughout the thesis except where otherwise indicated.

CHAPTER II

EFFORTS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MAN AND GOD

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When men desire to worship God, to praise Him, or to engage in prayer, a kind of communication is necessary. There can be no satisfactory completion of acts of supplication or of offerings of adoration unless the gap is bridged between the human and the divine.

The present chapter considered efforts on man's part together with efforts on God's part which illustrate some of the aids and hindrances to communion.

Early Efforts of Man to Communicate with God

Has man desired to know God in close fellowship? Has he wished to speak with God? Admittedly, non-believers do not make a real effort to approach God in any degree of sincerity except in rare emergencies or at conversion experiences. Although every generation witnessed a majority of unbelievers, there were always some men historically who sought communion with God.

Primitive Altars of the Old Testament

Many early altars were erected for purposes of worship. The main idea regarding the sacred stone was that it either was actually the abode of deity or indicated the near-by presence of deity.¹ When Jacob awoke from his sleep in which he saw a vision

¹Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary, Philadelphia: The Blakiston Company, 1936, p. 40.

of the ladder with angels ascending and descending, he took the stone which had been his pillow and set it for a pillar, vowing that "If God will be with me ... then shall the Lord be my God."¹ The position of the Altar of Incense in the sanctuary of the tabernacle lay between the gold candlestick and the table: "It stood immediately in front of the veil, which speaks of the believer-priest's testimony (worship of) to God."² (The phrase "believer-priest" is an idea that holds that all believers have direct approach to God by virtue of their relation to Christ.)³

The Monastic Movement

During the third and fourth centuries after Christ, it became increasingly popular for men to become hermits or to live in cloisters of only the most pious. Monasticism was a system of renunciation of life in the world for the purpose of promoting the interests of the soul.⁴ The disturbing evils of the world interferred with holy worship and escape was, therefore, considered most desirable. St. Anthony was the first of these hermits to gain world-wide fame. He lived in seclusion in the

¹Genesis 28:20, 21.

²Harold Street, The Believer Priest in the Tabernacle Furniture, p. 103.

³James Orr, The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 2446. "Praise" and "to do good and communicate" are called sacrifices by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (13:15, 16).

⁴Lars P. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church, p. 109.

desert from age 20 to 106 years and became so popular that hermit life became a mass-movement.¹ Monastic life avoided many temporal concerns in another attempt to keep the lines of communication open between man and God.

God has Provided a Way Into His Presence

The Biblical record assures mankind that God has made great efforts to reunite all who have lost fellowship with Him. The Old Testament presents God as walking with his people. He encamped among them. He spoke to them through his prophets. He provided them with the Law as early as Moses' time. Likewise, in the New Testament, Paul's message to the Corinthians emphasized "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."² Thus, God spared not his own Son in making possible salvation for all who believe in Jesus Christ.³ That salvation is prior to any satisfying relationship with God is Scriptural teaching. Whether one desired to communicate in the form of prayer, in the form of praise, or to contact the Lord in any manner, he was to do so in the name of Jesus.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 109.

²II Corinthians 5:19.

³John 3:16.

⁴John 14:13, 14; Acts 3:16; Ephesians 5:20.

Factors in Modern Society Affecting
the Divine/Human Encounter

Men who would make contact with God today are confronted with some of the same problems that had to be faced by believers down through the history of the Christian Church. This was always a two-way proposition. For man to desire an audience before God, he had to be a "listener" at some time himself. Furthermore, not all have listened when God spoke. Even granting the dedicated efforts of Christ's best ambassadors, there have always been those who refused to hear the truth of the Gospel despite the clarity of its presentation. To receive truth one must truly want it. John explained:

And this is the judgment, that light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov'd. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God.¹

Such refusal of light as depicted in this passage precludes the possibility of enlightened communication with God.

Another hindrance to man's communion with God is his own human limitations. Man, himself, has been ordained to deliver divine truth, the result of which should be the worship of God. Since the time of Christ, each generation called for preachers:

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have

¹John 3:19-21.

not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?¹

The vocabulary of the preacher becomes a liability rather than an asset in cases where his audience does not comprehend. The problem of mental communication on the human level - that is, man-to-man, is a broad universal problem of which the minister should be aware. It was exposed by Stuart Chase:

Failure of mental communication is painfully in evidence nearly everywhere we choose to look. Pick up any magazine or newspaper and you will find many of the articles devoted to sound and fury from politicians, editors, leaders of industry, and diplomats. You will find the text of the advertising sections devoted almost solidly to a skillful attempt to make words mean something different to the reader from what the facts warrant.²

Some of the difficulty here is in the realm of semantics. Words have not meant the same thing to all who heard them. This fact is especially noticeable in the communicating of moral, religious and spiritual ideas.

Closely related to the foregoing is the barrier of language itself. Written mostly in Hebrew and Greek, the Bible has appeared in numerous translations. Although many are not seriously hindered by the multiplicity of translations, some laymen are, and require the instruction of a patient teacher. The Bible has always been the infallible word of God, but it "has worn all sorts of different dresses in different ages and countries."³

¹Romans 10:14.

²Stuart Chase, The Tyranny of Words, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938, p. 19.

³H. G. G. Herklots, How Our Bible Came to Us, p. 12.

There are other more practical considerations which affect the atmosphere of communion with God. Whether these are aids or hindrances to the divine/human encounter would, perhaps, be debatable. In the United States, for instance, freedom to worship God today is a matter awaiting individual application. Citizens are privileged, at least, to worship God in the manner of their own choice. This nation has protected this heritage both constitutionally and traditionally. In this regard, the founding fathers recognized an all-important concern of the historic Augsburg Confession that "It is not necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by men should be alike everywhere."¹ (Before the states of Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming were admitted into the union, they were required to enter a compact with the federal government securing perfect toleration of religious sentiment, and providing that no inhabitant be molested in person or property on account of his or her mode of religious worship.)²

Whatever contributes to meaningful worship contributes to man's possibility of making contact with God in a satisfying way. Today's comfortable churches, well-lighted, well-ventilated, with good heating systems have at least reduced some of the physical obstructions to worship. Many churches have taken the

¹Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, New York: Harper and Brothers, vol. III of Evangelical Creeds, 4th ed., 1919, p. 12.

²See the constitutions of states admitted since 1876.

acoustical factors into consideration in their architecture and some are equipped with a row of pews where the hard-of-hearing may "tune in" the preacher by simply plugging in the audio-phone. Improved organs and trained organists together with trained singers would seem to be an aid to worshipping God.

Ministers themselves are perhaps better trained today than ever before. The entire seminary curriculum is designed to help the minister to develop his talents in becoming the most effective channel possible through which souls may find God. The trained minister realizes that the acceptance of the truth depends largely upon the heart-attitude of his hearer. Even when God's presence seems to be near during the worship service, the believer must himself "draw near to God."¹ The minister recognizes also that the success or failure of any pulpit message depends much upon the accompanying work of the Holy Spirit.

Summary and Conclusions

God's love for man was in Christ, through Whom God provided a way into the presence of deity. The fellowship broken through the fall of man was restored for all believers in the person of God's Son. The incarnation thus marked God's supreme effort to bridge the widening gap of separation between himself and man and made communion obtainable in Christ.

¹Isaiah 55:6 and James 4:8.

Modern society affords both advantages and disadvantages to communication with God. God has clearly desired to meet man "half-way." The burden of approach remains with man. Study showed that man, however, encounters some real obstacles along the way to this communion. First of all, he frequently refuses the light. Since God uses no coercion, man remains in darkness. Those persons who seek communion with God may encounter problems with semantics, with language, or with being able to understand the minister. On the other hand, meaningful communion has been somewhat aided by man's consideration of such factors as better training for ministers and the elimination of conditions in the church edifice distracting to worship ideals.

Because of these things, we may conclude:

1. Despite all the obstacles which have discouraged man's communicating with God, the way back into fellowship was made possible through Jesus Christ.
2. Man has taken positive steps to create an atmosphere in which he may worship God.
3. The biggest hindrance to man's making satisfying contact with God is the lack of any real desire to do so.

CHAPTER III

EARLY CHURCH WORSHIP

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In order to discover the place given to praise in the New Testament, a study of worship in the early Christian Church was taken up in this chapter. Was praise a vital part of the worship of Christians in the first and second centuries after Christ? What constituted the worship service in the formative days of Christendom?

The worship of God is as old as man himself. It seemed fitting to provide a setting for Christian praise by studying those forms of worship which were set up by the apostles. It was assumed that, since the worship of God does not change in principle with the passing of time, the results of such a study deserves the attention of present-day worshipers.

Jesus Instructed On Worship

Jesus did not inaugurate any new patterns of worship for the church except for the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. In fact, he reminded Satan from the Pentateuch "it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."¹ To the Samaritan woman he explained that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."²

¹Matthew 4:10.

²John 4:24.

The Effect of the Synagogue Upon Liturgy

That the synagogue played an important role in the religious life of the first generation of Christians is seen in the fact that our Lord¹ and Paul² both made frequent visits there. Davies believes that synagogue worship "exerted a profound influence on the worship of the apostolic Church" and that

the main elements of its worship were carried over into Christian services. The prayers, the praise, the reading of the Scriptures, and the exposition of them, were the fundamentals of Christian worship.³

The first company of Christians at Jerusalem were Jews which helps to explain why the Christian Church did not inaugurate an entirely new type of worship. Davies believes that the synagogue and their liturgies formed the natural background of their worship.⁴ In agreement, Dr. Albert Palmer observed that the earliest worship of the Christians of the first century

simply followed Jewish forms of synagogue and family worship plus the emphasis upon Jesus as Messiah and risen Lord, the expectation of his early return, the deeply emotional sense of the Holy Spirit's presence and the feeling of common life which was accentuated by persecution and its perils. As these differences, while highly important from within, were hardly visible from without, it was probably difficult for a pagan observer to distinguish between a

¹Luke 4:16.

