

EXCERPTS FROM

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THE LINK

North Road Chapel (Evangelical)

BIDEFORD

Internet Edition

AFTER THIS MANNER... PRAY YE
(A Study of the Lord's Prayer)

Part 4

Having dealt with the preface to this pattern prayer we are now to look at the petitionary section.

The petitions are seven in number. The first three concern God and His kingdom. The last four, ourselves. In this there is resemblance to the TEN COMMANDMENTS. The first four being Godward and the other six manward.

Let us remind ourselves of the first four sections of the Decalogue, (cf. Ex.20:3-11).

1. No other gods before me. The God of Heaven is the true and living God - there is NO OTHER. He is SUPREME, MAJESTIC, ALMIGHTY, and ETERNAL.
2. He is to be worshipped as such and in THE MANNER appointed, with no intrusion of man's ideas or inventions.
3. Thou shalt not take His name in vain. The name of the Eternal God is HOLY. He bears a name which is high above all. That name is to be held in REVERENCE.
4. Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. This day is the Sabbath unto the LORD thy GOD. God's person and name is placed upon THIS DAY in a very definite manner; it is the LORD'S DAY; it is to be honoured and sanctified for HIS NAME'S SAKE.

After THIS MANNER therefore, pray ye: "Our Father which art in Heaven, HALLOWED BE THY NAME." His great and holy name is ever to be before us. God's person, law, and name can never be separated. Never does The Almighty depart from that law; it is ever central in all things. Even as Christ gives instructions in praying, and sets us an example for our devotions, the discerning mind is bound to see the underlying principles of the DIVINE LAW clearly in evidence.

The segregation of law and grace as seen in Dispensationalism, and the teaching of Antinomianism which is so prevalent in many Evangelical circles, is gross heresy, and must be staunchly denounced.

In the previous sections we have seen the blessed intimacy of relationship as through grace we can address the God of Heaven as OUR FATHER, but in no way does this reduce our responsibility to HALLOW His glorious and thrice holy name. Just as we have been given glimpses of sovereign saving GRACE in the opening words of the prayer, so now are we to catch something of the dazzling splendour of DIVINE HOLINESS such as was manifest at Sinai.

This by way of introduction to the petitionary section, we now go on to more closely examine the first petition: "HALLOWED BE THY NAME." How easy it is to utter these words without the slightest thought of their profound import! To do this is in itself a VIOLATION of the third commandment - a taking of "His name in vain." "Vain" means, EMPTY, UNREAL. How easy it is for any of us to take HIS NAME upon our lips in such a familiar way that it becomes commonplace and in consequence, empty, unreal and unimportant inasmuch, as, its deep significance has been lost sight of. This opening petition is GODWARD, as are the opening commandments of the Decalogue; it concerns His fearful and glorious NAME, and it is only as we hold this against the backcloth of Sinai that we shall be preserved from taking "His name in vain."

"HALLOWED." In English means HOLY, TO REVERE, TO SANCTIFY. Both in the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament, it is the same. The Puritans used to say that in prayer we should pray that "God's name might shine forth gloriously." Was not this the song of the angels? "Glory to God in the highest." The note struck by these sinless creatures was in perfect harmony with the opening phrases of this prayer: A revering of HIS NAME, a sanctifying of it, setting it apart from every other name, and giving HIM eternal supremacy.

This is exactly what the law of God demands. This is the will and the declared mind of God. Then, is it not obvious that all prayer must be within this orbit? So, as Christ gives us an example on how to pray it is in full accord with the law. For that reason alone, apart from any

other consideration, it is a PERFECT PRAYER, the outstanding feature being, as with The Commandments, the Godward aspect comes first - "HALLOWED BE THY NAME." This is the first and great commandment: the weightiest article of the faith, yea, the all-important petition - GOD'S GLORY - the reason, of course, being that it is ETERNAL.

Later petitions in this prayer will one day become outdated, as there will be no need of their continual use. For example: In the eternal state there will be no need to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread," for then we shall not hunger or thirst any more. "Forgive us our trespasses," will also be irrelevant, for in the eternal world there is no sin. "Lead us not into temptation," would have no meaning, for Satan and his hosts will forever be assigned to the lake of fire; there will be none to tempt in that blest abode. All these later petitions are of temporary duration, but not the one before us now. The first petition is ETERNAL. EVER will His people say, "HALLOWED BE THY NAME." It will be the endless concern of our hearts that, "God's name shall shine forth gloriously."

In the Book of the Revelation, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are seen central to all things. There is no need of sun or moon to light that realm for the very GLORY OF GOD is the light thereof. All the nations of the saved shall walk in the full splendour of that UNCREATED light, and they shall bring their glory and honour unto HIM who is in the midst of the throne. This is the New Jerusalem; it is the Eternal State, and says John in Revelation chapter 21 verse 11, the GLORY of God is there in the magnificence of eternal splendour.

The question may well be posed in our minds: If God is the Supreme Eternal Being, then ALL glory is His in any case; His name is sanctified already; He is pre-eminent; nothing can be added to Him nor anything taken away? This is true. Riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, and blessing, are His inherently and eternally, (cf. Rev.5:12). Nevertheless His people will NEVER cease to acknowledge and proclaim this. It will be upon their lips for ever and ever; the sanctifying, the hallowing of HIS NAME as DISTINCT from ALL others, so that HE shall ever be seen as the SUPREME BEING. As the first Commandment states: "No other gods before me."

