

# NEW TESTAMENT ESSAYS

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# SOME REFLECTIONS ON WORSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

by

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SEVERAL valuable studies on 'worship' in the New Testament and in the Church have appeared in recent years.<sup>1</sup> In the following discussion, we should like to recapitulate some of the results which have been achieved by these studies, and to emphasize certain points of view which have not always been observed.

## I

The most important New Testament *terms* for the idea of 'worship' taken in its general meaning of regular acts performed in honour of God, are *λατρεία*, *λειτουργία*, and *προσκυνέω*.<sup>2</sup> There are also words like *δουλεύω*, *εὐλάβεια*, *θρησκεία*, *σέβεσθαι*, *εὐσέβεια*, *τιμάω* and others, which do not mean exactly 'worship', but have the more general meaning of 'service', 'religion', 'piety', or 'veneration'.<sup>3</sup> Still others like the verbs *αἰνέω* and *δοξάζω*, 'to praise, honour', have a more limited meaning than 'worship'. Consequently, to illustrate New Testament terminology for the idea of 'worship' it is important primarily to study the occurrence of the terms *λατρεία*, *λειτουργία*, and *προσκυνέω*.

Turning first to *λατρεία* and *λειτουργία*, one is struck by the fact that these terms, frequent in the LXX, occur rather seldom in the New Testament, a fact which is also true of the corresponding verbs, *λατρεύω* and *λειτουργέω*. In the cases where these words are found they often have nothing to do with any worship practised within the New Covenant, but refer to the Jewish temple service.<sup>4</sup> There are also cases where Jewish or Christian devotion in general is called a *λατρεία* or a *λειτουργία*, but here the words have received a broader and more figurative meaning which is not

equivalent to worship in the technical sense of the word.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, *λειτουργία* appears sometimes without special reference to worship or temple service, and keeps instead its original meaning of social ministrations,<sup>6</sup> as is the case when it signifies a financial subvention.<sup>7</sup> So, curiously enough, there remain only a few places where *λατρεία*, *λειτουργία* and their corresponding verbs have the technical meaning of 'worship', as practised by those belonging to the New Covenant.

Even more surprising is the fact that there is but a single passage in the New Testament where any of the terms in question is used for worship practised by the Christian community, and this is Acts 13:2. Here, the prophets and teachers of Antioch are said to have worshipped (*λειτουργέω*) the Lord and fasted, before they sent out Barnabas and Saul on their first mission. The context makes it probable that this worship was mainly prayer. In the other New Testament examples of worship practised within the New Covenant or the New Aeon, the worshippers are not members of the Church on this earth. Instead, the reference is either to Christ in his function as a new, heavenly High Priest (Heb. 8:2, 6), or to the martyrs standing before the throne of God in heaven (Rev. 7:15, 22:3).

As for the verb *προσκυνέω*, which occurs much more frequently in the New Testament than the terms treated above, it is necessary first to eliminate many passages where this word refers to a single act of prostration, a 'salaam'. Even if religious veneration is always involved, it is obvious that an isolated act of this kind cannot be termed worship.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand it is very important to observe that the idea of bodily prostration is always more or less attached to *προσκυνέω*, so that the instances where this verb really means worship also involve doing reverence to the Deity.<sup>9</sup> First among these instances are those where *προσκυνέω* means the initial act of submission, as in I Cor. 14:25 (where a heathen is converted, does reverence to and adores God), or in Rev. 3:9. When this initial act of submission is prolonged into permanent subordination to the Deity, *προσκυνέω* comes to mean adoration or devotion, as for example in Matt. 4:9 f. and Luke 4:7 f. (where Jesus refuses to adore the Devil, saying that only God is to be adored and worshipped). This meaning of *προσκυνέω* is rather common in the New Testament; in Revelation such instances are especially frequent, although there the object of adoration in most

