

## **PRESBYTERIANISM**

“I am first a Christian, next a catholic (i.e., a member of the universal church), then a Calvinist, fourth a paedobaptist, and fifth a Presbyterian. I cannot reverse this order.” – Jay Duncan (18th century Scottish Presbyterian)

### **What is the first Article of the WCF? Scriptures**

-Contrary to Topol, I'm not a Presbyterian because of “tradition! Tradition!” but because of Scripture—if there was a system more faithful to the Scriptures, I'd switch. This is no “Presby until death!” just because kind of thing.

-Switch started through a biblical conviction of the covenants, starting with Abrahamic cov as not a covenant of works but of grace, and the understanding of God's covenants as unchanging bc He's unchanging.

-Calvin in Geneva who taught Knox who brought it to Scotland (Scottish Reformed); Scotland to England and US (P&R); two sacraments (subjective need of faith for both and spiritual presence for communion)

-“In 1788, American Presbyterians adopted the [eight] Preliminary Principles of Presbyterianism....The first preliminary principle is that “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matter of faith or worship.” Closely related to this is the seventh preliminary principle, “That all church-power . . . is only ministerial and declarative.” The ministerial and declarative nature of Presbyterianism is of the essence of biblical Presbyterianism.”

### **SPACE – A worldview encompassing far more than just soteriology**

**Sovereignty** – encompassing salvation, best summed up in TULIP – (WSC 2.2 (theology proper), 3.7(reprobation), 21.1 (sovereignty by light of nature)

-Creator/creature distinction: God has absolute preeminence in all

-Joseph (u meant for evil, but God..., Jesus Acts 2:22-28)

-5 Solas—Scripture (inerrancy), Christ (saved by Him alone), faith (gift of God), grace, glory of God (telos)

**Polity** – ecclesiology – plurality of elders and associations (Moses and Jethro, Jerusalem council, WSC 30,31), worship (RPW – Sola Scriptura emphasis, ordinary means of grace WSC 1.7, 18.3, 21.5)

-Worship (21.5): “The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching, and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God with understanding, faith, and reverence; singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as, also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ.”

-No creativity allowed or necessary!

**Amill** – including postmil –

**Covenant theology** – including paedobaptism – (WSC 7 (esp. 7.6b “There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations”), 14.2 (saving faith), 17.2 (perseverance of the saints), 19 (law of God), 28 (baptism)

**Evangelism** – fulfilling the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations

-Nick Batzig: “Presbyterianism is founded on the idea of a plurality of elders and the connectivity of local churches for governance, accountability, and ministerial collaboration.”

-**Interesting to note** this played out in the American separation of powers and the judicial system with lower and higher and highest courts (superior courts, district courts, appellate courts, Supreme Court).

-Batzig: “the local church, with its elders, constitutes the lowest court. The regional body of teaching and ruling elders forms the higher court. The national gathering (i.e., General Assembly) of teaching and ruling elders makes up the highest court. However, certain Presbyterian theologians have chosen to speak of these as wider rather than higher courts, since *Presbyterianism principally avoids any movement toward hierarchical ecclesiology.*”

-**Note that there is no centralization of power;** instead, there’s governance by bodies and checks and balances all grounded on the Word.

-“As a polity, it is known as a system of church government which rejects alike the rule of one man and the rule of the extemporized and irresponsible assembly; but which asserts the right of self-government through its own chosen representatives administering rule and discipline in accordance with the word of God. Its polity is the fruit of its doctrine. That doctrine asserts the sovereignty of God over all men and affirms the personal responsibility of every man to God, who alone is Lord of the conscience...” – George P. Hays

-Dutch Reformed use largely the Three Forms of Unity (Belgic, Dordt, Heidelberg) and P&R use WSC more, but theologically they are basically the same.

## **ANGLICANISM**

-Traced back to King Henry VIII’s separation from Rome

-Hierarchical in nature: King as defender of the faith and supreme governor, followed by Justin Welby as Archbishop of Canterbury

-JI Packer, JC Ryle, Michael Reeves (?), Whitefield, Toplady

-39 articles have strong language against Rome

## **IMAGES AND 2ND COMMANDMENT**

START BY READING EX. 20:4

-Still working through this issue but hits home because of kids – at this point I prefer to err on the side of caution and lean heavily toward a historic Reformed view on the issue.

Anglicanism 39 articles: 22. Of Purgatory.

