

bring them to your heavenly Father. He loves you far more than I can do. Why, Eli, my love compared to his is only a drop of water beside the ocean. You may be sure he'll bring after you far more than you can long for him and this is the meaning of that voice in your heart. It is his Father calling his child. The Good Shepherd seeking his lost lamb. Yes, I can lend you books such as you ask for, and good ones, yet I would much rather you would go right to the fountain head of all love and wisdom. Study the life and words of Jesus, bring your doubts, your sins, your fears to him and his love will soon drive the clouds away. Yes, and if there is any bitterness left in your heart toward your Aunt Minnie, pray to be delivered from that too. For you must freely forgive, my child, as you wish to be freely forgiven. That is one of the first lessons our Lord Jesus taught, and his love has set you free from your sins, your doubts and your fears; you will not find it hard yourself to forgive and love."

Elie pressed her aunt's hand and sat by her a moment in silence. Then she stole softly away while Aunt Minnie, seeing that the young girl wished to be by herself, remained in the little parlor to thank God and to pray for her darling.

Her prayers were soon answered. The young girl's affections were already won for Christ, and even while she pleaded with him to take away her doubts and sins, love opened wide the door, and she found herself in the everlasting arms

(To Be Continued.)

The Worship of a Baptist Church

By A. LINCOLN MOORE, D. D.

A young lady with a plumed hat, fearfully and wonderfully made, towering about to rest upon the beholders; a waist fitted to several inches less than its natural size, and a piece of sheet music in her hands, stands up and opens her mouth and emits a series of noises in strained unnatural tones, trilling, warbling, screaming, and rolling out sounds of inimitable, artificial, unnatural, not one of them expressing an honest emotion of the heart, but simply exhibiting the compass of her voice, which frequently is as metallic as the conch shell for her pronunciation. The careful practiced ear perhaps fails to catch one solitary word she utters, and the reflective listener is reminded of the ancient prediction of a time when "The songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day."

Can such a performance as this be conducive to the solemnity of divine worship? Is God pleased with pride, with vanity, with pretense, with noise? Is it right to take money of the people of God and waste it for such performances? Is it right to consume the time devoted to God's worship in such empty and senseless outcries? Is it not better to lay such things aside, to sing with the spirit and with the understanding, alone, and to sing something which *other people can understand* when they sing it or when they hear it sung?

No truth need be more thoroughly impressed upon the average congregation than that God is in His holy temple. With awe the patriarchs approached the mercy seat and reverently bowed down and worshipped. Reuben prompted the psalmist to sing: "Holiness be in Thy house, O Lord forever more."

How great the honor, that a mortal is permitted to come into the presence of Him whom angels and arch angels delight to worship, and bow with unrestrained confidence before the dread Sovereign of the Universe! While invited to come boldly to the throne of grace, this boldness must not degenerate into irreverence. With holy fear the worshiper must touch the golden sceptre which the King holds forth, saying: "Give me a heart to love and dread Thee."

Spontaneity—In a formal liturgical service this important element is almost, if not altogether, lacking. Wherever forms of expression and prayers framed by other men in other ages are

exclusively used, then, the spontaneous utterance of the heart and the natural outpouring of the soul are precluded. To possess a faculty for the spontaneous expression of religion on terms and of course it is natural. No one can stanch the natural flow of the soul without doing violence to his primal nature, and thereby suffering a great loss. The service of the liturgical churches may possess superior stateliness and beauty, but I contend that very often in such services the people seek in vain for some channel through which their emotions may flow. "To draw Christ into temple to be a place wherein a simple and unassuming cry may never arise to heavenly heights." To use only prescribed forms is to forfeit the gift of tongues and grieve the Holy Spirit.

The service of a Baptist church ought to be so conducted that the worshiper may give frequent and free expression to the emotions of penitence, gratitude, joy and aspiration that surge through the heart.

Our worship should be as natural and spontaneous as the gushing of the fountain, the exhalation of the rose, the carol of the lark. What I mean by the spontaneous element in worship is illustrated by an incident in the life of Henry Ward Beecher. On a certain occasion the great preacher was invited to make the prayer. He accepted the invitation and offered a petition of wonder, awe and beauty. A few days later he received a letter from the chairman of the meeting, requesting a copy of the prayer for publication. His answer was characteristic:

"You request a copy of the prayer offered by me at the Memorial Day exercises. You might as well ask the flowers for their perfume, the sunbeams for their brightness and warmth, the birds for their music, as to ask me for the prayer which arose spontaneously to my lips, ascended skyward, and left me forever. I trust that it reached heaven and was registered by the recording angel; in that case the only copy is on High."