It is for this reason that the GRAMMAR Of Holy Scripture must not be tampered with. Neo-Evangelicals have joined with Modernists in this, in modern translations of the Bible. In consequence not only is Holy Scripture affected, so also is prayer. The Eternal God is now addressed as "YOU." The pronoun "YOU" has not the purity of the singular; it is multi; it is applicable to an individual, to a whole community or to a nation. It must be emphatically stated that this is NOT Biblical language. This modern talk of archaic speech is humbug. Let us not be swayed by the shallow talk of these so-called scholars. It is SPIRITUALITY and CORRECTNESS we need to be concerned with, not loose speech. This is a very important issue, far more important than most Christians think today. The eternal thrice Holy God demands PURITY of language. His name is to be HALLOWED, SANCTIFIED, to stand ALONE, and be SUPREME, and not confused with others, be they men or angels. It is THOU art worthy and THOU ALONE – singular; in absolute purity.

Some might well be puzzled as to how down here on earth, in a scene of sin, we can really hallow or sanctify God's name. The principle is precisely the same as it is in Heaven. We are to continually proclaim His glories and attributes, not only making Him supreme in what we SAY, but also in our MANNER OF LIFE. Let some examples be given concerning this.

1. We HALLOW God's name when we walk in the FEAR OF GOD; when we are in constant fear and trembling of ourselves lest we fall and bring dishonour upon His name so that we cast ourselves wholly upon Him, saying, "Hold thou me up and I shall be safe." (Psalm 119:117). Also put so forcefully by the hymn writer:

"Hold Thou my hand, so weak am I and helpless,
I dare not take one step without Thine aid,
Hold Thou my hand! for then O loving Saviour
No dread of ill shall make my soul afraid.

Hold Thou my hand, and closer, closer draw me,
To Thy dear self – my hope, my joy, my all,
Hold Thou my hand, lest haply I should wander
And missing Thee, my trembling feet should fall."

The man who walks in this attitude will be marked out as a GOD FEARING MAN: such HALLOW, SANCTIFY, and set God SUPREME in their lives.

2. We hallow God's name when we fully trust Him, or when we truly live by faith. "We have trusted in His holy name." (Psalm 33:2L). To live at this level causes God's name to "shine forth gloriously." Of Abraham we read: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." (Rom.4:20). When the world around sees a Christian – "with a mind stayed upon his God" – quiet and calm in every circumstance of life, no matter what the situation, then is God's name HALLOWED in very truth, bringing glory to Him.

3. Love to God. In all that we are now considering it should be pointed out that the Trinity is in view. The fear of God, living by faith, and our love is applicable to all three persons – The One Eternal God. However., in Scripture there are various analogies used on times which are more relevant to one particular person within the Godhead. For example: Our relationship to Christ (the Son) is likened unto that of bride and bridegroom, or husband and wife. This draws out the aspect of love as in no other human relationship.

This relationship in its true Biblical framework (not as it is viewed by so many today, and alas, many professing Christians are no better than worldlings in this) is a binding ongoing thing for life. Within its Divine institutional setting, Holy matrimony is human love at its zenith. It is HONOURABLE, as is so rightly stated in the marriage service. A wife greatly HONOURS her husband by giving him such love as she would give to NONE OTHER, it is a conjugal love, for they become ONE flesh. Here is the pattern. We are JOINED to Christ, "bone of His bone," says the Scripture; "espoused unto Him as a chaste virgin." Then we give unto Him such love as we give unto NONE OTHER. He becomes the SUPREME object and desire of our lives, and everything revolves around HIM.

This brings us back again to the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first" and great commandment"! (Matt.22:37-38). This indeed is HONOURABLE.- Giving Him TOTAL and ABSOLUTE DISTINCTION in

our lives, making Him SUPREME and esteeming Him the ALTOGETHER lovely One. Such love and spontaneous overflow of heart HALLOWS His name in a way which is unique and of the highest order.

4. The true observance of the Sabbath. Indissolubly linked with the HALLOWING of God's name is the HALLOWING of His day: "And God blessed the seventh day and SANCTIFIED it"(Gen.2:3). This, like marriage, is a creation institution binding upon all men for all time. Great attention was drawn to this in the Decalogue: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and HALLOWED it." (Ex.20:8-11).

The Old Testament Sabbath was the seventh day. The New Testament Sabbath is the first day, but the principle laid down by God is perpetuated, one day in seven is HOLY: It is the LORD'S DAY: it belongs to GOD. "HALLOW ye the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers." (Jer.17:22). Let no one think that they HALLOW God's name if they fail to HALLOW His day. How many there are who attend a place of worship on a Sunday morning and will recite the Lord's prayer, actually saying "HALLOWED BE THY NAME," then spend the rest of the day in pleasure and social activity. This is NOT hallowing the Sabbath; it is not setting it apart WHOLLY for God; it is a DESECRATION of the LORD'S DAY. Then, to pray "hallowed be thy name" is a mockery, and better never said.

