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THE SCRIPTURE RULE OF WORSHIP.

That God is to be worshipped is a dictate of nature itself. The most darkened heathens have some notion of a Supreme Being whom it is their interest to please, and to whom they render such a worship as is in harmony with their conception of his character. What the light of nature suggests Revelation enjoins. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."

Whilst all christians are unanimous in the recognition of God's claim to universal worship, there is scarcely anything in which there is a greater divergence of sentiment and practice than just the *mode* of that worship. If an intelligent heathen from the South Seas should make the tour of Protestant Christendom, and as he passes along, should step into the churches where the God of christians is formally worshipped, it would be difficult for him to realize that the same God is the common Object of all their devotions. Seeing one assembly approach Him through a liturgy, another in the exercise of free prayer,—one assembly using exclusively the psalms of inspiration, another using hymns of human composition,—one assembly offering "the sacrifice of praise," exclusively with "the lips giving thanks to his name," another praising Him who is a Spirit, in the use of "things without life giving sound,"—one assembly rising up when called to the mercy seat, another irreverently keeping their seats in the presence of the King Eternal—seeing all this diversity, he would naturally enquire, "Do all these Christian congregations worship the same God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ?"

In view of all this divergence of sentiment and practice, the question naturally arises, Is there any fixed rule of worship? Is there any established Bible principle to determine the worship which God will sanction and accept? If there be so, what is it? This is the question which, in a few remarks, we propose to answer.

In regard to what is allowable in the worship of the Supreme Being there are two theories very diverse in their nature and operation. One is, that anything is allowable that is not positively *forbidden* in the Divine Word. Such a theory cannot stand the test of either scripture or reason. If any rite or ceremony, not positively prohibited, may be admitted into the worship of God, then the way is open for the introduction of the silliest childishness and even the grossest profanity. On such a principle drums and trumpets might be welcomed into the house of God, lighted candles, holy water, incense, crucifixes, images, and other meretricious adornments of the "mother of harlots" might find a place in Protestant