cases is not God or Christ, but the Beast and similar figures. However, these cases do not illustrate the idea of worship in a technical, cultic sense, because they involve only a certain attitude, and not acts regularly performed. Only in connection with the adoration of Jews or proselytes in Jerusalem, or of Samaritans on Mount Gerizim, does *προσκυνέω* have a somewhat cultic meaning (John 4:20, 12:20; Acts 8:27). In the continuation of the first of these passages (John 4:21-4), the verb occurs again, but here true worship is said to be something referring not to Jerusalem, Gerizim or any other holy place, but to Spirit and Truth. However, this does not mean that all external forms of worship are rejected within the New Covenant. Rather, the emphasis here is on the presence of God's Spirit in opposition to any geographical limitation of the service of God; and God's Spirit and Truth may be believed to be present in different forms of worship, in elaborate liturgical service as well as in simple prayer. Therefore this saying of Jesus in conversation with the Samaritan woman should not be given that anti-liturgical meaning which 'purists' commonly have found in it.<sup>10</sup> At the same time it must be recognized that nothing is said in this context about worship in a more technical sense of the word. In fact, nowhere in the New Testament does *προσκυνέω* mean technical worship performed by Christians on this earth. The only passages which allude to a technical worship performed in the sphere of the New Aeon are found in Revelation, where heavenly elders or angels are said to do reverence to God in His celestial temple (Rev. 4:10, 5:14, 7:12, 19:4). But even here *προσκυνέω* does not in itself signify a permanent worship of God, but only instantaneous reaction to His great eschatological deeds; for the elders and angels in question are only said to do reverence to God and the Throne on the occasions when the signs of the last days are revealed. Hence it may be concluded that *προσκυνέω* has certain relations to cultic ideas, but is never used for technical worship performed by members of the Christian Church on this earth.

Thus the New Testament does not use any specific term for Christian worship in the technical sense of the word, the only relevant passage being Acts 13:2, where *λειτουργέω* seems to refer to prayer. Nor is there any elaborate doctrine of worship in the New Testament.

Considering this, one is tempted to ask: Does not 'worship' have any importance for the New Testament authors?

## 2

Terminological circumstances, however, are not decisive, even if they illustrate several interesting points. The *idea of 'worship'* may well be found in the New Testament, even in the absence of any technical expression for it.

The New Testament authors evidently avoided *λατρεία* and the other terms in question mainly because these expressions were connected with the Jewish temple, as is proved by the vocabulary of the Septuagint, and partly also by that of the New Testament itself. In view of the necessity of preventing believers from confusing the Gospel with Jewish temple worship, it was hardly advisable to use terms like *λατρεία*, which inevitably suggested Judaism. Furthermore, in attempting to prevent any confusion with Jewish forms of worship, the New Testament authors in reality also rejected general heathen ideas of worship. To the Jews, technical worship had the meaning of man's bringing sacrifices to God: this was also the view of ancient man in general regarding worship. Accordingly, the Jewish as well as the general human idea of worship is not applicable to the New Testament.<sup>11</sup> In the Areopagus speech, the Apostle emphasized this with the declaration (Acts 17:25): 'God is not worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing.'

But this state of things does not mean that the idea of worship had no importance in the sphere of the New Testament. Rather, the question is one of determining in which sense 'worship' is represented there.<sup>12</sup>

In the New Testament, all emphasis is on *what God does* for man. That excludes any interest in what man, through sacrifices and similar acts, is supposed to do for God (cf. Acts 17:25, quoted above).

Only one kind of sacrifice is required from man in the New Testament, and that is man's offering of his whole person to the service of God, as described in Rom. 12:1: 'Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, which is holy and agreeable to God.' Here the apostle calls it a *logical*, that is, a *spiritual*, worship (*λατρεία*). This is the sort of worship or sacrifice that may be said to be characteristic of the New Testament as a whole. And in this context liturgical terms are frequently used.<sup>13</sup> But here there is no question of sacrifice in the technical sense of the word. The only sacrifice in

the New Testament which may be compared with the Old Testament sacrifices, and which may be regarded as a continuation or rather a fulfilment of them, is the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. 4:25; Eph. 5:2, etc.).<sup>14</sup> Yet the One who performs this sacrifice is God Himself, and the sacrifice of Christ on Golgotha is in no sense a form of worship.

These circumstances show forcefully that in the New Testament all stress is placed on what God does for man in Christ. It is impossible to find here any general instruction as to what man is to do for God in worship.

Nevertheless, according to the New Testament, worship was practised by Jesus, by his Apostles and by the Primitive Church in general. Jesus is said not only to have taken part in the temple and synagogue services (Matt. 26:18 *parr.*; John 2:13, etc., Matt. 4:23, etc.), but also to have instituted specific forms of worship like Baptism and the Eucharist. Similarly his disciples are reported not only to have taken part in the temple and synagogue services (Acts 3:1, 21:26; 9:20, etc.),<sup>15</sup> but also to have celebrated these Sacraments and other holy ceremonies (Acts 2:38, 42, etc.).

How is this to be defended, seeing that the only important thing is not what man does for God, but what God does for man?

In answering this question, it is valuable to regard the matter of worship in the New Testament from two points of view: (a) what God gives to man, and (b) how man is to receive the gifts of God.

