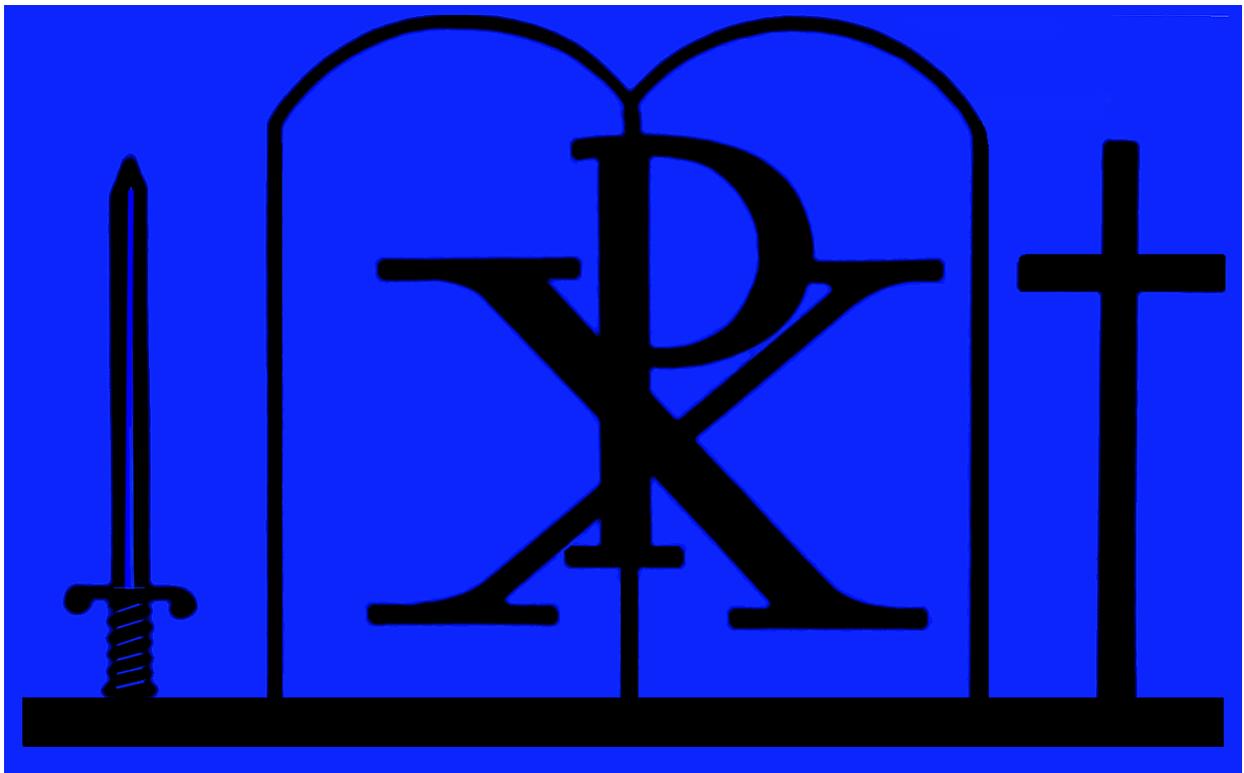


ARE THE MOSAIC LAWS FOR TODAY?

OBSERVATIONS ON CALVINISM AND THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS
ANENT
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD'S MORAL LAW OF NATURE FOR ALL MEN
AND
ANCIENT ISRAEL'S CEREMONIAL & JUDICIAL LAWS



by

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I. GOD’S LAWS FROM CALVIN THROUGH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIANISM

Nearly half-a-millennium ago in 1537, **John Calvin** wrote the following weighty words in his *Catechism*: “Christ has been made for us not only righteousness but also sanctification. Hence we cannot receive through faith His righteousness, without embracing at the same time that sanctification. Because the Lord in one and the same covenant, which He has made with us in Christ, promises that He will be propitious toward our iniquities and will write His Law in our hearts (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; 10:16).”¹

Rather more than four centuries later in 1967, Rev. Dr. A.H. Leitch surveyed **American Presbyterianism in the Twentieth Century**. He declared that “part of the Calvinistic tradition” is “that the Law...as Law has its place. The Law is the framework within which and upon which love may work. Jesus said – in the Sermon on the Mount – ‘I came not to destroy the Law....’ He also said with regard to the Law, ‘Not one jot or one tittle shall pass away....’

“The Law is not to be dismissed; rather is it to have content.... The Christian is free, but he is not free to be lawless. Those who cry out against legalism, ought to be faced with the question: ‘Do you want, then, illegalism?’.... We cannot mean we have the right as Christians to do something less than the Law recognizes or allows.... The Christian rejoices in the Law....

“There is a ‘new morality’ abroad today, and it is based on the idea that in any situation one is directed not by Law but by love.... Paul...said: ‘Love is the fulfilment of the Law! We still need the control of the Law..., or the new morality can become just a new rationalization for the old immorality!”²

Only a short time ago, in 1975, the continuing Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) exalted God’s Law at the very beginning of its new *Book of Church Order*. There it uplifted “Jesus Christ, upon Whose shoulders the government rests” – and “of the increase of Whose government and peace there shall be no end.” It rightly claimed that the Saviour-King “sits upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and justice – from henceforth, even forever (Isaiah 9:6-7).”

For Jesus Christ, “being ascended up far above all Heavens [so] that He might fill all things, ...is...the only Lawgiver in Zion (or the true Christian Church). It belongs to His Majesty from His throne of glory to rule and teach the Church through His Word and Spirit by the ministry of men – thus mediately exercising His Own authority and enforcing His Own Laws unto the edification and establishment of His Kingdom.... The sole functions of the Church – as a kingdom and government distinct from the civil Commonwealth – are to proclaim, to administer, and to enforce the Law of Christ

¹ John Calvin: *Instruction in Faith*, 1537, (ed. Furmann [London Lutterworth, 1969]), section 17, p. 42.

² A.H. Leitch: *A Layman’s Guide to Presbyterian Beliefs* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 1967, pp. 83-85.

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revealed in the Scripture.... The exercise of ecclesiastical powers, whether joint or several, has the divine sanction when in conformity with the Statutes enacted by Christ the Lawgiver....”³

The above words of the continuing Presbyterian Church in America go all the way back to the first paragraph of the 1645 *Form of Presbyterial Church-Government* of the **Westminster Assembly**.⁴ That Assembly not only composed a *Form of Presbyterial Church-Government*. It also drew up two very fine *Catechisms* – and a great *Confession of Faith*.

Yet fine and great though they were and still are, even the *Westminster Standards* of the mid-seventeenth century were fallible documents. In fact, they were amended in 1788 (and also again subsequently) by the North American Synod of the Presbyterian Church in America denomination. This was done, because the initial version of these documents was ultimately deemed to be insufficiently Scriptural on certain points. For, unlike the original autographs of Holy Writ, all of the various versions of the *Westminster Standards* are corrigible. Though highly valuable, they are nevertheless fallible summaries of the teachings of the inerrant Bible as the only final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

Now here in our present discussion, we shall use the 1973-1977 **Presbyterian Church in America’s version** of the *Westminster Standards*. This consists: of the unamended 1647 original British version of the *Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms*;⁵ of an American version of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*;⁶ and of the Biblical prooftexts of the original British Standards (except for those in the chapter of the *Confession* on the Civil Magistrate where the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A.’s edition is followed).⁷ But, being fallible documents, the possibility (yet improbability) of further

³ Presbyterian Church in America: *Book of Church Order* (Montgomery, Alabama: Committee for Christian Education and Publications), 1975, Preface I, & ch. 3-3ff.

⁴ Cf. the *Westminster Assembly’s Form of Presbyterial Church-Government*, 1645, Preface: “Jesus Christ, upon Whose shoulders the government is, ...of the increase of Whose government and peace there shall be no end.” *etc.*

⁵ In 1973, the First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America adopted the original unamended versions of the *Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms*. See 1973 *Minutes* of the National Presbyterian Church (subsequently renamed the Presbyterian Church in America) [Montgomery, Alabama: Committee for Christian Education and Publications, 1973, pp. 31, 75-126].

⁶ The Presbyterian Church in America’s version of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, as adopted by the 1973 First General Assembly (cf. 1973 *Minutes*, pp. 31, 75-126), consists of the original American version of 1788 as subsequently amended (see below). The original American version of 1788 is identical to the original British version of 1647-1648, except for the original American amendments to chs. 20:4 and 23:3 and 31:1-3 (see A.A. Hodge: *Confession of Faith* [London: Banner of Truth, 1958, pp. 21-23]). The subsequent Presbyterian Church in the United States’s amendments of 1886 (to ch. 24:4) and of 1939 (to ch. 25:6) were also adopted by the Presbyterian Church in America in 1973.

⁷ In 1977, the Presbyterian Church in America gave “tentative approval” to and authorized the printing of a study edition of the *Westminster Standards* with the Biblical proof texts of the original seventeenth-century Westminster Assembly. Only as regards “the chapter of the *Confession* on the Civil Magistrate” did the Presbyterian Church in America not adopt the original prooftexts. As regards that chapter, the Presbyterian Church in America substituted the prooftexts of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of the United States of America. Cf. *Minutes of the Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in*

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changes to the Presbyterian Church in America's version of the *Westminster Standards* in the future – especially as regards the prooftexts for the various statements made in the *Standards* – cannot be discounted altogether.⁸

However, even though fallible, the *Westminster Standards* are nevertheless **most blessed documents**. They were constructed by some of the finest theologians the World has ever seen. They were systematized over a period of many years. And they are the result of extremely meticulous Bible study, having been produced by gifted Christian scholars utterly loyal to the Word of God.