Sincerity—Mere lip service will not suffice. Worship, to be acceptable, must be genuine, sincere. The life of the worshiper will determine the character of worship. Praise and prayer and preaching do not rise above the level of daily living. In true worship, the worship and worshiper must harmonize. Worship is holy, therefore the character of the worshiper must be holy. The psalmist emphasizes this great truth when he asks the question: "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?"

Worship that exhausts itself in mere words and meaningless forms is a hollow mockery. Lip service and religious cant are evident signs of decay, and indicate that calamity of some kind is close at hand. Worldliness may sweep over the church like a flood and carry the members into open ungodliness, or some other way the candlestick will be removed.

It will be a sad day for our American Christianity, and a woeful day for our churches, when worship becomes a thing of mere form and posture, while the heart is far from God. The Almighty looketh upon the heart. Mere lip service will not suffice. True worship must be heart worship. Worship is serious work. Worship is the highest and noblest act of man. Worship is ultimate in the scale of human possibilities, and to be acceptable must be sincere; that is, *sincere*, without wax-like the clear, transparent lens.

When spiritualized there can be no true worship. "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

The spontaneity, solemnity, spontaneity and sincerity for which I plead are all essential, but only as a means to an end. They form the avenue of approach to the holy temple of worship itself, while by a genuine spirituality the worshiper enters into the very holy of holies and finds the mercy seat, and the Shekinah burning there.

True spiritual worship celestializes the face. The divinity within shapes the divinity without. The mightiest chemical agency in the world is divine worship. The worship of God gives a shining face, a luminous personality, an external beatification. First, the worshipful heart, then the shining face. The culture of beauty would begin in the sanctuary. There is no cosmetic, no perfume, no appliance which will adorn the countenance with such radiance as breaks over

it when the joy of God fills the soul and the wisdom of God lights up the understanding.

A spiritual atmosphere should pervade the sanctuary. Every church has its atmosphere which distinguishes it from every other church. Each has its own individuality. One is spiritual and another is worldly. I recently preached in a church so surcharged with spirituality that upon entering the pulpit the influence was electrical, uplifting, inspiring, ecstatic. A spiritual atmosphere acts and reacts upon preacher and audience, stimulating the minister to his best efforts and putting the congregation into a plastic and formative state, the condition best adapted to receive holy and helpful impressions.

In such an atmosphere every soul will be conscious of a gracious uplift, and can say:

"I bent before Thy gracious throne
And asked for peace on suppliant knees,
And peace was given—not peace alone,
But faith sublimed to ecstasy."

As Baptists we do not profess to be a wealthy and fashionable people, but we do claim to be a spiritual people; we profess to give the Uns preponderance over the visible, the spiritual supremacy over the temporal. The congregation whose worship possesses the essentials will realize that there is in the sanctuary a Presence, unseen but real, omnipresent, reading every heart, knowing every desire, cognizant of every need; a Presence that is all loving and anxious to help and comfort and save and sanctify every soul; a Presence that is all powerful, and able to do for men all that His infinite wisdom and eternal love prompts.

"We may not see our Master's face,
We may not hear His voice;
And yet we know that He is here;
We feel it, and rejoice.
There is music in our souls
Set to no mortal key;
There's a Presence in our hearts;
We know that it is He!"

Rejoicing in the conscious presence of Christ, the worshiper can exclaim with John Wesley: "The best of all is God is with us;" and with his gifted brother Charles:

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in Thee I find."

The ideal worship of a Baptist church is simple, solemn, spontaneous, sincere, spiritual—a worship so pure, so true, so heavenly, so divine, "that it only needs the rending of the veil, the removal of a few limitations, the abatement of a few negations, and the addition of the one element of perpetuity to make it altogether fit for the upper and eternal sanctuary."

New York City.

Dear Editor:

In your issue of Oct. 8th, you print Dr. McArthur's article on Improved Services—and you invite us to say in your columns what we think of it.

I approach the matter with reluctance; for a wise proverb says, "You cannot touch pitch without being defiled," and this article of Dr. McArthur's is a regular tar barrel.

The Doctor begins by confounding an *order* of services with a *form* of worship. This confusion is continued throughout, thus making his article contain, for the size of it, an amazing amount of nonsense.

The ordinary services in an evangelical church (not including baptism and the Lord's supper) are prayer, reading of God's Word, and exposition, sermon or exhortation. The whole interspersed with singing.

As to the order which these services should follow. A Baptist church assembled for worship, finds no law of the denomination fixing an arbitrary order of services. Some begin with prayer. Some with singing. It is I think the universal custom to have prayer and reading of the Scriptures, precede the sermon or exhortations. This