(a) The New Testament describes what God has done for the world in Christ, the central point being Christ's death and resurrection. This not only belongs to the past, but is also of decisive importance for the present and for the future. According to sayings of Jesus quoted in the New Testament, and according to the unanimous conviction of the Apostles and the Church, the justification and salvation offered to the world in Christ is communicated to believers by the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. This is so because the New Testament regards the Word that is preached as the kerygma of the One who died and was raised again for the sins of the world (Acts 2:22 *ff.*, etc.), and the Sacraments as means of communion with Him (Rom. 6:5; I Cor. 10:16).<sup>16</sup> So the Word and the Sacraments are indeed considered as holy gifts of God: a prolongation of what He has given in Christ on Golgotha, a manifestation of what He gives

in the Lord who is always present in his community, and an anticipation of what He will give in the world to come.<sup>17</sup>

(b) Now these holy gifts of God cannot be received by man without special arrangements. There must be a human mediator who preaches the Word and administers the Sacraments. And there must be a congregation of people who receive what is offered to them. Such external arrangements are also essential for the worship of the Church.

However, in practice a Christian congregation gathered for worship does not merely receive passively what is conferred on them as believers. There are also *elements of worship* that have a more *active* character, like hymns of praise, confessions, and thanksgivings. In opposition to the principle of 'sacrament', as a symbol of what God is understood to give, theology here often speaks of 'sacrifice'.<sup>18</sup> Can such elements when considered as 'sacrifice' be justified by the New Testament, in view of its quite specific idea of worship as involving only activities of God?

The answer to this question, from the New Testament point of view,<sup>19</sup> is that if in worship the initiative is on God's side, this does not exclude the fact that He expects to be worshipped by angels and men as a *response* to what He does for the world. Certainly this is also characteristic of New Testament ideas of worship. The New Testament often indicates how angels and men show reverence to God and His Son, when they see His wonders. One illustration of this fact is the hymn of the angels in Luke 2:14, which is sung because of the birth of Christ. The same fact may be exemplified further by certain passages in which the verb *προσκυνέω* is the key word. When the disciples saw Jesus entering the boat after having walked on the sea, they showed reverence to him and called him the Son of God (Matt. 14:33). The women who met the Risen Lord fell at his feet and showed reverence to him (Matt. 28:9). In a similar way the twenty-four elders and other beings in the heavenly Temple prostrate themselves before God every time an eschatological sign is revealed to them (Rev. 4:10, etc.). These and similar cases represent a sort of instantaneous veneration and worship of God, involving a pious response to the great wonders that God does for the world in Christ. As we have seen, the worship of the Church is a prolongation of what God has done for the world long ago through Jesus Christ. In addition, however, there must also be a prolongation of the reaction of those who were

happy to see with their own eyes what God did for the world through the appearance of the Son of Man and the Risen Lord. Just as angels and men once were struck with awe when they saw Christ's miracles and experienced the great mercy of God, so all later generations must show that they fear and love God, when they see what He has done for them in Christ, what He still does and will do. There must also be a prolongation of the veneration and worship that Christ received from angels and men when he appeared on this earth, both as Jesus of Nazareth and as the Risen One. And this prolongation is the worship of God practised by the Church, in so far as it consists of such things as hymns, doxologies, confessions and thanksgivings. In the New Testament there is an illustration of this in Eph. 5:15-21.<sup>20</sup>

The fact that Our Lord and his Apostles took part in Jewish worship before any specific worship of the Church had come into existence indicates their anticipation of it. For in doing this, they did not simply adapt themselves to Judaism, but obviously considered Jewish worship to have gained a new import since the coming of the Messiah (Luke 4:21; Acts 13:38-41). Accordingly, even this provisional participation in Jewish worship is actually to be regarded as a response of man to the great deeds of God in Christ.<sup>21</sup>

These, it seems to me, are the principal New Testament reasons why there must be worship in the Church, regarded as the work of God and partly also as a response of man.

## 3

On the other hand it is apparent that within the New Testament period a certain *evolution of conceptions of worship* took place. The teaching of Jesus and Paul is not so advanced in this respect, as is that of the authors of later writings like Hebrews and Revelation, whose conceptions are explicitly 'liturgical'.

However, the question is whether such differences are great enough to justify rejecting the liturgical interests of Hebrews and Revelation, and so to conclude that the development of worship in the Church was not a legitimate one, as many anti-liturgists are inclined to say. In view of this problem it is important to ascertain whether or not certain essential conceptions found in Hebrews and Revelation were represented earlier by Jesus and Paul.

