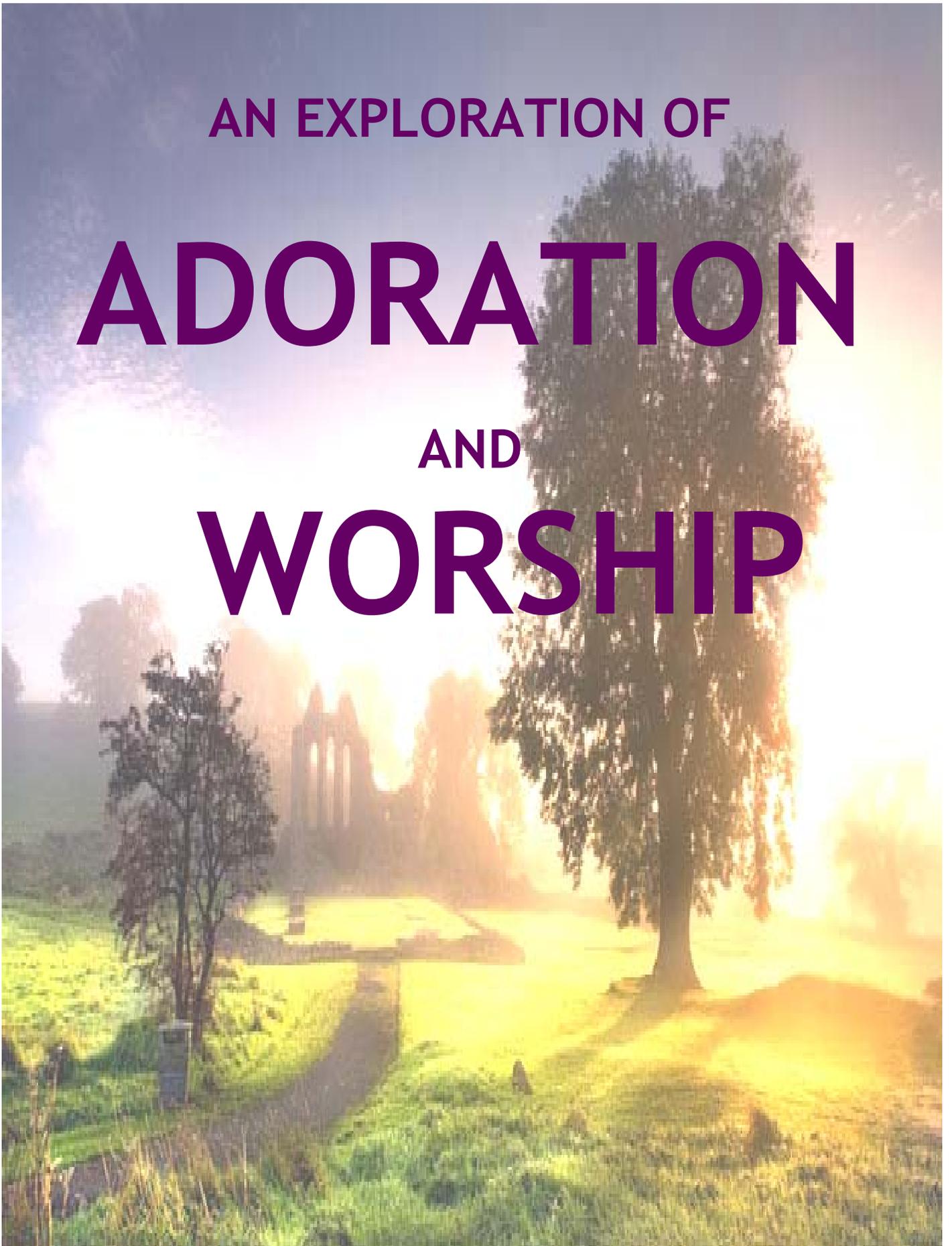


AN EXPLORATION OF

ADORATION

AND

WORSHIP



Adoration and Worship

This booklet is a simple exploration of our approach to God and of our encounter with Him in adoration and personal prayer.

Coming into His presence, the Creator of all, the high and mighty, the one who is perfect in all His ways, we experience His **transcendence**.

As we draw near to Him and experience Him as our Father God, full of love, we are aware of His nearness and the intimacy of our relationship with Him in Christ. He is immediately near to us and so we experience His **imminence**.

In simplicity we examine the ways in which we may encounter Him, communicate with Him and walk with Him.

Our starting point is surely one of awe as we approach God in all His glory. We are weak, but He is mighty. We are sinful, He is perfect. We are finite, He is infinite.

No words are adequate as we take our first step and kneel in silence before Him. His words for us in all our confusion, tiredness and weakness are surely *“Be still and know that I am God”*.

Coming from a world bursting with tension and conflict, we can say in confidence *“You keep Him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon you, because he trusts in You”* (Isaiah 26.3).

