

A Discourse on the Christian Celebration of the Papish Christ-Mass.

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Scriptural Regulative Principles

The history of Christ's church demonstrates that God's covenant people oft times will drift from the pure worship of God and fall into the snares of man-made innovations and syncretism with false religions. Man's fallen nature dictates that the more we develop worship ourselves the more perverse it would become.

“And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and 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 ye use to go a whoring; that ye may remember, and do all the commandments, and be holy unto your God.” (Num 15:39-40)

As will be demonstrated, the Word of God contains a regulative principle for worship, which teaches that anything not commanded is forbidden. The history of man clearly shows that if sinful man is left to himself in selecting his means and modes of worship he will choose man-centered worship. A society driven by man will be drawn to entertainment, rituals and pomp. Man-made innovations, like all human vices, if left unchecked, will continue to deteriorate. The church and worship are no different. Without regulation this is the direction worship will follow. This regulation cannot come from those needing regulation but from the transcendent God, therefore God's Word is the only source for this regulation.

False worship originates in the mind of man, true worship originates in the mind of God and is revealed in His Holy word.

“But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward.” (Jer 7: 23-24)

The ideals of the reformation set the strange superstitions, and traditions of the Church against the Word of God for this reason. The Church was impelled by audacity and presumption whereby trampling under their feet the very Word of God. Bringing into their worship vain practices of their own devise that “they prefer themselves and their own trumperies to God”.(Calvin) Obedience is the basis of true religion, and if our hearts are seeking righteous worship in the sight of God we need to cast aside those things of our invention and institute alone those set by God. Thus is the basis of the reformation slogan of *sola scriptura*, claiming scripture alone to be authoritative in all matters of faith and practice.

The Bible alone is our infallible regulative principle of that faith and practice. There is no area of life where this truth is not applicable, nor is there any area of life not an act of worship. Before entering the promised land God instructed His people on how to avoid idolatry and this syncretism with false religions.

“Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods?”

Even so I will do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God...

what thing soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it”

(Dt 12:30-32)

Whatever is not commanded in scripture in the worship of God is forbidden. Anything that we do must be a result of an explicit command of God or be a result of a sound deduction thereof. Nothing connected with the worship of God is left to the wisdom or discretion of man, but by the Word of God. The power of the church is purely ministerial and declarative and should limit itself to the holding forth of sound doctrine, avoiding discretionary powers.

The fairly recent trends to use the regulative principle in the negative allows anything that is not forbidden to be acceptable. This is known widely as the normative principle. If we are to say that the command to add nothing is indeed God's desire then we must hold that every addition, although not contrary to any particular command or restriction, is itself contrary to the command to add nothing. It also must be understood that underlying this are the differences between ordinances and circumstances. Ordinances are to be regulated, while circumstances may have discretionary liberties. For example; the command to preach the Word does not regulate the type of structure one does it in.

The command to add nothing, that what is commanded of God is the basis for regulation and not the opposite has a clear demonstration in the scriptures.

“And in the process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground and offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstfruits of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.

And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.” (Gen 4:3-5)

We know that the rejection of Cain's offering was not arbitrary and would carry grievous results, so what was it about Cain's sacrifice that made it unacceptable? Both men gave the firstfruits of their particular vocations, did they not? As we look over God's commands in relation to sacrifice, Noah's knowledge that God would only accept clean animals for sacrifice presupposes a prior regulation.

Additionally, pondering the redemptive value of killing animals to cover their sin shows an early indication of its importance even with Adam and Eve. That said, Cain's wrongdoing was offering of his own creation. God's command is for animal sacrifices. Regardless of his heart or sincerity, Cain's sacrifice was contrary to His Word, and therefore displeasing to God. 4

If we were to use the normative principle, meaning anything not forbidden is acceptable, then could not Cain, or Abel, or even the Levitical priests sacrifice anything that is not particularly forbidden.

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and out 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” (Lev 10:1-2)

Which God commanded them not. This text is not that God commanded them not to, but rather he did not command them to. There is a significant difference. There is no mention in scripture of what kind of fire is not allowed, or not allowed. But here it is clear, they did something that God did not command to be done, yet they are consumed by the fire of God.

