

WORSHIP

The Christian's Highest Occupation

Alfred P. Gibbs

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APPENDIX:

DIRECT ADDRESS TO THE LORD Jesus

INTRODUCTION

THE title of this paper may appear strange to those Christians who, from their conversion, have been rightly taught that it is their scriptural privilege to address both the Father and the Son *directly* in worship, praise and prayer. It will therefore come as an unpleasant surprise for such to learn that in certain circles there are Christians who would strongly object to a believer directly addressing the Lord Jesus. Some have gone so far, in their erroneous belief, to remove from their hymnbooks all those songs of worship and praise which are addressed directly to the Son of God!

The writer recently heard of a company of believers where certain brethren were taken to task because they had addressed the Lord Jesus directly. They were solemnly informed that all worship, praise and prayer must be addressed *only* to the Father through the mediation of the Son. Such scriptures as John 4:23 and 16:23 were quoted to support the assertion, as though this represented the entire revelation of the word of God regarding the matter of worship, praise and prayer!

Unfortunately, such an incident is by no means an isolated one.

Periodically, this question is raised at Bible readings and conferences of believers, and there seems to be a little confusion in the minds of some as to this question of *direct address* to the Son of God, in either worship, praise or prayer. In view of this, it will be profitable to look into the matter, and see what the word of God has to say concerning it.

It is well to remember that one of the fundamental principles governing the correct understanding of any text of Scripture is that it must be interpreted in the light of all the other scriptures which refer to the same subject.

This is the meaning of II Peter 1:21-22, which reads:

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

This simply means that no single text of Scripture can be interpreted wholly in the light of itself, but must be understood in the light of *all* that the Divinely inspired word has to say regarding the subject as a whole.

Almost any mistaken theory can be based on an *isolated* text, or even a skillfully arranged *collection* of texts, as the claims of scriptural support by false cults will demonstrate; but no wrong theory can possibly stand up to the test of *all* that the Bible has to say concerning any *doctrine*. Therefore, in discussing any scriptural theme, the *full revelation* of it must be taken into consideration ere a right conclusion can be reached. It has been well said:

“Learned and gifted men can make what is only a human theory look so like a Divine principle that the honest, but unwary person, is led into a snare without being aware of it.”

When we apply this sound principle of interpretation to the subject now under consideration, we shall discover that the Bible gives ample authority for the believer to address both the Father and the Son directly in worship, praise and prayer.

We shall begin our study of this subject by a short consideration of the great truth of

I. The Tri-unity of the Eternal Godhead

The Bible clearly teaches that the Object of the believer’s worship is the triune and eternal Godhead, who is described as: “**Eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen**” (I Timothy 1:17).

The meaning of the term

While the word, “*trinity*,” is not found in the Scriptures, yet the truth of the tri-unity of the Godhead is clearly evident as one opens the pages of the Bible.

The Godhead is revealed as consisting of three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each equal and eternal with the Other, each possessing all the essentials of Deity, as omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and immutability, and each possessing all the essentials of personality, as intelligence, emotions and will.

Yet these Three are One in nature and essence.

Thus there are not three Gods, but one Godhead revealed in three Persons.

“God is a trinity of Persons in a unity of nature.”

This tremendous truth is utterly beyond our finite *comprehension*, but not beyond the *apprehension* of faith, for we implicitly believe what God has been pleased to reveal concerning this fact.

What this tri-unity of the Godhead involves.

The late W. E. Vine wrote: “The word, ‘trinity,’ was used as early as the second century to express conveniently the scriptural doctrine that, in the undivided unity of the Divine nature of the Godhead, there are the personal distinctions of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each possessed of complete and perfect personality.” G. Campbell Morgan puts it thus: “In one essential Godhead there co-exists three Persons, co-substantial, co-equal and co-eternal. This mystery cannot be explained, or defined, because it is beyond the grasp of the finite, and no explanation is given in the inspired word.”

In the fourth century, Athanasius, who so valiantly defended the doctrine of the essential and eternal deity of the Lord Jesus against the attack of Arius, who denied the Deity of Christ, stated his conception of the trinity in this magnificent passage: “We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. There is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit; but the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is all One, the glory equal and the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet there are not three Eternals, but one Eternal. So likewise the Father is Almighty; the Son, Almighty; and the Holy Spirit, Almighty. And yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet there are not three Gods, but one God.”

Some attempted illustrations of the Trinity.

There are no adequate illustrations of the Tri-unity of the Godhead, for it transcends all possible human comprehension and defies all philosophical analysis. Many attempts have been made to illustrate the Trinity, but all fall far short of conveying the actual fact.

Nathaniel Wood, in his excellent book: “*The Secret of the Universe,*” declares that this secret is the tri-unity of the Godhead. He proceeds to demonstrate that this tri-unity is reflected in man himself, who was made in the image of God, and who is composed of spirit, soul and body, yet he is but one individual. Space also is a tri-unity, consisting of length, breadth and height, yet space is but one. Time also falls into this same threefold category, for it consists of past, present and future, yet time is but one thing.

The distinctions in the Godhead.

Scripture generally presents the Father as *purposing*, the Son as *executing* the Divine purpose, and the Holy Spirit as *energizing* and applying this purpose, and making it operative in the experience of the believer.

- The *Father* loved the world, and gave His Son.
- The *Son*, obedient to the Father’s will, gave Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice to accomplish our redemption.
- The *Holy Spirit* convicts man of his need as a sinner, leads him to repentance and faith in the Person and work of the Son of God and, on his trusting in the Lord Jesus, seals him unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).