Adoration is the highest reverence we can offer. It can only be given to the one true God. We need to be aware of His warning *“You shall have no other gods before me...you shall not make for yourself any idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God am a jealous God...”* (Exodus 20).

God is our creator, our redeemer, our sanctifier. As we were taught centuries ago in the Nicene Creed, He alone should be worshipped and glorified and we must turn away from all idolatry.

Adoration is the recognition that the living worship of God and love for Him is a response to the truth that He first loved us (1 John 4.9-10). The Bible teaches us that, as believers, we are called to offer a sacrifice of praise to God (Hebrews 13.15).

In this booklet we explore the expressions and attitudes of Christians as they quietly contemplate and adore the living God and come into His presence to worship, praise and bring thanksgiving.

The words come from different traditions and ages.

Although rooted in quiet and perhaps silent waiting upon God, our adoration is a radical and dynamic activity. It confirms and affirms the reality of the presence of God in our lives and in the world. In adoration and worship we can experience, first hand, the greatness of God - His infinite love and His mighty power to heal, to save, to comfort and to strengthen.

What shall I do my God to love,
My loving God to praise?
The length, and breadth, and height to prove,
And depth of sovereign grace?

Thy sovereign grace to all extends,
Immense and unconfined;
From age to age it never ends;
It reaches all mankind.

Throughout the world its breadth is known,
Wide as infinity;
So wide it never passed by one,
Or it had passed by me.

Charles Wesley

Our Attitude to God in Adoration

The Bible gives us some indication and the following sentences may help us to understand.

“Put off your shoes from your feet for the place where you stand is holy ground” (Ex 3.5).

“I fell down before the Lord” (Deut. 9.18).

“Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (1 Chronicles 16.29)

“O come let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker” (Ps. 95.6)

“Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His holy hill for the Lord our God is holy” (Ps. 99.9)

“Bless the Lord O my soul and all that is within me bless His holy name” (Ps 103.1)

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory” (Is. 6.3)

“To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and ever. Amen” (Jude 1.25)

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty who was, and is, and is to come” Rev. 4.8)

“I fell at his feet to worship Him” (Rev. 19.10)

“Stand in awe” (Ps. 4.4)

“Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him” (Ps. 33.8)

“O come let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker” (Ps. 95.6)

“My heart stands in awe of your word” (Ps. 119.161)

Transcendent

A God who is mighty

Lord of the cosmos,
Creator of all
Infinite in wisdom, power and authority.
Above all
King of Kings,
Lord of Lords,
Infinite in knowledge and power
Perfect in all Your ways
Ground of our being
The great 'I am'
The 'rock of ages'
The 'ancient of days'
From everlasting to everlasting
Author of life
Revealer of truth
Upholder of justice
Yet full of mercy
Light in the darkness
And in Your radiance
I bow down.
In my weakness and loneliness
I reach out
And Your strong right hand is there.
You are not distant
You are not silent
As you speak to my heart
I am filled with adoration
I am overwhelmed with your glory.
I worship you
With every part of my being,
Soul and strength.

Imminent

A God who is Near

When I come into Your presence, O God,
I consciously move from the tension,
confusion and noise of the world
into stillness, silence, peace.
I turn away from the lies,
the corruption and the pain of a fallen world.

I am overshadowed by Your majesty and Your might.
The purity of Your truth and Your limitless love overwhelm me.
I come before You in utter lowliness, humility and poverty.
In Your presence I am in awe.
I am weak, but You are mighty.
I am broken, but You are perfect.
I am soiled, but You are pure.

In my frail humanity I am not worthy to approach Your throne,
yet in the name of Jesus I come.
You call me by my name.
You knew me in my mother's womb.
You touch me and I am at once made whole.
You breathe upon me and I receive Your Spirit.
As Father, You draw me into Your family.
You would have me be close to You.
With joy You receive my humble cry, 'Abba, Father'.

King of Glory.
I come to You.
I adore You.
I am lost in wonder, love and praise.

The Nature of God

You are holy, Lord, the only God and Your deeds are wonderful.
You are strong, You are great,
You are the most high, You are almighty.
You, Holy Father, are King of heaven and earth.
You are Three and One, Lord God, all good.
You are good, all good, supreme good, Lord God, living and true.
You are love, You are wisdom.
You are humility, You are endurance.
You are rest, You are peace.
You are joy and gladness, You are justice and moderation.
You are all our riches, and You suffice for us.
You are beauty, You are gentleness.
You are our protector, You are our guardian and defender.
You are courage, You are our haven and hope.
You are our faith, our great consolation.
You are our eternal life, great and wonderful Lord,
God almighty, merciful Saviour.

