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## Chapter 10

### HOW SHALL WE THEN WORSHIP?

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Comedian Flip Wilson used to have a character in his repertoire named Reverend Leroy, who pastored The Church of What's Happenin' Now. In the early 1970s Reverend Leroy and his church were an outrageous parody. But, truthfully, the evangelical community these days is swarming with Reverend Leroy's and churches that might aptly be named The Church of What's Happenin' Now.

There is almost no limit to how far some churches will go to be "relevant" and "contemporary" in their worship services. And nothing, it seems, is too profane or outrageous to be fused with worship.

The *Los Angeles Times Magazine* recently reported on one Lutheran church in Southern California that distributes flyers advertising their church service as "God's Country Goodtime hour." The flyers boldly promise "line dancing following worship." According to the magazine article, "the pastor is dancing, too, decked out in Wrangler boots and Levis." The pastor credits the campaign with revitalizing his church. The article describes Sunday morning at the church:

Members listen to sermons whose topics include the pastor's '70 Ford pickup, and Christian sex (rated R for "relevance, respect, and relationship," says [the pastor], "and more fun than it sounds"). After the service, they dance to a band called—what else?—the Honkytonk Angels. Attendance has been steadily rising.<sup>1</sup>

You might think such a scene is merely an aberration from an obscure or offbeat church. Sadly, that is not the case. Current church-growth theory has opened the door wide for such antics. It sometimes seems as if P. T. Barnum is the main role model for many practitioners of church growth these days. In fact, the following ad for a Sunday evening service appeared in the bulletin of one of the largest and best-known churches in the heart of America's "Bible belt":

#### Circus

See Barnum and Bailey bested as the magic of the big top circus comes to The Fellowship of Excitement! Clowns! Acrobats! Animals! Popcorn! What a great night!

This same church once had their pastoral staff put on a wrestling match during a Sunday service, even going so far as to have a professional wrestler train the pastors to throw one another around the ring, pull hair, and kick shins without actually hurting one another.<sup>2</sup> Again, these are not extraordinary incidents. Scores of churches are following similar methods, employing every means available to spice up their services.

Clearly, the corporate worship of the Lord's Day is undergoing a revolution that has few parallels in all of church history. The resulting crisis within evangelicalism cannot help but be profound in its direct bearing upon the health of thousands of our churches.

## TRUE WORSHIP

A few years ago while preaching through the gospel of John, I was struck by the depth of meaning in John 4:23: “An hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.” I saw as clearly as I had ever seen before the implications of that phrase “worship ... in spirit and truth.”

The phrase suggests, first of all, that true worship involves the intellect as much as the emotions. It underscores the truth that worship is to be focused on God, not on the worshiper. The context also indicates that Jesus was saying that true worship is more a matter of substance than of form. And He was teaching that worship embraces what we do in life, not just what we do in the formal place of worship.

I interrupted the John 4 series at that point and did an extended topical study on worship. Moody Press graciously asked me to compile those messages in a book, which they published in 1983 as *The Ultimate Priority*. That survey of worship affected me as profoundly as any sermon series I have ever prepared. It forever changed my perspective on what **it** means to worship.

That series also signaled the beginning of a new era for our church. Our corporate worship took on a whole new depth and significance. People began to be conscious that every aspect of the church service—the music, the praying, the preaching, and even the offering—is worship rendered to God. They began to look at superficialities as an affront to a holy God. They saw worship as a participant’s activity, not a spectator sport. Many realized for the first time that worship *is* the church’s ultimate priority—not public relations, not recreation and social activities, not boosting attendance figures, but worshipping God.

Furthermore, as our congregation began to think more earnestly than ever about worship, we were continually drawn to the only reliable and sufficient worship manual—Scripture. If God desires worship in spirit and *truth*, then surely all true worshipers must fashion their worship in accord with the truth He has revealed. If worship is something offered to God—and not just a show put on for the benefit of the congregation—then every aspect of it must be pleasing to God and in harmony with His Word. So the effect of our renewed emphasis on worship was that it heightened our commitment to the centrality of Scripture.