It has been well said: “All that can be *seen* of God is through the Son, and all that can be *experienced* of God is through the Holy Spirit” (John 1:18; 14:9; 15:26; 16:7-15).

We need ever to keep in mind the fact that there is no jealousy in the eternal Godhead. Each person delights to glorify the Other.

The Bible does not even maintain a fixed order of sequence when mentioning their names. For the purpose of convenience of identification we usually speak of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as: “The first, second and third Persons of the Godhead.”

Scripture, however, varies the order of their names.

- Sometimes the order is: “Father, Son and Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).
- At other times the order is: “Spirit, Father and Son” (John 15:26).
- Then again, the order reads: “Son, Spirit and Father” (Hebrews 9:13-14; Ephesians 2:18).
- Once more, the order is “Son, Father and Holy Spirit” (II Corinthian 13:14).

Let each reader carefully ponder the wonderful revelation of the Father which His beloved Son gave, as recorded in the fifth chapter of John.

Let the full significance of Christ’s own words sink deep into his heart, for it reveals a tremendous truth: “**All men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him**” (John 5:23).

What does this mean? There is only one answer: it means exactly what it says.

The same honor that we give to the Father must be given equally to the Son. In whatever way we honor the Father, then in that same way we are to honor the Son. We shall have occasion to refer more fully to this passage later on. The more a believer contemplates the infinite greatness, majesty, holiness, righteousness, truth, mercy, love and grace of the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the more he will be lost in reverential awe, wonder, praise and worship. It becomes us, therefore, as our thoughts are occupied with such a glorious Being, to prostrate ourselves before Him in humble adoration for all He has revealed Himself to be, and for all He has done in the wondrous work of our redemption.

Each Christian should keep in mind the distinction between the Persons of the Godhead. This will enable him to be spiritually intelligent, not only in his private devotions, but also as he audibly takes part in a gathering of believers for worship or prayer.

Sometimes one hears a believer thanking the Father for dying for him on the cross. This person would never have expressed himself thus if he had been clear in his conception of this distinction of the Persons in the Godhead. Confused thinking must inevitably issue in confused speaking.

While we would not “**make a man an offender for a word**” (Isaiah 29:21), yet we should heed the injunction to “**hold fast the form of sound words**” (II Timothy 1:13).

Sound *doctrine*, when grasped by a sound *mind*, will result in sound *thoughts* which, in turn, will find expression in sound *words* (See II Timothy 1:7, 13; Titus 2:1).

Often the word, “God,” includes in its scope Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their undivided Unity, as Genesis 1:1; Revelation 19:10; 22:9, etc. Sometimes the word has the *Father* particularly in mind, as John 3:16; 4:24; 5:44, etc. At other times it is the *Son of God* who is in view, as Romans 9:5; Hebrews 1:8, etc. At still other times it is the *Spirit* who is emphasized, as Acts 5:4. Let us ever keep in mind the fact that each Person is equally “God,” with all that this term implies.

5. The approach to the Father and the Son

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that the believer, as a member of the family of God (Ephesians 3:15), is to approach *the Father* in worship, praise and prayer *through the mediation* of the Son of God. See John 14:6; 4:23; 14:13; 16:23; I Peter 2:5; Hebrews 10:19-22; Ephesians 2:18, etc.

The same Divine revelation, however, makes it equally clear that the believer may approach the Son of God *directly* in worship, praise and prayer, *without any mediation* whatever. See Luke 24:50-53; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5:9-10; Ephesians 5:19; Acts 7:59-60; 9:5-6; 9:10-17; II Corinthian 12:8-10; Acts 22:10; Revelation 22:20.

Romanism has introduced, amongst other false teachings, the unscriptural theory of the mediation of Mary. They argue that inasmuch as the Father must be approached through the mediation of the Son, therefore the Son must be approached through the mediation of Mary.

The scripture reveals that *there is no mediator* between the believer and his blessed Lord and Saviour. The mediation of the Son has to do with the believer’s relationship with and his approach to “*the Father.*”

Doctrinal truth must be held in proper balance

The truth of God concerning any subject revealed in Scripture, must be held in *full* revelation of God concerning it. We are all naturally creatures of extremes, and are therefore prone to emphasize one aspect of a scriptural truth to the entire exclusion of the other.

This can easily be demonstrated in the twin truths of the sovereignty of God and the free will of man.

Both these truths are clearly revealed in the Bible, yet Christians are sharply divided into two opposing schools of thought regarding the matter, each holding one side of the truth to the entire exclusion of the other!

In regard to the subject we are now considering, we could sum up the Scripture teaching as follows:

- The believer should approach the Father, in worship, praise and prayer, through the mediation of His Son.
- The Bible also reveals that the Son of God may be approached, in worship, praise and prayer, *directly by the believer*.
- Thus the word of God teaches *both* aspects of this truth, and each believer is responsible to be obedient to what God has revealed in His word regarding this matter.

Regarding the true interpretation of Christ's words, as found in John 16:23, "**And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He will give it you;**" I cannot do better than quote Mr. August Van Ryn's comment on this passage:

"The whole argument that, from this passage, prayer and praise should not be addressed to the Lord Jesus falls to the ground for the simple reason that the first word "ask" in that verse does not mean asking in the sense of wanting something to supply one's need, but it means to "inquire," or questioning for the sake of learning something one does not know.

Both A. T. Robertson in his critical notes, and W. E. Vine in his "*Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*" comment on this fact.