The widespread ignorance of their teachings today is one of the characteristic symptoms of the general spiritual poverty of the modern Church. But a thorough study of these precious *Standards* and a consistent application of their Biblical teachings, would even in our present age probably result in the transformation of the World into a greater manifestation of the Kingdom of God through the power of Christ's Spirit.

America (Montgomery, Alabama: Committee for Christian Education and Publications), 1977, p.64. However, see too note 8 below.

⁸ The Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (*Minutes*, p. 64) [cf. note 7 above] gave tentative approval to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland's prooftexts for the *Westminster Standards* (which proof texts are the same as those of the original 1647-1648 British version). At the same time, the Presbyterian Church in America made it clear "that such proof texts should not become a formal part of the *Constitution*" (which consists of the unfootnoted *Westminster Standards* as described in note 5 & 6 above); but that those footnotes, in 1977 tentatively approved and authorized to be published by the Presbyterian Church in America, "may be amended and receive final approval at a subsequent Assembly" of the Presbyterian Church in America.

II. DISTINCTION AND INTERRELATIONSHIP OF VARIOUS MOSAIC LAWS

Now Calvin, the Calvinian *Swiss Confession*, and the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards* all **clearly distinguish** the universal Moral Law of nature for all men everywhere – from the ceremonial and the judicial laws of Israel. Following historic Christianity, the Calvinistic Calvin did so more than one hundred years before the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession*. For the Genius of Geneva wrote that “we must attend to the well-known division which distributes the whole law of God as promulgated by Moses into the moral, the ceremonial, and the judicial law – and we must attend to each of these parts.”⁹

Similarly, both the 1566 *Swiss Confession* and the later *Westminster Confession* also did the same.¹⁰ So too did the Calvinistic Dabney of Southern Presbyterian fame a century ago – and more than two hundred years after Westminster.¹¹

Why did they all do this? The Church of all ages – Apostolic, Patristic, Mediaeval and Protestant – has done so for at least seven good reasons.

For Scripture itself records that (not the ceremonial and the judicial laws but only) the universal Moral Law of nature: (1) was written by the Lord God on the hearts of humanity at creation before the fall;¹² (2) antedated the Mosaic laws by at least 2500 years and then continued ever since the fall;¹³ (3) was later spoken out of the midst of the fire and the cloud and thick darkness, handed down by the disposition of angels, and written by the very finger of God on holy tablets of stone amid thunderings and lightnings at Mount Sinai;¹⁴ (4) was thereafter re-engraved on stone tablets by the Lord Himself;¹⁵ (5) was thenceforth preserved inside the very ark of the covenant;¹⁶ (6) was re-enjoined in every detail even after Calvary;¹⁷ and (7) is carved anew into the fleshly tables of the hearts of all regenerated sinners by the Spirit of God Himself.¹⁸ Accordingly, the Moral Law for all humanity is clearly distinct from the ceremonial and the judicial laws of Israel.

⁹ John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV:20:14.

¹⁰ *Second Swiss Confession*, chs. 12 & 27.

¹¹ Robert Dabney: *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 1878 (Grand Rapids Zondervan), 1976 reprint, pp. 352 & 354.

¹² Cf. Eccl. 7:29 & Rom. 2:14-15 & 13:8-10; cf. F.N. Lee: *Ten Commandments Today!* (London: Lord's Day Observance Society), 1976, pp. 3-11.

¹³ Gen. 4 to Ex.2; cf. Lee's *Ten Commandments Today!* pp. 11-13.

¹⁴ Ex. 20:1-18 & 31:18 & 32:15-16 & 34:1,28 & Deut. 4:13 & 5:5-22 & 9:10 & 33:2 cf. Acts 7:38,53; per contra Ex. 20:22 to 24:4 & 24:7 to 34:27 & Deut. 6:1 to 31:9 & Eph. 2:15-17 & Col. 2:14-20ff.

¹⁵ Ex. 34:1,28 & Deut. 10:1-4 cf. II Cor. 3:3ff.

¹⁶ Ex. 25:16,21 & 40:20 & Deut. 10:2-5 & I Kgs. 8:9 & Heb. 9:4.

¹⁷ Cf. I Cor. 8:4-6 & 10:14 & Jas. 5:12 & Heb. 4:9 & 10:25 & Eph. 6:3 & I John 3:15 & Jas. 4:4 & Heb. 13:4 & Eph. 4:28 & Col. 3:9 & Rom. 7:7 & 13:8-9 & Eph. 5:5-12 & I John 2:16 etc., cf. Lee's *Ten Commandments Today!* pp. 14-15.

¹⁸ Ezek. 36:25-27 cf. Rom. 8:4-14 & II Cor. 3:3-18 & Heb. 8:10-12 & 9:4 & 10:15-17.

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Now the *Westminster Confession* not only distinguishes but it also **defines** the Moral Law of nature on the one hand – and the ceremonial and judicial laws of Israel on the other. By Moral Law, the *Confession* means the Law written on Adam’s heart – which bound him and all his descendants to personal, entire, exact and perpetual obedience.¹⁹ This Moral Law was summarily restated on Mount Sinai in Ten Commandments²⁰ – and elaborated in what the Decalogue itself determines to be the “moral duties” in and the “general equity” of various other laws.²¹ Indeed, this Moral Law “doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof.”²²

By the ceremonial laws, the *Confession* means those which contained “several typical ordinances” prefiguring Christ and holding forth various instructions – “all [of] which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament.”²³ And by the judicial laws, the *Confession* [cf. in its 1656 Latin version] means those various political statutes, sundry of which expired together with the State [or *Politeia*] of the people of Israel in 70 A.D.²⁴

Yet the *Westminster Confession*, while defining and distinguishing the Moral Law on the one hand and the ceremonial and the judicial laws on the other, also shows their **interrelationship**. For it teaches that even the ceremonial laws also set forth “moral duties.”²⁵

It further goes on to say that to the people of Israel “also, as a body politick, He [namely God] gave sundry judicial laws.” Such laws are “not obliging any other (people) now – further than the general equity [or moral substance] thereof, may require.”²⁶

The *Confession* declares that “the moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof.”²⁷ Moreover, it also states that “repentance unto life is an evangelical grace...to be preached by every Minister of the Gospel.” Thereby, the sinner so “hates his sins as to turn from them all unto God – purposing and endeavouring to walk with Him in all the ways of His Commandments.”²⁸ This means

¹⁹ *Westminster Confession of Faith* 19:1-3d & 4:2gh & *Westminster Larger Catechism* 17rs & 92o & 93-98.

²⁰ *West. Conf. Faith* 19:2b.

²¹ Cf. *West. Conf. Faith* 19:3e & 19:4g with paragraphs 14-74 below.

²² *West. Conf. Faith* 19:5.

²³ *West. Conf. Faith* 19:3. On the meaning of the word “abrogated” in this sentence of the *Confession*, and on its distinction from “abolished,” cf. under our section VI.

²⁴ *West. Conf. Faith* 19:4. Note here that the 1656 official Latin translation of the earlier English original rightly translates its word “State” as *Politeia*. Too, regarding the exact implications of the word “sundry” (Latin version: *multas*) – cf. in our Section VIII below.

²⁵ *West. Conf. Faith* 19:3e.

²⁶ *West. Conf. Faith* 19:4g.

²⁷ *West. Conf. Faith* 19:5h.

²⁸ *West. Conf. Faith* 15:1-2d.

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“according to all the Law of Moses” – viz. “by purposing and endeavouring constantly to walk with Him in all the ways of new obedience.”²⁹

²⁹ Cf. Ps. 119:6,59,106 (128) & Luke 1:6 & esp. II Kgs. 23:25, as quoted in *West. Conf. Faith* 15:2d & *West. Larg. Cat.* 76v. Cf. too note 28 above.

III. THE MORAL LAW OF NATURE FOR ADAM AND ALL MEN EVERYWHERE

Now Calvin and the Calvinian *Swiss Confession* and the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards* all emphasize the **universal Moral Law of nature** given to Adam and to all of his descendants in perpetuity. This requires all people to obey the Law of nature – and nature’s God (the Triune *’Elohiym*).