5. Corporate worship. This follows right on, indeed is a part of true observance of the Sabbath. We HALLOW God's name and greatly glorify Him in holy and spiritual worship. The gathering together of His people in His name. "This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be SANCTIFIED in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified." (Lev.10:3). "It is a good thing for me to draw near unto God." (Psalm 73:28).

However, we must gather in the appointed manner. God is to be "SANCTIFIED" in them that come nigh to Him. On the subject of worship Thomas Watson says: "Men are not to prescribe to God or superadd their inventions, this the Almighty looks upon as strange fire, and is a high provocation." How apt are these words to our day!

What inventions of men have intruded into the courts of our God! What strange fire is offered in the name of worship! "I am not glorified in this," saith the Almighty: He is looking for PURITY in worship, not POMP: SPIRITUALITY not CARNALITY: not a form which is pleasing to men and which they may find enjoyable, but that which is enjoyable to HIM. It must be plainly stated that there is NO HALLOWING of God's name in much of today's Churchianity. The law must again be brought to bear. The first commandment concerns the worship of the TRUE GOD. The second commandment pertains to the worship of the true God in the TRUE MANNER, and the second is as important as the first.

6. We hallow God's name in our stand for Truth. "Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name." (Psalm 138:2). Let no person speak of HALLOWING God's name if they disparage ANY PART of His Holy Word, however small a part of that Word it may be. The God of Heaven is TRUTH. The LIVING WORD (Christ) was THE TRUTH. He gave THE TRUTH and caused it all, by the Holy Spirit's sovereign control, to be written down and preserved to all generations as long as the earth remaineth. "THY WORD IS TRUTH." (John 17:17). To dismiss ANY PART of the teaching of the sacred mandate is to dismiss THE TRUTH, and so believe, or practice THE FALSE. Indeed, it makes God a liar. "LET GOD BE TRUE," (Rom.3:4). If God has SAID IT then it MUST be true; then ALL must ACT upon it, and be grieved at the REPROACH to GOD'S NAME when His Word is to any degree set aside.

When Nehemiah heard of the tragic state of affairs in Jerusalem, the laying waste of God's house, and the desecration of His holy law, he sat down and wept. Hezekiah had a similar experience, and he came and spread the whole matter before the Lord.

The apostacy of our day is NO LESS than theirs; and if we talk of the HALLOWING of God's name, then we shall have a DEEP CONCERN FOR HIS TRUTH and the way in which it is treated TODAY. If this is NOT SO then we are as the Scribes and Pharisees - HYPOCRITES.

Not genuine in our profession.

Not genuine in our living.

Not genuine in our praying.

To summarize: If WE are to HALLOW God's name then we must:

1. WALK IN THE FEAR OF GOD.
2. LIVE BY FAITH.
3. LOVE THE LORD OUR GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART.
4. REMEMBER THE GOD ORDAINED SABBATH AND KEEP IT HOLY.
5. WORSHIP HIM ACCORDING TO DIVINE ORDERING.
6. STAND FOR THE TRUTH OF HIS WORD.

If these things be true of us then with deep sincerity of heart shall we pray AFTER THIS MANNER: "HALLOWED BE THY NAME."

W. H. Molland

HALLOWED BE THY NAME: How easy it is to utter these words without the slightest thought of their profound and holy import! If we offer this petition from the heart, we desire that God's name may be sanctified by us, and at the same time own the indisposition and utter inability to do this of ourselves. Such a request denotes a longing to be empowered to glorify God in everything whereby He makes Himself known, that we may honour Him in all situations and circumstances. Whatever be my lot, however low I may sink, through whatever deep waters I may be called to pass, get to Thyself glory in me and by me. Blessedly was this exemplified by our perfect Saviour. 'Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father glorify Thy name.' (John 12:28). Though He must be immersed in the Baptism of suffering, yet, HALLOWED BE THY NAME."

A. W. Pink

PAEDO-BAPTISM - IS IT VALID?

Those who practice infant baptism tell us that it is Biblical, and that it was practiced by the Apostles and continued right down through the history of the New Testament Church. It is stated by them: "To baptize infants is the command of God through all ages. Those who fail to do this must recognize that they live in disobedience to the Lord."

It is not the purpose of this article to go into the ramifications of "Covenant Theology" which in some sections of Christendom is an integral part of their understanding of baptism, rather is attention to be drawn to historical facts concerning the subject.

First of all, let it be said that the word "BAPTIZE" means "to dip" or "to thoroughly immerse." To say that immersion is the mode of baptism is as superfluous as it is to say that dipping is the mode of dipping. This being so, regardless of the subjects, be they infants, children or adults, to speak of them as being baptized demands that they be dipped or thoroughly immersed. For many centuries this was realized and practiced, even by those who regarded infants as suitable subjects.

John Stock in an essay on "THE MODE AND SUBJECTS OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM" states. "All credible historians have unanimously admitted that immersion was the primitive mode of baptism. The celebrated ecclesiastical history of Mosheim (a Paedo-baptist, be it remembered) is very explicit in the account which he gives of the mode of baptizing in the early centuries of the Christian Church." It was by immersion.