"One has only to look at the context of this verse to realize this fact. The Lord is telling His disciples that, in balance, and in the light of the view of His going to leave them for Heaven, they would no longer be asking Him questions as they had been doing all the while He was with them, as they wanted to do at that very moment. See verse 19. Now that the Holy Spirit would come, the time for asking questions from the Lord Jesus had come to an end. Thus this statement has nothing to do with praying in the normal sense of the word."

It simply means that after Christ's departure, the Holy Spirit would be the "*Teacher*," as the Lord Jesus had been while on earth. See John 3:2.

In this paper, however, we are particularly concerned with the matter of the scripturalness of directly addressing the Lord Jesus in worship, praise and prayer. We shall therefore concentrate on this subject.

In reply to the question: "Should the Son of God be addressed directly in worship, praise and prayer?" our answer is a most emphatic, "yes," for the following scriptural reasons:

1. God commands it. Psalm 45:6, 11; Hebrews 1:6-8

There is no doubt whatever of the Messianic character of Psalm 45. It is redolent with Christ and, to make doubly sure that there shall be no misunderstanding as to this fact, it is quoted in the New Testament. Only as we appreciate, in some measure, both the mystery and reality of the eternal Godhead can we understand these words, for here it is God addressing God, the Son: "**But unto the Son He saith: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!**"

No wonder, therefore, that the Divine decree goes forth concerning the Son of God: **“Let all the angels of God worship Him!”**

Nor is this worship to be confined to the angels, for the exhortation of Psalm 45 is also addressed to the “daughter,” a type of the Church, and of each believer in it: **“Hearken, O daughter and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him”** (v. 10).

How fitting therefore, that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which sets forth the infinite superiority and absolute supremacy of the Son of God, is found this Divine command to worship the Son of God, for all He is and for all He has done.

Ultimately, as we know from the Word, universal homage shall be rendered to Him, when every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess that **“Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”** (Philippians 2:9-11).

Well may each Christian, redeemed by **“the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot,”** bow low in adoration before the Son of God and render to Him what God has commanded, the worship of his redeemed spirit! We may therefore state that since the Father has glorified His beloved Son, exalted Him to sit at His own right hand, and distinctly commanded us to worship Him, every Christian who does so is acting in obedience to the direct revelation of God Himself in Holy Scripture.

2. Scripture reveals it

We shall notice six ways in which this is done.

(1) In the vision of Isaiah. Isaiah 6:1-10, cp. John 12:38-41.

Who was this glorious Being, who is described as: **“sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple,”** before Whom the seraphim worshipped and covered their faces as they cried: **“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory”?**

We are not left in any doubt as to the identity of **“the Lord of Hosts,”** for we read in John 12:41: **“These things said Isaiah when he saw His glory and spake of Him.”**

Whose glory did Isaiah see, and of whom did he speak? The context allows but one answer to this question: Isaiah saw the glory of the pre-incarnate Son of God, which glory He had **“before the world was”** (John 17:5).

Shall redeemed Christians on earth deny, to the once crucified, but now glorified Son of God, the worship that Heaven gave Him in Isaiah’s day?

(2) The Theophanies of the Old Testament.

An interesting study, in this connection, are the theophanies of the Old Testament. These theophanies, or appearances of God to men were, in reality, appearances of the pre-incarnate Son of God, for He alone is the visible manifestation of God. See John 1:18.

In some of these appearances He is described as “**the Angel of the LORD,**” and is:

- Directly addressed as Deity,
- Worshipped as God
- Petitioned in prayer.

See Genesis 16:1-13; 21:17-19; 22:11-16; 31:11-13; Exodus 3:2-4; Judges 2:1; 6:12-16; 13:3-22, etc.

It is important to know that all that is predicated of Jehovah in the Old Testament is claimed by Christ in the New Testament. How unspeakably blessed it is for the believer to know that the “JEHOVAH” of the Old Testament is the “JESUS” of the New Testament!

(3) *In the use of the word in the original for “worship.”*

There are two words that are translated “worship” in the New Testament. They are “*proskuneo*,” and “*latreuo*,” (also translated “*serve*”).

Both these words appear in Matthew 4:10.

Each of these words is used to describe the worship of the Father and the worship of the Son.

-There is “*proskuneo*” to the Father, in John 4:23, 24; Revelation 4:10; and there is “*proskuneo*” to the Son in Luke 24:52; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5:14.

- There is “*latreuo*” to the Father in Philippians 3:3; Hebrews 9:14; and there is “*latreuo*” to the Son in Revelation 22:3.

Thus what is rendered to the Father *through* the Son is also rendered *directly* to the Son of God Himself.

(4) *In the use of the title of “The Lord.”*

Mr. W. R. Lewis, of “*The Echoes of Service*,” in his small but excellent pamphlet: “Should the Lord Jesus be addressed in praise and prayer?” points out:

“Of the three hundred five occurrences of the title, ‘the Lord,’ found in Acts to Revelation, considerably more than half, say one hundred ninety-six, refer to the Lord Jesus. He is spoken of as ‘the Lord,’ more than in any other way, and the weight of evidence is in favor of taking ‘the Lord’ in Ephesians 5:19 as referring to Christ, as it evidently does in verse 22 . . . This is not to deny that God is ‘the Lord,’ but in the New Testament, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the title belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.”

We shall notice four things regarding this title.

This title of "The Lord" was Divinely given to Christ.

Peter declared: **"God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ"** (Acts 2:36).

To Cornelius he said: **"The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, (He is Lord of all)."** Acts 10:36.

Paul, by the Spirit affirmed: **"For to this end Christ died and rose and revived that He might be Lord, both of the dead and the living"** (Romans 14:9).