## ***SOLA SCRIPTURA***

A few years after that series on worship, I preached through Psalm 19. It was as if I saw for the first time the power of what the psalmist was saying about the absolute sufficiency of Scripture:

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul;  
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.  
**The precepts of the Lord are right; rejoicing the heart**  
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.  
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;  
The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.  
They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.  
(Ps. 19:7—10)

The point of that passage is, quite simply, that Scripture is *wholly sufficient to meet every need of the human soul*. It suggests that *all essential spiritual truth* is contained in the Word of God. Think of this: The truth of Scripture can restore the sin-damaged soul, confer spiritual wisdom, cheer the downcast heart, and bring spiritual enlightenment. In other words, the Bible sums up everything we need to know about truth and righteousness. Or, as the apostle Paul wrote, Scripture is able to equip us for every good work (2 Tim. 3:17).

That series on Psalm 19 marked another decisive moment in our church's life. It brought us face-to-face with the Reformers' principle of *sola Scriptura*—*Scripture* alone. In an age when many evangelicals seem to be turning en masse to worldly expertise in the areas of psychology, business, politics, public relations, and entertainment, we were pointed back to Scripture as the only source for infallible spiritual truth. That had an impact on every aspect of our church life—including our worship.

## THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE TO REGULATE WORSHIP

How does the sufficiency of Scripture apply to worship? The Reformers answered that question by applying *sola Scriptura* to worship in a tenet historically called the *regulative principle*. John Calvin was one of the first to articulate it succinctly:

We may not adopt any device [in our worship] which seems fit to ourselves, but look to the injunctions of him who alone is entitled to prescribe. Therefore, if we would have him approve our worship, this rule, which he everywhere enforces with the utmost strictness, must be carefully observed. . . . God disapproves of all modes of worship not expressly sanctioned by his word.<sup>3</sup>

Calvin supported this principle with a number of relevant biblical texts, including 1 Samuel 15:22: “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.” He also appealed to Matthew 15:9, which says, “In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.”

An English Reformer and a contemporary of Calvin, John Hooper, stated the same principle in this way: “Nothing should be used in the Church which has not either the express Word of God to support it, or otherwise is a thing indifferent in itself, which brings no profit when done or used, but no harm when not done or omitted.” And nineteenth-century Scottish church historian William Cunningham defined the regulative principle in these terms: “It is unwarrantable and unlawful to introduce into the government and worship of the church anything which has not the positive sanction of Scripture.”

The Reformers and Puritans applied the regulative principle against formal ritual, priestly vestments, church hierarchy, and other remnants of medieval Roman Catholic worship. The regulative principle was often cited, for example, by English Reformers who opposed elements of high-church Anglicanism that had been borrowed from Catholic tradition. It was the Puritans' commitment to the regulative principle that caused hundreds of Puritan pastors to be ejected by decree from Church of England pulpits in 1662.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, the simplicity of worship forms in Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational, and other evangelical traditions is the result of applying the regulative principle. Evangelicals today would do well to recover their spiritual ancestors' confidence in *sola Scriptura* as it applies to worship and church leadership. A number of harmful trends that are gaining momentum these days reveal

a diminishing evangelical confidence in the sufficiency of Scripture. On the one hand, there is, as we have noted, almost a circus atmosphere in some churches, where pragmatic methods that trivialize what is holy are being employed to boost attendance. On the other hand, growing numbers of former evangelicals are abandoning simple worship forms in favor of high-church formalism. Some are even leaving evangelicalism altogether and aligning with Eastern Orthodoxy or Roman Catholicism.

Meanwhile, some churches have simply abandoned virtually all objectivity, opting for a worship style that is turbulent, emotional, and devoid of any rational sense. Perhaps the most talked-about movement currently sweeping Christendom is a phenomenon known as the “Toronto Blessing,” where whole congregations laugh uncontrollably for no rational reason, bark like dogs, roar like lions, cluck like chickens, or jump, run, and convulse. They see this as evidence that the power of God has been imparted to them.