“And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Adinadab that was in Gilbeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Adinandab, drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Adinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark...And 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” (2 Sam 6:3-7)

The sincerity of David and his men are not brought into question here. It was his love for God that drove Uzzah to keep the ark from falling off the ark, yet for doing what was clearly forbidden in scripture he was stricken. (Num. 4:15) At 1 Chron 15:13-15 David, however, seems to think that everyone was at fault for God's anger. In the fourth chapter of Numbers cited here God had given strict command as to how the ark was to be moved and by whom it was permitted. He did not specifically state that they could not carry it on a cart, but He did indeed tell them how they could. Succumbing to syncretism they copied the manner in which the Philistines carried the ark and improved on that. It is clear that we are not to improvise, even when our motives are good.

“and they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.”

(Jer 7:31) (cf Jer 19:5)

Jeremiah cuts straight to the root of idolatrous worship. The people were worshiping in a manner that was of their own creation and did not originate in the mind of God. If they had consulted His Word for direction in worship they could have spared themselves the ire of God. God as creator has the right to determine and to set forth how he will be served by his creation.

The examples are extensive. There is King Saul who offered sacrifice without authority from God. The command was for Levitical priests to do so. He lost his kingship and his family. (1 Sam 13:8-14)

“in the month which he had devised of his own heart” King Jeroboam's ordaining of his own feast day and such is the very paradigm of false worship. He did not see any harm in engaging in any worship that God did not forbid. If it is wicked for he as king to set out days as holy, then it must follow that it is also wicked for popes, religious leaders, and all people to do so. (Cf. 1 Ki 12:32-33)

Concurring with the Old Testament teaching on worship, the Apostle Paul condemns some at Collosae for seeking to impose Judaical food laws, holy days, and other man-made doctrines upon the church.

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“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances- touch not; taste not; handle not; which are all to perish with the using- after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh”

(Col 2:20-23)

Paul claims that the adding to God's Word is a vain display of “will worship” and not worship according to God's will. Such man made regulations prohibit Christian liberty. They are “not in any honor” to a believer.

God has set forth a holy day for His Worship and a Book of Psalms to be sung. Can we, or even should we, improve upon that? What is our theology, or view of God, whereby we are set out to improve upon the manner in which God Himself has commanded us to worship Him?

Jesus championed this cause with the Jewish leaders. He oft times rebuked them for adding to God's law. They too fell victim to the human nature of allowing man-made traditions to interfere with true worship.

“thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.” (Matt 15:6)

The early church permitted traditions and rituals as well as syncretizing with pagan religions and degenerated into the idolatrous and heretical Roman Catholic Church that needed drastic reformation in the 16 and 17th centuries. History demonstrates that without our returning to the regulative principles prescribed in scripture alone we too will degenerate into a heretical church.

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“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”
(Matt 15:8-9)

Modern Christians might argue that it infringes upon their Christian liberty and is too restrictive for this era. But what are the logical implications of perverting what God ordains by allowing anything not forbidden. Clearly it is not enough to permit things that are expressly not forbidden and forbid anything not commanded.

Worship services as ordained by scripture contains the following ordinances:

Preaching of the Word (Matt 26:13, Mk 16:15, Acts 9:20, 2Tim 4:2, Acts 20:8, 17:10, 1Cor 14:28)

Reading of the Word of God (Mk 4:16) Acts 13:15, 1 Tim 4:13, rev 1:13, Acts 1:13, 16:13, 1Cor 11:20)

Meeting on the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7, 1Cor 16:2, rev 1:10, 1Cor 11:18)

Administration of sacraments (Matt 28:19, Matt 26:26-29, 1 Cor 11:24-25)

Hearing the Word of God (Lk 2:46, Acts 8:31, Rom 10:41, Jas 1:22, Lk 4:20, Acts 20:9)

Prayer (Matt 6:9, 1 Thess 5:17, Heb 13:18, Phil 4:6, Jas 1:5, 1 Cor 11:13, Dt 22:5)

Singing of Psalms (1Chron 16:9, Ps 95:1-2, Ps 105:2, 1 Cor 14:26, Eph 5:19, Col 3:16)

Anything else added to it is man made and not commanded by God.