The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Relics, and also Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

Rome:

IV. "You Shall Not Make For Yourself a Graven Image . . ."

2129 The divine injunction included the prohibition of every representation of God by the hand of man. Deuteronomy explains: "Since you saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a graven image for yourselves, in the form of any figure...."<sup>66</sup> It is the absolutely transcendent God who revealed himself to Israel. "He is the all," but at the same time "he is greater than all his works."<sup>67</sup> He is "the author of beauty."<sup>68</sup>

2130 Nevertheless, already in the Old Testament, God ordained or permitted the making of images that pointed symbolically toward salvation by the incarnate Word: so it was with the bronze serpent, the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim.<sup>69</sup>

2131 Basing itself on the mystery of the incarnate Word, the seventh ecumenical council at Nicaea (787) justified against the iconoclasts the veneration of icons - of Christ, but also of the Mother of God, the angels, and all the saints. By becoming incarnate, the Son of God introduced a new "economy" of images.

2132 The Christian veneration of images is not contrary to the first commandment which proscribes idols. Indeed, "the honor rendered to an image passes to its prototype," and "whoever venerates an image venerates the person portrayed in it."<sup>70</sup> The honor paid to sacred images is a "respectful veneration," not the adoration due to God alone:

Religious worship is not directed to images in themselves, considered as mere things, but under their distinctive aspect as images leading us on to God incarnate. the movement toward the image does not terminate in it as image, but tends toward that whose image it is.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Deut 4:15-16.

<sup>67</sup> Sir 43:27-28.

68 Wis 13:3.

69 Cf. Num 21:4-9; Wis 16:5-14; Jn 3:14-15; Ex 25:10-22; 1 Kings 6:23-28; 7:23-26.

70 St. Basil, De Spiritu Sancto 18, 45: PG 32, 149C; Council of Nicaea II: DS 601; cf. Council of Trent: DS 1821-1825; Vatican Council II: SC 126; LG 67.

71 St. Thomas Aquinas, STh II-II, 81, 3 ad 3.

WSC: Q. 50. What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his Word.<sup>127</sup>

Q. 51. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images,<sup>128</sup> or any other way not appointed in his Word.<sup>129</sup>

Q. 52. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us,<sup>130</sup> his propriety in us,<sup>131</sup> and the zeal he hath to his own worship.<sup>132</sup>

WLC 109: What are the sins forbidden in the Second Commandment?

Answer: The sins forbidden in the Second Commandment are, all devising<sup>1</sup>, counseling<sup>2</sup>, commanding<sup>3</sup>, using<sup>4</sup>, and anywise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself<sup>5</sup>; tolerating a false religion<sup>6</sup>; the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever<sup>7</sup>; all worshiping of it<sup>8</sup>, or God in it or by it<sup>9</sup>; the making of any representation of feigned deities<sup>10</sup>, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them<sup>11</sup>; all superstitious devices<sup>12</sup>, corrupting the worship of God<sup>13</sup>, adding to it, or taking from it<sup>14</sup>, whether invented and taken up of ourselves<sup>15</sup>, or received by tradition from others<sup>16</sup>, though under the title of antiquity<sup>17</sup>, custom<sup>18</sup>, devotion<sup>19</sup>, good intent, or any other pretense whatsoever<sup>20</sup>; simony<sup>21</sup>; sacrilege<sup>22</sup>; all neglect<sup>23</sup>, contempt<sup>24</sup>, hindering<sup>25</sup>, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God has appointed.<sup>26</sup>

WLC 110: What are the reasons annexed to the Second Commandment, the more to enforce it?

Answer: The reasons annexed to the Second Commandment, the more to enforce it, contained in these words, For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments<sup>1</sup>; are, besides God's sovereignty over us, and propriety in us<sup>2</sup>, his fervent zeal for his own worship<sup>3</sup>, and his revengeful indignation against all false worship, as being a spiritual whoredom<sup>4</sup>; accounting the breakers of this commandment such as hate him, and threatening to punish them unto divers generations<sup>5</sup>; and

esteeming the observers of it such as love him and keep his commandments, and promising mercy to them unto many generations.

Heidelberg

97. Q. May we then not make any image at all?

A. God cannot and may not be visibly portrayed in any way. Creatures may be portrayed, but God forbids us to make or have any images of them in order to worship them or to serve God through them.

98. Q. But may images not be tolerated in the churches as "books for the laity"?

A. No, for we should not be wiser than God. He wants his people to be taught not by means of dumb images but by the living preaching of his Word.

Importance of maintaining the creator-creature distinction: God has us on His terms, not us Him on our terms.