Articles by Frederick Tatford

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Worship (Sept 1962)

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If an illustration were required of the truth of Isa. 55:8, no more striking one could be found than the 4th chapter of John. In the heat of the noontide sun, the Lord Jesus Christ sat upon Jacob's well discussing —not with learned doctors of the law but — with a poor Samaritan harlot the great truth of worship. In a single sentence He swept away the old system altogether, and foretold the imminence of a day when worship should be no longer local but universal, and true worshippers should "worship the Father in spirit and in truth." Moreover, He added the amazing statement that "the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

It may well seem astounding that the omnipotent God should desire anything from us, but the tremendous fact remains that He does long for the worship of His redeemed. The question naturally arises, do we give to Him that portion for which our Lord intimated He so much longed?

What is worship? Often the term is represented almost as a synonym of praise, but praise is rather the lauding of God for His works or deeds. We do well to come before Him with praise, but that is not the whole of worship. Possibly thanksgiving may be suggested as an equivalent, but obviously thanksgiving is merely the expression of gratitude for some gift or favour. Again, worship is not prayer, for in prayer the soul does not give, but is engaged in supplicating or petitioning God for something.

What then is worship? Surely it is that complete occupation with our blessed Lord in which self and surroundings are lost to view, when the soul pours itself out in adoration and whole-hearted devotion. Worship rises above the joy of sins forgiven and of gratitude for blessings and mercies, and centres the thoughts and affections upon a Person—not upon blessings but upon the Blesser. It is as we are lost in contemplation of our adorable Lord, occupied with His intrinsic worth, His glories, attributes and virtues, His untold excellencies, His surpassing beauty, that our souls are ravished and our hearts are bowed at His feet in adoration and worship.