None of these trends is being advanced for solid biblical reasons. Instead, their advocates cite pragmatic arguments or seek support from misinterpreted proof texts, revisionist history or ancient tradition. This is precisely the mind-set the Reformers fought against.

A new understanding of *sola Scriptura*—namely, the sufficiency of Scripture—ought to spur us to keep reforming our churches, to regulate our worship according to biblical guidelines, and to desire passionately to be those who worship God in spirit and truth.

## APPLYING *SOLA SCRIPTURA* TO WORSHIP

Immediately, practical questions arise about how *sola Scriptura* should be used to regulate worship. Someone will point out that no less than Charles Spurgeon used the regulative principle to rule out the use of any musical instruments in worship. Spurgeon refused to allow an organ in the Metropolitan Tabernacle because he believed there was no biblical warrant for instrumental music in Christian worship. Indeed, there are Christians even today who oppose instrumental music on the same grounds. In the church I pastor, however, we employ instruments of all kinds, from the trumpet and the harp to loud cymbals (cf. Ps. 150).

Obviously, not all who affirm the soundness of the regulative principle necessarily agree in every detail about how it should be applied. Some would point to such differences in matters of practice and suggest that the whole regulative principle is untenable. William Cunningham noted that critics of this principle often try to debunk it by resorting to the tactic of *reductio ad absurdum*:

Those who dislike this principle, from whatever cause, usually try to run us into difficulties by putting a very stringent construction upon it, and thereby giving it an appearance of absurdity. [But] the principle must be interpreted and explained in the exercise of common sense. . . . Difficulties and differences of opinion may arise about details, even when sound judgment and common sense are brought to bear upon the interpretation and application of the principle; but this affords no ground for denying or doubting the truth or soundness of the principle itself.<sup>7</sup>

Cunningham acknowledged that the regulative principle is often employed in arguing against things that may be seen as relatively unimportant, such as “rites and ceremonies, vestments and organs, crossings, kneelings, bowings,” and other trappings of formal worship. Because of that, Cunningham said, “some men seem to think that it partakes of the intrinsic littleness of things.”<sup>8</sup>

Many therefore conclude that those who advocate the regulative principle do so because they actually enjoy fighting over small matters.

Certainly no one should take delight in disputes over minor points. It is undoubtedly true that the regulative principle has occasionally been misused in this way, but concern for correct worship is not, ultimately, a minor issue. An obsession with applying any principle down to the smallest detail can easily become a destructive form of legalism, though that is not inherent in the actual concern for sound worship.<sup>9</sup> But the principle of *sola Scriptura* as it applies to worship is nevertheless worth defending fiercely. The principle itself is by no means trivial. After all, failure to adhere to the biblical prescription for worship is the very thing that plunged the church into the darkness and idolatry of the Middle Ages.

I have no interest in igniting a debate about musical instruments, pastoral robes, sanctuary decorations, or other such matters. If there are those who want to use the regulative principle as a springboard for such debates, please leave me out. The issues that spark my concern about contemporary worship are far larger than these matters. They seem to me to go to the very heart of what it means to worship in spirit and in truth. My concern is this: The contemporary church's abandonment of *sola Scriptura* as the regulative principle has opened the church to some of the grossest imaginable abuses—including honkytonk church services, the carnival sideshow atmosphere, and wrestling exhibitions. Even the broadest, most liberal application of the regulative principle would have a corrective effect on such abuses.

Consider for a moment what would happen to corporate worship if the contemporary church took *sola Scriptura* seriously. Four biblical guidelines for worship immediately come to mind that have fallen into a state of tragic neglect. Recovering them would surely bring about a new Reformation in the modern church's worship.

## PREACH THE WORD

In corporate worship, the preaching of the Word should take first place. All the New Testament instructions to pastors center on these words of Paul to Timothy: "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (2 Tim. 4:2). Elsewhere, Paul summed up his advice to the young pastor, "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching" (1 Tim. 4:13). Clearly, the ministry of the Word was at the heart of Timothy's pastoral responsibilities.

