



"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32). "Speaking the truth in love." (Eph. 4:15).

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Christian Worship Is Sanctified By Blood Joseph H. Cox, Louisville, Ky.

When God gave the first testament, it was dedicated with the blood of animals. Moses said: "This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry", Heb. 9:20, 21. Even so the "true tabernacle", which is the church of the New Testament, is dedicated by the blood of Christ. Acts 20:28. There was an absolute necessity for Moses to see that God's people "should make all things according to the pattern." We who have received Christ, "the mediator of a better covenant" (Heb. 8:3-6), should see that "all things" are "according to the pattern" of the New Testament, in regard to the system of worship, in "the true tabernacle", the church of Jesus Christ. Only those elements and acts which God has arranged should be allowed in the worship of "the true tabernacle." The system of worship taught in the New Testament is dedicated in Christ's blood. Who will dare change it? Paul says: Ye are come "to the general assembly and church of the first born . . . and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh." "For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth (Moses, J.H.C.), much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him (Christ, J.H.C.) that speaketh from Heaven." (Heb. 12:22, 25).

THE SYSTEM OF TRUE WORSHIP

Christ speaks through the New Testament, and Peter, one of the writers, says: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." 1 Pet. 4:11. What then has been spoken upon the subject of

worship in the New Testament? Luke says that the church "continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers", Acts 2:42. Paul speaks of another act of worship which is included in "the apostles doctrine", but is classified as a specific act of teaching in praise to God. This act is singing. Eph. 5:19. True worship requires specific acts to be performed as well as certain elements to be used. The system of worship set forth in the New Testament, therefore, is composed of the following acts and elements:

1. "Apostles' doctrine" (teaching).

The teaching of Christ and his apostles is dedicated in the blood of Jesus, for it is in the New Testament. We are authorized to teach the truth only. John 8:32. Paul also says: "Preach the word", (2 Tim. 4:2) and he pronounces a curse upon those who dare to preach another doctrine than the one which the apostles preached. Gal. 1:8, 9.

2. "Fellowship".

The "fellowship" as used in this text, refers to "the collection" or contribution which is a free will contribution of the saints to be collected upon "the first day of the week." 1 Cor. 16:1, 2. This "collection" in 1 Cor. 16 is called by the same writer "the fellowship", 2 Cor. 8:4. The financial support of the church of our Lord is to be collected on the first day of the week. There are fifty-two "first days" in the year, as there are fifty-two weeks in the year. So we are to "lay by in store" on the first day of every week. We are command-

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ed to give as we are "prospered." This is God's plan to support the church. No ice cream socials, pie suppers, cake sales, fish fries, or rummage sales, etc., are acceptable as a means of financing the work of the church.

3. "Breaking of Bread."

This refers to the "Lord's Supper", 1 Cor. 11. Luke also says: "And Jesus took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after the supper, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Lk.22:19,20. Both species, bread and wine, compose the elements of the Lord's Supper. No one can eat the Lord's Supper by partaking of the bread only, as is done by Roman Catholics. Paul emphatically shows that the church at Corinth partook of both the bread and the fruit of the vine. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we brake, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. 10:16. This "communion" is to be observed on "the first day of the week", called Sunday on our calendar. Acts 20:7. Those who eat the Lord's Supper on Thursday evening have no higher authority for this action than the Roman Catholic church.

4. "Prayers".

Prayer is another act of worship and is one of the greatest privileges of the Christian. No Christian can afford to neglect prayer. A child of God can no more lead the Christian life, without the function of personal prayer, than one can live a physical life without breathing air. The attitude of the disciples of more than nineteen centuries past should ever be characteristic of his disciples of the present century—"Lord, teach us to pray." Paul says: "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." 2 Thess. 5:7,8.

5. "Singing".

God has ordained that his people under the New Testament law of Christ should worship him in the act of singing. This is involved in the "apostles teaching." Said Paul: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Eph. 5: 19. Vocal music is the only kind of music authorized in the New Testament. The New Testament was dedicated by the blood of Christ (Heb. 10:29), for his blood is called "the blood of the covenant." No one can rightfully

claim to respect the blood of Christ and refuse to practice the things which he has authorized in his testament. It is equally true that the blood of Christ is not honored when men add acts or elements to the worship which the New Testament has not authorized. The use of mechanical music, counting of beads, and the burning of incense, in Christian worship are all foreign to New Testament teaching.

Let us not, therefore, "count the blood of the covenant, wherewith he is (we are) sanctified, an unholy thing." If we corrupt the system of worship, it is doing "despite unto the Spirit of grace." Heb. 10:29.

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since each one must sing. Sometimes people say they don't sing in worship because they "cannot carry a tune." Now, where does God ever command us to "carry a tune?" Paul said "make melody in the heart." When we sing praises to God, it is not done to satisfy men. Our voices may not be trained or "cultured," but we can at least "offer up the fruit of our lips" in praise to God. If our singing comes from the heart, if we utter the words of scriptural songs understanding what we are saying, then God will be satisfied whether our voices blend or not. This is not to discourage efforts to make our singing better and more harmonious, but rather to put the emphasis upon each individual's responsibility to sing, to the best of his ability, the praise of God.

Music is an important part of worship and let us strive through a knowledge of the Word to understand our duties in that respect. We need to learn how to worship Him now, so that we may be better trained to praise Him around the "Great White Throne."

ONE MAN'S OPINION

I have carefully and regularly per-used these Holy Scriptures, and am of the opinion that the volume, independently of its Divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and fine strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books in whatever language they may be written.—Sir William Jones.

Teacher: "Jimmy, who led the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

Jimmy: "It wasn't me teacher. We just moved here last week."