

The Home Mission Journal.

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Rosecroft.

CHAPTER XII.

It was now only six weeks since Elsie had come to the cottage, and already she looked a different girl. The pure air of Berwick, the wholesome fare, always appetizingly prepared, but so different from the rich, highly-spiced dishes that used to be served at her step-father's, the atmosphere of love and sunshine that surrounded her; above all, the environment of a life that had its spring above, had wrought a beautiful change. Her cheeks, once so thin, were growing plump and rosy; the light of love and hope was in her face and, though still a little shy with strangers, she was no longer awkward, brusque and sullen in their company.

She had looked forward with dread to attending church and Sabbath-school for the first time in her life, and only her love of Aunt Diantha kept her from asking to be left at home. If that wise little lady divined her feelings, she forebore to notice them, but quietly took it for granted that her niece was going with her.

"Can you be ready to start for Sunday-school by half-past eight, Elsie, dear?" she had asked.

What could Elsie do but answer, "Yes, Aunt," and go demurely upstairs to put on the dainty suit of white nun's veiling and pretty white hat that her aunt had presented to her. When she was dressed, she could not but acknowledge to herself that it was a very nice looking girl whose troubled eyes looked out at her from the mirror, and the consciousness helped to reassure her a little. If only she had not been out one day before, taking a long tramp with Rags, when Aunt Diantha's Sunday-school class came to call! It would have been enough of an ordeal to meet them at home, but this was worse, to have to make their acquaintance at the church. She hoped Aunt Diantha would not ask her any questions in the class, for though she had carefully looked over the Quarterly and other lesson helps which Miss Hathaway had given her, she felt like a bewildered traveler exploring an unknown region. She was fascinated, interested, yet felt ashamed to confess her ignorance of the Scriptures even to kind Aunt Diantha.

And now, the third day after their arrival, the Sabbath had come round, and all too soon for Elsie, who would have faced physical danger with much more equanimity than that anticipated visit to the church and Sunday-school.

It was as beautiful a Sabbath as ever dawned upon this weary world, and as Elsie walked with her aunt through pleasantly shaded streets, fragrant with the breath of flowers from surrounding gardens, the gentle influences of the day of rest and peace began to steal into her heart. How quiet the little town seemed, how musical was the chiming of church bells upon the balmy air! And Aunt Diantha, in a bluish-gray gown of some soft material, vested with snowy lawn, looked the very personification of peace.

The church was scarcely fifteen minutes' walk from their cottage, and was a capacious, cheerful-looking structure of red brick and granite, ivy-mantled, and standing in a green inclosure. Elsie's heart began to beat tumultuously as they neared it, and she felt a child-like longing to turn and run away. But she suppressed her agitation as usual, except that she turned pale as they entered the gate.

A bevy of bright looking girls who stood chatting near the church ran joyfully to meet Miss Hathaway. They were her Sunday-school scholars, and had been under her charge since they were little children, just promoted from the

infant class.

"Well, my dears, you are very early this morning," she said as she affectionately returned their greeting. Then she presented each of them in turn to Elsie, who could at first hardly find words in reply to their kind greetings. But there was something about them so genuine and warm-hearted as well as courteous, that Elsie soon began to feel more at ease with her future companions and was able to thank them so gracefully for the beautiful surprise they had given her the day of her arrival that they all took a fancy to her.

"They seem very nice girls," thought Elsie. "After all, how could they be anything else, brought up, as you might say by Aunt Diantha?"

There was truth in Elsie's reflection; all the girls showed the affect of their teacher's gentle training, and it was especially noticeable in the case of three, whose home influence had not been of the sort to refine or elevate them. All had early "come into the Kingdom," and were active young Christians, who had learned from their teacher her tactful way of winning souls for the Master. Everywhere they went their helpful influence was felt, and in the home of the three girls specially referred to a blessed change had gradually taken place. In one a father had been reclaimed from a drunkard's life and was now the support and comfort of his family and an active Christian worker, while in the other two cases an atmosphere of vulgar discord and peevish discontent had been transformed to one of sunshine and peace.

The following article on "The Worship of a Baptist Church," by A. Lincoln Moore, D. D. of New York City, may be regarded as a reply to Dr. McArthur's article on "The Ritualism in Baptist Worship," found on our first page in this paper, although it makes no reference to that article. This one being lengthy we will give the balance of it in our next issue. It will pay you to read the whole of it.

The Worship of a Baptist Church

By A. Lincoln Moore, D. D.

Worship, etymologically, is a contraction of the old Saxon noun—"worth ship." Originally the word was applied to a person in recognition of the good qualities or worth which he was supposed to possess. "Then the word came to be in the verbal form, and to worship was to recognize the worth of the person to whom the worship is addressed. To worship God is to recognize in appropriate ways the worth that is in Him."