According to Calvin, “it is evident that the Law of God which we call ‘Moral’ – is nothing else than the testimony of Natural Law and of that conscience which God has engraven on the minds of men.”³⁰ Indeed, it is also evident that the Moral Law of nature proceeds “from the Source of rectitude Himself and from the natural feelings implanted in us by Him.” This is so, “since it flows from the fountain of nature itself – and is founded on the general principle of all laws.”³¹

According to the Calvinian *Second Swiss Confession*, “the Law of nature...was at one time written in the hearts of men by the finger of God (Rom. 2:15)... At another, it was inscribed by His finger on the two Tables of Moses – and eloquently expounded in the books of Moses (Ex. 20:1ff & Deut. 5:6ff).”³²

According to the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards*, “the Law of nature” (cf. Eccl. 7:29 & Rom. 2:14-15 & 13:8-10 & Jas. 1:23-27 & 2:8-12) was not only written on the heart of Adam before the fall.³³ Yet more, even after the fall, the still-continuing “Light of nature” in common revelation (cf. Gen. 9:1-16 & Ps. 19:1-3 & Acts 14:15-17 & 15:19-29 & 17:24-28 & Rom. 1:19-32 & I Cor. 11:13-15) clearly confronts all men today – even outside of Scripture. Indeed, this too renders all of them without excuse for their sins.³⁴

Consequently, as the great Baptist theologian Ernest Kevan has pointed out in his valuable study of British Puritan theology entitled *The Grace of Law*: “The ‘Law of nature’...for the Puritans...derived from God’s action in making our nature such – as...duty shall result... Their use of this term, therefore, indicated...man’s creaturely obligation to render to God what is His due.... The Law of nature...in man’s own nature...[is] the knowledge of the Law...called ‘God’s Law written in the heart.’” It is

³⁰ Calvin: *Institutes* IV:20:16.

³¹ Calvin: *Commentary* on Lev. 18:6, in his *Harmony of the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 1948ff, III, p. 100.

³² Henry Bullinger’s *Second Swiss Confession* of 1566, ch. 12.

³³ Cf. *West. Conf. Faith* 4:2fgh & 7:2bcd & 19:1a & 19:2b & 19:5hi & 20:4pq & 21:7k & *West. Larg. Cat.* 17rs & 19n & 24v & 92o & 93p & 151.3w & 139q. Cf. note 27.

³⁴ Cf. *West. Conf. Faith* I:1a & I:60 & 20:4pq & 21:1a & *West. Larg. Cat.* 2c & 60q & 151.3w. Cf. too notes 30-33 above and 35 below. Cf. too Hyamson and Silbermann’s *Jewish Encyclopaedia* (London: Shapiro Vallentine & Co., 1938, p. 375), which insists that the universal Noachic laws binding on all Gentiles (just like the Mosaic Decalogue) prohibit idolatry, blasphemy, murder, immorality, robbery, injustice, and intemperance. Cf. the 1st to the 3rd and the 6th to the 10th Commandments!

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“not a law produced by nature..., but a Law determinative of it” and produced by God for it.³⁵

Now according to the Scriptures, the **exact scope of the Moral Law** is considerably broader than just the Ten Commandments written on the stone tablets at Mount Sinai. Not only does the Old Testament use specific extra-decalogical laws to summarize the Moral Law.³⁶ So too does the Lord Jesus Christ.³⁷ And even Paul himself declares that “‘Thou shalt not commit adultery,’ ‘Thou shalt not steal,’ ‘Thou shalt not bear false witness,’ ‘Thou shalt not covet,’ and if there be any other Commandment – it is briefly comprehended [or ‘summed up’] in this saying, namely, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself!’”³⁸

Consequently, according to both Scripture and the *Confession*, the entire Moral Law consists of the Ten Commandments plus the “moral duties” of the ceremonial laws plus the “general equity” or abiding morality³⁹ of the judicial laws.⁴⁰ And all of these are summarized by the Decalogue – which is itself “briefly comprehended” in Christ’s “Great Commandment”⁴¹ (itself deriving from the Mosaic law of Leviticus 19:18).

Indeed, Christ magnified and fulfilled the whole Law – moral and ceremonial and judicial.⁴² For He was punished for its total transgression by His Own people. In His life and death and resurrection, He fulfilled it all. In this sense, the Law is all interrelated – and was all fulfilled when Jesus died for His Own.

Similarly, the **exact scope of the Moral Law according to the Westminster Standards** exactly parallels its scope in Scripture. For Westminster declares that the Law is of perpetual obligation from the beginning until the end of the World.

This clarifies that the Moral Law was already given to Adam and to all his posterity, and written on their hearts.⁴³ Indeed, “this Law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness.”⁴⁴

³⁵ Ernest Kevan: *The Grace of the Law* (Grand Rapids: Guardian Press), 1976, pp. 54-58.

³⁶ Deut. 6:4-5 cf. Lev. 19:18.

³⁷ Mark 12:29-31 cf. note 36 below.

³⁸ Rom. 13:9, Greek *anakephalaioutai*, “summed up” or “brought under the head(ing)s”; cf. *West. Larg. Cat.* 98 & *West. Short. Cat.* 41-42. Hereinafter we further abbreviate *West. Larg. Cat.* to *W.C.F.* and *West. Short. Cat.* to *W.S.C.*

³⁹ Cf. *W.C.F.* 19:3e.

⁴⁰ *West. Conf. Faith* (hereinafter abbreviated to *W.C.F.*)19:4g. Cf. Donald A. Dunkerley: *What is Theonomy?* (Pensacola: McIlwain Presbyterian Church), 1978, p. 3: “The moral law is summarized, but not stated exhaustively in the decalogue.... From the perspective of classic theology, therefore, theonomy is the universal moral law of God, summarized in the decalogue and explicated in many other scriptures, including the judicial law.”

⁴¹ Cf. Matt. 22:37-40.

⁴² Cf. *W.C.F.* 19:3-6 & 20:1 & *W.L.C.* 97.

⁴³ *W.C.F.* 19:1a.

⁴⁴ *W.C.F.* 19:2b.

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Accordingly, the Moral Law is accessible to “unregenerate men” – and even to the illiterate, rendering them all “inexcusable.” For they all clearly enough see the Moral Law both in the external World all around them (Rom. 1:20) and in their own internal hearts within them (Rom 2:15).⁴⁵

Yet the Moral Law is of even greater use to the regenerate than it is to the unregenerate. Besides the general uses of that Law – uses “common to them [the regenerate] with all men” – the Moral Law is “of special use” to those who have been born again. For it helps “to shew them how much they are bound to Christ for His fulfilling it.” It also helps “to provoke them to more thankfulness, and to express the same in their greater care to conform themselves thereto as the rule of their obedience (Luke 1:68-75 and Rom. 7:22 and Tit. 2:2-14).”⁴⁶

Accordingly, the Moral Law holds sway over all men. Indeed, it does so right down until the very end of the World⁴⁷ – and even for ever, therebeyond!

Nor is this a specifically Calvinistic belief. Indeed, it is a **Pan-Protestant view** known also to **Lutheranism**. See, for example the *Wittenberg Confession*. That states: “We acknowledge the Law of God, whose abridgment is in the Decalogue, to commend the best, the most just and perfect works – and we hold that man is bound to obey the moral precepts of the Decalogue.” (See Bolton’s *True Bounds*, page 60.)

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* states that this “Moral Law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments which were delivered by the voice of God upon Mount Sinai and written by Him in two tables of stone.”⁴⁸ And the *Shorter Catechism* states that “the Moral Law is summarily comprehended in Ten Commandments”⁴⁹ and that “the sum of the Ten Commandments is to love the Lord...and our neighbour as ourselves.”⁵⁰

As the *Epistle to the Reader* of the *Westminster Standards* declares: “God wrote the Decalogue as a summary of things to be done.”⁵¹ So too, also the *Apostles’ Creed* is only a “brief sum” of the Christian Faith – agreeable to the Word of God.⁵²

⁴⁵ *W.L.C.* 96.

⁴⁶ *W.L.C.* 97kl.

⁴⁷ Cf. Matt. 5:18 with *W.C.F.* 19:5k & 21:7n.

⁴⁸ *W.L.C.* 98m.

⁴⁹ *W.S.C.* 41.

⁵⁰ *W.S.C.* 42.

⁵¹ Cf. *The Epistle to the Reader* – or *To the Christian Reader, especially Heads of Families* – paragraph 6, by the theologians Gouge and Goodwin and Matthew Pool and Thomas Manton and Thomas Watson and Obadiah Lee, etc., introducing the *Westminster Standards* they and/or others had just written.

⁵² Thus the *Appendix to the W.S.C.*, as printed immediately following the *W.S.C.* in *The Subordinate Standards and Other Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Offices of the Free Church of Scotland), 1933, p. 250: “And albeit the substance of the doctrine comprised in that abridgment commonly called *The Apostles’ Creed* be fully set forth in each of the *Catechisms* so as there is no necessity of inserting the *Creed* itself, yet it is here annexed not as though it were composed

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This clearly implies that though the Decalogue does summarize the Moral Law, it does not exhaust it. For just as the Moral Law existed before the publication of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, so too even after Calvary the non-decalogical prooftexts Lev. 11:44-45 and 20:7-8 are referred to by the *Larger Catechism* to prove that “the Moral Law is of use to all men to inform them of the holy nature and will of God.”⁵³

Understandably, the *Larger Catechism* does not hesitate to quote extensively from the Levitical law even in its treatment of the Moral Law.⁵⁴ Small wonder, then, that even the Liberty Bell of the Founding Fathers of the American Republic relevantly points to the Levitical law from Philadelphia’s Independence Hall: “Proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof!”⁵⁵

by the Apostles or ought to be esteemed canonical scripture, as the Ten Commandments, ...but because it is a brief sum of the Christian faith agreeable to the Word of God and anciently received in the churches of Christ.”

⁵³ *W.L.C.* 95v.

⁵⁴ E.g., *W.L.C.* 95v on the usefulness of the Moral Law, quoting from Lev. 11:44-45 & 20:17 *etc.* See too our own main text above and the Bible texts therein quoted or referred to in its footnotes.