²Acts 13:14.

³Horton Davies, Christian Worship, New York: Abingdon Press, 1957, p. 20.

⁴Ibid., p. 19.

Jewish and a Christian synagogue.¹

Basic Characteristics of the Early Christian Service of Worship

Christian believers began immediately to gather together for worship. They met in private homes for prayer,² broke their bread together,³ and praised God with singleness of heart.⁴ When opposition increased and persecutions began, early Christians were forced to organize churches and to develop worship services suitable for their own group.⁵

The Elements of Early Worship

What were the essential elements of the actual service of worship in the gatherings of early Christian believers? The best reference, perhaps, is in the book of The Acts where it says

And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people...⁶

¹Albert W. Palmer, The Art of Conducting Public Worship, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945, p. 35.

²Acts 2:46, 47.

³Acts 2:42.

⁴Acts 2:46, 47.

⁵Ilion T. Jones, A Historical Approach to Evangelical Worship, New York: Abingdon Press, 1954, p. 69.

⁶Acts 2:46, 47.

In Troas Paul spoke at length to a gathering which came together "to break bread."¹ The elements of instruction, preaching, prayer and breaking of bread were mentioned, and mentioned in such a way as clearly to show that these elements were, from the beginning, the foundation of all the worship life of the Christian community.² Arthur Hoyt listed the seven New Testament elements of worship as:

1. The reading of the Scriptures.
2. The exposition of the Scripture; teaching or preaching.
3. Prayer, holding a prominent place, both a use of sacred and venerable forms, and free and spontaneous in expression.
4. Singing; the peculiar expression of the devotional sentiment, the use of both old and new hymns.
5. The Creed; the public confession of the faith of Christians and the testimony to the essential facts and truths of the new religion.
6. The offering; a practical expression of gratitude to God for His great gift, and to men of the new love that was to control human relations.
7. The Sacraments - two; Baptism and the Lord's Supper; baptism, the outer sign of the inward change of life and the formal entrance into the new Society; the Lord's Supper, with the Agape, used at first with every service of public worship, and with no fixed ritual.³

Oscar Cullman noted still other elements from the Pauline Epistles in the very earliest period of worship. These were the

¹Acts 20:7.

²Oscar Cullman, Early Christian Worship, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953, p. 12.

³Arthur S. Hoyt, Public Worship For Non-Liturgical Churches, New York: The George H. Doran Company, 1911, p. 26.

Psalms, revelation, speaking with tongues and the interpretation of tongues¹ as mentioned by Paul.²

Background to the Pauline Plea for Moderation and Orderliness

One of the reasons for Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians was to correct some of the irregularities in public worship. He finally asked that "all things be done decently and in order."³ Why was the apostle's rebuke necessary?

All members of the early church were privileged to take part in the liturgy. Ilion Jones sees "no reference in the New Testament to indicate that anyone in particular was the appointed leader of worship,"⁴ but the silence of Scripture at this point (if it can be substantiated) is no argument that leaders of worship were non-existent. Nevertheless, the service of worship in the first congregations was something very much alive. Liturgical formulae showed no sign of being paralyzed.⁵ Individuals came together: one had a psalm; one had a teaching; one had a revelation; another had a tongue and another an interpretation.⁶

¹Oscar Cullman, op. cit., p. 20.

²I Corinthians 14:26.

³I Corinthians 14:40.

⁴Ilion T. Jones, op. cit., p. 70.

⁵Oscar Cullman, op. cit., p. 25.

⁶I Corinthians 14:26.

With reference to these and other individual contributions to the worship service, Jones added:

The number of these contributions became so numerous and those contributions were made with such eagerness, and responded to by others so vigorously, that it led to confusion and disorder and caused Paul to try to put restrictions upon the practice.¹

Of particular concern to Paul was the manner in which members spoke in a tongue which was unknown to the rest of those present. Although this "speaking in tongues" was regarded by the New Testament Church as a divine gift² and was engaged in by Paul himself,³ the Apostle urged expediency for the sake of mutual edification. "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding," Paul wrote them, "that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue."⁴ He desired, therefore, that the understanding be fruitful whether one engaged in prayer, in singing, or in the exercise of the gift of tongues.⁵

The principle of the spontaneous nature of New Testament worship needs to be distinguished from its abuse. Paul's task was not an easy one as there were dangers from the beginning.

¹ Ilion T. Jones, op. cit., p. 76.

² I Corinthians 12:10; 12:30; 14:1, 2.

³ I Corinthians 14:18.

⁴ I Corinthians 14:19.

⁵ I Corinthians 14:14, 15.

Cullman observed:

There was need for a strong sense of moderation and order, such as Paul possessed in a pre-eminent way, in order to unify such diverse elements as speaking with tongues and prophecy on the one side and the fixed acts and forms of liturgy on the other. Paul was able to bring freedom of the Spirit and the restrictions of liturgy together in the self-same service because he saw everything in the light of the one aim: the οἰκοδομή (building up of the Church).¹

In this connection, the usual alternative: charismatic or liturgical worship seems improper.

New Testament Instances of Praise in Worship

Five examples of praise were found in the New Testament. Three of these were in The Acts while two were in the Gospel of Luke. A study of these was made.

Christian Converts at Prayer: Acts 2:46, 47.

The word αἰνούντες² (praising) was used here in the sense of "laudation."³ This passage revealed that:

1. The worshipers met daily.
2. They praised God with "gladness and singleness of heart."
3. They had favor with "all the people."

¹Oscar Cullman, Early Christian Worship, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, from Studies in Biblical Theology translated by A. Stewart Todd and James B. Torrance, 1953, p. 32.

²D. Eberhard Nestle, Novum Testamentum Graece, New York: American Bible Society, 1950, p. 304.

³James Strong, Dictionary of the Greek New Testament, New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1890, p. 30.

The Lame Beggar by the Temple: Acts 3:8.

The lame man was praising (αἰνῶν) God for the miraculous healing of his lame condition. As soon as his feet and ankle-bones received strength at the hand of Peter and John, he began to give the credit to the Lord:

And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.¹

The healed beggar accompanied the disciples to the temple where they worshipped God together.

Paul and Silas in Prison at Philippi: Acts 16:25.

Several unusual features accompanied the praises of these missionaries:

1. The setting was an extraordinary one and certainly dissimilar to the synagogue or temple environment of worship.
2. The hour of midnight was rather late to be engaging in prayer or to be singing praises.
3. Paul and Silas were severely beaten not long before they sang praises to God.
4. Their feet were in the stocks.
5. Prisoners were listening to the missionaries.
6. Paul and Silas were under guard, but the jailor went to sleep.

Witnesses to the Blind Man's Healing: Luke 18:43.

Another beggar was healed in the person of the blind man at Jericho. Those who saw this great miracle performed by Jesus

¹Acts 3:8, 9.

gave praise unto God. The man, too, followed Jesus and glorified God. The word αἶνον (praise) is from the same stem αἶνος used in Acts 2:47 and Acts 3:8 meaning "laudation."

The Multitude at the Triumphal Entry: Luke 19:37.

A final illustration of praise from the New Testament was vividly presented in Luke's Gospel. Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem to meet "the whole multitude of the disciples." They began to rejoice in the streets and to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen. The form of their praise was: "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."¹ Some of the Pharisees wanted Jesus to rebuke the disciples for such loud outbursts, but the Son of God answered them with "I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out."² The same Greek form for praise (αἰνεῖν) as seen before was used here in the infinitive form "to laud."

Conclusions

Instances of praise in the New Testament story of worship were found only in Luke and Acts. In each case studied the word translated "praise" or "praises" was found to derive from αἶνος "praise" (of God), except in Acts 16:25 where the original word

¹Luke 19:38.

²Luke 19:40.

ὕμνον from ὑμνέω means "to celebrate or worship with hymns."¹

The praising of God in each instance was "contagious."

In each instance, the people praised God as the result of some miracle.

The author of every instance of praise was Luke. Of interest was the fact that each account was recorded with vivid detail.

The Relatedness of Freedom of Expression and Recognition of the Holy Spirit

Carl Brumback, scholarly Pentecostal author, notes the lack of instruction which the New Testament affords worshipers:

The New Testament, unlike the Old Testament, lays down no set form of worship to which we as children of God must adhere. It gives us freedom to conduct our worship together according to our individual inclinations or desires, the only stipulation being that the worship must be 'in spirit and in truth.' This freedom has produced innumerable forms of worship, ranging from extreme ritualism to the almost complete absence of form.²

While rules for the conducting of a service of worship are not clearly presented in the New Testament record, there are enough examples of early services to point out basic principles for the entire church. What were early church services like? Some men

¹Harper's Analytical Greek Lexicon, New York: Harper and Brothers, n. d., p. 413.

²Carl Brumback, What Meaneth This?, Springfield, Missouri: The Gospel Publishing House, 1947, p. 299.

have written well on the subject. Their comments were included here for purposes of illustration only and not as evidence.

Dr. Albert Palmer, President of the Chicago Theological Seminary, sees the early services of worship as follows:

These early Christian services must have been very long and intimate: first a supper together, each family bringing its own food, as is sometimes done in church suppers today; then a solemn blessing and partaking of the bread and wine in memory of Jesus; then scripture reading and prayers and the singing of psalms; then the demonstration of the presence of the Holy Spirit by a testimony meeting which included expository and hortatory talks by such as had the gift of 'prophecy,' healing or reports of healings, and ecstatic utterances by those who were emotionally uplifted - the speaking with tongues.