In the New Testament church, the activities of the believing community were totally devoted to "the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42). The preaching of the Word was the centerpiece of every worship service. Paul once preached to a congregation past midnight (20:7—8). The ministry of the Word was such a crucial part of church life that before any man could qualify to serve as an elder, he had to prove himself skilled in teaching the Word (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24; Titus 1:9).

The apostle Paul characterized his own calling this way: "Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, *so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God*" (Col. 1:25, italics added). You can be sure that preaching was the predominant feature in every worship service he took part in,

Many people see preaching and worship as two distinct aspects of the church service, as if preaching has nothing to do with worship and vice versa. But that is an erroneous concept. The

ministry of the Word is the platform on which all genuine worship must be built. In *Between Two Worlds*, John Stott says it well:

Word and worship belong indissolubly to each other. All worship is an intelligent and loving response to the revelation of God, because it is the adoration of his Name. Therefore acceptable worship is impossible without preaching. For preaching is making known the Name of the Lord, and worship is praising the Name of the Lord made known. Far from being an alien intrusion into worship, the reading and preaching of the word are actually indispensable to it. The two cannot be divorced.<sup>10</sup>

Preaching is an irreplaceable aspect of all corporate worship. In fact, the whole church service should revolve around the ministry of the Word. Everything else is either preparatory to, or a response to, the exposition of Scripture.

When drama, music, comedy, or other activities are allowed to usurp the preaching of the Word, true worship inevitably suffers. And when preaching is subjugated to pomp and circumstance, that also hinders real worship. A “worship” service without the ministry of the Word is of questionable value. Moreover, a “church” where the Word of God is not regularly and faithfully preached is no true church.

#### EDIFY THE FLOCK

Scripture tells us that the purpose of spiritual gifts is for the edification of the whole church (Eph. 4:12; cf. 1 Cor. 14:12). Therefore all ministry in the context of the church should somehow be edifying—building up the flock, not just stirring emotions. Above all, ministry should be aimed at stimulating genuine worship. To do that it *must* be edifying. This is implied by the expression “worship . . . in spirit and truth.”

As we noted earlier, worship should engage the intellect as well as the emotions. By all means worship should be passionate, heartfelt, and moving. But the point is not to stir the emotions while turning off the mind. True worship merges heart and mind in a response of pure adoration, based on the truth revealed in the Word.

Music may sometimes move us by the sheer beauty of its sound, but such sentiment is not worship. Music by itself, apart from the truth contained in the lyrics, is not even a legitimate springboard for real worship. Similarly, a poignant story may be touching or stirring, but unless the message it conveys is set in the context of biblical truth, any emotions it may stir are of no use in prompting genuine worship. Aroused passions are not necessarily evidence that true worship is taking place.

Genuine worship is a response to divine *truth*. It is passionate because it arises out of our love for God. But to be true worship it must also arise out of a correct understanding of His law, His righteousness, His mercy, and His being. Real worship acknowledges God as He has revealed Himself in His Word. We know from Scripture, for example, that He is the only perfectly holy, all-powerful, all-knowing, omnipresent source from which flows all goodness, mercy, truth, wisdom, power, and salvation. Worship means ascribing glory to Him because of those truths. It means adoring Him for who He is, for what He has done, and for what He has promised. It *must* therefore be a response to the truth that He has revealed about Himself. Such worship cannot rise out of a vacuum. It is prompted and vitalized by the objective truth of the Word.

Neither rote ceremonies nor mere entertainment are able to provoke such worship—no matter how moving such things may be. Those things cannot edify. At best they can arouse the emotions. But that is not true worship.

## HONOR THE LORD

Hebrews 12:28 says, “Let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe.” That verse speaks of the attitude in which we should worship. The Greek word for “service” is *latreuomen*, which literally means “worship.” The point is that worship ought to be done reverently, in a way that honors God. In fact, the King James Version translates it this way: “Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly *fear*” (italics added). And the next verse adds, “For our God is a consuming fire” (v. 29).

