

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 21.-Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day.

VI. Neither Prayer, nor any other part of Religious Worship, is now under the Gospel, either tyed unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed¹: but God is to be Worshipped every where², in Spirit and Truth³; as in private Families⁴ daily⁵, and in secret, each one by himself⁶; so, more solemnly, in the publique Assemblies, which are not carelessly, or wilfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by his Word or Providence, calleth thereunto⁷.

Question 1.—*Is prayer, or any other part of religious worship 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?*

Answer.—No. John 4:21; Mal. 1:11; 1 Tim. 2:8. Therefore, the Papists do err, who consecrate churches, and ascribe holiness to them, and to other places far off, where they mumble their preachings, and mutter their prayers, *cf.* 1 Cor. 14:9. Likewise, many ignorant persons err, who think their private prayers will be more acceptable to God, being said in the church, than in their own private closets, 2 Kings 4:33. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because the Lord says, by the mouth of his prophet, that prayers shall be offered up to him in all places, under the time of the Gospel, Mal. 1:11. 2.) Because Christ commands us when we pray to enter into our closet, and the door being shut, to pray to our Father which is in secret, lest we should seem to desire a praise and approbation from men: which rite and ceremony of praying publicly, when we should pray privately, Christ clearly condemns, Matt. 6:5,6. 3.) Because Paul wills that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting, 1 Tim. 2:8. 4.) Because Christ says, The hour cometh, when we shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father, John 4:21. Thereby implying that when the Jewish economy was ended, there would be no longer a restriction of acceptable worship to this or that place, John 4:23.

Question 2.—*Ought God to be worshipped in Spirit and in truth?*

Answer.—Yes. John 4:23,24. Thus do the Papists, Lutherans and other errorists mistake the nature of New Testament worship advocating typical and symbolical worship in the place of spiritual and true worship, *cf.* Ps. 51:17. Their confusion is refuted for the following reasons: 1.) Paul tells us those typical elements of worship were mere shadows of that which was to come under the New Testament, Col. 2:17. 2.) Hebrews tells us that the old covenant had its ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary, Heb.

¹John 4:21.

²Mal. 1:11; 1 Tim. 2:8.

³John 4:23,24.

⁴Jer. 10:25; Deut. 6:6,7; Job 1:5; 2 Sam. 6:18,20; 1 Pet. 3:7; Acts 10:2.

⁵Matt. 6:11.

⁶Matt. 6:6; Eph. 6:18.

⁷Isa. 56:6,7; Heb. 10:25; Prov. 1:20,21,24; 8:34; Acts 13:42; Luke 4:16; Acts 2:42.

9:1. This in contrast to the new, Heb. 9:8. 3.) This worldly sanctuary was, as to its arrangement and elements, typical and figurative, and stood only until the time of the New Testament, Heb. 9:9-12.

Question 3.—*Should God be called upon and worshipped in families, as well as in public, and that daily?*

Answer.—Yes. Deut. 6:6,7; 1 Pet. 3:7; Acts 10:2; Matt. 6:11. Thus do they impiously err, who, whether ignorantly or knowingly, neglect this duty. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) The word of God threatens wrath and judgment upon all families sinfully negligent in this duty, Jer. 10:25. 2.) We find the example of Abraham, the father of all who have faith, to be, to rear up altars wherever he came; and his attention to family religion was expressly commended of God, Gen. 18:19. 3.) We have numerous examples given in Scripture, Joshua, 24:15; Job, 1:5; and David, 2 Sam. 6:18,20.

Question 4.—*Ought secret prayer be offered by each believer himself?*

Answer.—Yes. Matt. 6:6; Eph. 6:18. Christ himself not only inculcates the duty of prayer, but recommends it by his own example, Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35. Additionally, it has been exemplified in the lives of the saints of God through all ages; Jacob, Gen. 32:24; Daniel, 6:10; David, Ps. 55:3,17; Hezekiah, Isa. 38:2. Secret prayer is inseparable from a state of grace; it is one of the first, one of the plainest and strongest symptoms of spiritual life; see the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, Acts 9:11.

Question 5.—*Ought the public assemblies of the congregation solemnly to be attended, when the Word of God or his Providence calls unto?*

Answer.—Yes. Prov. 8:34; Acts 2:42. As the dispensation which consisted in particular places has come to an end; so too, the various times and seasons of that period. The New Testament is characterized as a period wherein the people of God do gather most gladly and willingly, Isa. 56:6,7. They do seriously err against light and wisdom, who carelessly or willfully neglect the gathering of God's people in public assemblies, Heb. 10:25. Clearly, the Word of God calls us to a weekly assembling on the Lord's day for the public worshipping of God, as exemplified in the conduct of God's people, Acts 13:42; and in the life of the Saviour himself, Luke 4:16. The prophet Malachi foretells that the people called by God will often, in his providence, speak to one another in such a way that God will hearken to them, Mal. 3:16. Indeed, many of the commanded duties of believers cannot be carried out conveniently, except by way of regular calls of providence to gather at set times apart from the weekly public worship on Lord's day, Heb. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:11; 1 Pet. 4:10; Gal. 5:13. All careless or willful neglect of thinking upon the Word of God and his works done in wisdom are considered, in Scripture, a slighting of the Lord, Prov. 1:20,21,24.