

the life of his soul from the moment when as infant he cradled at his mother's breast.

“AND WORSHIP HIM THAT LIVETH
FOR EVER AND EVER.”

Prayer and worship are not the same. This is felt at once when we consider the distinction between religion in heaven and religion on earth. Here on earth we are in all sorts of need and misery. We endure a thousand anxieties. We struggle with disappointment and adversity. And every day our life is a concatenation of needs that call for fulfilment. This condition of itself impels us to make prayer and supplication, to invoke help and deliverance, to implore for redemption and the grant of our desires. In religion here on earth prayer, supplication, the invocation of higher help is entirely in place.

This is altogether different in heaven. Undoubtedly in heaven also there is prayer, even much prayer. Christ himself lives to pray for us. But prayer in heaven, on the part of Christ and of the angels and of the blessed, bears an entirely different character from our prayer on earth. “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” can also be prayed above. The Kingdom of glory tarries. The conflict between the power that opposes God and Christ continues. The end is not yet. And therefore it is natural that everything in heaven invokes this end, and prays for the coming of the Kingdom of glory.

It is also plain that in heaven prayer is made in behalf of God's people in the earth. The Scripture teaches this clearly with respect to Christ. That the angels remember us in their supplication is quite certain. And that the blessed themselves unite with Christ and the angels in prayer for the triumph of the Kingdom of God in the earth, can scarcely be taken in question. But though we follow along this line as far as scripture allows, it is self-evident, that neither the angels nor the blessed can join us in the prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our debts, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil." The blessed may pray that they might be clothed upon, but their state is not one of need, misery, lack and want. They are blessed and drink with full draughts from the fountain of bliss. And where we are permitted to look at life in the heavens, as in Revelation, we are told almost nothing else of angels, seraphs and cherubim, and of the blessed, save that they worship. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.

If then there is this difference between religion above and religion on earth, that with us prayer stands in the foreground, and worship in the heavens, it is of utmost importance, that we carefully consider the character of this worship. Prayer is the search after God's nearness in our behalf, that he might be gracious unto us. Worship is the search after God's nearness, in order from our side to bring tribute unto God of praise and honor, thanksgiving and glory. In principle one is the opposite of the other. He who prays

desires something from God. He who worships desires that his soul and his whole being may devote itself to God. He who prays intends that something shall come to us from God. He who worships intends that something from us shall come to God.

That grace operates in worship, is self-evident, but it is another kind of grace. It is grace, that the infinite, almighty and self-sufficient God will accept the magnifying of his name at the hand of the creature. He is so infinitely exalted that the creature can not bring him anything. And though every voice of angel and every tongue of man were to be silent forevermore, the Eternal Being would be in need of nothing, and would remain sufficient unto himself. And herein is grace that the most High God, who is in need of nothing, will take pleasure in the songs of praise of angels and of men, and that he grants unto them the sacred joy of showing forth his praises. All worship, all thanksgiving, every hymn of praise and every tribute of honor rests upon the foundation of this to us impenetrable grace.

This worship and tribute of praise can at the same time serve to make great the name of God before our fellow-creatures, but in worship at least this is not the intended aim. He who sings the praises of God, can do this for the sake of confessing his Holy Name before unbelieving multitudes, and of winning them for God, but worship is an holy utterance of soul, which takes place between our soul and God, and can at most adapt itself to the worship of fellow-believers. In its highest utterance, worship can not be mechanical. Worship only comes to pass when

the soul loses itself in God, when, in adoration it marvels at his virtues and his works, and of itself breaks forth into praises even as the Æolian harp emits its dulcet strains, when the wind plays on its strings.

Examine now the life of your own soul and see, not whether there is more prayer in it than worship, but whether, together with prayer, worship is accorded sufficient room of its own. And then, alas, it must be the honest confession of many, that in the life of prayer, worship constitutes but all too meagre an element. We do not say that most people do not worship also, but we are bold to express the surmise that the blessed joy of worship is but all too little known and sought.

And this should not be so. He who seeks the secret walk, he who desires to be near unto God, should not in prayer be engaged almost exclusively with himself or with his own interests, but when kneeling before God, he should not even lastly be busy with God. The knowledge of God lies in worship, far more than in prayer. He who prays for something, thinks first of all of his own need and want, and he only loses himself in his God to this extent, that with God there is power and might that can come to his help in his need.. He, on the other hand, who worships, loses himself in God, forgets himself, in order to think of God alone, to let himself be illumined by the lustre of God's virtues, and to cause the reflex of God's greatness to be reflected from his own soul, as it mirrors itself in his adoring and spell-bound spirit.

Only when the Kingdom of Glory shall have

been ushered in, shall we, on the new earth and under the new heaven, together with all God's angels, do nothing else. At present, need and want continuously bring prayer to the lips. And yet, woe be to him, woe be to her, who already here, has not some knowledge of that real life, which finds its blessedness in worship.

Let thanksgiving here be the training school. The Reformed Confession takes the whole life of a child of God as one of gratitude, and giving thanks is the beginning and continuance of all worship. O, who would not daily pray for the forgiveness of sins; but it is dreadful when earnest thanksgiving for pardon obtained on Golgotha remains lacking or at least does not fill the soul. So it is with our whole life. There is constant need and want, and the pressure of soul from the depths to call upon God, that he might be gracious unto us. But is there ever a moment in prayer, when there is no occasion as well, to give thanks for grace obtained, and to honor him who gave it?

Giving thanks is not yet perfect worship. It is worship only with respect to what God has done for us. But he who has learned to give thanks, honest, affectionate thanks, comes of himself to this yet far more perfect worship, which has no other desire than to glorify the majesty of God. With the heathen at times there was more worship for idols than is found with us for the Holy One. Is the admonition superfluous that we shall accustom our children from the beginning not only to pray, but also to giving thanks and to worship? There is nothing so effective in bringing the soul near unto God as worship.

**"THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER,
BUT MANY."**

Christ is your King. He has been anointed King not merely over Zion, the mountain of his holiness; not merely King, after the earthly Zion had been profaned, over God's kingdom in the earth. No, Christ is also King over the persons who are subject unto him. Our personal relation to Christ can not be expressed in a single word. It is many-sided. When we think of the guilt of sin, which threatens doom, Christ is our Reconciler. When we seek safety with Christ against the power of sin and of temptation, he is not our Reconciler, but our Redeemer. Or when we look to Christ for direction and guidance in the labyrinth of life, the selfsame Savior is not our Reconciler, not our Redeemer, but our Shepherd, who has gone before us in the way, and has left us an example.

But even this does not exhaust our many-sided relation to our Savior. For that self-same Christ is also our glorified Head with the Father, the Lord before whom our knee must bend, and whom our tongue must confess; and therefore the King who has incorporated us with his people; whose subjects we have become; and in whose palace we shall once be expected. The honorary title of King is even so little accidental, that the great plea on Golgotha is at length fought out under it, and at the bar of Pilate the conflict between the Emperor of Rome and the Anointed One of God concentrated itself in the struggle for the honor of Kingship. As announced to John