

History and Survey of the Westminster Confession of Faith



Leadership College: Module 2
Part 2: The Doctrine of the Confession
Of Religious Worship
and the Sabbath Day (ch. 21)

Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

1. The light of nature showeth
that there is a God,
who hath lordship and sovereignty over all,
is good, and doth good unto all,
and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and
served,
with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might.

Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

“light of nature” – faculties of human reasoning: the powers/faculties of the soul.

(This is different than rationalism.)

a) There is a God

1) Man is a worshipping creature (Rom. 1:19-23); God has lordship/sovereignty (often demonstrated by our rebellion against that); and God does good unto all (just vs. fair; cf. Gen. 4:7).

2) Man will always be prone to look to mediation b/n himself & God.

3) Merit will always be a consideration – in offering, works, or sacrifice vs. gratitude.

b) God is to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served w/all that is in the creature.

Acceptable way of worship – how God dictates vs. how/what we feel/think is right/proper (“joyful”) Does God give us regulations or freedom in worship?

Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God
is instituted by himself,

and so limited by his own revealed will,

that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices
of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or
any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.



Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

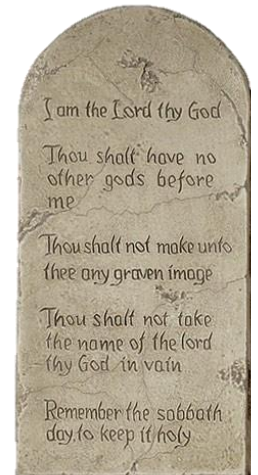
Acceptable way of worship –
how God dictates

vs. how/what we feel/think is right/proper (“joyful”)

Does God give us regulations or freedom in worship?

1st table of the Moral Law instructs us regarding worship

Who, how, why, and when we are to worship



Devices of men/Satan

Idolatry – immoral, sensual (either embracing or denying), and savage (self-mutilating, destruction of women/children)

visual representations – Ex. 32 – contribution according to imagination & creativity

pictures of Jesus – 3rd comm would tell us to revere that, but the 2nd comm tells us to prohibit it

The Reformation in Worship



Luther


- *Sola Scriptura* - authority
- A monk's sense of devotion & practicality.
- Focus on corruption more than institution.
- Objected to the peasants destroying images/relics.
- Meaning of ordinances not radically changed.



Zwingli & Calvin


- *Sola Scriptura* - definition
- Both had a pastor's heart and theologian's mind for purity & integrity.
- Focus on theological foundation of thought and practice.
- Required removal of images and relics.
- Radically redefined ordinances.


The Regulative Principle of Worship



Luther


Whatever is not prohibited
may be allowed





Zwingli & Calvin

Only that which God
commands is to be allowed



The Regulative Principle of Worship



Lutheranism

Whatever is not prohibited
may be allowed

- Is beauty and creativity not properly offered to God in worship?

"I have been hesitant and fearful, partly because of the weak in faith, who cannot suddenly exchange an old and accustomed order of worship for a new and unusual one."

from An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg, 1523



Calvinism

Only that which God
commands is to be allowed

- What God ordains and commands is, by definition, the best and finest.

"... [T]he only legitimate worship is that which he himself approved from the beginning."

from Calvin Contra Sadoleto On the Regulative Principle Of Worship

The Regulative Principle of Worship



Lutheranism

Whatever is not prohibited may be allowed

- Is beauty and creativity not properly offered to God in worship?
- Is the progression of the gospel in history not to be recognized in Christian worship?

Calvinism

Only that which God commands is to be allowed

- Tradition, progress in history do not change the gospel message.
- The Psalms not only speak of Christ's first but also his second coming.

The Regulative Principle of Worship



Lutheranism

Whatever is not prohibited may be allowed

- Is beauty and creativity not properly offered to God in worship?
- Is the progression of the gospel in history not to be recognized in Christian worship?
- Is culture not to be given expression?

