

Sunday Evening, August 13, 2023

WCF Chapter XXI - Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath-day (5)

5. The various elements of the ordinary religious worship of God are the reading of the Scriptures with reverence; the sound preaching and conscientious hearing of the Word in obedience to God, with understanding, faith, and reverence; the singing of psalms with grace in the heart; and the proper administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ. Also, on special occasions and at appropriate times, there are other elements of worship, namely, religious oaths, vows, solemn fasts, and thanksgivings. These are to be used in an holy and devout manner.

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I. The Church Has a Duty to Sing

A. The Importance of Singing with Our God

God the Father: Zeph 3:17;

God the Son: Heb. 2:12 (Psa 22:22); Rom. 15:8, 9; Matt. 26:30

God the Spirit: Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16

B. The Importance of Singing about Redemptive History

C. The Importance of Singing in Heaven Rev. 5:9; Rev. 14:3; Isa. 35:10, 51:11, 52:9

D. The Importance of Singing in Corporate Worship Now Ps. 149:1; 1 Cor. 14:26

II. The Church Has the Privilege to Sing

III. The Church Has Guidelines to Sing Col. 3:16

A. We Are to Sing the Word of Christ

B. Out of meditation on the Word of Christ— We Are to Sing Psalms, Hymns, Spiritual Songs

1. Meaning of: “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs”

2. Meaning of “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” does not refer to the Book of Psalms

IV. The Church Has an Audience to Sing to Heb. 13:15; Ps. 98:1

A. Our Music must Have Transcendence and Reverence

Ps. 99:1–3. 9; Rev. 5:12; Phil. 3:16, Ps. 95:1–2; Heb. 12:28

B. Our Music to Be Well Done Ps. 33:3; Ps. 98:4f

C. Our Music Is to Be in Sincerity of Heart Amos 5:21–24

D. Our Music Is Not to Be about us Rev. 5:12; Phil. 3:16; Ps. 95:1–2

Quotes:

Martin Luther - Music is a noble gift of God, next to theology.”

Martin Luther - “We should not ordain young men as preachers, unless they have been well exercised in music.”

Church Father, John Chrysostom - “Nothing so arouses the soul, gives it wing, sets it free from the earth, releases it from the prison of the body, teaches it to love wisdom, and to condemn all things of this life, as concordant melody and sacred song composed in rhythm.”

“Congregational singing is a duty and privilege to be practiced and cultivated in all the churches. Let every member of the church take part in this act of worship.” OPC Directory of Worship

“As public worship is for the praise and glory of God and the building up of the saints, not for the entertainment of the congregation nor the praise of man, the character of the songs used therein is to befit the nature of God and the purpose of worship.” OPC Directory of Worship

“God's people should sing, not merely with the lips, but with understanding and with grace in their hearts, making melody to the Lord.” OPC Directory of Worship

“Earlier in this century someone claimed that we work at our play and play at our work. Today the confusion has deepened: we worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship.” Leland Ryken
To which David Gordon added, “His observation is truer now than when he first made it, as a new generation now witnesses a new oxymoron for the first time: playful worship. We cannot deformatize or deritualize worship without turning it into play.”

“[Subjectivity in worship] is the tendency to construct and evaluate worship in terms of the human subject— human experiences, feelings, and responses— rather than in terms of the divine object, God, the blessed self-revealing Trinity, and his will, word, and activity. This subjectivity takes various forms, but they all share in common the view that worship is essentially something we experience, rather than something we offer, and that the quality of that experience is the measure of effective worship.” Nick Needham

“. . . Music is socially and sociologically significant: we sing about what is important to us. Nations compose national anthems; each branch of the American armed services has its own song; lovers compose love songs; and European soccer fans boisterously sing the songs of their respective teams throughout soccer matches. Music may be religious or profane, sublime or mundane, pious or pernicious, but music is not insignificant. It would not be a universal reality in all cultures if it were insignificant.” David Gordon

“The thing I look for above all else in church music is the sense of transcendence. Music in worship shouldn't familiarize God to me, but rather music should stimulate the soul to a posture of adoration.” RC Sproul

“A hedonistic, narcissistic, relativistic, me-focused age is hardly one that should inform and define our approach to God. And yet, it does. We measure our success by numbers, our relevance by how technologically integrated and up-to-date we are, and our worship by how good it makes us feel. In the minds of contemporary saints, hymns clash with the spontaneity, simplicity and style that have come to rule in the modern evangelical church.” Paul Jones