We have previously seen that God has decreed that the whole universe shall ultimately be made to confess that **"Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."**

(b) Salvation is conditioned by calling on the name of the Lord.

Both in Romans 10:9-13 and Acts 2:21, the message is heard: **"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."** Think of the countless number of souls who, in all their sin and need have cried, from the heart:

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O, Lamb of God, I come."

All such have discovered, by joyous experience, that salvation, peace, life, light, liberty, pardon, power, righteousness and acceptance are found only in the Lord Jesus.

(c) The New Testament assemblies were characterized by the fact that the believers, composing these assemblies, called on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mark this carefully.

Paul, in his letter to the assembly at Corinth wrote: **"Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours."**

Here there is no doubt as to the identity of "the Lord." Each believer, in those days, called upon the Lord Jesus Christ. It was their distinguishing characteristic. The heathen called upon the name of their idols, but Christians called upon the One whose they were and whom they served. (Acts 27:23).

Notice, this was not only true of the assembly in Corinth, but it obtained in "every place" where believers met together in assembly fellowship. Thus they spoke directly to the Lord Jesus.

Notice also in II Timothy 2:22. Here Paul urges believers to “follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Here, again, direct address to Christ is indicated. It is interesting to observe that Peter uses a similar phrase in his Epistle and wrote: “**If ye call on the Father**” (I Peter 1:17).

Thus the Christians of his day called on both the name of the Father and on the name of the Son.

(d) *By its use in the institution and observance of the Lord’s Supper.*

The institution of the Lord’s Supper was the subject of a special revelation to Paul from the Lord Himself. See I Corinthians 11:23-34.

In this revelation the purpose of its institution is plainly stated by the Lord Himself.

“This is My body . . . this is My blood . . . This do for a remembrance of Me.”

Thus, at the Lord’s Supper, the Lord directs our attention to Himself in a particular way. The sole object of this ordinance is to remember the One who gave His holy body and shed His precious blood to secure our eternal salvation.

How appropriate then, at such a meeting, that worship and praise be addressed directly to the blessed Son of God, as all the redeemed of all the ages shall do in a coming day (Revelation 5:9-13).

Through the years that have intervened since the institution of the Lord’s Supper, many spiritually gifted and intelligent believers have composed hymns of worship and praise addressed directly to the Lord Jesus. These hymns form no small part in the worship of God’s people as they gather together for the remembrance of their Lord in the breaking of bread. We shall refer, more fully, to this later on. From a study of reliable church history we learn that doctrinal error soon began to manifest itself in the post apostolic church, as Paul had prophesied. See Acts 20:28-32.

Origen (born 185), one of the early “church fathers,” and guilty of propagating much error concerning the Person of Christ, wrongly taught, from John 16:23, that it was improper for Christians to address prayer directly to the Lord Jesus.

Thus this false interpretation had both an early and bad beginning.

(5) *Both apostles and disciples are described as directly addressing the Lord Jesus.*

We shall examine seven of these instances.

(a) *Thomas*, as he saw before him the risen Son of God, with the marks of Calvary still upon Him, cried:

“My Lord and My God!”

(b) *The hundred and twenty disciples*, as they met together to choose an apostle to take the place of Judas, the traitor, prayed: “**Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all, men, show whether of these two Thou hast chosen**” (Acts 1:13-26).

(c) *Stephen*, as he stood before the Council, “**saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,**” and testified to this fact. Filled with malignant hatred they rushed upon him and stoned him. The Divine record states: “**And they stoned Stephen calling upon God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,’ and he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice: ‘Lord, lay not this sin to their charge’**” (Acts 7:55-60).

(d) *Saul, of Tarsus*, arrested by the Son of God on the Damascus highway, inquired: “**Who art Thou, Lord?**” On being told: “**I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest,**” he replied: “**Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?**”

Thus Saul, for the first time (but certainly not the last time!) in his life addressed the Lord Jesus directly. Paul rejoiced in the fact of the Lordship of Christ, and refers to Him many times as “*the Lord.*”

- In I Corinthians 9:1, he speaks of Him as “*our Lord.*”

- In I Corinthians 8:6, he refers to Him in these words: “**To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.**”

- In Philippians 3:8, he gives us his own testimony as to what the Lord Jesus meant to him personally: “**I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.**”

(e) *Ananias* now comes into the picture, as the Lord Jesus gives to him a vision in the which He commissions him to go to Saul. Note, in this account, the naturalness of Ananias’ direct conversation with the Lord (Acts 9:10-19).

(f) *Peter* is next mentioned, and in the vision of the sheet let down from Heaven, he replies to the Lord’s command to “**slay and eat**” by saying, with typical impetuosity: “**Not so, Lord.**” (Acts 10:10-16).

(g) *Paul*, when afflicted with “**the thorn in the flesh,**” addressed his prayer three times to the Lord that this physical disability would be removed from him. Far from removing the thorn, the Lord replied to His servant by saying: “**My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness**” (II Corinthians 12:7-9).

Here, then, are seven instances where the Lord Jesus is directly addressed by His people. It is also most significant that the last prayer of the Bible is addressed to the Saviour.

In reply to His promise: “**Surely, I come quickly,**” comes the prayer: “**Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus**” (Revelation 22:20). Surely each believer can reecho this prayer!

(6) The doxologies of the New Testament indicate the direct addressing of praise to the Lord Jesus.

There are sixteen of these doxologies, or ascriptions of praise found in the New Testament.