Perhaps the nearest approach to this today is found in the custom of saying 'Amen,' 'Glory to God,' 'Praise the Lord,' 'That's right, brother,' while the minister is praying or preaching which still survives in certain churches, and in the emotional excitement of high pressure evangelistic meetings or the still more ecstatic behavior which characterizes cults like the holy rollers.¹

If the "cults" referred to by Dr. Palmer produced the same kind of results today that were produced in the meetings of those early Christians, it would be one answer to revival prayers.

For in Dr. Palmer's next words, he admitted that:

The important, and convincing, thing was that primitive Christians got results from their religion right then and there. They did not just go through a ritual as a matter of duty or in order to insure their soul's salvation after death, but they actively participated in a series of spiritual exercises out of which they received a thrilling sense of release from sin, of inner power and direct contact with God which sent them forth ready to face life and

¹Albert W. Palmer, The Art of Conducting Public Worship, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945, p. 37.

even persecution and death with steadfast courage.¹

Brumback particularly noted the way early Christian worshippers gave recognition to the Holy Spirit:

Perhaps the most prominent feature of the worship prevalent in those days was the recognition of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. . . . Furthermore, in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters of I Corinthians, which take us right within the doors of the early church and give us a glimpse of its worship, we find that the Spirit was regarded as the Divine Leader of the service. When the saints assembled themselves together, they sought diligently the mind of the Spirit, for only in following His leading would it be possible for them to worship in the highest manner.²

Ilion Jones characterized New Testament worship as:

1. spontaneous, or free, worship in contrast to fixed worship.
2. prayer worship in contrast to sacrifice worship.
3. lay-led and lay-participation worship in contrast to priestly, or sacerdotal, worship.
4. preaching worship in contrast to ritualistic, or ceremonial, worship.
5. spiritual, heartfelt, or inner worship in contrast to outward, or formal, worship.
6. simple and direct worship in contrast to complex and 'mysterious' worship.³

Principles of Worship in the Early Church

What principles of worship did the early church leave for later congregations to be guided by? Are there any universal

¹Ibid., p. 37.

²Carl Brumback, op. cit., p. 299.

³Ilion T. Jones, A Historical Approach to Evangelical Worship, New York: Abingdon Press, 1954, p. 86.

principles to govern the form of worship? Since worship is essentially of the heart and cannot consist of mere outward form, some persons may object to the suggestion of such a question. But, while worship is spiritual, its expression is largely dependent upon the form of service conducted. It will assume an outward form.¹

First, any form of worship should be the truthful expression of one's religious life ... "in spirit and in truth."² Lip-service alone cannot suffice.³ The Christian's worship is not merely the cry of a perishing soul, but is also the rapturous recognition of the Lord and Light of heaven within his human reach.⁴ "All pure affections, emotions, sensibilities, are exercised in that experience and find expression in the acts and words that try to utter it."⁵

Secondly, the Early Church felt no obligation to conform to a particular liturgical pattern in their worship of God. Diversity in worship was not only desirable because of varying experiences and conditions, but diversity was inevitable for the same reasons. Early worship took place in temples⁶ but also

¹Arthur S. Hoyt, Public Worship for Non-Liturgical Churches, New York: The George H. Doran Company, 1911, p. 19.

²John 4:24.

³Matthew 15:8, 9.

⁴Arthur S. Hoyt, op. cit., p. 20.

⁵Ibid., p. 20.

⁶Acts 2:46.

in private homes.¹ Services were conducted in such a manner as to allow for a maximum of spiritual freedom. Sometimes a person would stand up before the group and expound the Scriptures² while all members were welcome to have a part in the worship service.³

Thirdly, forms of worship should be devoid of ostentation. The hypocrites to whom Jesus referred put their religion on display and whatever has its source in love of display more than love of truth is not in harmony with religion. Hoyt says:

A highly articulated service will not harmonize with a worshipful spirit. The form of worship must be easily understood and bring quick and spontaneous response from the worshipers. It is a superficial view of worship to lay too much stress on the outward act. . . . Historically, worship has lost in spirituality as it has gained in elaborate form.⁴

The Essence of Christian Worship

What, then, is the heart and "essence" of Christian worship? It seems to be now, as in the early church, personal communion with God. Paul Milhouse, minister of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, came to this conclusion as he pointedly declared that "the essence of Christian worship is personal

¹Acts 12:12.

²Acts 20:11.

³I Corinthians 14:26.

⁴Arthur S. Hoyt, op. cit., p. 21.

communion with God."¹ He further observed:

The human body is not to be burned but is to be dedicated in obedient service to God. One is to dedicate himself to God as completely as if laid on the altar as a sacrifice. As in Old Testament worship, so in Christian worship, the climax comes at the moment when life is given to God. Christian worship is not complete until human life is dedicated to obedient service and impelled by consecrated devotion.²

Christian worship was not something that could be done for the worshiper by a priest ministering at an altar, but something the worshiper did under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The recognition of the Holy Spirit in early church worship³ clearly influenced the free expression of their praises to God. Regrettably, not all groups of worshipping Christians have retained this freedom of spontaneous expression. Srawley tells of the manner in which an evolution took place:

St. Peter speaks of Christians as forming a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In Hebrews reference is made to the Christian 'altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle;' the readers are bidden to 'offer up a sacrifice of praise' through Jesus Christ continually to God; while of alms-giving it is said that 'with such sacrifices God is well-pleased.' Such language supplied Christian devotion with a means of expressing its own highest conceptions when engaged in public worship, and helped to create a liturgical phraseology, which in time became stereotyped and found a permanent place in

¹Paul W. Milhouse, Christian Worship in Symbol and Ritual, Harrisburg, Pa.: The Evangelical Press, 1953, p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 32.

³I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14.

the written liturgies of the Church.¹

Scripturally, praise was an integral part of the religious life of the early Christian believers. They were frequently "praising God, and having favor with all the people."² It was a source of strength in time of trial³ as well as an expression of gratitude in time of rejoicing.⁴ Daily sacrifices of praise in the experiences of early church worshipers was the norm. The normal character of Christian worship itself "is thanksgiving, at once praise and prayer, which, as Menahem said, remains after other kinds of prayers have ceased."⁵ It was the presentation of the whole man such as Paul entreated for in Romans:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.⁶

¹J. H. Srawley, The Early History of the Liturgy, Cambridge: (London), University Press, 1957, p. 16.

²Acts 2:47a.

³Acts 16:25.

⁴Acts 3:8.

⁵James Hastings, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928, vol. XI, p. 763.

⁶Romans 12:1.

Summary Points

The following points summarize the main sections in this chapter:

1. Laymen freely participated in early worship services.
2. Early Christians worshipped God in a simple, very personal manner. There was an absence of ceremonialism.
3. The early Christian service of worship took a diversity of forms, so that no one could predict beforehand the pattern of the service.
4. Luke is the primary source for instances of "praise" in the New Testament.
5. Each of the five New Testament references to "praise" reveals that other persons join in the worship when one offers praises to God.

Conclusions

On the basis of this chapter it was concluded:

1. That early Christian services of worship allowed for a maximum of individual expression of praise to God.
2. That the primary reason for the freedom of expression and lively participation on the part of early church worshipers was their desire to be guided by the Holy Spirit.
3. That the greatness of the early Christian service of worship lies in the harmonious combination of freedom and restriction.
4. That the essence of Christian worship, whether public or private, is personal communion with God.

CHAPTER IV

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF PRAISE

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Despite the pre-eminent place given to "praising the Lord" in the worship of the early Christian Church, opinions differ widely when it comes to ascertaining the content of Christian praise. What are its elements? What are the involvements? To what extent is man obligated to render praise to God? What are the proper expressions which praise may take Biblically?

The subject was developed in this chapter with these questions in mind. Upon examination, Biblical references fell generally into two categories: (1) Exhortations to praise and (2) Examples of praise. A study into both of these areas was necessary in order to learn the Biblical concept of the term.

Definitions of Praise

A standard dictionary defined praise as an act of man designed "1. To express approbation (of); extol; commend. 2. To glorify, esp. God, by homage; to magnify, esp. in song."¹ The word comes from the Latin "pretium," "price," or "value," and may be defined generally as an ascription of value or worth.

¹Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1948, p. 779.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia added:

Praise may be bestowed upon unworthy objects or from improper motives, but true praise consists in a sincere acknowledgment of a real conviction of worth.¹

Praise was defined by theological writers in various ways. Due to the very nature of the subject, uniformity was not expected in their definitions. Their respective views were not necessarily in disagreement; but each writer emphasized a little different aspect of praise:

C. S. Lewis "Except where intolerable adverse circumstances interfere, praise almost seems to be inner health made audible."²

G. S. Bowes "What is praise?" The rent we owe to God; and the larger the farm the greater the rent should be."³

H. Orton Wiley "Praise is the audible expression which extols the Divine Perfections..."⁴

C. H. Spurgeon "Praise is the dress of saints in

¹The New International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915, vol. IV, p. 2429.

²C. S. Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958, p. 94.

³G. S. Bowes as quoted in C. H. Spurgeon, Treasury of David, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, ed. by David Otis Fuller, two vols., 1940, vol. I, p. 147.

⁴H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology, Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, vol. III, p. 39.

heaven; it is meet that they should fit it on below."¹

Augustine "Whatever thou dost, do well, and thou hast praised God."²

John Trapp "...Right principles and upright practices; this is real and substantial praising of God. Thanks-doing is the proof of thanksgiving."³

Thus, like a well-cut diamond, each facet of praise contributes to its brilliance. The above definitions indicate variously an overflow from a full Christian life, a debt, or a way of life involving personal ethics and moral uprightness.

