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of such an ordinance. From what source is the duty of public religious worship derived; and is it intended to be a standing and permanent ordinance in the Church of Christ? It is not difficult to find an answer to such a question, or to evince the nature and obligation of the ordinance as part of the public homage of the Church to God.

I. The foundation of the duty of social worship lies in the law of nature itself.

View man individually and apart from other men, and it is the very law of his being, as a creature of God, to love, and honour, and serve his Creator. Praise and outward homage and adoration are the very expression by a dependent creature of the relation in which as a creature he stands to God—the very end for which he was created and exists. Add to the idea of the individual man, taken and regarded as separate and apart from others, the further idea of man as a social being, or man made for and placed in the society of others, and you are at once shut up to the notion of social worship as a duty no less binding upon men collectively, than was the duty of private worship upon men individually. Into whatever relation he enters, man carries with him the same paramount and unchanging law which binds him to honour, and love, and worship his Creator; and every relation of life, capable of being turned to such an end, underlies according to its character the same obligation of doing homage to God. Man in the closet, man in the family, man in the Church, is equally bound to the duties of the personal, the domestic, the public worship of God. Without this, there are many of the powers and faculties of man's nature as a social being, formed as they were for the glory of God, which he cannot bring to do their proper work of glorifying Him. The worship of God, publicly and in society with others, is the proper expression towards God of man's social nature. The very law and light of nature tell us that the public worship of God is a standing and permanent ordinance for the whole human race.

II. The institution of the ordinance of public worship as a standing and permanent ordinance for man, is demonstrated by the Divine appointment in regard to it.

In what manner man as the creature of God is to hold intercourse with Him for the purpose of worship; in what form or by what methods he is to express his natural duty of honouring

and adoring his Maker; by what positive institutions, or in what appointed way, he is to draw near in religious service to God,—all this has not been left to the wisdom or invention of men to regulate, but has been determined and ruled by God Himself. The public worship of one God and Father of all, forms indeed one of the duties of natural religion; but in addition to this, it has been made one of the positive appointments of revealed religion, and the manner of it has been expressly enjoined. From the very beginning there has been a visible society of men united together upon the principle of “calling upon the name of the Lord”¹ in social union, and separated from other men by the profession which characterizes them as His people. In other words, there has been a Church on earth under every dispensation since the first; the members of which have been distinguished from the rest of the world by the faith which they held in common, and by uniting together in public acts of worship as expressive of that faith. The avowal of their belief in the face of men, and their association in a Church state for the purposes of public religious worship, were not matters of mere opinion on their part, nor matters resulting solely from the obligations of natural religion. They associated themselves together in this way by the express institution of God, in accordance with the promise that Christ should have a seed to serve Him, and a Church throughout all ages.² It was a Church union constituted upon the authority of God, and regulated by His positive institutions; and Church worship as a revealed ordinance was grafted upon the duty as previously recognised in the character of an ordinance of nature.

There is a duty of nature, which lays upon man the obligation of social worship; there is a duty of grace to the same effect, over and above the duty of nature. And not only so. But the manner of social worship, in addition to the duty, has been expressly appointed by God. There has never been wanting in any age since the first a Divine directory for the form and method of worship, suited to man’s circumstances as a sinner, and regulating the manner of his approach in religious acts to God. There have been at all times positive observances and institutions of worship added to what was enjoined or required by the law of nature.

¹ Gen. iv. 26.

² Gen. xvii. 7; Ps. xxii. 30; Isa. liii. 10

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This addition of positive institutions of worship, and the express regulation of the manner of it, were more especially necessitated by man's fall. After the fatal separation between man and God occasioned by that event, it remained for God, and for Him alone, to say whether He would ever again permit the approach of man to Him in the way of worship; and if so, it remained for God, and for Him alone, to prescribe the terms and to regulate the manner of the approach. In regard to such a matter as either the conditions or the way of a sinner's approach to God in accepted worship, it was for the sinner not to devise his own method, but to receive submissively God's method. And hence not only the duty of Church worship, but the express manner of it, have been dictated by God in every age; and the way in which a sinner might worship Him acceptably, has been prescribed and regulated by positive Divine institution. There are the arbitrary rules and observances of a Church state enjoined according to a Divine directory for worship, in addition to what the religion of nature might dictate.

These institutions of public worship of a positive kind have varied from age to age under the different dispensations of God. There were the rite of sacrifice and the original promise, that formed the public worship and the Bible of men immediately after the fall. There were, in addition to these, the rite of circumcision and the covenant with his special seed, that formed the directory for worship and the revelation given to Abraham and his successors in the patriarchal time. There were the passover and the giving of the law, the institutions of Moses, the temple service, and the prophecies, that formed the appointed worship and oracles of the Jewish Church. And under the New Testament dispensation, although, compared with what went before, it is a spiritual one, God still regulates the manner as well as enjoins the duty of Church worship. In short, in no one age since the first have sinners been left to their own devices or option in regard either to the duty or to the manner of social worship. Nor could it be so. The sinner may not dare to approach to God, even for the purpose of worshipping Him, except according to the express manner which God has laid down. Public worship is one of the acts of the Church; and every part of the tabernacle is to be made according to the model given on the mount. It is a standing and perpetual ordinance of God,