8

Celebration of the Christ Mass

Remembrance is an important theme in the scriptures. Passover, arguably the most significant of all the feasts on the Hebrew calendar, is about remembering what the Lord had done.

“And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by the strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this place; there shall no leavened bread be eaten” (Ex 13:3)

All of the celebrations in scripture are monuments to what God has done. In Christ we have fulfillment of all of these.

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth that until heaven and earth disappear not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished”
(Matt 5:17-18)

Everything that God has done, and the promise of what He will do, are brought together with fulfillment in the Christ. It is Christ alone that we are to celebrate. The scriptures even command how that is to be done:

“For when he had given thanks he took the bread and broke it and said, take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.”

(1Cor 11:24)

The celebration of the Lord's Table commanded in scripture is to remember all Christ did in the fulfillment of all God did in Him. The celebration of the Christ Mass is a celebration of past and present idolatry.

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Let us first take a look at the Mass itself. As centuries passed the Lord's Table disappeared and was replaced by an altar. They had lost sight of the reality that to a Christian the cross was the only altar. There were now priests dressed in ancient Babylonian priestly vestments. This was caused by the lack of persecution and comfort. When the state of Rome became a Christian patron under Constantine the simplicity and reality of the Lord's Table were displaced by heathen forms. In an age when all of the religions were being united through syncretism to promote unity this could be the only outcome. In exchange for peace and comfort the church gave no resistance. Babylonian customs flourished in pagan Rome.

In Babylonian altars there was an image of a woman, the Queen of Heaven. She was holding a baby known as the Seed. To this woman was sacrificed a bloodless offering of round moon shaped cakes. They were to be placed on the altar where the faithful could bow down before them in reverence. This was not a new practice for it was spoken of centuries earlier.

“Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.”

(Jer 44)

In an effort to bring the pagan religions into the church was to adopt their rites and give them Christian meaning. This compromise was to call the bread the body of Christ, or the host. It actually becomes this upon a ritual blessing spoken by the priest. There is no doubt that the holding of this bread in

reverence, as being God is idolatry. This is still the practice of the Roman Catholic Church today. It is there claim that it is a continual unbloody sacrifice offered for the sins of the living and the dead. Each time the sacrifice is made it is celebrated, thus the “Celebration of the Mass”. This is a denial and rejection of the work that Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross. As stated in Galatians, Christ died as a sacrifice for our sins once for all. This practice is blasphemy. 10

“and almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without blood there is no remission.”

(Heb 9:22)

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached to you, let them be accursed.” (Gal 1:8)

“To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Is 8:20)

The highest Mass of the Papish (Roman Catholic) calendar is the Christ Mass. As stated earlier, it is the ultimate monument to past and present idolatry. A celebration of remembrance over against those things commanded by God to remember. Let us take a look at what we are reminded of in the celebration of the Christ Mass and the festivals revolving around it. During the week of the winter solstice every pagan civilization had a god which was celebrated with festivals. In pagan Rome Saturnalia was the sun god celebrated and sacrificed to so that he would come back strong again in the spring. This feast was midweek of the solstice, on or about December 25. Ironically, (maybe), the day which the Papists celebrated the birth of Christ at the Christ Mass. The apostolic church did not do this, in fact as late as 245 AD church leader Origen repudiated the idea of this as if he were a King Pharaoh. It was not until after Christian Rome had begun to sycretize in the 6th century.

As the church spread so went its idolatry and the additions to its own it picked up. A Babylonian tradition throughout the empire was that of the sacredness of evergreen trees during the solstice. It is said that the spirit of Nimrod coming to life again and being born to a virgin. In Rome they would

decorate these trees with red berries to celebrate this. In the northern parts (Germany, Scandinavia) the trees were decorated with gilded nuts, candles and apples to represent the stars moon and sun. This is still popular with Wicca today. Celtic Druids lit a ceremonial log, called a Yul, to light a strange fire in honor of the sun god. It would be extinguished and re-lit in the equinox, symbolizing the sun's rebirth.