A number of words have meanings which border on "praise." Roget's Thesaurus furnished synonyms also for the terms "worship" and "approbation:"

Praise "laud, acclaim, applause, commendation, exaltation; grace benediction, thanksgiving."⁴

Worship "laudation, exaltation, magnification, glorification, paeon, benediction, grace, thanksgiving, doxology,

¹C. H. Spurgeon, op. cit., vol. I, p. 161.

²Ibid., vol. I, p. 173.

³Ibid., vol. II, p. 100.

⁴C. O. S. Mawson, Roget's Thesaurus, Garden City: Garden City Books, 1940, p. 376.

hosanna, hallelujah, alleluia; psalm, hymn, chant; response, anthem, motet, antiphon, antiphony."¹

Approbation "approval, sanction, advocacy, esteem, estimation, good opinion, favor, admiration; appreciation, regard, affection, love; account, popularity, credit, reputé, renown, commendation, compliment, congratulation, praise, laudation."²

Girdlestone furnished other synonyms for "Praise and Blessing" which was considered by this writer to be the best information on these words among reference sources studied:

The praises of God are set forth very largely in the O. T. and are represented by two or three words. The most general is Hallal (... , Ass. *ellu*, 'bright'), whence comes the word Hallelu-jah, 'Praise the Lord.' Its original meaning is to shine, then to make clear, and afterwards to exclaim in a loud tone. It is perhaps something more than a coincidence that the Greek *δοξάζω*, to glorify, which is often used of the praise of God, should also refer in the first instance to the making clear, bright, or shining. The LXX rendering for Hallal, however, is not *δοξάζω*, but *αἰνέω*, *ἐπαίνέω*, or *καυχάομαι*.

Another word largely used in the Psalms, and from which the Hebrew name for a psalm is derived, is Zamar (...), to sing praise to God. With the exception of the Book of Psalms, it is only found in Jud. 5. 3 and 2 Sam. 22. 50. This word is rendered *ψάλλω* in the LXX, whence the English 'psalm.' See Rom. 15. 9; I Cor. 14: 15; Eph. 5. 19; and James 5. 13.

Barac (... , Ass. *baraku*), to bless (whence the name Beracah in 2 Chron. 20. 26), literally, to kneel, is translated 'praise' in Jud. 5. 2 and Ps. 72. 15; and it is to be

¹Ibid., p. 573.

²Ibid., p. 26.

noticed that blessing signifies not only the act of a superior to an inferior, but also the expression of grateful praise proceeding from the inferior and ascending to the superior. The usual Greek translation of this word is εὐλογέω.¹

Barac was the word used in God's promise to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."² The passive voice was used in this passage and in Genesis 18:18, and 28:14. The Hithpael or reflexive voice was adopted in Genesis 22:18 and 26:4 as well as in Psalm 72:17 and Isaiah 65:16. The slight, but interesting, difference between the use of the two voices in these passages is:

...The passive signifies that the blessing is a gift of God, the Hithpael appears to signify that the blessing received from God produces fruit in the life; and those who bless themselves in God indicate by this expression that they acknowledge their blessings to be summed up in Him.³

The word Yadah, to set forth, or confess publicly, occurs chiefly in the Psalms. The only other word to be noticed is Shavach, to praise and commend. It is used four times in the Psalms, once in Ecclesiastes 4:2 and five times in Daniel.⁴

Man as the Object of Praise

The direction in which praise flows may be man-ward as

¹Robert B. Girdlestone, Synonyms of the Old Testament, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951, p. 220.

²Genesis 12:3 (KJV)

³Robert B. Girdlestone, op. cit., p. 221.

⁴Ibid., p. 221.

well as God-ward. When David exclaimed "Bless Jehovah, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name,"¹ he was praising the Lord. But when God said of David "Arise, anoint him; for this is he,"² God was praising David. The author sat at a table in a Seattle restaurant whereon was taped suggested ways of offering grace before meals. One prayer for each faith was suggested. The Catholic prayer was "Bless US, O Lord, and these Thy gifts...;" the Protestant prayer read "Bless, O Lord, this FOOD to our use..." The Jewish prayer submitted was "Lift up your hands toward the sanctuary and bless the LORD..." The fact of the direction of praise was illustrated in this unique manner (although it is doubtful the contributor of the prayers was aware that the "blessing" was to go in different directions according to faiths.)

Man Praises Man

The communication of praise strictly among humans may be altogether fitting and proper. Paul commended one of his co-laborers as "the brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches..."³ Especially is the believer to "know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord,

¹ Psalm 103:1.

² I Samuel 16:12.

³ II Corinthians 8:18.

and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love..."¹

A similar charge was given to Timothy, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine."² Thus the Apostle Paul did not hesitate to compliment a brother who performed a distinguished Christian service.

Some have desired applause. Following the Beatitudes in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus pronounced "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets."³ This type of praise bestowed nothing and was not to be taken as genuine. Such insincerity illustrates the pre-eminent factor of inner motivation whether on the part of the giver of praise or the one whose deeds are "to be seen of men."

Jesus quickly detected any lack of sincerity. He pronounced divine disapproval when men did their alms, prayers and fastings to be seen of men. He explained that such base motivation was totally out of harmony with the doing of righteousness:

Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.⁴

¹I Thessalonians 5:12.

²I Timothy 5:17.

³Luke 6:26.

⁴Matthew 6:1.

The instruction Jesus gave concerning alms-giving and prayers were a continuation of His plea for a heart single toward God:

When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.¹

This attitude which Jesus publicly censured was depicted among the Pharisees who "loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God."²

When the ruler came to Jesus and called him "Good Teacher," Jesus, questioning his motivation, asked "Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, even God."³

The foregoing observations show praise is proper only when done in sincerity and offered with proper motivation. The receiving of praise may also be more harmful than beneficial under some circumstances. The doing of good works was seen to be closely related at times to one's desire for the approval of

¹Matthew 6:2-6.

²John 12:43.

³Luke 18:18, 19.

his fellow-man.

Men may also receive praise from civil government for good cause. Paul admonished the Romans to "do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same (rulers)."¹

Another reference adds:

Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well.²

God Praises Man

At the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River, a voice was heard "out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased."³ Jesus welcomed the assurance that He moved among men under the approval of the Father.

Jesus, Himself, did not withhold praise when it was called for. He commended the poor widow for her offering of two mites by telling the onlookers, "She hath cast in more than they all."⁴ He praised the centurion for his "great faith."⁵ Jesus also said of John the Baptist that there was not a greater prophet

¹Romans 13:3.

²I Peter 2:13, 14.

³Mark 1:11.

⁴Luke 21:3.

⁵Luke 7:9.

than he among those that are born.¹

The faithful servant, in the parable which Jesus told of the pounds, was commended and made ruler over ten cities. These words of approbation inspired the song "He'll Understand and Say 'Well Done.'"² Christians frequently testify that the hearing of these words from the lips of their Lord will be the greatest reward they could imagine receiving in heaven: "Well done, thou good servant!"³

Although it was found that both God and man engage in the praise of men, there was one basic difference: God's commendations were always genuine. The praise men give, on the other hand, degenerates occasionally into mere flattery, an example of improper motivation. Mere flattery was especially disapproved in the Proverbs.⁴

Summary

When man is the object of praise, he needs wisdom to discern the reason for his being signally honored. That this is important was seen in the fact that human motivation is not without selfishness. Pharisees were doing good works to be seen

¹Luke 7:28.

²Alfred B. Smith, Favorites Number Three, p. 13.

³Luke 19:17.

⁴Proverbs 12:3; 20:19; 24:24; 29:5.

of men and received severe condemnation from Jesus. Here, too, proper motivation was of paramount importance. Praise offered by man was also judged by its true aims as to whether it was an honest commendation or mere flattery. God's praise for man was found of course to be sincere and genuine, affording a blessed assurance to the receiver since his worthy trait came under the approval of Almighty God.

God as the Object of Praise

In the Bible it is God who is especially presented as the object of praise. Every thing that hath breath is to give Him praise.¹ Even inanimate objects can praise the Lord - rationally only through man's appreciation, however. Biblical references to inanimate objects that give praises to God are the writings of imaginative poets and ought to be understood and appreciated in the light of the Hebrew poetry it is. Another interpretation could lead one to a form of the erroneous doctrine of pantheism.

God is to be Praised

The Psalmist, David, said clearly "I will call on the Lord, who is worthy to be praised."² John refers to Christ in a similar way: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and

¹Psalm 150:6.

²II Samuel 22:4.

glory, and blessing."¹ The very theme of the Psalms is one of praise to God. Again and again comes the exclamation: "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness..."² Although it was properly a spontaneous reaction of man to the manifold goodness of God, David found it necessary one day to instruct his soul to call to remembrance God's blessings upon his life.³

Do the Scriptures make praising the Lord obligatory?

Angels and human beings were assigned to praise the Lord:

Angels "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength..."⁴ "Praise ye him, all his angels..."⁵

Human beings "Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."⁶

John Pulsford went so far as to say:

There is no heaven, either in this world or the world to come for people who do not praise God. If you do not enter into the spirit and worship of heaven, how should the spirit and joy of heaven enter into you?⁷

¹Revelation 5:12.

²Psalms 107:8, 15, 21, 31.

³Psalms 103:1.

⁴Psalms 103:20a.

⁵Psalms 148:2a.

⁶Psalms 30:4.

⁷C. H. Spurgeon, Treasury of David, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, ed. by David O. Fuller, two volumes, 1940, vol. II, p. 325.

