

The Rule of God's Worship

Whatever is not required is forbidden. Our Lord himself says, "In vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." He discards the additions made to his law by the Pharisees. Men may arrange what is clearly necessary but incidental in the worship of God. "There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God common to human actions and societies which are to be ordered by the light of nature." These arrangements are to be limited to what is necessary and never to infringe on what God has provided, or add to it. "God is a Spirit and they that worship him **must** worship him in spirit and in truth." He is to be worshiped in accordance with his own nature, in accordance with his own revealed will and in accordance with the simple requirements of the dispensation of the Spirit, not with the ceremonies and methods peculiar to the temple at Jerusalem.

To sustain the principle that what is not required in God's worship is forbidden, we offer the following proofs:

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer and put fire therein and put incense thereon and offered strange fire before the Lord which he commanded them not.

And there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them and they died before the Lord." The fire they should have used came down from heaven on the altar of sacrifice. Other fire was not forbidden, but was not commanded. What is not required is forbidden.

Korah was a Levite, but not a son of Aaron. Dathan and Abiram were sons of Reuben the first-born. These three and their followers tried to take the place and offer the incense that the Lord assigned to the sons of Aaron. "The ground clave asunder that was under them; and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up." This offering of incense was not required of them; therefore forbidden.

Saul offered a burnt offering at Gilgal. He had no right to act as a priest. For this he was told by a prophet of the Lord. "Thy kingdom shall not continue."

The Lord directed that the ark of the covenant be borne upon the shoulders of the Levites. David directed that it should be borne on a cart. Uzza put forth his hand to steady it and was struck dead. The cart was not required, therefore it was forbidden.

Uzziah, the king of Judah, went into the temple to burn incense to the Lord, an act belonging only to the priests. He was at once smitten with leprosy.

After Christ was crucified, being the

one sacrifice for sin, the Jews in their unbelief continued to offer sacrifices after the divine warrant for such sacrifices was withdrawn. For this unbelief and disobedience they were dreadfully punished in the year 70, Jerusalem laid waste and the temple burned. What was not required was forbidden.

This same principle is the teaching of the Second Commandment which treats of the worship of God and this stands out in its opening words, "Thou shalt not make unto thee." **This Commandment requires the receiving, observing and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in His word and forbids the worship of God by images or any other way not appointed in His word.**

This conclusion is confirmed by express statements of Scripture. "Remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you used to go a whoring." "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it."

This same principle is also clearly and impressively taught in the explicit directions given for the building of the tabernacle. Full instructions are laid down by the Lord to Moses concerning its boards, covering and curtains. Its furniture is described as to shape, size, and materials. The garments of the

priests and the form of their consecration are told with a fulness that seems tedious. The lesson is plain. All things connected with the worship of God are to be decided by himself. This conclusion is enforced in the Lord's admonition to Moses, "See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."

The same lesson is taught in Ezekiel's description of the spiritual land and temple, the fulfillment of which is the New Testament Church. Everything is set down with great particularity showing that nothing essential in the worship of God is to be left to the invention of men. What is not commanded is forbidden.

The power and tendency to invent new things and new ways of doing old things are of great importance and value among men, but not in the worship of God. Here we are to be guided solely by the word of God. The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. The errors which have led the world astray have been the inventions of men. Our safety and assurance in the worship of God is in holding fast to his revealed will. This is the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus. **Whatever is not required in the worship of God is forbidden.**

WITNESS COMMITTEE

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