⁵⁵ Lev. 25:10.

IV. CALVIN'S DETAILED EXPOSITION OF THE MORAL LAW OF NATURE

It was John Calvin who paved the way for the detailed discussion of the Moral Law in the Calvinistic *Westminster Larger Catechism*. To Calvin, “the Law is perpetual” inasmuch as “the rule of just and pious living even now retains its force” – also after “we are delivered from the yoke of bondage from the curse” of law-breaking; and even after “the coming of Christ has put an end to its ceremonies.”⁵⁶ For “this is the peculiar blessing of the New Covenant, that the Law is written on men’s hearts.”⁵⁷

Indeed, soon after writing these words, Rev. Professor Dr. John Calvin went on to give an excellent classification of the various Mosaic Laws. He did so, under the ten heads of the Decalogue.

Under the First Commandment⁵⁸ requiring the worship of the Lord Jehovah alone (Ex. 20:3 and Deut. 5:7), Calvin gives a detailed discussion of Leviticus 18 & 19 and of Deuteronomy 6 *etc.*⁵⁹ Then, under the “Ceremonial Supplements of the First Commandment”⁶⁰ – he deals with the Passover (Ex. 12), the sanctifying of the firstborn (Ex. 13), the payment of atonement tribute (Ex. 30), the Nazirite vow (Num. 6), the offerings of the first fruits (Deut. 26), the purification of women (Lev. 12), the confinement and purification of lepers (Deut. 24 and Lev. 14), the pollutions arising from issues (Lev. 15), defects excluding men from the tabernacle (Deut. 23), general purification laws (Num. 19), the disposal of waste matter (Deut. 23), prohibited mixtures (Deut. 22), clean and unclean foods (Lev. 20 and 11), accidentally polluted things (Deut. 14), mixed marriages (Deut. 21), and various judicial supplements (Deut. 13 & 17 to 20 and Ex. 22 and Num. 10).

The Second Commandment⁶¹ requires that the true God be worshipped in the correct way (Ex. 20 & 25 to 30 & 34 and Num. 8 and Deut. 4 & 12 to 16). Here Calvin gives a detailed discussion of: priesthood laws (Ex. 28 to 29 and Lev. 6:22 and Num. 3 to 35 and Deut. 17 & 31); tithing obligations (Num. 18 and Deut. 18); other obligations (Lev. 24); offerings (Ex. 29 and Num. 28 to 29); and the yearly atonement (Lev. 1 to 7 & 16 & 22 and Num. 15 and Deut. 23). Then, under the “Civil Supplements of the Second Commandment”⁶² – he deals with the destruction of idolatrous edifices and practices (Ex. 23 & 34 and Deut. 7 & 17 & 23 & 25).

⁵⁶ Calvin: *Harmony of the Pentateuch*, I, p. 411ff.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 417ff.

⁵⁹ *Idem*, expounding from Deut. 6 & Lev. 19 & Deut. 6 & 18 & Lev. 18.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 454ff.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, II, p. 115ff, expounding from Ex. 34 & Deut. 4:16,23,14 & Ex. 20:25,27 & Num. 7 & Ex. 26 to 30 & Ex. 28 to 29 & Lev. 6 & Num. 8 & 3 & Lev. 8 & 21 & Deut. 31 & Lev. 10 & 21 to 22 & Num. 6 & 35 & 18 & 4 & Lev. 17 & Deut. 17 & Num. 5 & 18 & 5 & Lev. 7.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 386ff.

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The Third Commandment⁶³ requires reverence for God's Name (Ex. 20:7 and Deut. 5:11). Here Calvin deals with false swearing (Lev. 19) and vows (Deut. 23 and Lev. 27 and Num. 30). And in his "Political Supplements to the Third Commandment,"⁶⁴ he deals with the punishment for blasphemy (Lev. 24).

Similarly, under the Fourth Commandment,⁶⁵ requiring the sanctification of the sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11 and Deut. 5:12-15), Calvin includes a discussion of Lev. 19 and Ex. 31. And in his "Supplements to the Fourth Commandment,"⁶⁶ he deals with the ceremonial septennials and jubilees (Ex. 23 and Lev. 23 to 25 and Deut. 16).

Coming now to the second table of the Moral Law, the Fifth Commandment⁶⁷ requires respect for one's human superiors (Ex. 20:12 and Deut. 5:16). Here Calvin discusses Lev. 19, and then gives "Supplements"⁶⁸ on the punishment for defying all of the various duly-constituted authorities (Ex. 21 and Deut. 16 & 21 to 22).

Next, under the Sixth Commandment⁶⁹ against murder (Ex. 20:13 and Deut. 5:17), Calvin discusses Lev. 19 and then gives the "Ceremonial Supplements of the Sixth Commandment."⁷⁰ Here he deals with ritual atonement for manslaughter (Deut. 21), and the forbidden drinking of blood (Deut. 12 and Lev. 17). Then, in his "Political Supplements of the Sixth Commandment,"⁷¹ he very carefully deals with: the legal penalties for murder, manslaughter and wounding (Lev. 24 & Ex. 21 & Deut. 17); injuries caused through negligence (Deut. 22); kidnapping (Deut. 24); the method of capital punishment (Deut. 21); corporal punishment (Deut. 25); personal responsibility (Deut. 24); rules of warfare (Deut. 20); oppression (Deut. 23), humaneness to animals (Deut. 22 and Ex. 23); and cities of refuge (Num. 35).

The Seventh Commandment⁷² concerns sexual purity (Ex. 20:14 & Deut. 5:18). Here, after dealing with Lev. 18, Calvin adds "Political Supplements"⁷³ about homosexuality and bestiality (Lev. 18 & Ex. 22), prostitution (Lev. 19 & Deut. 23), adultery (Lev. 20 & Deut. 22), seduction (Lev. 19), marriage (Ex. 21), dowries (Ex. 22), war-brides (Deut. 24), trial by ordeal for suspected unfaithfulness (Num. 5), virginity laws (Deut. 22), divorce (Deut. 24), and incest (Lev. 18). Then, under "Judicial" or "Political" Supplements⁷⁴ to this Commandment – he includes penalties for incest (Lev. 20) and for breach of chaste conduct (Deut. 25); and also a requirement that clothing be modest (Deut. 22).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 408ff.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 431ff.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 432ff.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 445ff.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, III, p. 5ff.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13ff.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20ff.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25ff, & cf. too note 71 below.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33ff.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 68ff.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 71-72ff.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 106,108ff.

IV.

CALVIN'S DETAILED EXPOSITION OF THE MORAL LAW OF NATURE

The Eighth Commandment⁷⁵ defends private property (Ex. 20:15 & Deut. 5:19). Here Calvin opposes theft and fraud and oppression (Lev. 19 & Deut. 24) – especially at the expense of resident aliens (Ex. 22 & Lev. 19), and widows and orphans (Deut. 10). Similarly, he here also condemns deceitful weights and measures (Lev. 19 & Deut. 19), cruel pledge requirements (Ex. 22 & Deut. 24), usury or exorbitant rates of interest (Ex. 22), the non-return of lost property (Deut. 22 & Ex. 23), the neglecting of restitution (Num. 5), bribery (Ex. 23), and injustice (Ex. 23).

Then, under “Political Supplements,”⁷⁶ Calvin discusses penalties for theft (Ex. 22 & Lev. 22), the remedy for property damage caused through negligence (Ex. 21), gleanings laws (Deut. 23 & Lev. 19), release from debt (Deut. 15), slavery laws (Ex. 21 & Deut. 15 & Lev. 25), distress sales of future crops (Lev. 25), care of trees (Deut. 20), marriage property and inheritance provisions (Deut. 21), wartime production (Deut. 20), and Levirate property (Deut. 25).

Under the Ninth Commandment,⁷⁷ true reporting is required (Ex. 20:16 & Deut. 5:20). Here Calvin, after discussing Ex. 23 and Lev. 19 in His “Supplement to the Ninth Commandment,”⁷⁸ deals with the procedure and the penalty for perjury (Deut. 19:16-21). So too, after discussing the Tenth Commandment⁷⁹ against covetousness (Ex. 20:17 & Deut. 5:21), he deals with “the Sum of the Law”⁸⁰ in terms of Deut. 10 & Lev. 19, the “Use of the Law,”⁸¹ and the “Sanctions of the Law contained in the Promises and Threats”⁸² of Lev. 18 & 26 and Deut. 4 & 7 & 11 to 12 & 27 to 30.

Let us summarize Calvin’s contribution⁸³ to the analysis of the Moral Law in the light of the Mosaic legislation. We see that under the First Commandment, he refers to Deut. 7:6 & 14:2 & 26:18 and Lev. 19:2, *etc.*⁸⁴ Under the Second Commandment, he refers to Deut. 4:15 *etc.*⁸⁵ Under the Third Commandment, he refers to Lev. 19:12 and Ex. 22:11 *etc.*⁸⁶ Under the Fourth Commandment, he refers to Num. 13:22 and Ex. 31:13-17 & 23:12 and Deut. 5:14 (*etc.*) – adding: “Who can deny that both (Deut. 5:14 & Ex. 23:12) are equally applicable to us as to the Jews?”⁸⁷ Under the Fifth Commandment, he refers to Ex. 21:12,15 & 22:28 and Lev. 19:3,32 & 19:32 & 20:9 and Deut. 5:16 & 16:18 &

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 110ff.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 140ff.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 179ff.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 185ff.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 190ff.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 196ff.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 201ff, discussing Lev. 18:5; Deut. 27:11-26; 11:26-32; Lev. 26:3-13; Deut. 28:1-14; 7:9-15; 12:28; Lev. 26:14-45; Deut. 28:15-68; 4:25-31; 29:10-28; 30:1-20.