All humanity was enjoined to praise the Lord: the Gentiles,¹ young men, and maidens; old men, and children,² kings of the earth, princes, and judges,³ masters and servants, small and great.⁴ "Let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever."⁵

Hebrew poetry reached a zenith in imagination and majesty where nature was mentioned as rendering praise to God. Rather than literalizing the praises that proceed from inanimate things, the reader should recognize the poetic style and take care not to put such praise on a par with the praise from rational beings:

Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail: snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl...⁶

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the

¹Romans 15:11b.

²Psalms 148:12, 13a.

³Psalms 148:11.

⁴Revelation 19:5.

⁵Psalms 145:21.

⁶Psalms 148:3, 7-10.

hills be joyful together.¹

The prophet Isaiah also described a time in prophetic fulfillment when "...the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."²

In the light of such spontaneous response of all creation to its Maker, Spurgeon attentively asked:

What if men are silent, yet the woods, and seas, and mountains, with all their countless tribes, and all the unseen spirits that walk them, are full of the divine praise. As in a shell we listen to the murmurs of the sea, so in the convolutions of creation we hear the praises of God.³

But the praises of nature could scarcely suffice for the praises of men to God. The Bible furnished many sound reasons to show that man ought to render praise to God.⁴ On the other hand, nature was created and is sustained by the Creator. Though miraculous and wonderful, creation has no cause to be thankful for such manifestations of God as his mercy, his salvation, his counsel, or his answering of prayer. Therefore, unless man praises the Lord, the Lord remains un-thanked!

¹Psalm 98:4, 7, 8.

²Isaiah 55:12b.

³C. H. Spurgeon, op. cit., vol. I, p. 226.

⁴See Chart III in the Appendix.

Praise is the Duty of Christians

The Bible enjoins all men to praise the Lord, but it is the distinct privilege and responsibility to do so. Nevertheless, to view Christian praise strictly as an obligation, overlooks one of its basic characteristics. It is a part of worship which flows spontaneously and easily out of grateful hearts. It could scarcely be effected under duress. (It would be difficult to imagine a kind of worship whose chief aim was to fulfill an obligation.) Certain portions of Scripture point to the responsibility of Christians in this regard. The two selected passages were selected among many:

Psalm 100 This well-known Psalm of Thanksgiving furnishes twenty-one suggestions for praise-giving hearts: It gives a three-fold reason why all men should be praising the Lord:

1. The goodness of the Lord.

God is far better than we could deserve. He was good. He is good. He will be good.

2. The mercy of the Lord.

God is unchangeable and everlasting. His forgiveness is ever the same. His grace is faithful.

3. The truthfulness of the Lord.

God is true. He is faithful. He can be fully trusted and will never go back on his word.

In a recent radio address on the 100th Psalm, Rev. James Braga, faculty member at the Multnomah School of the Bible in Portland, Oregon, made the following statement:

If we are ever to offer worthwhile praise to God, it can only be done by contemplating the greatness of God to Whom the praise is given.¹

God did not fail Israel in the hour of their greatest need² and the Christian may praise Him for equal faithfulness today.³

I Thessalonians 5:16-18 Turning now to the New Testament, Paul admonished the saints at Thessalonica to "Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward." No particular mention was made of "praise" here by Paul. However, some characteristics which have already been noted as belonging to the nature of praise and which are normally associated with Biblical praise appear here in terse form. For clearly praise would be incomplete without any one of the three essentials combined in this passage. Biblical examples illustrate this fact:

(a) David brought the ark of God to Jerusalem with shouts of praise and singing.⁴

(b) Moses led the Children of Israel in a song of praise after crossing the Red Sea and Miriam led the women in an

¹Rev. James Braga, quotation from his radio address "Bible Blessings," Station KPAM, 9:00 A.M., January 11, 1960.

²Joshua 21:45.

³Compare Hebrews 13:8.

⁴I Chronicles 15:1-29.

answering chorus with her timbrel.¹

(c) Solomon led Israel in praises to God at the dedication of the temple.²

(d) Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns unto God in the prison at Philippi.³

Rejoicing, prayer, and the giving of thanks appear to be facets of the many-sidedness of praise in the Biblical concept.

The passage I Thessalonians 5:16-18 contains a thread of continuation. This provides a stabilizing element, a requisite for the living of a consistent Christian life. What truth can one glean from this continuation theme expressed as "always," "without ceasing," and "in every thing?" How does it contribute to the experience of praising the Lord? Circumstances have a tendency to discourage one's praises to God. Just as there is a tendency to rejoice only when things go well and to pray only when it seems necessary, so man neglects the place of praise when adversity strikes. The "giving of thanks" in this passage very nearly equals the rendering of praise to God. Paul added that thanks should be given "in every thing" and emphasized that this was the will of God.

According to Edward Payson, Christians have not been

¹Exodus 15:1-21.

²II Chronicles 6:1-21.

³Acts 16:25.

liquidating their debt of praise to God:

During every day and every hour which has elapsed since the apostasy of man, this debt (of praise to God) has been increasing; for every day and every hour all men ought to have given unto Jehovah the glory which is due to His name. But no man has ever done this fully. And a vast proportion of our race have never done it at all.¹

Similarly, Abraham Wright marks the rendering of praise to God as one of the most neglected duties of believers:

There is hardly any duty more pressed in the Old Testament upon us, though less practiced, than this of praising God.²

Praise from Unregenerate Persons

"Praise is comely for the upright,"³ but what may be said of the unregenerate? Pharisees accused the disciples of Jesus of transgressing the tradition of the elders by eating with unwashed hands. The Son of God replied that they were hypocritically making void the commandments of God for the sake of their traditions. He then likened them to the people foretold in Isaiah's prophecy:

This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.⁴

¹C. H. Spurgeon, Treasury of David, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, ed. by David O. Fuller, two volumes, 1940, vol. II, p. 53.

²Ibid., vol. II, p. 151.

³Psalm 33:1b.

⁴Matthew 15:8, 9.

The natural man does not possess that personal relationship with God which evokes the normal response of praise to his Creator; and praise would not be worthy of the name were it merely lip-service. The unregenerate person would find it difficult to offer acceptable praise to the Lord since there would be lacking a "singleness of heart" for such response.¹ It might be said in either case the "responsibility" of the unregenerate person to render praise to his Maker is greater than his "response-ability." For, while God deserves the gratitude of all men, He will receive little from those yet unyielded to the terms of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Delighting in the Praising of God

The Scriptures contain such phrases as "glory in thy praise,"² and to "triumph in thy praise."³ With the recognition of his responsibility and the carrying out of the same by sincere acts of praise to God, the Christian believer soon will have discovered precious return benefits. This truth was cogently expressed by Professor Herman Mueller at the Western Evangelical Seminary: "Praise is not only our responsibility, but our privilege; and brings to us the deepest satisfactions of

¹See Ephesians 6:5.

²I Chronicles 16:35.

³Psalms 106:47.

life."¹ Neither the "life more abundantly"² mentioned by Jesus nor the "joy unspeakable and full of glory"³ experienced by Peter would be a reality without engaging in meaningful worship and adoration of the Lord.

Not only is it true "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he,"⁴ but it is also true "as a man singeth in his heart so is he." (Singing as an expression of praise was discussed later in this same chapter). To the church at Colosse Paul exhorted:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, ... teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.⁵

This activity is spiritual in nature and is substantially that of delighting in the praise of God, a practice which affords "the desires of thy heart."⁶

Briefly, what is the deep satisfaction that is derived from praising the Lord? Is it not the inner presence of the Holy Spirit? The early Christians who daily praised the Lord, as seen in the previous chapter, were frequently spoken of as

¹Dr. Herman E. Mueller, from his chapel prayer, February 6, 1959.

²John 10:10.

³I Peter 1:8.

⁴Proverbs 23:7.

⁵Colossians 3:16.

⁶Psalms 37:4.

being "full of joy and the Holy Ghost."¹ Properly motivated communicative praise to God brings the inner sense of spiritual health known as peace of mind.

Summary

To summarize this section, God was shown to be the One for Whom praise is always fitting and proper. Primarily, the Biblical emphasis of praise is with God as its object. All flesh owes it to Him. In poetic fashion, heavenly bodies, angels and the things of nature were mentioned in the Scriptures as sources of praise for the Creator.

"Praising the Lord" flowed naturally from thankful hearts. Many passages made it clear that praise was comely for the people of the Lord. The 100th Psalm presented convincing reasons why the Lord is deserving of praise. The Old Testament examples in David, Moses and Solomon along with the New Testament example in Paul and Silas, showed that Christians who engage in such activity have joined good company. Contributors to evidence in this section felt that to praise the Lord is both the responsibility and a rewarding privilege for Christians. Benefits from doing so, subjectively known by the worshiper only, were seen to consist in something of the realization of inner

¹Acts 13:52.

peace and joy and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Praising God Involves the Whole Personality

Upon learning that man is to praise God, the natural question to follow would be "How?" Expressions of praise could not be properly considered until the matters of motivation, emotion and other considerations were studied insofar as Biblical evidence warranted. Singing, for example, becomes true praise on the basis of more than mere words and melody. Although motivation and expression necessarily overlap, they were considered separately for purposes of study only.

The Scriptures clearly speak of praise in the sense of involving the whole of one's personality. Such phrases as "with the whole heart,"¹ "with the understanding,"² and "with uprightness of heart"³ furnish an essential aspect of the Biblical concept. Can one praise the Lord with only "half of his heart?"

Perhaps, but Spurgeon warns:

Halfhearted, illconceived, unintelligent praises are not such as we should render to our loving Lord. If the law of justice demanded all our heart and soul and mind for the Creator, much more may the law of gratitude put in a comprehensive claim for the homage of our whole being to the God of grace.⁴

¹Psalm 111:1; 138:1.