The writings of the early Fathers confirm this. The following is taken from "A HISTORY OF BAPTISM FROM THE INSPIRED AND UNINSPIRED WRITINGS" by Isaac Taylor Hinton:

"The term 'Fathers' is applied to eminent personages in ecclesiastical history who lived prior to the sixth century. About fifty individuals are honoured with this title. Five of them - Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp - are alleged to have been contemporary with the apostles and are therefore called Apostolic Fathers. Twenty more lived prior to Christianity becoming a State

religion in the days of Constantine, and the remainder subsequent to that period

Justin Martyr, says that - 'They went with the catechumens to the place where there was water!'

Tertullian - 'There is no difference whether baptism takes place in the sea or in a pond, in the river or the fountain, the lake or the bath, nor between those who were baptized in the Jordan by John, and those who were baptized in the Tiber by Peter.' Again - 'We are immersed three times, fulfilling somewhat more than our Lord has decreed in the Gospel.'

Hermas - 'The water of baptism, into which men go down bound to death, but come up, appointed unto life.'

Barnabas - 'We go down into the water full of sins and pollutions, but come up again bringing forth fruit, having in our heart the fear and hope which is in Jesus by the Spirit.'

Ambrose - 'You were asked, dost thou believe in God Almighty? Thou saidst, I believe; and thus thou wast immersed, that is thou wast buried.'

Augustine - 'After you professed your belief, three times did we submerge your heads in the sacred fountain' ... It is true that the practice of immersing three times prevailed in a very early age; but surely this was no approximation to sprinkling. Tertullian admits that it was doing somewhat more than the Gospel required ... The practice of trine immersion prevailed in the west as well as in the east, till the fourth Council of Toledo, which acting under the advice of Gregory the Great, in order to settle some disputes which had arisen, decreed that henceforth only one immersion should be used in baptism; and from this time the practice of one immersion only, gradually became general through the Western or Latin church."

John Stock in his Essay adds to the evidence:

"Justin Martyr - 'We bring them (converts) to some place where there is water, and they are baptized by the same way of baptism by which we are baptized; for they are washed in water, in the name of God the Father, etc.' Tertullian - 'The persons to be baptized in great simplicity

were let down into the water, and with a few words said were dipped; they were immersed in water.'

The succeeding Fathers, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Ambrose, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Chrysostom whose writings bring us down to about the year 400; all unequivocally testify to the same fact, and prove that primitive baptism was immersion."

The first recorded case of effusion (pouring) as a substitute for immersion occurred about the middle of the third century and concerned one named Novatian who was gravely ill and likely to die. At the time the idea had become prevalent in some circles that baptism was essential to salvation; because of this, Novatian had water poured over him on his bed. However, the man recovered and later became a candidate for the See of Rome, but it was said that, "Novatian came not canonically to his order of priesthood much less was he capable of being chosen bishop, for all the clergy and a great many of the laity were against his being chosen presbyter; because it was not lawful for any one that had been poured over in his bed as he had been, to be admitted to any office of the clergy." (Cornelius in a letter to Fabius, bishop of Antioch). From such a letter it is clearly to be seen that immersion alone was considered to be valid baptism.

To quote Hinton again: "It is as needless as it would be endless, to multiply quotations from the Fathers relating to the uniform practice of immersion, excepting only in case of danger of death ... Therefore baptism of this kind (effusion) was not customary, and was esteemed imperfect, as being what appeared to be received by men labouring under delirium, not willingly, but from fear of death. In addition, since baptism properly signifies immersion, a pouring of this sort could hardly be called baptism. Wherefore clinics (for thus were they called who had received baptism of this sort) were forbidden to be promoted to the rank of tt presbytery by the twelfth canon of the Council of Neo-Caesarea ... All the exceptions to immersion which are to be found, are upon the principle of danger of death, or other absolute necessity, and do therefore but confirm the rule ... The sole reason why the Fathers 'poured about' individuals on sick beds was that they fully believed baptism to be essential to salvation; those who follow their practice certainly encourage the belief from which that practice arose. The Scriptures contain no intimation that either of the

ordinances (Baptism or the Lord's Supper - these words put in by the writer) is to be introduced to the chamber of sickness or death. Each is a public commemorative act not a passport to heaven."

In his book "BAPTISM AND THE BAPTIST" George Duncan D.D. gives the testimony of ten Ecclesiastical Historians:

Pressensie - 'In the apostolic age it was not administered to infants. We cannot quote any positive fact in the New Testament that proves infant baptism.'

De Wette - 'In the times of the apostles, children were not baptized.'

Dr. W. Cunningham - 'Adult baptism then, exhibits the ordinance as it is usually brought before us, as it is directly and formally spoken about in the New Testament.'

Bishop Burnett - 'There is no express precept or rule given in the New Testament for the baptism of infants.'

Dr. Wall - 'Among all the persons that are recorded as baptized by the apostles, there is no express mention of any infant.'

Dr. Bunsen - 'The Reformation accepted paedo-baptism although its leaders were more or less aware that it was neither Scriptural nor Apostolic.'

Dr. Jacobi- 'Infant baptism was established neither by Christ nor His Apostles.'

Dr. Neander - 'Baptism at first was administered only to adults.'

Dr. Lingard (a most learned Roman Catholic historian) - 'Infant baptism is not taught in the Scriptures, and can only be learned from tradition.'