⁸³ Calvin’s full contribution to the analysis of the Moral Law still awaits collation from his *Institutes*, his *Commentaries*, his *Catechism*, his *Tracts and Treatises*, his *Church Ordinances*, his *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, and his other writings elsewhere in his *Opera Omnia*.

⁸⁴ Calvin: *Institutes* II:8:14.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, II:8:17.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, II:8:24-26.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, II:8:29-32.

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21:18 *etc.*⁶⁸ Under the Sixth Commandment, he refers to Ex. 20:13 & 21:15 & 23:5 and Lev. 17:10 & 19:14-17f,28 & 20:9 & 24:17-32 and Num. 35:9-34 and Deut. 5:15,23 & 12:15-27 & 17:6 & 19:1-15 & 20:10-18 & 21:1-9,18,22v. & 22:4-8 & 24:7,16 & 23:15v. & 25:1-3.⁸⁸ Under the Seventh Commandment, he refers to Num. 25:9 (cf. I Cor. 10:8) and Deut. 15:1, 13 & 23:24 & 24:10, 14 & 19:14 & 25:4 and Lev. 19:9f, 33, 35 & 24:33 & 25:42 and Ex. 22:25 *etc.*⁸⁹ Under the Eighth Commandment, he refers to Deut. 15:1,13 & 23:24 & 34:10,14 & 19:14 & 25:4 and Lev. 19:9f,33,35 & 24:33 & 25:42b and Ex. 22:25 *etc.*⁹⁰ Under the Ninth Commandment, he refers to Ex. 23:1,7 and Lev. 19:16, 17, *etc.*⁹¹ And under the Tenth Commandment, he refers to Deut. 5:21 (cf. Rom 7:7, 13, 14 and Jas. 1:15) *etc.*⁹²

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* 28 declares that “the punishments of sin in this World are either inward (as blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections); or outward (as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments.” Here, “vile affections” are footnoted to include lesbianism (Rom. 1:26) – and evils of “employments” include all urban and rural curses such as crop failures and childlessness *etc.* (Deut. 28:15-18f).

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* 29 further declares that “the punishments in the World to come are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body without intermission in hell-fire for ever. II Thess. 1:9; Mark 9:43-48; and Luke 16:24.”

Three observations need to be made about Calvin and the Ten Commandments. First, he stressed “spirituality” – not the “de-concrete-tization” alias the “other-world-ification” of one’s piety, but rather man’s internal motivation to keep the Ten Commandments outwardly both here and now. For Calvin believed that “in the Law, human life is instructed not merely in outward decency but in inward spiritual righteousness.”⁹³

Second, he also understood that the Decalogue needs to be interpreted by positivization and “synecdoche.” For “there is always more in the requirements and prohibitions of the Law than is expressed in words.”⁹⁴

Third, the Moral Law needs ‘contrarization.’ For, held Calvin, “if this pleases God, its opposite displeases; if that displeases, its opposite pleases.”⁹⁵

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, II:8:36.

⁸⁹ Cf. notes 73-74 above.

⁹⁰ Cf. notes 75-76 above.

⁹¹ Calvin: *Institutes* II:8:47; cf. his *Commentary* on Lev. 19:17 (cf. Matt. 18:15!) in his *Harmony of the Pentateuch*.

⁹² Calvin: *Harmony of the Pentateuch*, III, pp. 187-189.

⁹³ Calvin: *Institutes* II:8:6-7.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, II:8:8a.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, II:8:8b.

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Dr. Calvin's view were closely followed especially in the eight "**rules to be observed for the right understanding of the Ten Commandments** in the *Westminster Larger Catechism*."⁹⁶ Here again – even though the Ten Commandments are indeed the comprehensive summary of that Moral Law and the only means of demarcating it – we clearly see that the Moral Law itself is considerable broader than just the Decalogue.

For the *Catechism*'s first rule as to the perfection of the Decalogue (showing that the Moral Law requires the utmost perfection of every duty and forbids the least degree of every sin), is proved from three non-decalogical Bible texts.⁹⁷ The *Catechism*'s second rule as to the spirituality of the Decalogue (showing that the Moral Law reaches to the understanding and will and affections and all other powers of the soul as well as to our words and work and gestures), is proved from four non-decalogical Bible texts.⁹⁸ The third rule as to the interlockingness of the Decalogue (showing that the several Commandments of the Moral Law may require or forbid the same thing), is proved also from four non-decalogical texts.⁹⁹ Indeed, the fourth rule as to contrariety in the Decalogue (showing that the enjoined duties of the Moral Law also forbid the contrary sins and *vice-versa*) – is proved from fully ten non-decalogical texts.¹⁰⁰

The fifth rule as to timeousness in the Decalogue (showing that we may never do evil but need not at all times do every particular duty of the Moral Law), is proved from fully six non-decalogical texts.¹⁰¹ The sixth rule as to synecdoche (whereby under one sin or duty mentioned in the Moral Law all the sins or duties of the same kind are forbidden or commanded), is proved from seven non-decalogical texts.¹⁰² The seventh rule as to enforcibility (whereby we are bound according to our places to encourage others to avoid the sins and to perform the duties of the Moral Law), is proved by four non-decalogical texts.¹⁰³ And the eighth rule as to assistance (whereby we are bound according to our places to be helpful to others in performing their duties under the Moral Law), is proved by three non-decalogical texts.¹⁰⁴

By way of **detailed synecdoche**¹⁰⁵ of the **First Table** of the Decalogue in the *Catechism* – consider too just some of the many non-decalogical Biblical examples given

⁹⁶ *W.L.C.* 99.

⁹⁷ *W.L.C.* 99, quoting Ps. 19:7 & Jas. 2:10 & Matt. 5:21-22.

⁹⁸ *W.L.C.* 99.2p, quoting Rom. 7:14 & Deut. 6:5 & Matt. 22:37-39 & 5:21-44.

⁹⁹ *W.L.C.* 99.3q, quoting Col. 3:5 & Am. 8:5 & Prov. 1:19 & I Tim. 6:10.

¹⁰⁰ *W.L.C.* 99.4rstuv, quoting Isa. 58:13 & Deut. 6:13 & Matt. 4:9-10 & 15:4-6 & 5:21-25ff & Eph. 4:28 & Prov. 30:17 & Jer. 18:7-8 & Ps. 15:1-5 & 24:4-5.

¹⁰¹ *W.L.C.* 99.5wxy, quoting Job 13:7-8 & Rom. 3:8 & Job 36:21 & Heb. 11:25 & Deut. 4:8-9 & Matt. 12:7.

¹⁰² *W.L.C.* 99.6z, quoting Matt. 5:21-28 & 15:4-6 & Heb. 10:24 & I Thess. 5:22 & Jude 23 & Gal. 5:26 & Col. 3:21.

¹⁰³ *W.L.C.* 99.7a, quoting Lev. 19:17 & Gen. 18:19 & Josh. 24:15 & Deut. 6:6-7.

¹⁰⁴ *W.L.C.* 99.8bc, quoting II Cor. 1:24 & I Tim. 5:22 & Eph. 5:11.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. our text at note 62 above.

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by the Westminster theologians! Such are examples of duties required by the Moral Law (and also examples of sins against the Moral Law).

The First Commandment (requiring obedience to God alone), condemns all “self-love”¹⁰⁶ and “carnal security” and “lukewarmness” in at least five non-decalogical Bible texts adduced by the Westminster theologians. The Second Commandment (on the spiritual nature of worship), in at least eight non-decalogical Bible texts requires the “receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire” of the Scriptural system of “church government and discipline” – and “the disapproving, detesting, and exposing [of] all false worship” and the forbidding of “opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.”¹⁰⁷ The Third Commandment (in reverencing the Name of the Creator and respecting His creation), in at least five non-decalogical Bible texts requires esteem for all of God’s “works” – and also requires that people not use His Name superstitiously nor engage in “murmuring” against His providence.¹⁰⁸ And the Fourth Commandment (about work and rest), in at least nine non-decalogical Bible texts requires that “the Lord’s day is to be sanctified by a holy resting all the day”; that we make it “our delight”; and that “governors of families and other superiors” (such as political leaders) are to “see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge” and that those superiors forbid “all needless works, words, and thoughts about our worldly employments and recreations.”¹⁰⁹

The **detailed synecdoche continues in the Second Table** of the Decalogue, as expounded by the *Catechism*. For the Fifth Commandment (on maintaining law and order), in at least seven non-decalogical Bible texts requires “superiors” or leaders in “family, church or commonwealth” alias political government to reward such subjects as do well (or keep the Ten Commandments) – while “chastising such as do ill” (or break God’s Moral Laws).¹¹⁰ The Sixth Commandment (on the preservation of life and health), in at least fourteen non-decalogical Bible texts requires “a sober use” of food and drink and medicines and “sleep and labour and recreations.” It insists on capital punishment for murderers and on the need to kill enemies in “lawful war” – and forbids “withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life” and indulging in “distracting cares.”¹¹¹

The Seventh Commandment (on the preservation of sexual integrity), in at least seven non-decalogical Bible texts requires “chastity in body, mind, [and] affections” – and

¹⁰⁶ *W.L.C.* 105apw, quoting II Tim. 3:2 & Zeph. 1:12 & Rev. 3:16 & II Sam. 12:9 & Prov. 13:13, *etc.*

¹⁰⁷ *W.L.C.* 108osy & 109b (2nd series), quoting Matt. 18:15-17 & 16:19 & I Cor. 5 & 12:28 & Acts 17:16-17 & Ps. 16:4 & Acts 13:44-45 & I Thess. 2:15-16, *etc.*

¹⁰⁸ *W.L.C.* 112s & 113hv (1st series), quoting Job 36:24 & I Sam. 4:3-5 & Jer. 7:4,9,10,14,31 & Col. 2:20-22 & Rom. 9:14-20 *etc.*

¹⁰⁹ *W.L.C.* 117abd & 118fk, quoting Neh. 13:15-22 & Jer. 17:20-22 & Isa. 58:13 & Luke 4:16 & Acts 20:7 & I Cor. 16:1-2 & Ps. 92 & Isa. 66:23 & Josh. 24:15 & Jer. 17:24,27 *etc.*, and compare too at note 110 below.