²Psalm 47:7, with I Corinthians 14:15.

³Psalm 119:7.

⁴C. H. Spurgeon, op. cit., vol. II, p. 73.

One might well ask if there is actual praise communicated to God if the giver's loyalty was divided between God and mammon, or between the church and the world, or between the spiritual and the carnal? Bouchier observed:

Men are ever attempting to unite what the Word of God has declared to be incapable of union - the love of the world and of God - to give half their heart to the world and the other half to God.¹

Real and substantial praise should spring quite naturally from the life which is dedicated wholly to the Lord. Spurgeon noted:

When my heart is one, I will give Thee all of it. Praise should never be rendered with less than all our heart, and soul, and strength, or it will be both unreal and unacceptable.²

The frequent contemplation of such factors as the sovereignty of God, the emptiness of life without Christ, and the goodness of the Lord in showing mercy provides an atmosphere in which the Holy Spirit may operate in behalf of acceptable praise.

Do not men mistake physical effects for spiritual impulses? Do they not often offer to God strains far more calculated for human amusement than for divine acceptance? And understanding enlightened of the Holy Spirit is then and only then fully capable of offering worthy praise.³

Meaningful and effectual praise should also spring from moral integrity, like the spontaneous result of right Christian attitudes, enriched by a devotion to the Word: "I will praise

¹C. H. Spurgeon, op. cit., vol. II, p. 128.

²Ibid., vol. II, p. 13.

³Ibid., vol. I, p. 224.

thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments."¹

Another way of saying the "whole personality" was prayed by David, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name."²

A reverent attitude in both mind and body would be the Scriptural suggestion for the giver of praise. Of the more than twelve hundred references to the act of worship in the Bible, the terms used express this idea. They indicate a prostration of oneself before a superior in an act of reverent adoration.³ The closing advice of Paul in his epistle to the Philippians was that the mind should be occupied with thoughts of praise.⁴

The Emotional Element in Praise

Emotion is feeling. Joy and gladness are frequently mentioned in the Scriptures in connection with praise: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praises."⁵

King Hezekiah and princes commanded the Levites to sing

¹Psalm 119:7.

²Psalm 103:1.

³Paul W. Milhouse, Christian Worship in Symbol and Ritual, Harrisburg, Pa.: The Evangelical Press, 1953, p. 29.

⁴Philippians 4:8.

⁵Psalm 98:4.

praises to the Lord, which they did "with gladness."¹ The children of Israel "praised the Lord day by day" as they observed the feast of unleavened bread seven days "with great gladness."² Joy and praise were thus closely connected as seen earlier in this chapter.

Psychologists recognize differences in the emotional make-up of individuals. Emotion is feeling. Undoubtedly this is an important consideration when one praises God. On-lookers may behold one's outward, physical behavior and interpret it anywhere from mere sentiment and tender response to enthusiasm and full-orbed ecstasy. Ilion Jones noted that "A man does not believe anything until he feels it. ... Worship is not complete until the worshiper's emotions are moved."³ With reference to the enthusiastic worship in the New Testament, Jones added, "Admittedly this worship was surcharged with emotion. Such intense emotion could not, and should not, remain long at white heat."⁴

At this point of considering emotional characteristics, praise has been criticized and even feared. It has been thought

¹ II Chronicles 29:30.

² II Chronicles 30:21.

³ Ilion T. Jones, A Historical Approach to Evangelical Worship, New York: Abingdon Press, 1954, p. 85.

⁴ Ibid., p. 85.

by some persons that the expression of praise by individuals was extraneous to practical Christian living. Yet real praise has its practical side - or indeed should.

Righteousness and Christian Praise

In order for the Christian to arrive at that desirable place where he may devote meaningful praise to God, he must meet the moral and ethical implications behind such communication. The very kingdom of God, according to Paul, is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."¹ Praise may be said to contain joy, proceeding from a life of holiness. For, in a broader sense, the Lord is praised by the living at the highest level of moral integrity enabled by the grace of Christ. This view is in accord with the definition of praise by John Trapp and Augustine.²

Thanksgiving and Christian Praise

To give thanks to God in prayer is to praise Him. Thanksgiving and praise frequently occur together in Scripture and are also closely related. Whether spoken, sung, or inaudibly breathed, it is still substantial praise to give God an offering of thanks. When David appointed certain Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, they were to "celebrate and

¹Romans 14:17 (KJV).

²See page 37 of this thesis.

to thank and praise Jehovah, the God of Israel." This they did with the use of several musical instruments for accompaniment.¹

The fact that thanksgiving and praise are similar expressions broadens the base of the latter, relating praise to the more common experience. Even as one sings the familiar chorus of thanksgiving for salvation, he has (with exceptions noted) given praise to God:

Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul;
 Thank you, Lord, for making me whole.
 Thank you, Lord, for giving to me
 Thy great salvation so rich and free.

A Review of the Basic Biblical Concepts of Praise

A study of I Thessalonians 5:16-18 showed that rejoicing, prayer, and thanksgiving ought to be continuously in the Christian experience. These lead to the question "When and where is praise to be offered?" Christians will praise the Lord in eternity. The four beasts in Revelation² are better translated "living creatures" as in the American Standard Version and "they have no rest day and night, saying, 'Holy holy, holy, is the Lord, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.'"³

But should the Christian delay his praises to God until

¹I Chronicles 16:4.

²Revelation 4:8 (KJV).

³Revelation 4:8.

physically dead? On the contrary, the Christian should commence his worship of Almighty God while in his mortal state. "While I live will I praise the Lord."¹ Commenting on this same verse in the Psalms, Spurgeon observed:

I shall not live forever. This mortal life will find a finis in death; but while it lasts, I will laud the Lord, my God. I cannot tell how long or short my life may be, but every hour of it shall be given to the praises of my God. While I live, I'll love; and while I breathe, I'll bless. It is but for a while, and I will not while that time away in idleness but consecrate it to that same service which shall occupy eternity.²

The Psalmist David vowed, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I Will sing praise to my God while I have my being."³

The experience of Philip Power was interesting:

The author has heard continual praises from a tongue half eaten away with cancer. What use, beloved reader, are you making of your tongue?⁴

Praise was seen to contain joy. Rather, it was the overflow from joyous Christian living - not from its opposite, sometimes caricatured as "long-faced" religion. The experience of C. S. Lewis was also interesting from his recent book on The Psalms:

¹Psalm 146:2.

²C. H. Spurgeon, Treasury of David, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, ed. by David O. Fuller, two volumes, 1940, vol. II, p. 321.

³Psalm 104:33.

⁴C. H. Spurgeon, op. cit., vol. II, p. 20.

But the most obvious fact about praise - whether of God or anything - strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honour. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise unless (sometimes even if) shyness or the fear of boring others is deliberately brought in to check it.¹

Man cannot be divided in his relations with God if he would communicate with Him. Worship that is meaningful, therefore, must be from the whole man, involving the whole personality. Hearts occupied with praise cannot withhold anything from the Lord and still maintain the best spirit for its expression. Moreover, his adoration of God is borne of an understanding, the depth of which is dependent upon such factors as profound appreciation for things righteous and his yielding to the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. For no amount of praise merely from the lips produces true praise. This is true because the life of the worshiper and the praise he offers are inseparable here.

It seems that praise may take the form of contemplation. Affections are set on things above. God is worshipped in one's heart in quiet meditation.²

Rejoicing and Biblical praise were found to be inseparable also. Other emotional qualities appeared in shouting, praying, and in singing.

¹C. S. Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958, p. 93.

²See Isaiah 26:3 and compare Philipians 4:8.

Proper Expressions of Praise

Praise is expressed Biblically in a variety of ways.

What are some of the ways in which men have applauded deity? It is well to bear in mind that modes of expressing praise cannot be considered purely physical or mechanical. The mouth and lips merely speak audibly one's feelings in the heart. The Psalmist found it difficult to express his adoration for God: "Who can utter the mighty acts of Jehovah, or show forth all his praise?"¹ Words alone seemed insufficient for Paul, too, for he wrote: "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift."²

Worshipers frequently sang a hymn or prayed or testified. These modes of expressing praise seemed to fall into two categories: (1) Vocal Praise, including song, testimony, prayer, shouting, and (2) Instrumental Praise. A combination of the two also appeared in the Scriptures.

Vocal Praise

The Psalmist observed:

Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.³

¹Psalm 106:2.

²II Corinthians 9:15.

³Psalms 63:3; 119:171.

O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.¹

1. Worshipping the Lord With Singing

The Apostle Paul urged the believers at Ephesus to

...be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melodies in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.²

Singing is the music of the saints for they have performed this duty in their greatest numbers.³ They have let their praises be known in their greatest straits,⁴ in their greatest deliverances,⁵ and in their greatest plenties.⁶ High regard was held by Charles Spurgeon for singing among the saints as he saw it as a sacred expression of one's adoration for God. But he was especially concerned that the church choir be composed of "redeemed persons" only. He explained this concern rather frequently in his notes on The Psalms:

¹Psalms 51:15; 63:5.

²Ephesians 5:18b-20.

³Psalms 149:1.

⁴Isaiah 26:19.

⁵Isaiah 65:14.

⁶John Wells, The Morning Exercises, quoted in C. H. Spurgeon, Treasury of David, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, ed. by David O. Fuller, two volumes, 1940, vol. II, p. 37.