Dr. Lange - 'Would the Protestant Church fulfil and attain to its final destiny, the baptism of new-born children must be abolished ... it cannot on any point of view be justified by the Holy Scriptures.'

Having given this list, Duncan points out: "All these authors are themselves Paedo-baptists there is not one Baptist among them, yet truth constrains them to admit that paedo-baptism does not belong to the Apostolic age."

In the very early third century, when the idea of baptism being essential to salvation was becoming more and more prevalent, a

wealthy lady by the name of Quintilla wrote to Tertullian of Carthage concerning the baptism of her child (not an infant). This was the first request known to history for child baptism, and Tertullian did not view it favourably.

Origen, however, was beginning to argue on behalf of child baptism. "He (Origen) was the first as far as history tells us who so argued." (Duncan). We further quote Duncan: "Cyprian (200-258) was written to by Fidus, an African Bishop, concerning the age at which infants ought to be baptized, and the former summoned a council of sixty-six bishops, and these gave it as their opinion that the child ought to be baptized as soon as possible after birth or on the eighth day. This answer to Fidus is the first written defence of infant baptism, and it was written by Cyprian the founder of prelacy and many other of the follies and superstitions of Rome. But even then the practice was confined to Africa, the darkest and most benighted part of Christendom. The Roman and Greek churches knew nothing of it, though it soon spread, through the great influence of Cyprian ... We are now, however, fairly face to face with the practice, and we may expect to see it increase during the fourth and following centuries, though for a time the increase was gradual ... The great Fathers of this age were not themselves baptized till they were believers, though they were the children of at least one Christian parent.

Gregory of Nazianzen was not baptized until nearly the age of 30 years.

Bazil the Great 20 years.

Ephrem deacon of Edessa 18 Years.

Nectarius was baptized only when he was elected to succeed Gregory as bishop of Constantinople.

Chrysostom baptized at the age of 28 years.

Ambrosius of Milan 34 years.

Augustine had long reached man's estate before he was baptized.

Jerome 31 years of age.

These facts ought to impress deeply all Paedo-baptists."

To return to the mode of baptism, it has already been pointed out that effusion was only carried out in cases of sickness and then not generally looked upon as valid.

Dr. Wall states: "France seems to have been the first country in the world where baptism by effusion was used ordinarily to persons of health."

John Stock says: "Pouring was not tolerated in the church of Rome until the eighth century; while immersion still continued to be the established law of the church. It was not until the sixteenth century that pouring was generally adopted.

The English church retained the ancient mode of baptism longer than those on the continent."

Sprinkling did not prevail to any extent until the latter half of the sixteenth century. Infants were always immersed in large fonts.

Edward VI was immersed as an infant. Queen Elizabeth daughter of Henry VIII also in the first half of that century was dipped. Indeed the Book of Common Prayer reads, that after the naming of the child the minister "shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily saying, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

It is therefore evident from the Prayer Book that the English Reformers, although Paedo-baptist, did recognize that immersion was the only valid prescription. The Greek Orthodox Church still baptize their infants in this way as do some other sections of Christendom who hold to this dogma. However, in England, by the year 1600 immersion was almost entirely abandoned. James 1. from Scotland was the successor to Elizabeth and he had been initiated into sprinkling by the Scottish Divines, and he favoured its practice in England.

Hinton states: "During the Protectorate, when Presbyterianism was in the ascendant, the Assembly of Divines debated the manner in which baptism should be directed in their formula, and decided by a vote of twenty-five to twenty-four, that sprinkling alone should be

mentioned, without reference to immersion. This decision however, had nothing to do with the ritual of the episcopal church, which at the Restoration again became the national church and which still retains the DIRECTION for dipping and the PRACTICE of sprinkling ... In this country however, sprinkling was never used in ordinary cases till after the Reformation."

Isaac Taylor Hinton concludes by saying: "Can any historical evidence be more complete respecting the time and the causes of the introduction and of the innovation of sprinkling? May I respectfully ask the Paedo-baptist who reads this volume (Episcopalian Presbyterian, Congregationalist or Methodist): 1. Whether he has not been kept in ignorance of these facts? 2. Whether those clergy who withhold these facts from their flocks do not take upon themselves an undue and dangerous responsibility? 3. Whether he will have independence enough to take any adequate means to ascertain if these statements can be denied? And finally, whether, if they cannot be gainsaid, he will remain UNBAPTIZED; and in a state of disobedience to the King of Kings?"

John Stock finishes in similar vein: "The rite of baptism is not a moral precept, arising out of the natural fitness of things, or the adaptation of which to our condition can be ascertained by us independently of the command of God; it is a ceremony which derives its origin and authority exclusively from the command of Christ; and while that command remains unrepealed we have no power or right to modify any of its details. And therefore until Paedo-baptists can produce us in proof that the command of Christ to immerse believers in water upon a profession of their faith! is altered or repealed, evidence as good and weighty, as we can show that Christ gave and the Apostles obeyed that command, we can never consent to deviate in the slightest particular from the law as we find it in the New Testament. Where are we told that Christ has altered His own Divine Law by substituting effusion or sprinkling for immersion? We ask for proof, that the same power which GAVE has ALTERED the law? Christ alone can change His own institutions.