¹¹⁰ *W.L.C.* 124efg & 129pqs, quoting II Kgs. 5:13 & 2:12 & 13:4 & Gal. 4:19 & Isa. 49:23 & Est. 6:3 & Prov. 29:15 *etc.*, & cf. too note 109 above.

¹¹¹ *W.L.C.* 1135fhnopqrs & 136dho, quoting Prov. 25:16,27 & I Tim. 5:23 & Isa. 38:21 & Ps. 127:2 & Eccl. 5:12 & II Thess. 3:10-12 & Prov. 16:26 & Eccl. 3:4,11 & Gen. 9:6 & Jer. 48:10 & Matt. 25:42-43 & Jas. 2:15-16 & Eccl. 6:1-2 & Matt. 6:31,34 *etc.*

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forbids “vows of celibacy” and “lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, [and] stage plays.”¹¹² The Eighth Commandment (on the preservation of property), in at least fifteen non-decalogical Bible texts requires the encouraging of “lending freely” to “others” – and prohibits “robbery” and “usury” (or exorbitant interest) and “bribery” and “wasteful gaming” or gambling.¹¹³ (Observe too that the 1645 *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God* even admonishes every debtor especially when he is sick “to take care for payment of his debts and to make restitution or satisfaction where he hath done any wrong.”)¹¹⁴

The Ninth Commandment (on the preservation of truth), in at least seven non-decalogical Bible texts requires “a charitable esteem of our neighbours” and a “covering of their infirmities” – as well as a “discouraging...[of] flatterers” and a defence of our own good name when slandered.¹¹⁵ And the Tenth Commandment (on contentment), in at least fifteen non-decalogical Bible texts requires “a charitable frame of the whole soul toward our neighbour” – while it forbids “envying and grieving” about the prosperity of others.¹¹⁶

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* also frequently quotes **non-decalogical Mosaic laws when expounding the Moral Law**. This is especially relevant to our argument. In the Preface to the Decalogue (Ex. 20:2),¹¹⁷ the *Catechism* explains that God is the Triune **Jehovah** or “a God-in-covenant (Ex. 3:14 & 6:3)”¹¹⁸ – so that “we are bound to take Him for our God alone; and to keep all His Commandments (Lev. 18:30 & 19:37).”¹¹⁹ And the First Commandment, it is explained, requires that the Triune alias “the only true God” be

¹¹² *W.L.C.* 138z & 139zh, quoting I Thess. 4:4 & Job 31:1 & I Cor. 7:34 & Matt. 18:10-11 & II Kgs. 9:30 & Jer. 4:30 & Ezek. 23:40 *etc.*

¹¹³ *W.L.C.* 140nx & 142aklmxy, quoting Luke 6:30,38 & I John 3:12 & Eph. 4:28 & Gal. 6:10 & Gen. 47:14,20 & Phil. 2:4 & Matt. 22:39 & Ps. 62:10 & Matt. 23:25 & Ezek. 22:12 & Ps. 15:5 & Job 15:34 & Prov. 21:17 & 23:20-21 & 28:19 *etc.* Cf. too note 114 below.

¹¹⁴ “Concerning the Visitation of the Sick” (paragraph 14), in *The Directory for the Publick Worship of God agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, with an Act of the General Assembly, 1645* (in *Subordinate Standards of the Free Church of Scotland* [Edinburgh: Offices of the Free Church of Scotland], 1933, p. 298).

Similarly, cf. the great nineteenth century Southern Presbyterian Plumer’s *Law of God* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Education, 1864, pp. 520, 524-525): “The Bible opposes the system of debt and credit, at least when carried to such lengths as we sometimes see. ‘Owe no man any thing, but to love one another,’ Rom. 13:8.... Never begin the ruinous practice of paying usurious interest.... As fast as you can collect, pay over to those you owe.... Pursue this course diligently and sincerely for seven years.” Cf. esp. Ex. 22:5-27 & Deut. 15:1-9 & 23:19 & 28:12 & Ps. 37:21 & Matt. 5:26’s *apodoos* “give back!” Cf. too note 113 above.

¹¹⁵ *W.L.C.* 144mpwxy, quoting Heb. 6:9 & I Cor. 13:7 & Prov. 17:9 & I Pet. 4:8 & Prov. 26:24-25 & 22:1 & Ps. 51:5.

¹¹⁶ *W.L.C.* 147bc & 148efg, quoting Heb. 13:5 & I Tim. 6:6 & Job 31:29 & Rom. 12:15 & Ps. 122:7-9 & I Tim. 1:5 & Est. 10:3 & I Cor. 13:4-7 & Gal. 5:26 & Jas. 3:14-16 & Ps. 112:9-10 & Neh. 2:10 & Rom. 7:7-8 & 13:9 & Col. 3:5, *etc.*

¹¹⁷ *W.L.C.* 101d.

¹¹⁸ *W.L.C.* 101efgi, also quoting Gen. 17:7.

¹¹⁹ *W.L.C.* 101,1.

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acknowledged as “our God (Deut. 26:17)”¹²⁰ – by our “loving Him (Deut. 6:5).”¹²¹ For in “being zealous for Him (Num. 25:11),”¹²² we are to avoid “all compacts and consulting with the devil (Lev. 20:6),”¹²³ all “slighting and despising God and His commands (Deut. 32:15),”¹²⁴ and all “the praise of...ourselves (Deut. 8:17).”¹²⁵

The Second Commandment, the *Catechism* explains, requires the “keeping pure and entire [of] all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in His Word (Deut. 32:46)”¹²⁶ – particularly “the reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word (Deut. 17:18-19)”¹²⁷ and “the ministry and maintenance thereof (I Tim. 5:18 [which is itself quoting from Deut. 25:4]).”¹²⁸ It also requires “swearing by the Name of God (Deut. 6:13),”¹²⁹ and “removing all monuments of idolatry (Deut. 7:5).”¹³⁰ And it forbids “all devising (Num. 15:39)”¹³¹ and “counselling (Deut. 13:6-8)”¹³² any religious worship not instituted by God Himself (Deut. 12:30)¹³³ – such as “tolerating a false religion (Deut. 13:6-12)”¹³⁴ or such as “the making of any representation of God or of all or of any of the Three Persons [such as pictures supposedly of Jesus Christ] (Deut. 4:15-19)”¹³⁵ and especially the “worshipping of it or [of] God in it or by it (Ex. 32:5).”¹³⁶ It also prohibits “the making of any representation of feigned deities (Ex. 32:8)”¹³⁷ and all “corrupting [of] the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it (Deut. 4:2)”¹³⁸ – such as “all neglect” of the sacrament of infant baptism “(Ex. 4:24-26).”¹³⁹ For “God...(Ex. 20:5-6)”¹⁴⁰ has such a jealous and “fervent zeal for His Own worship (Ex. 34:13),”¹⁴¹ that He punishes various or “divers generations” of covenant-breakers – but blesses even more generations of covenant-keepers that “love Him and keep His Commandments...unto many generations (Deut. 5:29).”¹⁴²

¹²⁰ *W.L.C.* 104o.

¹²¹ *W.L.C.* 104y.

¹²² *W.L.C.* 104g.

¹²³ *W.L.C.* 105a (2nd).

¹²⁴ *W.L.C.* 105d (2nd).

¹²⁵ *W.L.C.* 105gli (2nd).

¹²⁶ *W.L.C.* 108o.

¹²⁷ *W.L.C.* 108q.

¹²⁸ *W.L.C.* 108t.

¹²⁹ *W.L.C.* 108w.

¹³⁰ *W.L.C.* 108z.

¹³¹ *W.L.C.* 109a.

¹³² *W.L.C.* 109b.

¹³³ *W.L.C.* 109e.

¹³⁴ *W.L.C.* 109f.

¹³⁵ *W.L.C.* 109g.

¹³⁶ *W.L.C.* 109i.

¹³⁷ *W.L.C.* 109k.

¹³⁸ *W.L.C.* 109o.

¹³⁹ *W.L.C.* 109y cf. 108r.