St. Francis of Assisi

Immortal, invisible, God only wise
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.
Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.
To all, life Thou givest - to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish - but nought changeth Thee.
Great Father of Glory, pure Father of Light,
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render; O help us to see;
Tis only the splendour of light hideth Thee.

Walter Chalmers Smith

Our Approach to Adoration

When we worship God and speak to Him about his greatness and His love, we forget about ourselves. We focus our gaze exclusively on Him. We fill our minds with thoughts about His goodness and mercy.

“Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is...the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy of that self-centredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin”. William Temple

Something deep within us leads us to abandon ourselves in adoration before our maker.

“The most fundamental need, duty, honour and happiness of mankind, is not petition, not even contrition, nor again even thanksgiving - these three kinds of prayer which indeed must never disappear out of our spiritual lives - but adoration”
Friedrich von Hugel

As we come before God we cannot begin to comprehend His nature other than to be amazed in His presence and overwhelmed at His limitless power and love and at His purity and truth.

“Wonder is the basis of worship” Thomas Carlyle

We bear the imprint of God upon our humanity and are staggered at the concept of God taking our human form in Christ - “Our God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man”. Charles Wesley

“It is because God has first of all made us in His own image that we find implanted in us the desire to worship Him and to grow in likeness to Him. It is God’s Spirit working in us that first brings us to worship the mystery of Holy Being and seek God’s peace”.

John Macquarrie

We are overwhelmed when we recognise the holiness of God.

“To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God. All this is

gathered up in that emotion which most cleanses us from selfishness, because it is the most selfless of all emotions - adoration". William Temple

When we approach God and worship Him our adoration is a response to the vision of His greatness.

"Worship is essentially an act of adoration, adoration of the one true God in whom we live and move and have our being. Forgetting our little selves, our petty ambitions, our puny triumphs, our foolish cares and fretful anxieties, we reach out towards the beauty and majesty of God. This is not a dull, grim drive towards moral virtues, but a response to a vision of greatness... The pattern of prayer given by our Lord begins and ends with words of adoration". Thomas F Green

Adoration is a supreme response to the God who reveals Himself to us, as Evelyn Underhill wrote - *"Adoration is the first and greatest of life responses to its spiritual environment; the first and most fundamental of spirit's movements towards Spirit the seed from which all other prayer must spring"*.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy Name - the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm in his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!

Timothy Dudley-Smith

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Expressions of Adoration

Our Maker

Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship Him in humbleness,
O praise Him, Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son
And praise the Spirit, Three in One.
St. Francis of Assisi

Far and Near

Lord of all being, throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Centre and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near.
Oliver Wendell Holmes

Holiness

Holy, holy, holy: though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see,
Only Thou art holy: there is none beside Thee
Perfect in power, in love and purity!
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea:
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity! Amen
Reginald Heber

Gladness

With gladness we worship, rejoice as we sing,
Free hearts and free voices how blessed to bring,
The old, thankful story shall scale Thine abode,
Thou King of all glory, most bountiful God.
We join with the angels, and so there is given
From earth Hallelujah, in answer to heaven.
Amen! Be Thou glorious below and above,
Redeeming, victorious, and infinite Love!
George Rawson

Adoration – from the Bible

You, Lord reign, You are robed in majesty;
You are armed with strength..
Your throne was established long ago;
You are from all eternity

Psalm 93.1 & 2

You Lord, my God are God of gods
and Lord of lords,
the great God,
mighty and awesome.

Deut. 10.17

The Way of Love

Immortal love, forever full
forever flowing free,
forever shared,
forever whole,
a never ebbing sea.

O Lord and master of us all
whate're our name or sign
we own thy sway
we hear thy call
we test our lives by thine.

Our Friend, our Brother,
and our Lord
what may thy service be?
Nor name nor form nor ritual word
but simply following thee.

We faintly hear
we dimly see in differing praise we pray
but, dim or clear we own in thee
the light, the truth, the way.

John Greenleaf Whittier

An Explosion of Praise

We bow before our common Lord

Infinite God, to You we raise
Our hearts in solemn songs of praise;
By all Your works on earth adored,
We worship You, the common Lord;
The everlasting Father own,
And bow our souls before Your throne.

Charles Wesley

Ceaseless Praise!

Fill Thou my life, O Lord my God,
In every part with praise,
That my whole being may proclaim
Thy being and Thy ways.

Not for the lip of praise alone,
Nor e'en the praising heart,
I ask, but for a life made up
Of praise in every part:

Praise in the common things of life,
Its goings out and in;
Praise in each duty and each deed,
However small and mean.

Fill every part of me with praise;
Let all my being speak
Of thee and of Thy love, O Lord,
Poor thought I be and weak.

So shalt Thou, gracious Lord, from me
Receive the glory due;
And so shall I begin on earth
The song for ever new.

So shall no part of day or night
From sacredness be free;
But all my life, in every step
Be fellowship with Thee.