The authority of the Church and of her ministers, is not LEGISLATIVE but EXECUTIVE; it is our province to enforce and to practice the laws of Christ's kingdom as we find them in the New Testament; but to

make new laws, or to add to, take from, or modify in any way those already existing we have no authority whatever."

This information alerts us as to the inaccuracy of those who claim that infant baptism, effusion, and sprinkling, were the recognized practices of the Church following the Apostles.

If these be the facts of history, what saith the Scriptures concerning these matters? Articles following will deal with this.

W. H. Molland

"Buried" in thy grave Lord Jesus,
I believe what God has said;
Faith, His judgement acquiescing,
"Reckons" now that I am dead.

Death and judgement are behind me,
Grace and glory are before –
All the billows rolled o'er Jesus,
There exhausted all their power.

"Firstfruits of the resurrection,"
He is risen from the tomb;
Now I stand in new creation,
Free, because beyond my doom.

Jesus died, and I died with Him,
"Buried" in His grave I lie,
One with Him in resurrection,
"Seated" now in Him on high.

I await the full redemption,
When the risen One shall come,
And my mortal body changéd,
Shall be **"fashioned"** like His own.

WORSHIP

Sermon (abridged) preached by the Minister at our Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 12th November 1987.

The reading was taken from 1 Chronicles 16 verses 7-36.

This Psalm is to be viewed as an act of corporate worship - a gathered company being led in worship by the Psalmist. I am speaking on this subject because I feel that it is so easy to lose sight of that which is the most important factor in a Christian's life. Theologically, worship is divided into two forms termed, General and Specific.

By General is meant that there is no area of life in which the adoration and worship of God is not to be before us. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10:31). Viewing creation around us, contemplating the faithfulness of the Creator, as with regularity the seasons come and go, yea, all things should call forth wonder in our hearts and cause us to lift up our souls in worship. Paul writing to the saints at Rome stated in chapter 12 of his epistle, verse 1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (or spiritual worship). Considering the manifold mercies of God toward us, it is only reasonable that we yield all our faculties and powers to HIM. This is spiritual worship. It is, however, individual, pertaining to the attitude of heart of a private person in a general and overall sense.

That which I am more concerned about for our instruction at this church meeting is PUBLIC WORSHIP - CORPORATE WORSHIP. Throughout the Scriptures there has always been a focal point for public worship. The Patriarchs would build an altar and to that point the family would assemble for worship. When God called together a company of people for Himself, He ordained a place for meeting - the Tabernacle, later the Temple, later still, the Synagogues, and from thence the New Testament Churches.

All local companies of believers in the New Testament had their focal point where they assembled, either in a house, or a hired hall, and later as the Church developed, special buildings built for the purpose

of gathering. The Spirit of God warns Christians not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. It was essential that they gathered as a body. When did they meet? Certainly every Lord's Day. It was the custom of Christ to be in the synagogue on the Sabbath Day. From 1 Cor. 16:1-2, and other Scriptures, it is obvious that the saints always came together on the first day of the week. There is little doubt but that they would assemble on other occasions also. But certainly every Lord's Day. Why did they come? What was the prime object of their coming together? Why did God ordain these public assemblies? It was for worship - specific corporate worship: the local body of believers gathered as one, with their Head, to worship God.

What takes place at such a gathering? All that God has prescribed in His Word, and anything which is not found in His Word must be strictly forbidden. What then is prescribed as being parts of, and essential to, corporate worship?

1. The reading and expounding of Holy Scripture.
2. Prayer, Confession, and Thanksgiving.
3. The Singing of Hymns and Psalms unto the Lord.
4. The observance of the Sacraments.

Having said this I must add, it is sadly possible to have our focal point for meeting, be regular in our attendance, and go through the God ordained parts of worship, yet, never really worship God. This, Beloved, concerns me, and I feel that it should exercise us all. Do we all really prepare ourselves for the privilege of meeting with God? To His Old Testament people He said: "And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory." (Ex.29:43). There at the appointed place. "I will meet with thee."

Who do we come to meet? "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords: who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; which no man hath seen, nor can see ... the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God."

I am increasingly impressed at the lofty concept which Scripture presents of Corporate Worship. When God's people assemble for

worship they enter the place where God IS in very truth, for He dwells among His people. When we assemble, we are face to face with none, other than God Himself. This is the OBJECT of worship, to meet with God. If we were fully conscious of this truth what dignity, what reverence would mark our assemblings. There would be a hush and an awesome quietness, every heart would exclaim, as did Jacob at Bethel: "How dreadful is this place (not dreadful in the sense that it produces terror, but that which inspires awe or solemn wonder) it is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of Heaven."

It is for this reason that every member should avoid unnecessary noise or whispering in the House of God. "My house shall be sanctified by my glory," said the Almighty. We need to face this issue squarely. What is the chief object of our coming together? Is it to hear the Word preached? Is it to pray? Is it to sing hymns of praise? Is it to observe the sacraments? Is it for Christian fellowship? Yes, we say, for all these things; and this is right. But this is not the end. They are but the means to an end. THE END IS TO GLORIFY GOD. If we simply come to hear the preaching, sing a few hymns, observe the Lord's Supper, and have fellowship, then we have missed the whole purpose of corporate assembly, for it is to meet with God.