There is certainly no place in the corporate worship of the church for the kind of frivolous, shallow, giddy atmosphere that often prevails in modern churches that seek to be “relevant.” To exchange the worship service for a circus is about as far from the spirit of biblical worship (“in reverence and awe”) as it is possible to get. “Reverence and awe” clearly refers to a solemn sense of honor as we perceive the majesty of God. It demands a sense of both God’s holiness and our own sinfulness. Everything in the corporate worship of the church should aim at fostering such an atmosphere.

Why would a church replace preaching and worship with entertainment and comedy in its Lord’s Day services? Many who have done it say they do so in order to reach non-Christians. They want to create a “user-friendly” environment that will be more appealing to unbelievers. Their stated goal is usually “relevance” rather than “reverence.” Their services are intentionally designed to reach unbelievers with the gospel, not for believers to come together for worship and edification. Many of these churches give little or no emphasis to the New Testament ordinances. The Lord’s Supper, if observed at all, is relegated to a smaller, midweek service. Baptism is virtually deemed optional, and baptisms are normally performed somewhere other than in the Sunday services.

What’s wrong with all of this? Is there a problem with using the Lord’s Day services as evangelistic meetings? Isn’t the church to reach the lost week by week? Is there really a biblical reason Sunday should be the day believers gather for worship?

Both biblically and historically there are a number of reasons for setting aside the first day of the week primarily for worship and fellowship among believers. Unfortunately, an in-depth examination of all these arguments would be far outside the scope of this brief chapter. But a simple application of the regulative principle will yield ample guidance.

We learn from Scripture, for example, that the first day of the week was the day the apostolic church came together to celebrate the Lord’s table: “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them” (Acts 20:7 KJV). Paul instructed the Corinthians to do their giving systematically, on the first day of the week, clearly implying that this was the day they came together for worship. History reveals that the early church referred to the first day of the week as the Lord’s Day, an expression found in Revelation 1:10.

Furthermore, Scripture suggests that the regular meetings of the early church were not for evangelistic purposes but primarily for mutual encouragement and worship among the community of believers. That’s why the writer of Hebrews made this plea: “Let us consider how

to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking *our own assembling together*, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another” (Heb. 10:24—25; italics added).

Certainly there were times when unbelievers came into an assembly of believers (cf. 1 Cor. 14:23). First-century church meetings were essentially public meetings, just as most are today. But the service itself was intentionally designed for worship and fellowship among believers. The corporate preaching of Christ would sometimes bring unbelievers to acknowledge Jesus as Lord savingly, but normally it seems evangelism took place in the context of everyday life, as believers went forth with the gospel (Acts 5:42; 6:7). First-century believers gathered for worship and fellowship and scattered for evangelism. When a church makes all its meetings evangelistic, believers lose opportunities to grow, be edified, and worship.

More to the point, there is simply no warrant in Scripture for adapting weekly church services to the preferences of unbelievers. Indeed, the practice seems to be contrary to the spirit of everything Scripture says about the assembly of believers. When the church comes together on the Lord’s Day, that is no time to entertain the lost, amuse the brethren, or otherwise cater to the “felt needs” of those in attendance. This is when we should bow before our God as a congregation and honor Him with our worship.

#### PUT NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH

In Philippians 3:3 the apostle Paul characterizes Christian worship this way: “We are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and *put no confidence in the flesh*” (italics added).

Paul goes on to testify about how he came to see that his own preChristian Pharisaical legalism was worthless. He describes how he was once obsessed with external, fleshly issues—such as circumcision, lineage, and legal obedience—rather than the more important issue of the state of his heart. Paul’s conversion on the Damascus road changed all that. His eyes were opened to the glorious truth of justification by faith. He realized that the only way he could stand before God and be accepted was by being clothed with the righteousness of Christ (v. 9). He learned that merely complying with religious rites—such as circumcision and ceremony—is of no spiritual value whatsoever. In fact, Paul labeled those things as rubbish or, more literally, as “dung” (Cv. 8 KJV).