He groaned that we might sing and was covered with a bloody sweat that we might be anointed with the oil of gladness.¹

How a certain society of brethren can find it in their hearts to forbid singing in public worship is a riddle which we cannot solve.² If David were present in churches where quarters and choirs carry on all the singing, he would turn to the congregation and say, 'Praise the Lord.'³

David would not fill his choir with reprobates but with sanctified persons who could sing from their hearts. He calls to you, ye people of God, because ye are saints: and if sinners are wickedly silent, let your holiness constrain you to sing. You are His saints - chosen, blood-bought, called, and set apart for God; sanctified on purpose that you should offer the daily sacrifice of praise.⁴

Praise is not comely from unpardoned professional singers; it is like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout. Crooked hearts make crooked music, but the upright are the Lord's delight.⁵

The Psalmist sent out a clarion call to the saved of earth to join in songs of praise to the Lord: "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation."⁶

Again and again the question arises in connection with singing (as with other expressions of worship), "Is the heart in

¹C. H. Spurgeon, op. cit., vol. I, p. 197.

²Ibid., vol. II, p. 64.

³Ibid., vol. II, p. 100.

⁴Ibid., vol. I, p. 144.

⁵Ibid., vol. I, p. 161.

⁶Psalm 95:1.

it?"

The gods of Greece and Rome may be worshipped well enough with classical music, but Jehovah can only be adored with the heart, and that music is the best for His service which gives the heart most play.¹ We never sing so well as when we know that have an interest in the good things of which we sing and a relationship to the God Whom we praise.²

Worshipful singing was linked with several stirring narratives both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Some of these were already mentioned. Hezekiah commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer: "And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped."³ A nearby passage reads, "...The Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord."⁴

Henry H. Halley, famed Bible commentator, saw the need for worshipful congregational singing in churches today:

The whole congregation should sing. Congregational singing has a rightful place in church services. It is the part of the service that people love most; the church's chief expression of its worship of God; the one thing, ordinarily, in all the service, that has most power over people's hearts. And it is a downright shame that it has to be shoved aside to make time for long-winded preachers who so dearly love to hear themselves talk.⁵

¹C. H. Spurgeon, op. cit., vol. I, p. 350.

²Ibid., vol. II, p. 87.

³II Chronicles 29:30.

⁴II Chronicles 30:21.

⁵Henry H. Halley, Best Bible Verses, Box 774, Chicago 90, Illinois: n. d., p. 601.

More people would go to church, and church services would have far more power over the people, if the church leadership would give CONGREGATIONAL SINGING its rightful place in the REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES, so that the people could feel that they were going to church to worship and Praise God, and not just to hear somebody preach, or sing.¹

These were the only personal convictions Halley expressed in his entire volume of 648 pages; hence they were his strong convictions.

This congregational singing was viewed by the United Free Church of Scotland as an occasion for the offering of praise to God. Thus the worship of God was given a prominent place in the order of service in Chart II of the Appendix, allowing for an effective movement of praise even in a highly ritualized service.

2. Prayer and Praise

Not all prayer is praise; but prayer is often the vehicle upon which praise travels to its heavenly destination. The prayer of Jehoshaphat was full of praise to God when he heard that the enemy was preparing for battle. He called the people together for a season of prayer, a portion of which reads:

O Jehovah, the God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and art not thou ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? and in thy hand is power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee. Didst not thou, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and give it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?²

¹ Ibid., p. 643.

² II Chronicles 20:6, 7.

When Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi, they praised the Lord Jesus with both praying and the singing of hymns in the hearing of the prisoners.¹ The hour of midnight was in keeping with Paul's own admonition to "pray without ceasing."²

3. Testimony and Praise

A regular practice in many churches has been the allowing of individuals to rise and address the audience in order to give an expression of praise to God. These "testimony times" or "praise services" have been conducted at mid-week on Bible study or Prayer Meeting night, and even on Sunday evenings. The leader of worship often reminds the people that testimonies properly give the "glory to the Lord" and not to the individual who testifies. Testimony time in the public service provides a time when Christians can "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."³

Testimonies of course are not limited to the church service. The Christian believer has opportunities to witness for Christ on the job, at a business meeting, on a camping trip with friends, while playing golf or while fishing. He may be riding

¹Acts 16:25.

²I Thessalonians 5:17.

³Romans 12:15.

on a train when an opportunity to testify opens up or he may be seated with others at a luncheon. Personal testimony accompanied by a commendable Christian life has been most effective in bringing praise to the Lord.¹

4. Shouting and Praise

The Psalmist approved of the loudness of praise and gave advice to worshipers to "shout unto God with the voice of triumph."² This expression obviously requires an increase in volume and is in contrast to the "well-bred whispers" which Spurgeon detested:

Heartiness should be conspicuous in divine worship. Well-bred whispers are disreputable here. It is not that the Lord cannot hear us, but that it is natural for great exultation to express itself in the loudest manner. Men shout at the sight of their kings: shall we offer no loud hosannas to the Son of David?³

It might be said that the shouting of praise was more spontaneous than pre-meditated. It should be kept in mind, however, that praise, in its truly Biblical context, was never simply an ejaculation from the lips.⁴

¹See Paul's personal testimony before Agrippa in Acts 26.

²Psalm 47:1.

³C. H. Spurgeon, Treasury of David, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, ed. by David O. Fuller, two volumes, 1940, vol. I, p. 162.

⁴See poem A in Chart IV in the Appendix.

Instrumental Praise

"All kinds of musick" was acceptable for praising the Lord in Old Testament times. The author found no authority to state how many musical instruments were in use for purposes of worship in those early days, but fourteen instruments of praise were named specifically in the Bible:

1. cornets
2. cymbals
3. dulcimers
4. flutes
5. harps
6. instrument of ten strings
7. organs
8. pipes
9. psalteries
10. sackbuts
11. tabrets
12. timbrels
13. trumpets
14. viols

In the use of these musical instruments, every faculty was enlisted in the praising of God. Wordsworth observed that:

The breath is employed in blowing the trumpet; the fingers are used in striking the strings of the psaltery and the harp; the whole hand is exerted in beating the timbrel; the feet move in the dance; there are stringed instruments (literally strings); there is the organ (the 'ugab, syrinx') composed of many pipes, implying combination, and the

cymbals clang upon one another.¹

Andrew Bonar tells of those who used some of these and other early instruments, quoting from Patrick:

Patrick has an interesting note on the many instruments of music in Psalm 149, which we quote here: 'The ancient inhabitants of Etruria used the trumpet; the Arcadians, the whistle; the Sicilians, the pectid; the Cretians, the harp; the Tracians, the cornet; the Lacedemonians, the pipe; the Egyptians, the drum; the Arabians, the cymbal (Clem. Paedag., ii:4). May we not say that in this Psalm's enumeration of musical instruments, there is a reference to the variety which exists among men in the mode of expressing joy and exciting to feeling?'²

Expressions which praise has taken issued occasionally in Scripture from a combination of vocal and instrumental modes. When God filled the heart with praise He put a new song in the mouth.³ The Psalms furnished the chief evidence for this in the Old Testament. The praises of Israel were joyful outbursts in which song was mingled with shouting and dancing to a rude accompaniment of timbrels and trumpets.⁴ Higher moods of praise have been expressed in the New Testament also in bursts of song.⁵

Silent Praise

Did praise always have an audible expression? or even

¹C. H. Spurgeon, op. cit., vol. II, p. 335.

²Ibid., vol. II, p. 336.

³Psalm 40:3.

⁴James Orr, The International Standard Bible Encyclopædia, Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, vol. IV, 1915, p. 2429. See also Exodus 15:20ff and II Samuel 6:5-14ff.

⁵Luke 2:14; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Revelation 5:9.

necessarily something physical? It seems that God can gather up the fragments of a "broken spirit" and be glorified thereby.¹

Job, for example, worshipped God after he had "rent his robe, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground."² Of Job's experience, Helen Strong concluded:

Not with the voice of song, high-sounding cymbals, and the harp did Job bless God, but with rent robe and face low in the dust. The music of the world may jar the wounded, stricken heart; but in the soul the melody of praise has touched a richer, minor chord.³

There is, therefore, a kind of praise which is inaudible, and Dr. Wiley's limited definition of praise was too narrow.⁴ Silent praise may be considered as "praise in secret" in contrast to "praise in society" whose expressions are better known. Dr. Caldwell, recent chapel speaker at Western Evangelical Seminary, remarked "what you are is more important than what you have or what you do."⁵ If this is true, then praise offered to God has here a good maxim. Expressions of praise which met only the eyes and ears of man were discussed earlier in this chapter.

Have not other silent forms of praise evinced an adoration

¹Psalm 51:17.

²Job 1:20:21.

³Helen P. Strong, The Garment of Praise, copyrighted 1888 by The American Tract Society, pamphlet, p. 27.

⁴See page 36 of this thesis.

⁵Dr. Mack M. Caldwell, quotation from his chapel message on the topic of Stewardship at Western Evangelical Seminary, January 8, 1960.

for God? Perhaps the following very practical expressions of praise illustrate John Trapp's definition:¹

1. A layman visits a fellow church-member in the sick room.
2. A layman chops wood for his neighbor who has a back injury.
3. A layman takes up the challenge of a Sunday School class of junior boys.
4. A woman witnesses to a neighbor about Jesus Christ.
5. Men volunteer for carpentry work on the church annex.

Good works clearly present an additional manner in which the Christian believer may express his praise to God. Since praise was found to be from the heart, its quality depends upon the uprightness of the heart of the worshiper. C. S. Lewis's definition pointed to these moral involvements and the ethical implications of the term "praise."² In other words, if without holiness no man shall see the Lord,³ without sanctification no man shall truly praise Him. Man's total relationship with God is beneath, above and beyond the mere form which his expressions of praise take.

Such a view of silent praise widens its base to include

¹See page 37 of this thesis.

²C. S. Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958, p. 94.