The flouting of God's mandate pertaining to women's head-covering is largely due to the fact that the true meaning of worship has been lost. People have lost sight of the fact that to meet with God face to face, to sanctify His courts, to worship and glorify Him, is the prime object of coming together. If this was realised there would be no trifling with His Word pertaining to the manner in which the woman is to demonstrate the Church as being in submission to her Head (Christ).

"My house shall be sanctified by MY glory" - set aside for the glory of God. Christ is supreme, not the Church. He is the one to be considered, not us. He is Head, and we are but members, and we are to submit to Him in all reverence and Godly fear. How tolerant we should be in this to Christians outside of the membership, I am not at all sure. Is this church at North Road, really set to glorify God and to extol Christ, or is it to be accommodating to rebellious defiant Christians who just will not conform to God's Word? This is God's

house; it is not a free for all for the unsanctified. Is it not the glory of God which must be our chief concern?

When we sit under the preaching, we must lose sight of one another; we must lose sight of the preacher; we must sit as did those spoken of in Acts Chapter 10 verse, 33: "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." It was not Peter they wanted to hear.

In awe should we listen, for God is speaking through His Word. When we sing, we should not be caught up with the tune, but intelligently take the words in a spiritual sense to ourselves, and using them, consciously to address our God. At the Lord's table it is the once crucified, now risen and glorified Saviour around whom we gather. In the Song of Solomon, He says to His Bride: "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice." Our heavenly Bridegroom encourages us to look with open face (by faith) and behold His glory - to engage in REAL communion. Do we not know how easy it is to be like Israel of old, of whom Isaiah wrote, and our Lord refers to it in Matthew chapter 15:8: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips but their heart is far from me."

Our worship must be in spirit and truth. It must be in the beauty of holiness, not in a careless manner, not in a way or in a place where many flagrantly abandon parts of the Divine mandate. No! "Be ye holy for I am holy," saith the Lord. "You cannot worship me, and ignore my pattern and standards for worship. Holiness becomes my house." Herein lies the beauty of holiness; that beauty which fears His glorious and holy name, and approaches Him. with reverence, and that Godly fear that sees all is done decently and in order, that flows spontaneously from the heart, though the breathings be simple, yet they are sincere. Further to this, though worship is a holy exercise and ever to be in a reverent spirit, yet is it joyful. Not that which the Charismatics call joy, rather a joy which is deep and marked by reverence and sobriety.

God's people are to enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. It is also true that there is to be confession and humiliation, yet, even in this the note of joy is not absent, for our God

is a God of mercy and with Him there is forgiveness. He is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Let us then like the Psalmist, thirst for His presence, saying: "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." It is such experiences which give us a very foretaste of Heaven.

One concluding thought. Public worship is that in which all UNITE. This is no sanction for that which some sections of Christendom claim for open worship, with any and everyone taking part. No! The local church is a gathered company of individual believers who unite as one. They sing together the Hymns and Psalms, attend upon the same Word, enter into the Prayers as led by the Minister ordained of God and called amongst them, but in it all, they personally identify. They do not passively listen and follow as isolated individuals, for this is specific corporate worship. It is the functioning of ONE BODY, and God has ordained the means whereby the EVIDENCE of this unity be expressed, and that is by the AMEN of every member at the close of Prayer and Sermon. Not an Amen in the heart, not the inaudible whisper, but a full chorus audible AMEN from all - male and female - which sets the seal of corporate worship, for it means we are all in agreement, all in accord, and what has been said is the voice of us all.

One is in no way advocating the nonsensical fervour of Pentecostalism where from the pew is heard a constant groaning of "Jesus," "Jesus," and the like. What does that mean? Where is the Biblical sanction for that? No! We carefully listen and follow as a brother leads in worship and prayer, then all the people say, AMEN. This is the Scriptural order.

If worship is true, if worship is of a Godly order, if it be in the beauty of holiness, and if we fully understand what corporate worship is, then, all the assembled people of God WILL say, AMEN. Brethren and sisters, if you don't learn to say it on earth, be assured of this it is one of the FIRST things which you will have to say in heaven. The glad Amen will be upon the lips of the Church forever and ever, in glory. Read the Book of the Revelation. That of which we are speaking is the language of heaven. Why be so reluctant to use it on earth? It is wrong Beloved, very wrong. The AMEN is the very climax of worship.

The reluctance to say Amen at the close of sermons and prayers was creeping into Non-Conformist worship early in the nineteenth

century, and although some godly ministers were very vocal concerning this matter, yet this guilty silence in the pew gradually increased. Today it is a sore evil in Conservative Evangelical circles. It would appear that in order to avoid the stupidity of the meaningless fervour of Pentecostalism the true people of God have become mute, and it is a serious matter. Let us not talk of others who are disobedient to the mandate of Scripture in other areas, if we ourselves are content in disobeying in this way, for such a stance is hypocritical.

Tertullian, one of the early Church Fathers said: "The Spirit of adoption that enableth a person to say, ABBA FATHER will also teach that person how to pronounce AMEN." It should be a spontaneous chorus as in the days of Moses, David, Nehemiah, the Apostle Paul, and many others.