To this day, however, when the average person speaks of “worship,” it is usually the external things that are in view—liturgy, ceremony, music, kneeling, and other formal issues. I recently read the testimony of a man who left evangelical Christianity and joined Roman Catholicism. One of the primary reasons he gave for abandoning evangelicalism was that he found Roman Catholic liturgy “more worshipful.” As he went on to explain, it became apparent that what he actually meant was that Rome offered more of the accoutrements of formal ritual—candle burning, statues, kneeling, reciting, crossing oneself, and so on. But those things have nothing to do with genuine worship in spirit and truth. In fact, as human inventions—not biblical prescriptions—they are precisely the sort of fleshly devices Paul labeled “dung.”

Experience and history show that the human tendency to add fleshly apparatus to the worship God prescribes is incredibly strong. Israel did this in the Old Testament, culminating in the religion of the Pharisees. Pagan religions consist of nothing *but* fleshly ritual. The fact that such ceremonies are often beautiful and moving do not make them true worship. Scripture is clear that God condemns all human additions to what He has explicitly commanded: “In vain do they

worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men” (Matt. 15:9). We who love the Word of God and believe in the principle of *sola Scriptura* must diligently be on guard against such a tendency.

## WORSHIP *IS* THE ULTIMATE PRIORITY

To Martha, troubled to distraction with the chores of being a hostess, our Lord said, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary” (Luke 10:41—42). The point was clear. Mary, who sat at His feet in adoration, had “chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (v. 42). Mary’s worship had eternal significance, whereas all Martha’s busy activity meant nothing beyond that particular afternoon.

Our Lord was teaching that worship is the one essential activity that must take precedence over every other activity of life. And if that is true in our individual lives, how much more weight should we give it in the context of the assembly of believers?

The world is filled with false and superficial religion. We who love Christ and believe that His Word is true dare not accommodate our worship to the styles and preferences of an unbelieving world. Instead, we must make it our business to be worshipers in spirit and in truth. We must be people who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh. And to do that we must allow Scripture alone to regulate our worship.

### NOTES

1. Judy Raphael, “God and Country,” *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, 6 November 1994, 14.
2. B. Gustav Niebuhr, “Mighty Fortress: Megachurches Strive to Be All Things to All Parishioners,” *Wall Street Journal*, 13 May 1991, A:6.
3. John Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church* (reprint, Dallas: Protestant Heritage Press, 1995), 17—18.
4. John Hooper, “The Regulative Principle and Things Indifferent,” in Iain H. Murray, ed., *The Reformation of the Church* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 55.
5. William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1989), 27.
6. The Act of Uniformity (1661) was given royal assent by Charles II shortly after the restoration of the English monarchy. It required every minister in the Church of England to declare unfeigned support of everything prescribed in the new edition of the Book of Common Prayer. Many ministers dissented and objected to the use of vestment and other extrabiblical prescriptions for how worship services were to be conducted. These men were summarily ejected from their pulpits and their livelihoods because of their stand for the principle of *sola Scriptura*.
7. Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, 32.
8. *Ibid.*, 35.
9. At the same time, it is helpful to remember that some of the disputes we read about in church history were not as trivial as they may seem at first sight. There was a heated debate among early Protestants, for example, about the appropriate posture for receiving communion. Some felt that the elements should be taken from a kneeling position, but the followers of Calvin insisted that communion should be administered to people who are seated. The real debate had to do with an issue far more significant than posture. Roman Catholicism taught that the elements were the actual body and blood of Christ and therefore they should be lifted up before the people to be worshiped by them. During the Catholic Mass, when the elements are elevated, people are expected to kneel in worship. The Calvinists correctly saw this as a form of idolatry, and in order

to make their own position clear they taught that the elements were the sign and seals of Christ's presence, not the actual physical body of the Lord Jesus. This meant that the elements were not to be worshiped and that the people should receive them while seated. The context of this debate is often forgotten by contemporary evangelicals, who sometimes wrongly characterize the Reformers as arguing about trifles.

10. John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the 20th Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 82.