True worship implies right conceptions of God and right relations to God. God, the object of worship, is a Spirit. Man, the worshiper, is created in the image of God. While man by his body is connected with the earth upon which he lives, and with the animals, of which he is one, he is also spirit of the same kind of being as God. God is the Father of spirits. Man, as a spiritual being, is in a peculiar sense God's Son, and partaker of God's nature. Man, therefore, can know God. Though bounded and conditioned by time, he is an image of the Eternal. Hence man is super-natural, hyper-material. Though he is finite, man has an intuition, necessary and real, of the infinite, and may ascend from nature to nature's God and know and worship Him as Abba, Father.

Man is a constitutional worshiper. The innate sense of God is one of the few relics of Paradise. Man worships instinctively as he breathes. He must worship. This is his business. If man worships not he is a failure as a man. Even as an animal his success is only partial, for the deer is swifter, the elephant stronger, the bee more industrious. He may be a success as a money-gatherer, a fact-collector, a counting-machine, but as a man he is a dismal failure. Man needs no divine command to worship, but does need to have his instinct of worship divinely regulated.

Public worship is a most comprehensive term, including the entire sanctuary service from beginning to end, from the first peal of the organ prelude to the last note of the postlude. Worship in its wider signification takes in all church

conduct, even the attitude of the worshiper, physical, mental, moral, spiritual. The self of the worshiper is part of worship. It is almost sacrilegious for a man with dirty skin, soiled raiment, stunted breath, unguided mind and listless soul to attempt the worship of Almighty God. It is equally reprehensible for the minister to come with weary body and jaded mind to lead the devotions of the people.

To the careful and thoughtful observer there will appear three distinct ideals of public worship, which I may designate respectively the emotional, the aesthetic and the intellectual. In some quarters it is thought that a service of public worship should appeal exclusively to the emotions, and the worship is enjoyed in proportion as the feelings are stirred; in other directions it is thought that the service should be a work of fine art, appealing exclusively to a sense of the beautiful; all things artistic and attractive to eye and ear must be combined—the full tones of the majestic organ, the sweetest and richest solo voices, and the grandest effects of choral music must unite with light softened by richly stained windows and all the glories of ecclesiastical architecture. To the aesthetic worshiper the artistic effects will determine the enjoyment of the service. Among another class, the ideal worship is that in which the intellectual predominates; the sermon is unduly emphasized, the discourse must possess unity, order, movement, point, and, above all things else, appeal to the logical faculties. It is not strange that such a service should be very attractive to men of carefully trained intellects.

The true ideal of worship, however, is found in the harmonious blending of these three elements—the emotional, aesthetic and the intellectual. There is grave danger in emphasizing unduly any one of these elements. Public worship is not exclusively an emotional thing, a work of art, or an intellectual exercise, but a *distinct means of grace*. Rightly conducted, it should appeal to all that there is in man—to heart, soul and mind—awakening slumbering potentialities, developing spiritual glances, and imparting beatific glory; for there is in every truly regenerate heart a divine something which, when fully developed, becomes a transfiguration, a golden mosaic of spiritual splendors. Public worship is the divinely appointed opportunity for men to draw near to God and to receive from God the light and cheer and comfort and peace and joy and beauty which He alone can impart. The great loving heart of the Infinite Father cannot be satisfied unless every soul that comes to His house is fed with the heavenly manna, and goes down from the sanctuary with a transfigured purpose, which may work itself out in a transfigured life.

For the realization of this exalted and exacting ideal, true worship, as opposed to formalism, should be characterized by simplicity, solemnity, spontaneity, sincerity and spirituality.

Simplicity.—There can be no valid objection to the reasonable enrichment of the service by the introduction of responsive readings, antiphonal singing and the congregational "amen." This responsive element which is often entirely lacking in Baptist churches, is not incompatible with simplicity. Indeed, the neglect of it has called down upon our heads well deserved criticism. A gifted writer in the *Andover Review* charges the non-liturgical churches with gradually attenuating public worship until it has reached "a painful, sometimes a ridiculous, extreme of thinness. It is the exception that congregations worship. They listen. Their mental attitude is unchanged from beginning to end. They not only listen to the sermon, the prayer is listened to. There is no general participation in worship. The result is that only those that are attracted to church who are interested in good preaching and who enjoy the singing of a quartette choir."

The less a congregation has to do the less devout it is liable to become. It is tempted to regard the service as a one-man performance, and to sit idly down and play the critic. Very often true worship is blasted by the chill breath of adverse criticism. There is at the present time a desire to make the services of our church more inviting. There is danger, however, of going to extremes. There is a tendency in many Baptist churches to depart from the primitive simplicity of worship as revealed in the New Testament and vigorously maintained by our fathers, and to in-