I do trust that all will now see the great importance of this matter of the UNITED AMEN. May the Lord bless His Word giving us, grace to accept it, and from henceforth practice it, ever helping us in our corporate worship for His glory. AMEN!

L. W. Gee

"The Church of Christ is not only His representative body on earth, it is also the temple of Divine service, continuing and perfecting the worship of the past. . . It embraces the means of grace, Prayer, The Word, and The Sacraments. These however, are really one, and their relations to each other AS ONE are of great importance. Both require for their realization the institution of the evangelical ministry.

The worship of the Christian Church as to its object is the revealed Trinity; its form is mediatorial, through the Son incarnate, by the Holy Spirit; its attributes are spirituality, simplicity, purity, and reverent decorum; its seasons are the Lord's Day pre-eminently, and all times of holy assembly."

M. F. Unger

ANNOUNCEMENTS and INFORMATION

Visiting Preachers

Lord's Day	April 17	Mr. M. Watts	Salisbury
	April 24	Mr J. Thackway	Devizes
Thursday	May 5	Mr F. Stanbury	Bow
	June 2	" " "	"
	July 7	" " "	"

On Thursday April 21 Mr. F. Ayoub of the Arabic Evangelical Centre, Wolverhampton, will speak of his work, and Minister at 7 pm.

Preliminary Notice

Saturday 16th July 1988

ANNUAL BIBLE CONVENTION

**Speaker: Mr. K. F. T. Matrunola M.A., B.D.
(Portsmouth)**

Early in the year our brother and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin, moved to Wellingborough to be nearer their family. We miss them in our midst, but wish them every happiness and blessing in their new home and surroundings.

On the 31st January we had the joy of receiving into the membership of the church, Mr. and Mrs. M. O'Brien from Plymouth. We are grateful to the Great Head of the Church for such additions, and pray that His guidance and blessing may ever be their portion.

Lord's Day 7th February saw another Baptism at North Road. Young Mr. Andrew Jukes of the Bideford Town Mission desired to obey the Lord in this ordinance. Our friends at the Mission joined with us, and Pastor J. Evans preached at that Service. This was a very happy occasion. It is a great joy to see young men in these days who are desirous of ordering their steps according to God's Word.

Alterations and improvements are being carried out at the Chapel. This includes the modernizing of the cloakrooms, and also the building of a rest room, which will have kitchen and dining facilities. Whilst this additional accommodation will be of added convenience to the church, this room will also be made available to visitors who may wish to use it for meals and rest on the Lord's Day. It is hoped that friends coming to us will feel quite free to avail themselves of this facility.

EDITORIAL

We live at a time when Christians - generally speaking - are not as attentive to the Word of God as they should be: they hear it, they know its truth, but they do not act upon it. The Holy Spirit saith unto us: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." (Heb.2:1).

Is not this exactly what is happening today? God's people are letting slip large areas of truth. This verse forcefully points out our responsibility in this matter. We are "to give the more earnest heed." This is not good advice; it is a Divine precept. God has commanded us, "to keep His precepts diligently." (Psalm 119:4).

To "give heed" is to apply the mind to the subject in question, to attend to it. Dr. Gouge on this verse says: "The duty here intended is a serious, firm, and fixed settling of the mind upon that which we hear; a bowing and bending of the will to yield unto it; an applying of the heart to it, a placing of the affections upon it, and bringing the whole man into conformity thereunto. Thus it comprises knowledge of the Word, faith therein, obedience thereto, and all other due respects that may any way concern it."

To hear the Word of God and to know the truth is not sufficient, there must be prayerful meditation upon it and personal appropriation. The

need for this is pressing; it is urgent. WHY? "Lest at any time we should let them slip."

There is a dual thought here: Lest we "let slip" the things which we have heard; or, lest we ourselves slip away - Apostatize.

The danger is very real. How easy it is for us to pay "earnest heed" in material matters, yet to "let slip" the spiritual, which is infinitely more important. How common a thing it is to "let slip" out of the mind that which should ever govern us. The fault is our own, it is the result of failing to give "earnest heed." Unless we "keep in memory" (1 Cor.15:2) then we shall "let slip," and ere long "slip away" ourselves.

Adherence to the Word of God, perseverance in the Faith is paramount to the Christian life. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." (John 8:31). "If ye continue in the faith." (Col. 1:23). Many have HEARD and once seemed to have interest, but alas, have "let slip" so much of that which they heard, and in consequence "concerning the faith have made shipwreck." (1 Tim.1:19).

Let us all "therefore ... give the more earnest heed."

A PRAYER OF JOHN CALVIN

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are extremely deaf to those so many holy warnings by which thou continuest to recall us to thyself, and since we ever harden ourselves against those threatenings, by which thou terrifiest us, that thou mayest break or at least correct our hardness; O grant, that we may, though late, yet in time, before final vengeance comes, attend to thy Word and submit ourselves, to thee, and in a teachable spirit undertake thy yoke, that thou mightest receive us into favour, and vouchsafe to us thy paternal kindness, and being at length reconciled to us, thou mightest grant us thy blessing, which thou hast promised to all thy children, who are members of the only begotten Son our Lord. Amen.