Calvinism

Only that which God commands is to be allowed

- The worship of God should not seek to conform with cultures for cultures contain the wickedness of man.
- Instead, all cultures are to be made to change and conform to the Word of God.

The Reformation of Music in Worship



Lutheranism

- Luther wrote
 - renditions based on Ps. 12, 14, 46, 67, 124, 128, 130
 - festal hymns
- Martin Bucer (1491-1551)
 - A commentary on the Psalms offering a Christian interpretation.
- Johannes Zwick (1496-1542)
 - Constance Hymn Book, 1540
 - half psalms, half hymns
- 100,000 hymns composed in 3 ½ years following Reformation.

Calvinism

- Calvin remained committed to psalmody exclusively.
- The only exceptions were a very few canticles (musical renditions of the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, etc.).

The Reformation of Worship



Lutheranism

- Normative Principle:

Whatever is not prohibited is allowed in worship.

Calvinism

- Regulative Principle:

Whatever is not required is prohibited.

Candles, incense, vestments, drama, dancing, art, icons, pictures, worshipping the elements of communion

Performance music, musical instruments, man-made hymns

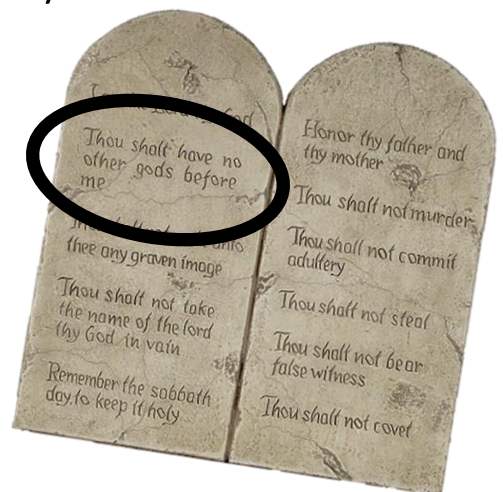
The Regulative Principle

“Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do.

You shall not add to it or take from it.” (Dt. 12:32, ESV)

Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

2. Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to him alone; not to angels, saints, or any other creature: and, since the fall, not without a Mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.



Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

3. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all men: and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of his Spirit, according to his will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue.

4. Prayer is to be made for things lawful; and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter: but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.

Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

Q. 178. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit; with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

- Prayer

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Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

5. The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear, the sound preaching and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith, and reverence, singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ, are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God:

beside religious oaths, vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions, which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in an holy and religious manner.

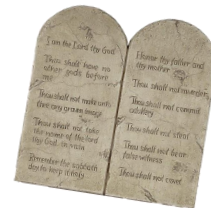
- Prayer
- Reading/Preaching of the Word
- Singing of psalms
- Sacraments
- Religious oaths, vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions
- Tithes & Offerings
- Salutation
- Benediction
- Elements vs. Circ.s

Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

6. Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now, under the gospel, either tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed: but God is to be worshiped everywhere, in spirit and truth; as, in private families daily, and in secret, each one by himself; so, more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or willfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by his Word or providence, calleth thereunto.

- Prayer
 - In Spirit & in Truth
 - By families
 - By one's self
 - In solemn public assemblies
- Reading/Preaching of the Word
- Singing of psalms
- Sacraments
- Religious oaths, vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions
- Tithes & Offerings
- Salutation
- Benediction
- Elements vs. Circ.s

Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day



7. As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in his Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.

The Fourth Commandment

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex. 20:8-11, ESV)

You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (Dt. 5:15, ESV)

Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

7. As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in his Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages (Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:8-11), he hath particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto him:

which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ (Dt. 5:12-15), was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:3-6), was changed into the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2), which, in Scripture, is called the Lord’s Day (Rev. 1:10), and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath .

Ch. 21 – Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

8. This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord,
when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their
common affairs beforehand,
do not only observe an holy rest, all the day, from their own works,
words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations,
but also are taken up, the whole time, in the public and private exercises
of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