11

In Rome Saturnalia celebrations included the giving of gifts, merry making and the decorating of their temples with bows made from the sacred evergreens. The Druids used mistletoe with great ritual and the Saxons used holly.

I am sensitive that the fact of pagan origins in modern celebrations of the Christ Mass is widely known. They are dismissed as opportunities to witness to unbelievers and that they have new meanings today that are harmless. This is born out of ignorance, however. It is a total disregard for the biblical teachings regarding idols, paraphernalia associated with idols and monuments thereof.

God has such a strong hatred of idolatry that He not only commanded His people not to engage in it, but that they would destroy anything associated with it.

“Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: and ye shall overthrow their altars, and break down their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place. Ye shall not do unto the Lord your God...and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods?

Even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God”

(Dt 12:2-4)

Signs of these superstitions are also to be done away with. Before returning to Bethel Jacob set out to purify the camp by having all signs of false gods taken from them. (Gen 35:4). Elijah, while engaged in his contest of sorts with the prophets of Baal he used an altar made specifically for god, and not the one used by the Baalists. It was not acceptable to use something made for idols and attempt to make it holy.

(1Ki 18:30). When Jehu sacked the sacred pillars and destroyed the temple of Baal he did not re-use it for a temple of God, he “*made it a refuse dump to this day.*” (2 Ki 10:27) In restoring true worship of God to Judah Josiah not only removed the Jewish priests engaged in idolatrous practices, but he destroyed all images, ritual booths, and he torn down altars etc. Further he purified the practices of the Passover, returning it to the those ascribed in scripture alone. (2 Ki 23:5) 12

These are to be examples for us. God does not want His people to take pagan days set aside by man-made religious leaders. He does not want us to engage in popish rites rooted in idolatrous practices, nor to have in our possession the symbols and paraphernalia associated with them. The scriptures are also clear that the changing of their meaning to a Christian one is also unacceptable before the Lord. His people may not be offended by all of this, we may say “It's just Christmas”, but we can rest assured that our Lord God is offended. I liken it to your spouse keeping a photo of a former lover on your mantle only to claim it is only there to remind him/her how good they have it with you.

The kings which God was pleased were the ones who destroyed idolatry at every level and returned to true worship. He commands the elimination of all monuments to idols.

The concept of holy days themselves is pagan. In His commandments God set forth one day each week for the celebration of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Initially this was for rest, but in its fulfillment but we find our rest in the Lord of the Sabbath, thus the Christian sabbath known as the Lord's Day. This day is a celebration of the whole work of redemption, not one aspect thereof. It is a celebration of the God-man Jesus from His birth, through crucifixion and resurrection, to ascension until he comes. The very concept of honoring different aspects of ones life is not found in scripture but from emperor worship. The only mention of a celebration of a day of birth in the New Testament was that of King Herod (Matt 14:6) which, incidentally, culminated with the murder of John the Baptist. In the Old testament the only mention of such a celebration was that of Pharaoh (Gen 40:20) which also was a prelude to murder.

Although the Lord's Day is truly a Holy Day in the eyes of our Lord God, it is the papal holy day

celebration of the Christ Mass that is adored, and revered over nay other. There is even a cult-like attendance of only this holy day at worship services. These individuals pay no mind to adulterers, drunkenness and other licentious behaviors while referring to those who skip the celebration of the Christ Mass to be deluded. Culture has turned this idolatrous celebration into a month-long preparation and celebration. What Jesus desires of us is not the observance of things he did not command, 13 but that which he did command.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” (Matt 28:19-20)

The Christian message is one of truth, everything about the celebration of the Christ Mass is a lie; from its pagan origins, the date that is set, to the re-sacrificing of a bloodless sacrifice, down to the telling our children of a Santa Claus. The Holy Spirit of God is a Spirit of Truth and the Gospel the Word of Truth. We are told that we are to worship Him in Spirit and Truth. Are Christians good witnesses to the truth in the celebration of a lie? The world loves this lie:

*“Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?
Whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”*
(James 4:4)

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world”
(1John 2:15)

God-hating, Christ-hating, idol worshiping pagan unbelievers love this celebration. Why is that? Because it is a worldly pagan festival built upon an unbiblical lie. If it was truly of God then child molesters, homosexuals, adulterers, murderers, drug addicts and such would despise it. Do they love the Lord's Day? Are we not to be the salt and light of the world?

So why do those who refer to themselves as Christians, those who are of a faith system derived directly,

or indirectly out of the reformation of the Roman popish church. The Mass itself was declared heretical by Christianity, yet the celebration of the Christ Mass, now shortened to Christmas has wide spread acceptance. When did this occur? The Mass is not celebrated in these reformation churches on the Lord's Day, why celebrate the highest Mass of the papacy.

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Let us review history for a moment, at least American history. Colonial America was largely puritanical and grounded in the reformation. Rooted in this movement against the papacy Anti-Catholic sentiments were widespread whereby the ratio of Reformed to Papal colonists lopsided toward the former. There are no accounts of Christmas celebrations in the early days of America, rather there are many anti-Christmas accounts. In the countries that had ousted popish kings and reformed Christmas was outlawed. This continued on in the English colonies. Records show that Congress was in session on December 25, 1789 with no mention of a holy day. It was the onslaught of immigrants and syncretism with foreign religious customs, especially those of the papacy, which brought this celebration to the fore in America. By 1870 it was a legal Federal holiday. Commercialism brought on by children stories, popular magazine and newspaper attention, the invention of a marketable Santa and merchant America's realization that this was an opportunity for them, combined with consumerism, gave rise to the Christmas we know today. Nothing more than a replica of Saturnalia festivals.

“Take heed to thyself that thou not be ensnared by following them, after they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? Even so I will do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God...What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.”

(Deut 12:30-32)

Do not find yourself the fool. There is a revival of paganism and idolatry going on today. Many old

festivals are being recognized, feminism is reviving fertility rites. Just as with ancient Rome, in an effort to promote peace and harmony in the empire between diverse ethnic groups, syncretism with false religions such as Roman Catholicism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and so on is perverting true religion. Those of the reformed wing of churches once found these practice abhorred but now, that they have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, celebrate in much the same manner on this un-godly day. 15

Abandoning the regulative principles found in scripture is what made the Church go wrong before and brought about the need for it to be reformed and called out from under paganism. Today, for the same reasons, we must return to these biblical principles, and like good king Josiah, call the people back to the true worship of God and reform the church of Christ once again.

The Bible teaches that *“the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God”* (1Cor 3:19).

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?...Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2Cor 6:14-17)

When the church and the world have something in common as to worship and the things of God, the Church is bond together with unbelievers. This is the wickedness of a broken Church.

These festivals look good and are inviting for *“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light”*
(2 Cor 11:14)

Do not be deceived. Take note that every time you try to justify away this discourse you will not rely on the scriptures to do so, but the ways of man. Those vain attempts to use scripture, you will find, are

weak attempts to impose Christmas upon the scriptures.

“Thus saith the LORD: Learn not the way of the heathen...for the customs of the people are vain”

(Jeremiah 10: 2-3)

Epilogue

All of this is being said to discourage the Christian practice of the Christ-Mass and is not necessarily an attack upon a family celebration whereby loved ones gather around a tree and exchange gifts as expressions of love. As a family oriented celebration this does not necessarily impede upon the Word of God. It is the making of it a holy day that contains no holiness, and stands against the commands of God that makes it deplorable. One may celebrate their family with reverence for God, as all things should be done unto his glory, but not the setting apart the day as holy. It is a secular celebration that may be celebrated by anyone, of any religion, much like America's Thanksgiving.

In short, it is time to take Christ out of Christmas and let us render unto God what is his, and unto Caesar what is his.