As to Jesus himself and his views on worship, one has first of all to consider the following evidence. The belief so characteristic of

Hebrews and Revelation, that the real temple of God is in heaven and that the earthly temple was a copy of the celestial, was represented already in the Old Testament and in Judaism, e.g. Exod. 26:30; Isa. 6:1-13; Ezek. 40-44; Ecclus. 24:1-12; Wisd. of Sol. 9:8; 1 En. 14:10-25; 2 En. 55:2.<sup>22</sup> Our Lord shared this conviction when He called heaven the throne of God (Matt. 5:34, 23:22), when he spoke of angels serving before God in heaven (Matt. 18:10), when he related the meals he celebrated with his disciples to heavenly meals with the patriarchs (Matt. 8:11 *parr.*), and when he spoke of rebuilding the Temple (Matt. 26:61 *parr.*).<sup>23</sup> Thus the inherited Jewish ideas of a divine liturgy did not disappear from the teaching of Jesus, although he was highly critical of the actual state of things in the Temple of Jerusalem. He also used the symbol of a building, representing the Temple of God erected on this earth, e.g. Matt. 21:42 *parr.*<sup>24</sup> Even the cleansing of the Temple (Matt. 21:12-19 *parr.*) proves that he appreciated this holy place and its liturgy, although it had been made a den of thieves.<sup>25</sup> Also important is the fact that when instituting the Holy Eucharist the Lord treated it as a prefiguration of a meal that he expected to celebrate in the Kingdom of God (Luke 22:16, 18). There is no sufficient ground to deny the authenticity of all these details, even if scholars may reject some of the passages quoted as not being 'genuine'. Accordingly, the liturgical ideas of Our Lord were not so different from those of such later New Testament writings as Hebrews and Revelation.

It is further to be observed that all the four Gospels represent traditions according to which Christ directly authorized worship practised by his disciples. This is obvious from the story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42), and from that of the woman anointing Jesus, told in different forms in Luke 7:36-50 and in Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8. Both traditions have the same purpose: to show that Jesus stressed the importance of worship as well as social work. Formally these traditions are not identical, but appear to be historically related to each other. In the Synoptic Gospels, the woman anointing Jesus is anonymous. According to John, she was none other than Mary, the sister of Martha. The latter fact was not known to Luke, who reproduced both stories without referring them to each other. This complicated state of things proves that old traditions are involved here which were taken over by the evangelists without being coordinated.

Probably the stories in question were included in the Gospel traditions in a situation where the Church discussed the value of liturgy in relation to that of *diakonia*, which is the very point in these stories. Allusions to such an ecclesiastical situation are found in the remarks that Martha was occupied with much *diakonia* (Luke 10:40), and that the good work of the woman who anointed Jesus would be remembered in every place where the Gospel should be preached (Matt. 26:13). This is nothing extraordinary. It certainly often happened during the collection and the formation of the gospel traditions that problems of the Early Church directed attention to what Jesus had said or done in a corresponding situation. Thus, in order to elucidate the problem regarding the value of worship in relation to that of social work, it was helpful to recollect situations in the life of Our Lord where he had given instructive answers to this problem.

In what situation of the Church did this problem become acute? Particularly suggestive is the discussion referred to in Acts 6:1-6. Because of the growth of the community, a certain tension between the ideals of worship or liturgy and social work or *diakonia* became unavoidable. As a result, the functions of the apostolic ministry were divided so that the Twelve kept to liturgy, whereas *diakonia* was handed over to a new *collegium*, that of the Seven. In this, or in a similar situation, the value of liturgy, which the Twelve had chosen, was easily called in question. In such circumstances it was valuable for the Apostles to cite one or two situations in the life of Jesus in which he had given directions with regard to the problem under discussion. Thus the Twelve were able to convince themselves and others that they had chosen the good part, as Mary is said to have done in Luke 10:42.

This does not exclude the possibility that something of the kind recorded in the story of Mary and Martha really took place in the life of Our Lord. It is only the form of the stories that has been influenced by an ecclesiastical situation. As to the possibility of their essential authenticity, considered from a purely historical and not dogmatic point of view, there is no reason to be sceptical. Especially it must be recognized that presumably from the very beginning the stories were told by the Twelve who, without sufficient reason, should not be stamped as falsifiers of traditions developed only a few years after the death of Jesus.

In any case it should be clear that according to traditions which

probably go back to the Apostles, and were taken up at a very early date, Jesus defended the practice of worship alongside the social work that was otherwise so important a part of his teaching.