Of these, nine are addressed to the Father, or to God. See Galatians 1:5; Romans 11:36; 16:27; Philippians 4:20; Ephesians 3:21; I Timothy 1:17; I Peter 5:11; Jude 25; Revelation 7:12. Two are addressed to the Father and the Son. See Revelation 5:13; 7:10.

The remaining five are rendered to the Son of God Himself. See I Timothy 6:16; II Timothy 3:18; Hebrews 13:21; II Peter 3:18; Revelation 1:6.

While it is true these are couched in the third person, yet so also are the doxologies addressed to the Father.

My good friend and brother in Christ, Mr. August Van Ryn, the well known Bible teacher, believes strongly that both Jude 25 and I Timothy 1:17 should also be included in the doxologies addressed to the Son of God.

If this be correct, then it is not without the deepest spiritual significance that there are *seven* doxologies addressed to the Father, and *seven* addressed to the Son. Thus the Father and the Son share *equal honors* in these ascriptions of praise.

Thus we have abundant authority, from the word of God, for addressing songs of praise directly to the Lord Jesus. Realizing this, spiritual and gifted men and women, led of the Spirit, have written hymns of worship and praise to both the Father and the Son, and these, set to appropriate music, have provided the people of God with the opportunity to sing and make melody in their hearts unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:19).

Let us ever keep in mind the fact that the Lord Jesus is “God,” just as much as the Father is God. In fact, Christ is described as being, “**God over all, blessed for ever**” (Romans 9:5).

John, by the Spirit, testified of the Lord Jesus: “**This is the true God and eternal life**” (I John 5:20).

The Father delights to hear worship and praise directed to His Son, even as His Son delights to hear worship and praise directed to the Father; and the Holy Spirit delights to lead the people of God in such worship and praise to both the Father and the Son.

3. The Father Wills It

In Christ’s own revelation of the Father, as recorded in John 5, He makes the tremendous statement that the Father desires “**that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him**” (John 5:23).

If words mean anything, then the obvious interpretation of our Lord's statement is that it is His Father's will that equal honor is to be accorded to both Father and Son. Whatever honor it may be that is given to the Father, then that honor is equally due to the Son. It therefore follows that, since in our worship we honor the Father by directly addressing to Him our praise, we should also likewise honor the Son by directly addressing to Him our worship and praise and, prayer. This, as we have seen elsewhere, is what the Bible clearly teaches.

4. The Son of God accepts it

We shall think of four things in this connection.

(1) *He accepted it before His incarnation.*

We have already touched on the Theophanies of the Bible, and learned that, as "the Angel of the LORD," He received worship and was petitioned directly in prayer. See Exodus 3:2-6; Jud. 6:12-24; 13:3-21; II Sam. 24:16; Isaiah 6:1-10.

(2) *He accepted it in "the days of His flesh" (Hebrews 5:7).*

This fact can be easily verified by a reading of the four Gospels. We will refer to eight of these instances:

(a) *At His birth.* Matthew 2:11.

(b) *By a leper.* Matthew 8:2.

(c) *By a certain ruler.* Matthew 9:18.

(d) *By the disciples at the calming of the lake.* Matthew 14:33.

(e) *By the Syrophenician woman.* Matthew 15:25. (f) *By the mother of James and John.* Matthew 20:20.

(g) *By the demoniac.* Mark 5:6.

(h) *By the man born blind.* John 9:38.

- It will be recalled that when Cornelius attempted to worship Peter he was rebuked (Acts 10:25-26).

- John was similarly rebuked when he sought to worship an angel (Revelation 19:10; 22:8).

- Our Lord, however, accepted the worship offered Him as His rightful due as the incarnate Son of God.

He quoted to Satan: "**Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve**" (Matthew 4:10). **He then proceeded to receive the worship from men which, as God, was his rightful due.**

If it be argued that only "God" should be worshipped, we agree, and point out that the Lord Jesus Christ is "God," and therefore should be worshipped.

(3) *He accepted it after His resurrection and ascension.*

- (a) *By the women at the sepulcher.* Matthew 28:9.
- (b) *By the disciples in Galilee.* Matthew 28:16-17.
- (c) *By the disciples after the ascension.* Luke 24:50-53.
- (d) *By the decree of God.* Hebrews 1:9.

(4) *He accepts it in Heaven.* Revelation 1:5-6; 5:1-14.

Remember, this was the revelation which John received from the Lord Himself, and which he was commanded to describe in writing (Revelation 1:19).

What a day that shall be when the once crucified, but now glorified Lamb of God, shall be surrounded by His redeemed people and receive their united worship!

With undimmed vision and unsinning hearts they shall exultantly sing: **“Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth!”**

Then, as John beheld this wondrous sight, he heard the voice of many angels around the throne, together with the living creatures and the elders, and tells us their number was **“ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.”** These now all joined with glad accord, and with one heart and voice to sing, with glorious harmony and exquisite melody: **“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and honor and blessing!”**

Then comes the grand consummation of this glorious scene which John describes in verse 13: **“And every creature which is in Heaven, and on earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying: Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!”**

There will be no one in that day to raise his voice in objection to this ascription of praise and worship offered directly to the Son of God! Thus, as it was in the eternal past, is now in the present, and shall be in the eternal future, the Son of God is the Recipient of the direct worship of His people, to the glory of God, the Father.

James G. Deck has well expressed it:

“If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus’ love
Lift our poor hearts this weary world above,
If even here the taste of heavenly springs
So cheers the spirit that the pilgrim sings,

What will the sunshine of His glory prove?
What the unmingled fullness of His love?
What hallelujahs shall His presence raise?
What but one loud eternal burst of praise!”