¹⁴⁰ *W.L.C.* 110c.

¹⁴¹ *W.L.C.* 110e.

¹⁴² *W.L.C.* 110gh.

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The Third Commandment, maintains the *Catechism*, requires our using of the Name of God when required in “vows (Deut. 23:18)”¹⁴³ – and forbids “blasphemy (Lev. 24:11)”¹⁴⁴ and all “curious prying into...God’s decrees (Deut. 29:29)”¹⁴⁵ and all “misapplying or any way perverting the Word...[un]to charms (Deut. 18:10-14).”¹⁴⁶ The Lord is God, and “His Name is not to be...abused by us (Lev. 19:12).”¹⁴⁷ Indeed, He will not allow sinners to get away with this – “nor suffer them to escape His righteous judgment (Deut. 28:58).”¹⁴⁸

Similarly, the *Catechism* explains that the Fourth Commandment requires our resting throughout the Sabbath “even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful (Ex. 16:25-28).”¹⁴⁹ For we are “to spend the whole time...in the public and private exercises of God’s worship (Lev. 23:3).”¹⁵⁰ This Commandment is “more specially directed to governors of families...(Ex. 23:12),”¹⁵¹ and to “other superiors”¹⁵¹ (such as political rulers).¹⁵² Moreover, the Sabbath requires an adequate “preparation [on the previous day] to keep it (Ex. 16:23)”¹⁵³ – so that Sabbath-keeping as such “restraineth our natural liberty in things at other times lawful (Ex. 34:21).”¹⁵⁴

Coming now to **the Second Table** – the Mosaic laws continue to be referred to by the Westminster theologians in expounding the Decalogue. For the Fifth Commandment, maintains the *Catechism*, requires us to honour all our superiors (including our political leaders),¹⁵⁵ and to “reverence [them] in our heart, word, and behaviour (Lev. 19:3,32)”¹⁵⁶ and to give our “willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels.”¹⁵⁷ Indeed, it forbids our “rebellion against their persons (Ex. 21:15)”¹⁵⁸ – as regards “their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections (Deut. 21:18).”¹⁵⁹

It also requires superiors to “bless their inferiors” and “to instruct, counsel, and admonish them (Deut. 6:6-7).”¹⁶⁰ And it requires political leaders to be “commending and rewarding such as do well – and [to be] discountenancing, reproofing, and chastening such as do ill.”¹⁶¹ At the same time, however, it warns such superiors against the sins of “ease,

¹⁴³ *W.L.C.* 112p & 113dp (1st).

¹⁴⁴ *W.L.C.* 113m (1st).

¹⁴⁵ *W.L.C.* 113wx.

¹⁴⁶ *W.L.C.* 113abcde (2nd).

¹⁴⁷ *W.L.C.* 114t.

¹⁴⁸ *W.L.C.* 114v.

¹⁴⁹ *W.L.C.* 117be.

¹⁵⁰ *W.L.C.* 117d.

¹⁵¹ *W.L.C.* 118f.

¹⁵² *W.L.C.* 118f, cf. Neh. 13:15,17 & Jer. 17:20.

¹⁵³ *W.L.C.* 121p.

¹⁵⁴ *W.L.C.* 121v.

¹⁵⁵ *W.L.C.* 124cg.

¹⁵⁶ *W.L.C.* 127,lmn.

¹⁵⁷ *W.L.C.* 127q, cf. Eph. 6:1-7 & I Pet. 2:13:14 & Rom. 13:1ff.

¹⁵⁸ *W.L.C.* 128bc.

¹⁵⁹ *W.L.C.* 128f.

¹⁶⁰ *W.L.C.* 129,lm.

¹⁶¹ *W.L.C.* 129pqrs, cf. I Pet. 2:14 & Rom. 13:3-4 & Est. 6:3.

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profit, or pleasure (Deut. 17:17)¹⁶² and of “commending things unlawful or not in the power of inferiors to perform (Ex. 5:10-18).”¹⁶³ And between equals, the Commandment forbids “grieving at the advancement or prosperity of another (Num. 12:2).”¹⁶⁴

The Sixth Commandment, the *Catechism* explains, requires “the avoiding of all occasions tending to the unjust taking away of the life of any [such as by neglecting to erect protective devices in dangerous thoroughfares even in one’s own home (Deut. 22:8)]”¹⁶⁵ – while forbidding “all taking away the life of ourselves or of others,¹⁶⁶ except in case of publick justice or lawful war or necessary defence (Num. 35:31,33 and Deut. 20:1-20 and Ex. 22:2-3).”¹⁶⁷ For God forbids “hatred (Lev. 19:17),”¹⁶⁸ “wounding (Num. 35:16-21)”¹⁶⁹ our neighbour; and also “whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any (Ex. 21:18-36).”¹⁷⁰

Similarly, the Seventh Commandment, maintains the *Catechism*, requires “chastity in body, mind, affections, words, behaviour” and “company.” It calls for chaste clothing or “modesty in apparel”¹⁷¹ – and the resisting of “all occasions to uncleanness.”¹⁷² Indeed, it forbids: “sodomy and all unnatural lusts (Lev. 20:15-16),”¹⁷³ all “unlawful marriages (Lev. 18:1-21),”¹⁷⁴ and all “tolerating” of brothels or “keeping of stews and resorting to them (Deut. 23:17 and Lev. 19:29).”¹⁷⁵

The Eighth Commandment, the *Catechism* explains, requires the “restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof (Lev. 6:2 cf. Luke 19:8)”¹⁷⁶ – and the furtherance of “the wealth and outward estate of others as well as our own (Lev. 25:35 & Deut. 22:1-4 & Ex. 23:4-5).”¹⁷⁷ Moreover, it prohibits “removing landmarks (Deut. 19:14)”¹⁷⁸ and “oppression (Lev. 25:17).”¹⁷⁹

The Ninth Commandment, maintains the *Catechism*, requires speaking “only the truth...(Lev. 19:15).”¹⁸⁰ It forbids: “all prejudicing the truth...(Lev. 19:15),”¹⁸¹ all “undue

¹⁶² *W.L.C.* 130d.

¹⁶³ *W.L.C.* 130ef.

¹⁶⁴ *W.L.C.* 132w.

¹⁶⁵ *W.L.C.* 135f.

¹⁶⁶ *W.L.C.* 136cd, cf. Acts 16:28 & Gen. 9:6.

¹⁶⁷ *W.L.C.* 136efg.

¹⁶⁸ *W.L.C.* 136k.

¹⁶⁹ *W.L.C.* 136w.

¹⁷⁰ *W.L.C.* 136x.

¹⁷¹ *W.L.C.* 138,zabcdefg.

¹⁷² *W.L.C.* 138m, cf. Gen. 39:8-10, etc.

¹⁷³ *W.L.C.* 139q.

¹⁷⁴ *W.L.C.* 139x.

¹⁷⁵ *W.L.C.* 139y.

¹⁷⁶ *W.L.C.* 141m.

¹⁷⁷ *W.L.C.* 141x.

¹⁷⁸ *W.L.C.* 142f.

¹⁷⁹ *W.L.C.* 142i.

¹⁸⁰ *W.L.C.* 144k.

¹⁸¹ *W.L.C.* 145bc (1st).

silence in a just cause (Lev. 5:1 and Deut. 13:8)”;¹⁸² all “holding our peace when iniquity call for a reproof from ourselves (Lev. 19:17)”;¹⁸³ all “lying (Lev. 19:11)”;¹⁸⁴ all “talebearing (Lev. 19:16)”;¹⁸⁵ all “raising false rumours (Ex. 23:1)”;¹⁸⁶ and all “envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any (Num. 11:29).”¹⁸⁷

Last, the Tenth Commandment against coveting, the *Catechism* explains, requires “a full contentment with our own condition (Ex. 20:17).”¹⁸⁸ It forbids being jealous of our neighbour’s goods, and “all inordinate motions and affections toward any thing that is his (Deut. 5:21).”¹⁸⁹

Moreover, the *Larger Catechism* tells us that **sin is the transgression of this Moral Law**¹⁹⁰ – and that it is aggravated if it “admit of no reparation (Deut. 22:22-29),”¹⁹¹ if it is committed “against...covenants (Lev. 26:25),”¹⁹² or “if done...presumptuously (Num. 15:30 & Ex. 21:14)”¹⁹³ or “frequently (Num. 14:22)”¹⁹⁴ or during “times of divine worship (Num. 25:6-7)”¹⁹⁵ or if committed “against the...holiness of God and against His righteous Law (Lev. 10:3 and 11:44-45).”¹⁹⁶ Throughout, however, though God’s Moral Law of nature is indeed much broader than the Ten Commandments – it is also quite adequately “summarily comprehended” by the latter.^{48f} And precisely the Decalogue, as expounded by the *Westminster Larger Catechism* and by its (especially Mosaic) Bible prooftexts cited above, determines the exact focus of the Moral Law revealed throughout the infallible Scriptures.

The singing or reading of the Ten Commandments in Christian Worship Services has had a long and illustrious tradition. The first Christian Churches grew out of the Synagogue Worship, where the liturgy was centred on the reading and exposition of the Moral Law (*cf.* Neh. 8).¹⁹⁷ Accordingly, the early Christian Churches themselves preserved the place of the Law in the liturgy and in doctrine. This is evidenced in the first century A.D. by the New Testament and by the *Didachee* or the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* and by the *First Epistle of Clement of Rome* (*cf.* Phil. 4:3) and by the *Epistle of*

¹⁸² *W.L.C.* 145k (1st).

