

## CONFESSTION OF FAITH.

### CHAPTER 21.-*Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day.*

VIII. This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affaires before hand, doe not only observe an holy Rest, all the Day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly imployments, and recreations<sup>1</sup>, but also are taken up the whole time, in the publique and private Exercises of his Worship, and in the Duties of necessity, and mercy<sup>2</sup>.

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*Question 1.—Is the Sabbath then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparation of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs before-hand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts, about their worldly employments and recreations; but are also taken up the whole time, in the public and private exercises of his own worship, except what is spent in the duties of necessity and mercy?*

Answer.—Yes. Ex. 20:8; 16:23, 25, 26, 29, 30; 31:15-17. Thus do they err, who think, that after public worship is ended, the rest of the Lord's day, may be spent in ordinary exercises, recreations, and such like other sports as are not unlawful on other days, unless they are forbidden by the church, or commonwealth wherein men live. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because the Lord says in the fourth commandment, In it thou shalt not do any work, Ex. 20:10. But ordinary recreation, games, and sports, are our own works, *contra* Jer. 17:21-27. 2.) Because nature itself requires, that we bestow as much of the Sabbath day on God, who is the Lord of time, and of all things which we have, as we can, and use to bestow upon our own affairs, on other days, Gen. 2:3. 3.) Because the Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, admonishes his people to be circumspect in keeping the Sabbath, Isa. 58:13, 14. Which command is only a continuance of that moral precept embodied in the commandments, Deut. 5:12, 13, 15; cf. Jer. 17:22. Additionally, it appears as a great concern of a church seeking to break off her backslidings to return to the Lord's Sabbath, Neh. 13:15-22.

Thus, it behooves men to set apart the Sabbath day but also an adequate period of the preceding day in order to make due preparation so that the Sabbath itself would be kept entire, Mark 15:42. This duty of preparation is implied in the keeping of the commandment whole and entire when we are commanded to *remember* the Sabbath day, Ex. 20:8. Remembrance demands a consciousness of duty and a reflection upon its requirements and, in this case, implies the necessity of a period of time in which due preparations may be undertaken so that the proper observance of the whole day may be studied, Luke 23:54.

*Question 2.—Wherein consist the exercises of public and private worship?*

Answer.—The exercises of public worship consist in: 1.) The hearing the word publicly read and preached with reverence and attention, 1 Pet. 2:2; Luke 4:16; our life depends upon it, Deut. 32:46, 47. 2.) Public prayers with the congregation, Zech. 8:21, 22; Isa.

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<sup>1</sup> Ex. 20:8; 16:23, 25, 26, 29, 30; 31:15-17; Isa. 58:13; Neh. 13:15-19, 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. 58:13; Matt. 12:1-13.

56:7; Mark 11:17. 3.) Praising God with Psalms, Ps. 47:6; 148:11-13. 4.) Partaking of the sacraments, Acts 20:7. 5.) Making collections for the poor, 1 Cor. 16:1, 2.

The exercises of private worship consist in: 1.) Family worship, which, though a duty enjoined to be performed upon all days, is especially appropriate on the Sabbath, Lev. 23:3. 2.) Family catechizing and instruction, too, is especially appropriate on the Sabbath, Ps. 34:11; Prov. 4:3, 4. 3.) Godly conference, Isa. 58:13; Luke 14:1, 12, 15. 4.) Holy care by the master of the house to restrain Sabbath profanation in his household, Deut. 5:14. Question 3.—*Wherein consists those duties of necessity and mercy which are allowed to be maintained upon the Sabbath?*

Answer.—Works of necessity exclude all those works, whether servile or worldly employments, which are all parts of men's ordinary callings, Neh. 13:15-17. Even the materials for the tabernacle were not to be prepared upon the Sabbath day, Ex. 31:13-17. In short, all works which are our own works are to be eschewed, Isa. 58:13. Therefore, though common actions and events which are necessary are allowed, there is to be diligence to avoid all unnecessary additions to our actions, e.g. food being necessary, Mark 2:23-28; yet excess preparation is forbidden, Ex. 16:23 *with* Num. 11:8. The prohibition of travelling to unnecessary servile work is unlawful on the Sabbath-day, Ex. 16:29; and was rightly extended to take in all unnecessary walking or travelling, Acts 1:12; yet, this did not prohibit the faithful Shunamite woman from travelling to attend the ministry of Elisha, 2 Kings 4:23.

As well, works of mercy are wholly appropriate upon the Sabbath day, Matt. 12:1-13.