5. The Holy Spirit leads it

(1) *The Saviour's revelation concerning His Person.*

Mark well the words of the Lord Jesus in this connection, He said, of the Holy Spirit: "When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of (from) Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:13-15).

Thus our Lord Jesus designates the Holy Spirit as His Vicar or Representative on earth.

It is now the Spirit's delight to occupy the believer's heart with the beauties of the Saviour, to guide each Christian into all truth, and to glorify the Son of God as He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. He it is who directs our worship, both to the Father and to the Son.

(2) *The Holy Spirit's work with the believer.*

- He it was that inspired holy men of old, so that what they wrote, under His control, were the very words of God. (II Peter 1:20; II Timothy 3:16-17).
- He it is who enables the believer to confess the Lordship of Christ, for "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Corinthians 12:3).
- He it is who convicts the sinner of his sin, leads him, as a repentant sinner, to put his faith in the Lord Jesus, seals him unto the day of redemption, indwells him and imparts to him a Divine nature, so that the Christian is empowered to live a life to the glory of Christ. See John 16:8-11; Ephesians 1:13; I Corinthians 6:19-20.

Each time a believer's heart is led out in worship, either to the Father or the Son, it is because of the indwelling of this holy and heavenly Guest. Well may our hearts and voices be raised in praise to God for this rich provision for our needs in the gift of the Holy Spirit!

(3) *We are not instructed to directly address the Holy Spirit in worship, praise, or prayer.*

There is no precept or example in the Scriptures for addressing the Holy Spirit, *directly*, in worship or prayer. We are urged to pray *in* the Spirit, that is, as guided by the Spirit, but we are not told to pray to the Holy Spirit.

Our worship is to be *in* the Spirit, but we are not instructed to offer it to the Holy Spirit. See Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 3:3; John 4:23.

Apart from the indwelling Holy Spirit we can neither pray as we ought, or worship as we should. He alone makes this possible to the believer (Romans 8:26-27).

This does not, for one moment, imply that the Holy Spirit is less important, or that He holds a subordinate position to the Father and the Son, for the Bible makes clear that He is equal and eternal with Both.

Let us summarize the teaching of the New Testament as to this.

- The Son of God, for the purpose of obtaining our redemption, became incarnate and voluntarily submitted Himself to a life of absolute dependence upon His Father, obedience to the Scriptures, and the empowerment and guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- So now, likewise, the blessed Holy Spirit, in this dispensation, delights to glorify the Son of God, and to draw forth, from each believer's heart, true worship and praise to both the Father and the Son.

Let us reemphasize what was stated previously: *There is no jealousy in the eternal Godhead.* Therefore when we worship "God," we include in our thought each Person of the Godhead, and bow low in adoration before such a glorious Being, and at love, "so amazing and Divine."

Having seen, from the Scriptures themselves, the fact that the Lord Jesus may be directly addressed in worship, praise and prayer, it will not be surprising to know that:

6. The writings of godly, able and sound teachers and poets endorse it

The present day believer has a goodly heritage in the many excellent expositions written by Spirit-filled, Spirit-taught and Spirit-led teachers, writers and poets, particularly during the past one hundred and fifty years. Their writings are available to all believers. May each believer both appreciate, desire and take full advantage of these gifts of the risen Head to the members of His body, the Church, for their edification and comfort (Ephesians 4:7-16).

(1) The writers.

While we do not, for one moment, base our beliefs upon the writings of men, however godly, gifted and sincere for, as human beings, they are liable to error; yet, insofar as their writings are in accord with the general teachings of the word of God, they are of great profit for the edification of the Lord's people.

How good it is, therefore, to find that this truth of direct address to the Lord Jesus is confirmed in their writings. We think of such writers as:

- J. N. Darby,
- C. H. Macintosh,
- W. E. Vine,
- George Goodman,
- R. C. Chapman,
- W. Kelly,
- F. W. Grant,
- C. A. Coates,

- J. R. Caldwell,
- F. B. Meyer,
- W. Griffith Thomas,
- G. Campbell Morgan,
- C. F. Hogg,
- H. P. Barker,
- C. H. Spurgeon,
- Harold St. John,
- J. G. Bellett,
- George Muller,
- F. R. Havergal,
- J. B. Watson,
- S. Ridout,
- George Soltau,
- H. A. Ironside,
- Erich Sauer,
- A. T. Pierson,
- Sir Robert Anderson.

Space will not permit quotations from their writings, but their books are available to all believers.

(2) *The poets.*

We can certainly praise God for the men and women whom He has raised up, through the years of the Church's history, to express, in choice poetry and fitting music, the appreciation of the hearts of the people of God, both to the Father and to the Son.

As one looks through such hymn books as:

- "*Hymns of Worship and Remembrance,*"
- "*The Believer's Hymnbook,*"
- "*Hymns for the Little Flock,*"
- "*Spiritual Songs,*"
- "*Hymns of Light and Love,*"

He will be impressed with the fact that practically a third of the worship hymns are addressed, wholly or in part, directly to the Lord Jesus, both in worship, praise and prayer. In some cases, both Father and Son are directly addressed in the same hymn.

It will be obvious, to all sensible Christians, that *singing* directly to the Lord Jesus is exactly the same as *speaking* to Him.