³Hebrews 12:14; I Peter 1:16.

such other matters as:

- (a) one's position with regard to the will of God,
- (b) one's position with regard to personal stewardship,
- (c) one's position with regard to the more excellent way of love.

To admit that additions could be made to this list "ad infinitum" would be to agree that the degree in which the Christian communicates effective, meaningful, substantial praise to God is contingent upon the extent to which he has already come under the approval of God. But an exhaustive list would hardly be possible. It culminates in motivation, the clearest presentation of which Paul gave to the Colossians:

Servants, obey in all things them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord: whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the Lord Christ.¹

¹Colossians 3:22-24.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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Summary

Despite the fact that man enjoyed early fellowship with God, he was soon separated from God through the fall in Eden. During Old Testament times a few men circumvented this alienation from God through obedience to the Law and the prophets. Those who would communicate with God in those days generally did so through a priestly mediator.

A new era for worship came with the Babe in Bethlehem. God's love for man was seen in Christ, through Whom a more direct access into His presence was provided. The incarnation marked God's supreme effort to bridge the gap of separation and made communion more obtainable in Christ. God desired that man be reconciled unto Himself through Jesus Christ.

Nevertheless, many refused to appropriate God's new provisions in Christ, largely because of man's open preference for evil deeds.

Others took certain positive steps to create an atmosphere in which God might be worshiped. The Christian Church of the first century worshiped God in a more "personal" manner. No longer was it required that a priest minister at the altar if one would worship God. Public and private worship was left largely to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the essence of early Christian worship was this personal communion with God.

A study of five New Testament instances of praise showed that Luke was the author of each instance. Praise was found to be a kind of spontaneous reaction of glorifying God which caused those near-by to join in with praises. In the only New Testament narratives of praise discovered, the people praised God as the result of some miracle.

Praise was found to be proper only when done in sincerity and offered with proper motivation. The Scriptures gave abundant proof that it may be more harmful than beneficial for one to receive praise from another under certain circumstances.

The Biblical emphasis of praise is with God as its object. All flesh owes it to Him. In poetic fashion, heavenly bodies, angels and the things of nature give praise to the Creator.

To render praise to God was agreed to be both a responsibility and a rewarding privilege for Christian believers. Most precious of these rewards seemed to consist in something of the realization of inner peace and joy and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. It was the overflow from joyous Christian living and was closely related to the virtue of being thankful for whatever comes one's way. Christians are given enough Biblical examples of genuine worship to serve as a trustworthy guide. Jesus placed primary emphasis upon the condition of the heart of those who would honor Him, labeling as hypocrites any who gave a lip-service apart from proper motivations. Praise involved the whole man.

Vocal praises included those expressed with singing (with

or without musical accompaniment), with prayer, with testimony and (rarely) with shouting and dancing.

There was found to be a real sense in which God receives meaningful praise in a silent expression. Upright living, the doing of good works, and, in fact, the total spiritual relationship of man with God was directly connected.

Conclusions

As a result of this study, this writer concluded:

1. Man owes to God far more praise than he generally realizes in the present day.
2. The whole life of the Christian believer should bring glory to God.
3. It is altogether possible for man to communicate true praise to God.
4. The degree in which the Christian communicates effective, meaningful, substantial praise to God is contingent upon the extent to which he has already come under the approval of God.
5. Christian praise is a kind of communication of one's own idea of God's worth to Him, but only conveys its intended message when it proceeds out of a heart made clean through Jesus Christ.
6. Praise to God may take silent forms as well as audible - that is, one may give praise to God in secret as well as in society.

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APPENDIX

CHART I

A CHART OF THE PSALMS SHOWING DIVISIONS
ARE CAPSTONED WITH BENEDICTIONS OF PRAISE

<u>Division</u>	<u>Psalms</u>	<u>Division Ending</u>	<u>Corres. Book</u>
BOOK I	1-41	Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, from everlasting and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.	Genesis
BOOK II	42-72	And blessed be his glorious name for ever; And let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen.	Exodus
BOOK III	73-89	Blessed be Jehovah for evermore. Amen, and Amen.	Leviticus
BOOK IV	90-106	Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting. And let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye Jehovah.	Numbers
BOOK V	107-150	See Psalm 150 in its entirety, concluding with "Let everything that hath breath praise Jehovah. Praise ye Jehovah."	Deuteronomy

CHART II

AN ORDER OF WORSHIP FROM
THE UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
SHOWING THE MOVEMENT OF PRAISE¹

1. Sentence of Scripture.
2. Invocation.
3. Praise - Psalm or hymn.
4. Scripture - Old Testament.
5. Prayer of adoration, thanksgiving, confession and petition.
6. Praise - Psalm sung or chanted, hymn or anthem.
7. Scripture - New Testament.
8. Praise - Hymn.
9. Prayer of Intercession, with Lord's Prayer.
10. Praise - Hymn.
11. Prayer for Illumination.
12. Sermon.
13. Praise - Hymn.
14. Prayer for blessing on the Word.
15. Praise - Doxology.
16. Benediction.

¹Arthur S. Hoyt, Public Worship For Non-Liturgical Churches, New York: George H. Doran Company, 1911, p. 155.

CHART III

SCRIPTURAL REASONS FOR PRAISING THE LORD

A. Because of Himself

1. For His majesty:

O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord,
all the earth. Honour and majesty are before him...¹

They shall sing for the majesty of the Lord...²

2. For His excellency:

And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast
overthrown them that rose up against thee...³

Let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name
alone is excellent...⁴

3. For His glory:

Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a
voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of
the Lord from this place.⁵

4. For His greatness:

For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: he

¹Psalm 96:1, 6a.

²Psalm 24:14b.

³Exodus 15:7a.

⁴Psalm 148:13.

⁵Ezekiel 3:12.

also is to be feared above all gods. Great is the Lord,
and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearch-
able.¹

5. For His holiness:

Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is
like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing
wonders? And one (of the seraphims) cried unto another,
and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole
earth is full of his glory.²

6. For His wisdom:

Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered
and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for
wisdom and might are his. I thank thee, and praise thee,
O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and
might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of
thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's
matter.³

7. For His power:

Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: so will we
sing and praise thy power.⁴

8. For His goodness:

Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness...
O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good...⁵

¹ I Chronicles 16:25; Psalm 145:3.

² Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 6:3.

³ Daniel 2:19b, 20, 23.

⁴ Psalm 21:13.

⁵ Psalm 107:8; 118:1.

9. For His mercy:

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever.¹

10. For His lovingkindness and truth:

I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.²

11. For His faithfulness and truth:

O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.³

B. Because of His Free Gifts

12. For salvation:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.⁴

13. For His wonderful works:

And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.

¹II Chronicles 20:21. See also Psalm 136, naming particular mercies.

²Psalm 138:2.

³Isaiah 25:1.

⁴Luke 1:68, 69.

Praise him for his mighty acts...¹

C. Because of His Constant Help

14. For His consolation:

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.²

15. For His counsel:

I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel...³

16. For the pardoning of sin:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities...⁴

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace...⁵

17. For constant preservation:

By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art

¹ Psalms 89:5; 150:2.

² Psalm 42:5; Isaiah 12:1.

³ Psalm 16:7a.

⁴ Psalm 103:2, 3a.

⁵ Ephesians 1:5-7.

he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee. I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.¹

18. For spiritual health:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.²

19. For deliverances:

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.³

Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.⁴

20. For protection:

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.⁵

21. For answering prayer:

Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of

¹ Psalm 71:6-8.

² Psalm 103:2, 3.

³ Psalm 40:2, 3.

⁴ Psalm 124:6.

⁵ Psalms 28:7; 59:17.

my supplications. I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.¹

22. For the hope of glory:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.²

23. For all spiritual blessings:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.³

24. For all temporal blessings:

He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth. Who giveth food to all flesh...⁴

25. For the continuance of blessings:

Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation.⁵

¹ Psalm 28:6.

² I Peter 1:3, 4.

³ Psalm 103:2; Ephesians 1:3.

⁴ Psalm 104:14; 136:25a.

⁵ Psalm 68:19.

CHART IV

SELECTED POEMS OF PRAISE

- A. I have no words to bring
 Worthy of thee, my King;
 O let my whole life be
 One Anthem unto Thee.
 And let the praise of lips and life
 Outring all sin and strife.¹
- B. Praiseful hearts soothe both sorrow and sadness.
 Praiseful hearts bring tidings of joy and gladness.

 Praiseful hearts are far reaching and most extensive.
 Praiseful hearts are rich with love yet not expensive.

 Praiseful hearts know not the pangs of limitation.
 Praiseful hearts are genuine, hence not imitation.²
- C. I would begin the music here,
 And so my soul should rise:
 Oh, for some heavenly notes to bear
 My passions to the skies.³
- D. Now, what is man when grace reveals
 The virtues of a Savior's Blood?
 Again a life divine he feels,
 Despises earth, and walks with God.

 And what in yonder realms above
 Is ransomed man ordained to be?
 With honor, holiness, and love,
 No seraph more adorned than he.

¹Helen P. Strong, The Garment of Praise, p. 19.

²Charles Olson, It Pays to Praise, p. 23.

³C. H. Spurgeon, Treasury of David, vol. I, p. 147.

Nearest the throne, and first in song.
Man shall His hallelujahs raise,
While wondering angels round Him throng,
And swell the chorus of His praise.¹

E. Roll, in your solemn majesty,
Ye deathless splendors of the skies.
High altars from which angels see
The incense of creation rise.²

¹John Newton, quoted in C. H. Spurgeon, Treasury of David,
vol. II, p. 311.

²Helen P. Strong, op. cit., p. 13.

THE END