Horatius Bonar

Spread His praise across the Earth!

O for a thousand tongues to sing,
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace!

My gracious Master and My God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honours of Your name.

Charles Wesley

Let all that live adore Him!

Let the peoples praise You, Lord;
Be by all that live adored;
Let the nations shout and sing
Glory to their Saviour King;
At Your feet their tribute pay,
And Your holy will obey.

Let the peoples praise You, Lord;
Earth shall then her fruits afford;
God to man His blessing give,
Man to God devoted live;
All below, and all above,
One in joy, and light and love. Amen.

Henry Francis Lyte

Blessing

Blessing and honour, thanksgiving and praise
more than we can utter,
more than we can conceive,
be unto You, O most holy and glorious Trinity,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
by all angels, all people, all creatures
for ever and ever. Amen and Amen.

Lancelot Andrewes

The Fire of God's Love

The Depth of His Grace

O Divinity, O unfathomable abyss, O deepest sea,
What greater gift could You give me than Your very self?
You are a fire that burns eternally yet never consumes
a fire that consumes with Your heat my self love.

Again and again You are the fire
which takes away all cold heartedness
and illuminates the mind by Your light,
the light with which You have made me
to know Your truth.

By this mirrored life I know You are the highest good,
a good above all good,
a fortunate good,
an incomprehensive good,
an immeasurable good,
a beauty above all beauty,
a wisdom above all wisdom
for You are wisdom itself, the food of angels,
the fire of love that You give to man.
You are the garment covering our nakedness,
You feed our family with Your sweetness,
a sweetness You are
from which there is no trace of bitterness
O eternal trinity.

Catherine of Siena

A Blazing Fire

O Thou who camest from above
the pure celestial fire to impart,
kindle of flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart!

There let it for Thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze;
and trembling to its source return
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Charles Wesley

To know God is to live

O Lord in whom all things live,
who commanded us to seek You,
who are always ready to be found:
to know You is life,
to serve You is freedom,
to praise You is our soul's delight.
We bless You and adore You,
we worship You and magnify You,
we give thanks to You for Your great glory,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Augustine of Hippo

He is the Great God

You are the great God - he who is in heaven.
You are the creator of life, You make the regions above.
You are the hunter who hunts for souls.
You are the leader who goes before us.
You are He whose hands are with wounds.
You are He whose feet are with wounds.
You are He whose blood is a trickling stream,
You are He whose blood was spilled for us.

Prayer of a Xhosa Christian from Africa

Beyond

Beyond all thought
Beyond the efforts
Of humankind
Beyond our hopes
Our dreams, our fears
Beyond all imagination and intellect
Beyond our comprehension
You tower over us
In blinding glory
You are God.

DW

My Gift to God

I give you my soul

I am giving You worship with my whole life,
I am giving You assent with my whole power.
I am giving You praise with my whole tongue,
I am giving You honour with my whole utterance,
I am giving You reverence with my whole understanding,
I am giving You the offering with my whole thought,
I am giving You praise with my whole fervour,
I am giving You humility in the blood of the Lamb.
I am giving You love with my whole devotion,
I am giving You adoration with my whole desire,
I am giving You love with my whole heart,
I am giving You affection with my whole being.
I am giving You my existence with my whole mind,
I am giving You my soul, O God of all gods.

Early Scottish Prayer

You are infinite in mercy

You are infinite in mercy, and it is Your will
that we should learn to know you.
You created heaven and earth, and rule over all.
You are the only true God,
and there is no other God above You.
Grant, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and the
working of the Holy Spirit, that all may
come to know You, for You alone are God.
May all draw strength from You,
and all be kept from teaching that is
untrue or Godless.

Irenaeus

Every knee shall bow

At the Name of Jesus, every knee shall bow
Every tongue confess Him, King of glory, now,
'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord
who from the beginning was the mighty word.

Caroline Noel

The Real Presence of God

When we adore God we fix our gaze upon Him to the exclusion of everyone and everything else. The roots of revival in our personal lives and churches and renewal in our land will be found in a deep and silent waiting upon God.

At a time when there is much doubt and confusion in the life of our nation and when a great struggle is taking place for its soul, Christians are rediscovering the importance of coming before God in adoration to listen and to worship. When we do this we will be compelled to become a worshipping people full of praise and thanksgiving. This process starts with us as individuals kneeling in silence before God

If we get into the right frame of mind, recognising our own weakness and frailty, we will experience individually and together the real presence of God.

Final Thoughts

“There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of everyman”. Pascal

“Our hearts are restless until they rest in You”. Augustine

*“If people turn away from God, they inevitably turn to idols”.
Alexander Men*

“If Jesus Christ is not the Lord of your life, someone else will be”. Donald Coggan

“Anyone who is not burning will not be able to set anyone else on fire”. Peter of Rheim



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