Some of the most used hymns at the meeting for the remembrance of the Lord Jesus in the breaking of the bread are addressed to Christ directly. Take, for instance, a few of the following well known hymns and notice to Whom they are addressed:

- *“Thou art the everlasting Word,”*
- *“Lord Jesus Christ, we seek Thy face;”*
- *“Gazing on the Lord in glory;”*
- *“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds’“*
- *“Lamb of God, our souls adore Thee”*
- *“Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour Thou;*
- *“Lord of Glory, we adore Thee;”*
- *“O, blessed Lord, what hast Thou done;”*
- *“O blessed Saviour, is Thy Love;”*
- *“O, Lord, Thy love’s unbounded;”*
- *“O, my Saviour, crucified;”*
- *“Thou life of my life, blessed Jesus;”*
- *“Through Thy precious body broken;”*
- *“Thy name we love, Lord Jesus;”*
- *“What grace, O Lord, and beauty shone;”*
- *“Worthy, worthy, is the Lamb;”*
- *“According to Thy gracious Word;”*
- *“Around Thy table, holy Lord;”*
- *“For the bread and for the wine;”*
- *“Saviour, we remember Thee;”*
- *“Jesus, Lord, we know Thee present;”*
- *“O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head;”*
- *“Lord, we would ne’er forget Thy love;”*
- *“On that same night, Lord Jesus;”*
- *“To Calv’ry, Lord, in spirit now;”*
- *“When I survey the wondrous cross;”*
- *“With Jesus in the midst, we gather;”*
- *“And shall we see Thy face;”*
- *“Here, O our Lord, we see Thee face to face;”*
- *“Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts;”*
- *“‘Tis past, the dark and dreary night;”*
- *“Lord Jesus, Thou, who only art,” etc., etc.*

Were the writers of these beautiful hymns mistaken when they addressed the Lord Jesus directly in their songs of worship and praise?

Would the reader like to see these hymns eliminated from his hymn book?

The answer, of course, is an emphatic negative to both questions. These men and women of God were led by the Spirit of God, through the word of God, to write these magnificent ascriptions of worship and praise to the One who they loved, served and worshipped.

Sometime ago, at the conclusion of a meeting for the remembrance of the Lord in the breaking of bread, a young believer approached a visiting preacher and said:

“You did something this morning I have never seen done before. You directly addressed your worship to the Lord Jesus.”

The preacher inquired: “Have *you* never addressed the Lord Jesus directly?”

On his replying in the negative, the preacher asked: “Did you not sing, a few minutes ago: ‘*O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head,*’ and also: ‘*Saviour, we remember Thee?*’”

“Yes,” replied the young Christian.

“Then who were you addressing in that hymn?” inquired the preacher.

The young man thought a moment and, as the light dawned, he remarked thoughtfully: “Yes, I realize now that I was addressing the Lord Jesus. It never occurred to be before.” The preacher, with a smile, continued: “Of course, there is a difference between *singing* to the Lord Jesus and *speaking* to Him.”

“What is the difference?” inquired the young brother.

The preacher replied: “The difference is the same as that which exists between six and a half dozen!”

7. All Christians should do it

From what we have seen in the holy Scriptures, there can surely be only one logical conclusion, and that is for each believer to take advantage of his God-given privilege and address his worship, praise and prayer directly to the Son of God, as he is led of the Holy Spirit.

In so doing, the believer will bring pleasure

- To the Father, Who delights to hear His Son thus honored;
- To the Holy Spirit, Whose joy it is to glorify the Son of God;
- To the Lord Jesus Himself, Who is “worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing!” (Revelation 5:12).

How good it is, at a meeting convened particularly for worship, to hear spiritually intelligent ascriptions of worship and praise addressed to the Father through His beloved Son; and also to hear the Son of God directly addressed in worship and praise by those who know, love and adore Him!

B. The Importance Of Maintaining Spiritual Balance

In view of what we have been considering, it behooves each Christian to obtain and maintain a spiritually intelligent balance in regard to these scriptural truths relating to the worship of both Father and Son.

1. In relation to the Father

He should ever remember that, by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, he has been made a member of the family of God. Being such, God is now his Father.

How wonderful is this thought!

He has been brought from slavery to sonship, from poverty to plenitude, from filthy rags to royal raiment! No wonder the believer is directed to give “thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1:12).

We read, in the Scriptures, that as the Father:

- (1) He *chose us* in His Son before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4; I Peter 1:2.
- (2) He *gave His Son* to be our Saviour. John 3:16.
- (3) He *has begotten us* as His children. James 1:18; I Peter 1:3; I John 3:1-2.
- (4) He *has blessed us* with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Ephesians 1:3-6.
- (5) He *loves us*. John 16:27.
- (6) He *cares for us*, and supplies all our needs. Matthew 6:25-34; I Peter 5:7; Philippians 4:19.
- (7) He *desires us to worship Him* through His Son, and also to worship and praise His Son directly. John 4:23; Hebrews 1:9.

As the believer meditates upon his privilege of thus being in family relationship with this glorious Being who is revealed as “**The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,**” he will approach the Father, with becoming reverence and godly fear, through the mediation of the Son of His love, by whom He has been pleased to reveal Himself in all His infinite holiness and wondrous grace. (II Corinthian 4:6).

2. In relation to the Son

The Christian should never allow himself to forget the fact that all his blessedness has come to him through God’s beloved Son, whom he now knows as his own personal Saviour, and owns as the supreme Lord of his life. The Bible bears witness to these facts regarding the Son of God:

- (1) *In infinite grace, He became incarnate* in order to become our Redeemer. (II Corinthian 8:9; Hebrews 2:14-15).
- (2) *As the eternal Son of God,* Christ has given a full revelation of the Father, John 1:18; 14:9.
- (3) *In love to guilty sinners,* He willingly offered Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins.