This, it seems to me, may confirm the testimony of the New Testament that Our Lord himself instituted Baptism and the Eucharist, the principal sacraments of the Church. Even if these liturgical forms were perhaps not instituted exactly in the way described in Matt. 28:16-20 and 26:26-29 *parr.*, there is no sufficient historical reason to justify the anti-liturgical scholars' inclination to disregard these descriptions as cult legends. It is evident from the circumstances referred to above that Jesus was not so unfamiliar with the idea of worship that he could not have instituted sacraments like Baptism and the Eucharist.

Turning now to St. Paul, we must consider the fact that he assigns cosmic importance to the worship of a Christian congregation. Thus in I Cor. 11:3-10 he exhorts men and women, gathered to pray and to preach, to behave in accordance with their different positions in creation. A man taking part in worship must show that he is the glory of God, a woman that she is the glory of man, v. 7, the order being supervised by angels, v. 10. Furthermore it is not to be denied that St. Paul had a profound veneration for the sacraments. He goes as far as to explain the destruction of the children of Israel in the wilderness as the result of their having shown contempt for the sacraments (I Cor. 10:1-11). According to him they had actually participated in Baptism and the Eucharist, though in prefigurative forms. This is evidence for St. Paul's great appreciation of these sacraments. And when he says he had baptized only a few members of the Corinthian congregation (I Cor. 1:14-17), this is not because he had Baptism in contempt, but, quite the opposite, because he did not wish to handle this sacrament in a careless way. St. Paul's high estimation of Baptism is also evident from Rom. 6:3-10, where Christian ethics are directly related to Baptism as the means of connection with the death of Christ. In a similar way the moral life of Christians is related in I Cor. 11:20-34 to the Lord's Supper. No doubt St. Paul found the sacraments so essential that one must call his theology 'liturgical', in a broad sense of the word.

Accordingly, there is every reason to see a continuity between the Jesus of the Gospels and St. Paul on the one hand and writings like Hebrews and Revelation on the other. For the heavenly

worship of God which is described in these later writings is already presupposed by Our Lord and His greatest Apostle, and their comments on worship and the sacraments prove that in this respect they represented a way of thinking which must be called 'liturgical'. So it should be acknowledged that the development of liturgical worship in the Church is, historically, a quite legitimate one, which cannot be dismissed as the result of later Jewish or Hellenistic influences, as has often been attempted by anti-liturgical scholars and laymen.

## 4

Certainly the *forms of worship* cannot possibly have been so rich at the beginning as they were later. In fact, the descriptions in Acts give the impression that these forms of Christian worship were originally *quite simple*. Furthermore it took a long time for them to become more or less fixed. As is proved by St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, a rather free order of service still prevailed in a diaspora community like Corinth, 1 Cor. 14:23-40.

But a *sort of liturgy* was certainly present from the very beginning. This is shown by Acts 2:42, where the believers in Jerusalem are said to have taken part in the instruction of the Apostles, the communion, the breaking of bread and the prayers, the context indicating that provisionally this took place in the Temple. Even if St. Luke had no personal experience of the primitive Jerusalem congregation, it is not probable that this liturgical scenery was his personal invention, for then he should rather have attributed to the primitive community even such details as were characteristic of his environment and of his theology—which he does not do. As long as there are no other documents available referring to the subject, there is nothing to prove that the worship of the primitive Church was essentially other than St. Luke has described it. All *a priori* arguments against the description of Acts, such as the *konsequent* eschatology many think was characteristic of the first community, are indeed quite arbitrary. It is also arbitrary to deny the sacramental character of the breaking of bread alluded to in Acts, even if this activity was not identical with the Holy Eucharist as it appears in later contexts. The members of the Jerusalem congregation broke the bread in communion with the Apostles and in the shadow of the Temple, receiving instruction from the

Apostles and taking part in their prayers which, in Acts 6:2, 4, are described as belonging to a continuous service of the Word of God.<sup>26</sup> It is quite evident that St. Luke represents a tradition according to which the Apostles and the first Christians in Jerusalem from the very beginning took up a liturgical service of God in the Temple. And there is no reason why this should not be true. On the contrary it is very probable that a liturgical service was their way of keeping contact with the Lord and preparing for the salvation of the new Israel that had been created through the resurrection of Christ. Thus it may be concluded that the worship of the first community, though simple, had a liturgical character.

