

## CONFESSION OF FAITH.

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

V. The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear<sup>1</sup>; the sound preaching<sup>2</sup> and Conscionable Hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith, and reverence<sup>3</sup>; singing of Psalms with grace in the heart<sup>4</sup>; as also, the due administration, and worthy receiving of the Sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary Religious Worship of God<sup>5</sup>: Beside Religious Oathes<sup>6</sup>, Vows<sup>7</sup>, Solemn Fastings<sup>8</sup>, and thanksgivings, upon special occasions<sup>9</sup>, which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used, in an holy and religious manner<sup>10</sup>.

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Question 1.—*Is the reading of the Scriptures with godly fear, the sound preaching, and the comfortable hearing of the word, in obedience to God, with understanding, faith, and reverence, part of the ordinary religious worship?*

Answer.—Yes. Acts 15:21; Rev. 1:3; 2 Tim. 4:2; Matt. 13:19; Jas. 1:22; Heb. 4:2; Isa. 66:2; Acts 10:33. Therefore, the Enthusiasts, Libertines, Anabaptists, and other sectaries err, who (under pretext of being inspired by the Holy Ghost that teaches them all things) despise and contemn all reading of the Scriptures, and public hearing of the word preached. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because Christ commanded his apostles, and in them all the ministers of the gospel, to whom he has promised his presence to the end of the world, to teach all nations, and to preach the gospel to every creature, Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15,16. 2.) Because the public preaching of the word, by a minister sent, and called, and the hearing of it, is a mean ordained, and appointed by God, and according to the ordinary manner, necessary for begetting faith, and therefore needful to salvation, Rom. 10:14,15; 1 Cor. 1:21. 3.) Because God has promised to his covenanted ones, to bring them to his holy mountain, and make them joyful in his house of prayer; that is, in the public meetings of the saints and people, Isa. 56:7. 4.) From the example of those believers in Acts 2:42. 5.) Because the word of God is the perfect rule of life and manners. And all spirits are to be tried by it, 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 John 4:1; Isa. 8:20. Neither ought we to follow or hear any man, no not an angel, if he teach any thing contrary to the word, or heterodox from it, 2 Thess. 2:2; Gal. 1:8. 6.) Because the word of God is that incorruptible seed, by which we are born again, 1 Pet. 1:23. 7.) Because God forbids expressly separations from public assemblies (that is, so long as the word is truly and

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<sup>1</sup>Acts 15:21; Rev. 1:3.

<sup>2</sup>2 Tim. 4:2.

<sup>3</sup>Jas. 1:22; Acts 10:33; Matt. 13:19; Heb. 4:2; Isa. 66:2.

<sup>4</sup>Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; Jas. 5:13.

<sup>5</sup>Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-29; Acts 2:42.

<sup>6</sup>Deut. 6:13 *with* Neh. 10:29.

<sup>7</sup>Isa. 19:21 *with* Eccl. 5:4,5.

<sup>8</sup>Joel 2:12; Esth. 4:16; Matt. 9:15; 1 Cor. 7:5.

<sup>9</sup>Ps. 107; Esth. 9:22.

<sup>10</sup>Heb. 12:28.

purely taught, by those who enter in by the right door, that is Christ, and the way appointed by him in his word, John 10:7,8.), Heb. 10:25.

Question 2.—*Are these forementioned, together with the due administration of the sacraments (baptism and the Lord's supper), to continue in the church of God, till the end of the world, and the day of Christ?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-29; Acts 2:42. Because the Lord has joined together these two, his faithful servants, for teaching his people publicly, and the promise of the Spirit to guide them, and assist them in their works, Matt. 28:20; John 16:16,17,26.

Question 3.—*Is singing of psalms with grace in the heart, a part of the ordinary worship of God?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; Jas. 5:13. Thus, the Quakers, and other sectaries err, who are against the singing of the psalms, or at least tie it to some certain persons, others being excluded. They are confuted: 1.) From the practice of Christ and his apostles, Matt. 26:30. From the example of Paul and Silas, Acts 16:25. From Moses and the Israelites, Exod. 15. 2.) Because the singing of psalms was commanded under the Old Testament, and that, not as a type of any substance to come, nor for any ceremonial cause. Neither is it abrogated under the New Testament, but confirmed, Ps. 30:4; 149:1. 3.) From the general and universal commands in the New Testament, Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 14:15. 4.) Because the apostle James refers to it, Jas. 5:13. The meaning is not, that none should sing but such as are merry; for then none should pray but those afflicted, 1 Chron. 16:9. 5.) Because by singing of psalms we glorify God, we make his praise glorious: we edify others with whom we sing as well as we edify ourselves—which is the end proposed in singing, Col. 3:16. 6.) We cheer and refresh ourselves, by making melody in our hearts to the Lord, Eph. 5:19. Which arises, first, from our conscientious going about it as a piece of the worship to God, and in so doing we are accepted in that, Heb. 9:14. Secondly, from its being a part of Scripture, appointed for praise, whether it agree with our case or not, Heb. 2:12. That being the end wherefore it was designed to be sung, is a sufficient warrant for our joining in the singing, Ps. 111:1.

Question 4.—*Besides these parts which belong to the ordinary worship of God, are there also 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?*

*Answer.*—Yes. These being occasional duties; yet, they are such acts of worship as are called for according to their several times and seasons, and should be practiced in a holy and religious manner, Heb. 12:28. Religious oaths and vows are sometimes necessary, Heb. 6:16; Ps. 76:11. Scripture abounds with examples of godly men swearing oaths upon just occasions. Instances in the Old Testament are numerous, where we find it practiced by the patriarchs, and the whole body of the Jews, with God's own allowance and command, Deut. 6:13 w/ Neh. 10:29. Christ himself did thus swear when adjured by the high priest, Matt. 26:62-64 w/ Lev. 5:1. Likewise, Paul himself did often confirm his epistles by way of an oath, Rom. 1:9; 9:1,2; 2 Cor. 1:23; 11:31; Gal. 1:20. A vow is of like nature, but differing in this—whereas *an oath is made to a creature, by God; a vow is made to God himself*; Isa. 19:21 w/ Eccl. 5:4,5. This duty we see performed by the Corinthians, 2 Cor. 8:5. Scripture also holds forth, as occasional duties, that of solemn fastings, Joel 2:12; Esth. 4:16; Matt. 9:15; 1 Cor. 7:5; and thanksgivings, Ps. 107; Esth. 9:22.