On the cross of Calvary He bore our sins in His own body and, by the shedding of His most precious blood, satisfied all the claims of a holy God against sin and the sinner. By His death and resurrection, He has provided a free, full and eternal salvation for every sinner who will own his need as a lost and guilty sinner, receive Him by faith to be his own personal Saviour, and confess Him as the Lord of his life. Hebrews 9:11-28; 10:5-14; Romans 10:9-10.

(4) *Now ascended and glorified at God's right hand*, He is the believer's great high Priest, ceaseless Intercessor, and Advocate with the Father.

By His present ministry in the presence of God He maintains the work which He began in every Christian's life. Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-25; 7:17-27; I John 2:1.

(5) *As the supreme Lord and Master of His servants*, He commissions each Christian to be a witness for Him, both by the words he says and the life he lives. Matthew 23:8; 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; John 15:27; Mark 5:19-20.

(6) *At His second coming*, He shall raise the bodies of those who died believing on Him, and rapture those Christians who are alive at His coming.

Then, with glorified bodies, like unto their Lord's, the redeemed shall be with and like their Lord forever. I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthian 15:51-58; John 14:1-3; Revelation 22:20-21.

(7) He *may now be approached directly*, by His people, in worship, praise and prayer. Luke 24:52; Revelation 5:9-14.

Let no believer fail in taking advantage of this privilege.

3. In relation to the Holy Spirit

While the believer is not instructed in the Scriptures, either by precept or example, to directly address or worship the Holy Spirit; yet he must ever have before him the fact that it is the Holy Spirit who alone can make spiritual things vital to him in his Christian experience.

Only as the spirit is allowed to energize, lead and control, can the believer live a life well pleasing to the Father and the Son. Concerning the Holy Spirit we are taught from the Word:

(1) He *is equal and eternal with the Father and the Son*. This is seen in the linking of the names of the Trinity, and the prerogatives of each Person.

(2) *By His divine inspiration*, He has made possible the existence of the Holy Scriptures. II Peter 1:21; II Timothy 3:16; John 14:25-26; 16:13.

(3) *Christ's incarnation, life on earth*, and His sacrifice was accomplished through His presence and power. Luke 1:25; 3:22; Hebrews 9:14; Romans 1:4.

(4) He *applies the word of God to the sinner*, producing conviction of sin and leading the repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. John 16:8-11.

(5) He *seals the believer unto the day of redemption*, indwells him and makes him a partaker of the Divine nature. Ephesians 1:13; I Corinthian 6:19-20; II Peter 1:6.

(6) He *is the Christian's supreme Teacher*, and seeks to guide all believers into the truth of the word of God. He delights to take of the things of Christ and to glorify the Son of God in each believer's life. He also empowers the Christian for a life of service to his Lord and Master. John 14:26; 16:13-15; Acts 1:8; 4-8.

(7) He *guides the people of God in their worship, praise and prayer* to both the Father and the Son. John 4:23-24.

How needful, therefore, that each Christian should be susceptible to His leading in this important matter. (Romans 8:26-27).

It is possible for a believer

- To grieve the Spirit by his misconduct (Ephesians 4:25-30),
- To quench Him by disobedience to His leading (I Thessalonians 5:19-20),
- To limit Him by an attitude of unbelief (Psalm 78:41).

It truly becomes every child of God to lift up his heart and voice in praise to God for this holy Vicar of Christ, and to seek to live his life under His control and empowerment. Only in this way can the believer glorify the Father and the Son.

4. The value of this spiritual balance

There are two extremes to be avoided.

- The first consists of concentrating our thoughts on the Person of the Father to the entire exclusion of the Son;
- The other of concentrating our thoughts on the Son of God to the entire exclusion of the Father.

Both Persons are to be worshipped: the Son directly, and the Father through the mediation of the Son as these two hymns, which follow, indicate.

When these twin truths are held in their proper balance, and exercised in the power of the Spirit of God, both the Father and the Son shall be glorified as true, proportionate, spiritual and intelligent worship shall be given to Each.

May it be so in the lives of both writer and reader, for His name's sake!

1. Father, we worship Thee,
Through Thy beloved Son;
And, by the Spirit, now draw near
Before Thy holy throne.

2. We bless Thee Thou art Light,
Righteous and true art Thou;
Holy and Reverend Thy name,
Our hearts before Thee bow.

3. We bless Thee Thou art Love,
How vast that matchless grace,
Whose breadth and length and height and depth
No finite mind can trace!

4. We bless Thee most of all
For Him who Thee unveiled;
Whose precious blood redemption wrought,
And thus Thy heart revealed.

5. For what Thou art, we praise
And worship and adore;
To Father, Son and Spirit be
The glory evermore!

1. “Worthy, incarnate Word, to be adored!
All things were made by Thee and for Thee, O Lord!
Yet Thou didst leave Thy bright throne for earth’s shame,
And, clothed with humanity, our Saviour became!

2. Worthy, O Lamb of God, worthy art Thou!
Low at Thy blessed feet, Lord Jesus, we bow!
For Thou was slain for our sins, blessed Lord;
And Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood!

3. Worthy, Thou risen Lord, with glory crowned!
Now, as our great high Priest, exalted, enthroned;
Gladly we hail Thee and praise Thy great name,
Who art, yesterday, today and ever the same!

4. Worthy, Thou King of kings, worthy to reign!;
When, for Thy blood-bought bride, Thou comest again!
Then, ‘neath Thy sway, shall the earth be restored,
Creation, below, above, shall own Thee as Lord!”

THE END

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