Furthermore, certain *main forms* of service which existed *already* in the church of the *New Testament* may be discerned.<sup>27</sup> These probably were developed in accordance with older Jewish types of worship so that they may have existed even in the environment of Our Lord. (1) Baptism was such a specific form. It may have developed by analogy with lustrations of Jewish priests, Jewish proselyte baptism and purification rites of such revival movements as the community of Qumran and that of John the Baptist.<sup>28</sup> Of course the intimate relation of Christian Baptism to Christ and to the Holy Ghost is something quite new. And in Matt. 28:19 the institution of Christian Baptism doubtless has been described by one who was already acquainted with this fundamental sacrament of the Church. Nevertheless it is evident that from the very beginning, Christian Baptism was practised because Our Lord himself was baptized by John in the river Jordan, a fact which there is no reason to doubt. Thus the Christian sacrament of Baptism has a historical background in Judaism. (2) Another specific form of liturgical service practised by the Early Church was the common meal, to which were attached prayers, lessons and sermons, as indicated for instance by Acts 2:42, 20:7. It cannot be denied that this holy meal was partly a continuation of Our Lord's regular meals with his disciples.<sup>29</sup> These meals, in turn, may be thought to depend on Jewish religious meals, celebrated weekly or daily, such as are known from the Qumran community<sup>30</sup> and from the Pharisaic groups called *ḥaburoth*.<sup>31</sup> At the same time the Christian holy meal was understood as a continuation of Our Lord's last supper to which he had given a new and higher significance by relating it to Passover and sacrifice motifs.<sup>32</sup> In its later development the ceremony was concentrated on this 'eucharistic' motif,

so that it lost its character of a common meal where real food was eaten. St. Paul contributed to the development of such a purely eucharistic ceremony in Corinth (I Cor. 11:20).<sup>33</sup> There are, accordingly, several forms and factors to be considered in the development of the Eucharist. But the whole process may be regarded as an evolution of items which go back to Judaism, to Jesus himself and his apostles. It is not a question of anything quite new, or anything imported from outside. (3) Probably there were also in the Early Church sermon and prayer meetings without any relation to a common meal.<sup>34</sup> This seems to be probable with regard to Acts 1:14, 2:1-41, 3:11-26, 4:23-31, 5:18-25, 42, 13:2 f., 14:23-40. Here the Christians are described as gathered to pray and to listen to the word, without any meal being mentioned. Further, in Acts 6:4 appears an allusion to the fact that the Twelve chose to occupy themselves only with prayer and the 'service of the word', whereas the Seven took over the organization of the common meals. In the Jerusalem community, this 'service of the word' was obviously developed as a counterpart to the Jewish temple horæ and the synagogue worship, although formal differences existed between them; in a place like Corinth, Hellenistic piety may also have exerted its influence.<sup>35</sup> But the most characteristic thing was that this 'service of the word' had a special importance in missionary endeavours,<sup>36</sup> when outsiders were often present, and might sometimes be converted (Acts 2:5-13, 37-41, 3:11, 4:4, 5:25, I Cor. 14:23). The missionary purpose of such prayer meetings did not prevent them from being services of worship,<sup>37</sup> for the community of believers was understood to be present here just as at the common meals. The difference lay in the fact that here outsiders were allowed to participate who probably were not admitted to the holy meals of the elect. On the other hand the service of the word may be seen as intimately related to the common meal, for it may be regarded as a preparation for Baptism and the Eucharist, which were reserved for the believers. In the later main service of the Church, the mass, this preliminary service of the word was actually combined with the eucharistic meal, serving as an introduction to the latter.<sup>38</sup> Thus the mass of the ancient Church consisted of the 'missa catechumenorum', which included a sermon, and at which unbaptized persons could also be present, and the 'missa fidelium', which included the eucharistic meal and was reserved for the baptized. This combina-

tion is only a logical consequence of the fact that in practice the service of the word was really a sort of preparation for the Eucharist, its purpose being the conversion of all people, whereas the Eucharist itself served for the edification of fully fledged believers.

All this shows that the development of the liturgical forms of the Church was on the whole quite natural and legitimate, and that its main factors were already present in the environment of Jesus and his Apostles. Judaism also offers clear analogies to them.<sup>39</sup>

However, although these forms of worship may be called liturgical, and may even be traced partially to Jewish ceremonies, they are not at all 'worship' in the traditional sense of the word. They do not mean that man does anything for God in bringing Him sacrifices or in other service. Rather, the believers only *receive* the gifts of God when they take part in Christian worship. In connection with the service of the word they hear the Word of God preached to them by one who speaks in the name of God. Even in the case of prayer it is not the believers who pray, but the Holy Ghost who prays for them (Rom. 8:15 f.). In connection with the Sacraments which are a continuation of the work of God in Jesus Christ, the believers receive the gifts conferred on them by Christ and his Spirit. Man is passive, God is the only one who acts. A Christian does not baptize himself, but is baptized when he is embodied in the communion of saints which is the Church, the Body of Christ. He is presented with the flesh and blood of the Crucified when he takes part in the Lord's Supper. It is not a question of sacrifice performed by individuals, but of one performed by Christ for his congregation. This fact should always be observed when we speak of worship in the New Testament.

