

James Warner

Regulative Principle of Divine Worship

Worship not Instituted Unlawful. The word worship signifieth any bending, but in particular, an outward expression of inward reverence of the mind, used to God or man. The question then in this, what expressions of reverence and honor to God, used by us towards him, is accepted of him, and what is not? And we say, that whatsoever expressions of reverence to God he hath not required, he will not accept. - As God only knows himself, so he alone can declare what pleaseth the Divine Being; we can tell what would please a man, because we are men; but we cannot tell how to please God, unless we were gods; so saith the apostle; "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." {I Cor.2:11} - Now, that he accepts not what he requires not, he himself declares; wherefore else does he ask, who hath required this at your hands, if he would accept it, although he did not require it? For the meaning is; did I ever require such wicked men to tread my courts. {Is.1:12} Again, "in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." {Mt.15:8,9, Is.29:13} Israels using a manner of their own inventions, was the devil worship they were charged with, therefore they were bidden to bring their sacrifice to the door of the tabernacle, that they worshipped no more to Devils. {Lev.17:4,7} They made a calf, and after that manner which was the Egyptian manner, they worshiped God, and yet said to be to Devils. "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not." {Deut.32:17} "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." { II Cor.11:14} "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." {I Cor.10:20} "That they should not worship devils." {Rev.9:20} The like is said of Jeroboam's idolatry; "And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made." {II Chron.11:15} Now, that this devil worship consisted in being devised by their own imaginations, the Scriptures following do declare. "So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel; and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense." {I Kings 12:33} Of Israel it is said, "Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions; and the plague brake in upon them." {Ps.106:29} What these inventions were, we find in verse 28, in these words "They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead." Verse 38 saith; "they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan;" verse 39, "thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions." {Ps.106:39} "Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions." {Ps.99:8} That is; their doings, and their idolatry, which is elsewhere called; "Walking after the imagination of their own heart." {Jer.9:14} After the stubborn perverse imaginations of their hearts, and after Baalam which their Fathers taught them. Consult further: Jer.23:17 & 7:24, Deut.29:19 & Rom.1:21. 'Twas death under the dispensation of the Law, to alter the manner of the Worship commanded by using their own inventions, so as to offer in other places, or after another manner. And if God was so zealous of the

manner of his worship then, as given forth by Moses, as to slay Nahab and Abihu for offering fire not commanded. {"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. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified." Lev.10:1-3 &c.,} and "smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD," as I Sam.6:19. Uzzah for laying hold on it. {"And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it; and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God. II Sam.6:3,6-7} Because they brought it not after the manner commanded: "And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it; but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation." {Num.4:15} - "And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab; and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart. And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets. And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark; and there he died before God." {I Chron.13:7-10} - "And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, And said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order." {I Chron.15:11-13} How can we imagine God will bear with the affront offered to His Son, by whom He hath completed the Revelation of His Will, who came out of the bosom of God to show us fully how we shall be accepted with Him, and how we shall express our reverence to Him. For persons to reject this, and follow their own proud imaginations, they do more than deny the Authority of Christ. For if God had left the manner to ourselves, having given by nature the knowledge of the matter, where is the necessity of Christ's prophetic office? James Warner {"Brief Discourse of Right Worship against Idolatry and Will-Worship," 1684}