

Purity of Worship

*Have We, In Our Ignorance, Brought Strange Fire into the Church
A Few Quotes to Ponder*

"There is an amazing confusion of religions and forms of religious worship in the world...this came about because all proceeded without the Word of God, according to the opinion of their own heart...God does not want to be worshipped in any other way than that which He himself prescribed." LUTHER'S COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH 10:10-11.

"No form of Government is to be drawn up in the church by human judgment, but that men must wait for the command of God." CALVIN'S COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS.

"A form and order of a reformed church is limited within the compass of God's Word, which our Saviour hath left unto us as only sufficient to govern all our actions by; so that whatsoever is added to this Word by man's device, seem it never so good, holy, or beautiful, yet before our God...it is evil, wicked, and abominable." THE FORM OF PRAYERS AND MINISTRATION OF SACRAMENTS, ETC., USED IN THE ENGLISH CONGREGATION AT GENEVA PG 140.

"The Scripture is not a partial, but a perfect rule of faith and manners: neither is there anything that is...to be observed in the church of God, which depends either upon tradition, or upon any authority whatsoever, and is not contained in the Scriptures." WILLIAM AMES THE MARROW OF SACRED DIVINITY PG 5.

"The New Testament is absolutely perfect for delivering the whole manner of God's worship." HENRY JACOB, WORSHIP OF THE ENGLISH PURITANS PG 77.

"Protestants tell them [Roman Catholics] that the Scripture contains all things necessary to be believed and practiced in the worship of God." JOHN OWEN WORKS VOL. 14 PG 84.

"We may gather what it is not to make to one's self the God's of others, viz., to bid farewell to all the inventions of men, and to pay attention to this one thing - what God commands. For why does God desire to be worshipped by His elect people otherwise than the nations were in the habit of serving their gods, except because there ought to be a notable distinction, so that religion may not be confused? And surely that unless men cleave to God's Word, so as resolutely to determine that nothing else is permitted to them except what is there taught, they will not only be vacillating, but they will receive indiscriminately whatever comes in their way. We must then hold fast to this, "Thou shalt not do so"; and our minds must be restrained by this curb, lest any superstition which defile the service of God should insinuate or establish itself. He adds that God not only repudiates these strange worships, but even abominates them." CALVIN'S COMMENTARY (Leviticus 18) VOL. 2 PG 452-453.

"No other service of God is lawful, except that of which He has testified His approval in His word, and that obedience is as it were the mother of piety; as if he had said that all

modes of devotion are absurd and infected with superstition which are not directed by this rule. Hence we gather, that in order to the keeping of the First Commandment, a knowledge of the true God is required, derived from His word, and mixed with faith. By forbidding the addition, or diminishing of anything, He plainly condemns as illegitimate whatever men invent of their own imagination; whence it follows that they, who in worshipping God are guided by any rule save that which He himself has prescribed, make to themselves false gods; and, therefore, horrible vengeance is denounced by Him against those who are guilty of this temerity, through Isaiah, 'For as much as this people draw near me, &c., by the precept of men; therefore, behold I will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish.'" CALVIN'S COMMENTARY (Leviticus 18) VOL. 2 PG 453.

"There is a distinction, however, to be observed here, that we may not indiscriminately consider as applicable to ourselves, everything which was formerly enjoined upon the Jews. I have no doubt that playing upon cymbals, touching the harp and the viol, and all that kind of music, which is so frequently mentioned in the Psalms, was a part of the education; that is to say, the puerile instruction of the law: I speak of the stated service of the temple [ceremonial law]. For even now, if believers choose to cheer themselves with musical instruments, they should, I think, make it their object not to dis sever their cheerfulness from the praises of God. But when they frequent their sacred assemblies, musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the [ceremonial] law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostle is far more pleasing to him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints only in a known tongue (I Cor.14:16). The voice of man, although not understood by the generality, assuredly excels all inanimate instruments of music; and yet we see what St. Paul determines concerning speaking in an unknown tongue. What shall we then say of chanting, which fills the ears with nothing but an empty sound? Does anyone object, that music is very useful for awakening the minds of men and moving their hearts? I own it; but we should always take care that no corruption creep in, which might both defile the pure worship of God and involve men in superstition. Moreover, since the Holy Spirit expressly warns us of this danger by the mouth of Paul, to proceed beyond what we are there warranted by him, is not only, I must say, unadvised zeal, but wicked and perverse obstinacy." CALVIN'S COMMENTARY (Psalm 33) VOL. 4 PG 539.

"They [the ceremonial laws] were exercises of repentance and faith. So the law instructed the Jews in the spiritual worship of God, and in nothing else, though it were clothed in ceremonies agreeably to the requirements of the age. For, before the truth was fully made known, the childhood of the Church was to be directed by earthly elements, and thus, though there was great affinity and likeness between the Jews and Gentiles as regarded the external form of their religious service, yet its end was widely different. Moreover, when, we would seek the body or substance of the ancient shadows, and the truth of the figures, we may learn them, not only from the Apostles, but also from the Prophets, who everywhere draw the attention of believers to the kingdom of Christ; yet their clearer

explanation must be sought in the Gospel, where Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, shining forth, shews that their fulfillment exists in Himself alone. But, although by His coming He abolished these typical ceremonies as regards their use, yet at the same time He established the reverence justly due to them; since they have no claim to be held in esteem on any other grounds, except that their completion is found in Him; for if they are separated from Him, it is plain that they are mere farces, since neither the blood of animals, nor the sweetness of fat, nor aromatic odours, nor candles, nor anything of that sort, have any power to propitiate God...We are reminded that all the ancient figures were sure testimonies of God's grace and of eternal salvation; and thus Christ was represented in them, since all the promises are in Him, yea, and amen." (2 Cor. 1:20) CALVIN'S COMMENTARY (Exodus 25) VOL. 2 PG. 154,155.

"We must entertain ourselves, and proclaim His name, by singing praises to Him, singing aloud, for we should sing Psalms with all our heart, as those who are not only not ashamed of it, but are enlarged in it. We must sing a new song, newly composed upon every special occasion, sing with new affections, which make the song new, though the words have been used before, and keep them from growing threadbare. Let God be praised in the dance with timbrel and harp, according to the usage of the Old Testament Church very early, where we find God praised with timbrels and dances. Those who from this urge the use of music in religious worship must by the same rule introduce dancing, for they went together, as in David's dancing before the ark. But, where as many scriptures in the New Testament keep up singing as a gospel-ordinance, none provide for the keeping up of music and dancing; the gospel-cannon for Psalmody is to sing with the spirit and with the understanding." MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY PSALM 149:3.

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