Worship is certainly to be found throughout the New Testament, even in the technical sense of liturgical action. But here it presents that peculiar characteristic: God Himself is the agent behind all worship. Man only receives these gifts of God that so abundantly stream upon him from the Cross and through the Holy Ghost. Here is the great mystery, that even when man thinks he is active in worship, it is God and His Holy Ghost that are working in him (Rom. 8:15 f.; cf. Phil. 2:12b-13a).<sup>40</sup> This is the reason why the Church regards its liturgical traditions as venerable and holy.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> E.g. O. Cullmann, *Urchristentum und Gottesdienst* (1944; 2nd edn., 1950); G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (1945); E. Sjöberg, 'Kirche und Kultus im Neuen Testament', *Ein Buch von der Kirche von schwedischen Theologen*, hrsg. von G. Aulén e.a. (1950), 85-109; W. Hahn *Gottesdienst und Opfer Christi* (1951); G. Dellings, *Der Gottesdienst im Neuen Testament* (1952); H. Schlier, *Die Verkündigung im Gottesdienst der Kirche* (1953); also in: *Die Zeit der Kirche. Exegetische Aufsätze und Vorträge* (1956), 244-64; P. Brunner, 'Zur Lehre vom Gottesdienst der im Namen Jesu versammelten Gemeinde', *Leiturgia*, i (1954), 83-364; E. Lerle, *Die Predigt im Neuen Testament* (1956); C. E. B. Cranfield, 'Divine and Human Action. The Biblical Concept of Worship', *Interpretation*, xii (1958), 387-98.

<sup>2</sup> H. Strathmann, 'λατρεύω', TWNT iv (1942), 58-66; id. and R. Meyer, 'λειτουργέω', *ibid.*, 221-38; J. Horst, *Proskynesis. Zur Anbetung im Urchristentum nach ihrer religionsgeschichtlichen Eigenart* (1932), 172-307.

<sup>3</sup> K. H. Rengstorff, 'δοῦλος', TWNT ii (1935), 268-83; R. Bultmann, 'εὐλαβής', *ibid.*, 749-51; K. L. Schmidt, 'θηρησκεία', *ibid.*, iii (1938), 155-9; cf. Horst (n. 2), 179 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 1:23, 74, 2:37; Acts 7:7; Rom. 9:4; Heb. 8:5, 9:1, 6, 9, 21, 10:2, 11, 13:10.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 4:10; Luke 4:8; John 16:2; Acts 7:42, 24:14, 26:7, 27:23; Rom. 1:9, 25, 12:1; Phil. 3:3; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 9:14, 12:28.

<sup>6</sup> O. Casel, 'Λειτουργία—munus', *Oriens Christ.* iii, 7 (1932), 289-302.

<sup>7</sup> Rom. 15:27; 2 Cor. 9:12; Phil. 2:17, 30. In one of these passages, Phil. 2:17, *λειτουργία* is coupled with *θυσία*, but only in a metaphorical sense, for Paul does not regard the subvention he has received from the Philippians as involving worship of his person.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. 8:2, 9:18, etc.

<sup>9</sup> Horst (n. 2), 311.

<sup>10</sup> Horst (n. 2), 293-307 (306: the *ἐν πνεύματι* of John corresponds to the *ἐν Χριστιῶν* of Paul); R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (1941), 140; Cullmann (n. 1), 82; S. Petri, 'Tillbedjan i ande och sanning. En exegetisk skiss till Joh. 4:19-24', *Svensk exeg. årsb.* 11 (1946), 47-76.

<sup>11</sup> Hahn (n. 1), 27 f.

<sup>12</sup> Cullmann (n. 1), 11, 36, 114; Brunner (n. 1), 104 f.

<sup>13</sup> Hahn (n. 1), 24-9.

<sup>14</sup> Hahn (n. 1), 28.

<sup>15</sup> Hahn (n. 1), 34 f., rightly observes that Jesus and the first Christians did not separate Jewish and 'Christian' worship. But he does not explain how this is to be defended from the general New Testament point of view. An attempt to do this is made here below, p. 200.

<sup>16</sup> Sjöberg (n. 1), 88 f.

<sup>17</sup> The relation of Christian worship to Christ's activity in the past and in the future is emphasized by Cullmann (n. 1), 114 f.; Ph. Menoud, 'La définition du sacrement selon le Nouveau Testament', *Rev. de théol. et de philos.*, N.S. 38 (1950), 138-47; 'Wunder und Sakrament im Neuen Testament', *TZ* 8 (1952), 171-8; its relation to the Lord who is always present in his Church by H.

Riesenfeld, 'Kristen gudstjänst i ljuset av Nya Testamentet', *Svensk exeg. årsb.* 16 (1951), 59 f.

<sup>18</sup> This terminology may be traced back to M. Luther, *De capt. bab.* (1520), W.A. vi, 526, 13-17: 'Non ergo sunt confundenda illa duo, missa et oratio, sacramentum et opus, testamentum et sacrificium. Quia alterum venit a Deo ad nos per ministerium sacerdotis et exigit fidem, alterum procedit a fide nostra ad Deum per sacerdotem et exigit exauditionem. Illud descendit; hoc ascendit.' Cf. id., Ein Sermon von dem neuen Testament, das ist von der heiligen Messe (1520), 24-26, W.A. vi, 367-9; Ph. Melancthon, *Apologia confessionis augustanae* (1531), xxiv, 17-26; and modern theologians mentioned by Brunner (n. 1), 192. Y. Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice, Evangelical and Catholic* (1930), has a similar division on p. 17, but criticizes the individualistic consequences of this theory in Protestant theology on p. 131 f.

<sup>19</sup> Valuable systematic theological observations on the 'sacrifice' or 'respon-sory' elements of worship in Brunner (n. 1), 191-4, 253-67. Cf. Lerle (n. 1), 39 f.; Cranfield (n. 1), 388 f., 391 f.

<sup>20</sup> Schlier (n. 1, 1956), 252-8.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. above, n. 15.

<sup>22</sup> G. Schrenk, 'τὸ ἱερόν', TWNT iii (1938), 239 f.

<sup>23</sup> Sjöberg (n. 1), 87 f.; Schrenk (n. 22), 243 f.

<sup>24</sup> Dellling (n. 1), 25-9.

<sup>25</sup> E. Lohmeyer, *Kultus und Evangelium* (1942), 44-52; T. W. Manson, *The Servant-Messiah. A Study of the Public Ministry of Jesus* (1953), 81-3.

<sup>26</sup> B. Reicke, *Diakonie, Festfreude und Zelos in Verbindung mit der altchristlichen Agapenfeier* (1951), 25-31.

<sup>27</sup> T. W. Manson, *The Church's Ministry* (1948), 56-60.

<sup>28</sup> N. A. Dahl, 'The Origin of Baptism', *Norsk teol. tidsskr.* 56 (1955), 36-52 (with bibliography).

<sup>29</sup> N. Johansson, *Det urkristna nattvardsfirandet* (1944), 104 ff.

<sup>30</sup> K. G. Kuhn, 'Über den ursprünglichen Sinn des Abendmahles und sein Verhältnis zu den Gemeinschaftsmahlen der Sektenschrift', *Ev. Theol.* 10 (1950-51), 508-27 (translated in a revised and enlarged form under the title 'The Lord's Supper and the Communal Meal at Qumran' in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. K. Stendahl (1958), 65-93 [Ed.]).

<sup>31</sup> Dix (n. 1), 50 ff.; other references in Reicke (n. 26), 70.

<sup>32</sup> A. J. B. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament* (1952), 20 f.

<sup>33</sup> Reicke (n. 26), 255.

<sup>34</sup> W. Bauer, *Der Wortgottesdienst der ältesten Christen* (1930), 6-11; 15-64; R. Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (1948-53), 121.

<sup>35</sup> Bauer (n. 34), 11-15; 19 ff.

<sup>36</sup> Cullmann (n. 1), 31.

<sup>37</sup> Hahn (n. 1), 33, 35 f.

<sup>38</sup> Just., *Apol.* I, 67, etc.

<sup>39</sup> Manson (n. 27), 65 f. ('... some fundamental certainties which are the basis of all future developments of doctrine; some central acts of worship out of which will come the immense treasury of the liturgies').

<sup>40</sup> Brunner (n. 1), 188 f.; Cranfield (n. 1), 389.