¹⁸³ *W.L.C.* 145,l (1st).

¹⁸⁴ *W.L.C.* 145s (1st).

¹⁸⁵ *W.L.C.* 145x (1st).

¹⁸⁶ *W.L.C.* 145n (2nd).

¹⁸⁷ *W.L.C.* 145r (2nd).

¹⁸⁸ *W.L.C.* 146a-147b.

¹⁸⁹ *W.L.C.* 148fg; *cf.* too note 76 above.

¹⁹⁰ *W.L.C.* 24 *cf.* 149-150.

¹⁹¹ *W.L.C.* 151.3r.

¹⁹² *W.L.C.* 151.3d.

¹⁹³ *W.L.C.* 151.3h.

¹⁹⁴ *W.L.C.* 151.3m (2nd).

¹⁹⁵ *W.L.C.* 151.4v.

¹⁹⁶ *W.L.C.* 152cd, *cf.* I John 3:4 & Rom. 7:12.

¹⁹⁷ *Cf.* W.D. Maxwell: *An Outline of Christian Worship* (London: Oxford University Press), 1958, pp. 3ff.

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Barnabas and by various Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch (*cf.* Acts 11:25f) and Pliny and Polycarp.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Rom. 3:31 & 7:7,12,16,22,25 & 8:4,7 & 13:8-10 & I Cor. 14:21,34 & Eph. 6:1-3 & I Tim. 1:8-10 & Jas. 1:25-27 & 2:8-12 & 4:11-12 & I John 3:4,22-24 & 5:2-3,21 & Rev. 12:17 & 14:12 & 22:14-15 (*q.v.!*). See too Dan. 2 & 5; Rom. 11:12-15; 11:25-32;13:1-7; I Cor. 15:24-28; II Thess. 2:8-9 & 3:1; I Tim. 2:1-2; Tit. 3:1; I Pet. 2, and Rev. chs. 13 to 18.

Cf. too the *Didachee* (or the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*): “There are two ways, one of life and one of death; but a great difference between the two ways. The way of life, then, is this: First, thou shalt love God Who made thee!... And the second Commandment of the Teaching: thou shalt not commit murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not commit paederasty [or sexually corrupt children], thou shalt not practise witchcraft, thou shalt not murder a child by abortion nor kill that which is begotten! Thou shalt not covet the things of thy neighbour, thou shalt not forswear thyself, thou shalt not bear false witness!” *Did.* I:1-2 & 2:1-2.

Cf. too **Clement of Rome**: “The Church of God which sojourns at Rome, to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth.... The Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord were written upon the tablets of your hearts....

“Those in Christ who were entrusted with such a duty by God, appointed those [Ministers] before mentioned – when the blessed Moses also, ‘a faithful servant in all His House’ (Num. 12:10 *cf.* Heb. 3:5), noted down in the sacred books all the injunctions which were given him, and when the other Prophets also followed him.... Our Apostles also...appointed those [Ministers] already mentioned, and afterwards gave instructions....

“When Moses went up into the mount and abode there with fasting and humiliation forty days and forty nights, the Lord said unto him, ‘Moses, Moses, get thee down quickly from hence! For thy people whom thou didst bring out of the land of Egypt have committed iniquity. They have speedily departed from the way in which I commanded them to walk, and have made to themselves molten images.’” *Ist Ep. to Corinthians*, chs. 1 & 2 & 43 & 44 & 53.

Cf. too the *Epistle of Barnabas*: “The Scripture saith, ‘And Moses was fasting in the mount forty days and forty nights, and received the covenant from the Lord, tables of stone written with the finger of the hand of the Lord’; but turning away to idols, they [the Israelites] lost it.... Moses also says to them, ‘Behold these things, saith the Lord God: “Enter into the good land!”’....

“Again, I will show thee how, in respect to us [New Testament Christians], He has accomplished a second fashioning in these last days. The Lord says, ‘Behold, I will make the last like the first.’ In reference to this, then, the Prophet [Moses in Ex. 33:3] proclaimed: ‘Enter ye into the land flowing with milk and honey, and have dominion over it!’....

“Moreover, the Lord saith to them in Deuteronomy, ‘And I will establish My ordinances among this people’.... Moreover Moses, when he commanded, ‘Ye shall not have any graven or molten [image] for your God!’ – did so, that he might reveal a type of Jesus....

“What, again, says Moses to...Joshua?... ‘Take a book into thy hands and write what the Lord declares, that the Son of God will in the last days cut off...all the house of Amalek!’....

“Further, also, it is written concerning the Sabbath in the Decalogue which [the Lord] spoke, face to face, to Moses on Mount Sinai, ‘And sanctify ye the Sabbath of the Lord with clean hands and a pure heart!’.... Wherefore, also, we [Christians] keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead....

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This continued on throughout the second century. That is evidenced by the *Shepherd of Hermas*, by Theophilus of Antioch, by Justin Martyr of Samaria, by Irenaeus of Lyons, by Clement of Alexandria, and by Tertullian of Carthage.¹⁹⁹ It is seen also in Origen of

“Thou shalt not forsake the Commandments of the Lord!... Thou shalt not commit fornication; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not be a corrupter of youth! Thou shalt not let the Word of God issue from thy lips with any kind of impurity!... Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain!... Thou shalt not slay the child by procuring abortion; nor again shalt thou destroy it after it is born!... Thou shalt not covet what is thy neighbour’s!... Thou shalt remember the day of judgment!” *Barn.* chs. 4 & 6 & 10 & 12 & 15 & 19.

Cf. too **Ignatius of Antioch**: “Moses was meek [or law-abiding] above all men; and David was exceeding meek” (*Ep. to Ephesians*, ch. 10). “Moses declares, ‘For their murmuring is not against us, but against the Lord God’ (Ex. 16:8). No one of these has [in fact] remained unpunished, who rose up against their superiors.” *Ep. to Magnesians*, ch. 3.

“If any man does not stand aloof from the preacher of falsehood, he shall be condemned to hell. For it is obligatory neither to separate from the godly, nor to associate with the ungodly.... Have no fellowship with such a man, lest ye perish along with him – even should he be thy father, thy son, thy brother, or a member of thy family! For says [the Scripture], ‘thine eye shall not spare him!’ (Deut. 13:6,8).” *Ep. to the Philadelphians*, ch. 3.

“For the chief points are faith towards God, hope towards Christ, the enjoyment of those things for which we look, and love towards God and our neighbour. For, ‘thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself’ (Deut. 6:5). And the Lord says..., ‘a new Commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another! On the two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets’ (John 13:34; Matt. 22:40) *Ep. to Smyrnaeans*, ch. 6.

Cf. too **Pliny** (*To Trajan* X:96f). There, Pliny reports that Christians were “in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day...when they...bound themselves by a solemn oath not to [do] any wicked deeds; never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery; never to falsify their word; nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up.”

Also note **Polycarp** (*To the Philippians*, chs. 2 & 4): “He [God the Father] Who raised Him [Jesus Christ] up from the dead, will raise up us also – if we do His will and walk in His Commandments...keeping ourselves from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil-speaking, false-witness.... [Teach] chastity..., being far from slandering!”

¹⁹⁹ Cf. the **Shepherd of Hermas**: “This great tree that casts its shadow over the plains and mountains and all the Earth, is the Law of God that was given to the whole World; and this Law, is the Son of God proclaimed to the ends of the Earth. And the people who are under its shadow are they who have heard the proclamation, and have believed upon Him. And the great and glorious Michael is He Who has authority over this people, and governs them. For this is He Who gave them the Law into the hearts of believers. He accordingly superintends them to whom He gave it, to see if they have kept the same.... And they who returned their branches green as they had received them, are the venerable and the just and they who have kept the Commandments of the Lord.” *Herm.* III:8:3.

Cf. **Theophilus of Antioch**: “The three days which were before the luminaries [alias the sun and the moon and the stars], are types of the Trinity.... On the fourth day, the lights were made. The disposition of the stars, too, contains a type of the arrangement and order of the righteous and pious, and of those who keep the Law and Commandments of God.... And those, again, which change their position and

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flee from place to place – which also are called planets – they too are a type of the men who have wandered from God, abandoning His Law and Commandments....

“Now we [Christians] also confess that God exists – but that He is one (the Creator and Maker and Fashioner of this universe). And we know that all things are arranged by His providence, but by Him alone. And we have learned a holy Law. But we have as Lawgiver Him Who is really God, Who teaches us to act righteously and to be pious and to do good.

“And concerning piety He says, ‘thou shalt have no other gods before Me; thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above or that is in the Earth beneath or that is in the water under the Earth – thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them! For I am the Lord thy God.’

“And of doing good, He said: ‘Honour thy father and thy mother; that it may be well with thee, and that thy days may be long in the land which I the Lord God give thee!’ Again, concerning righteousness: ‘thou shalt not commit adultery!’; ‘thou shalt not kill!’; ‘thou shalt not steal!’; ‘thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour!’; ‘thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife!’; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house nor his land nor his manservant nor his maidservant nor his ox nor his beast of burden nor any of his cattle nor anything that is thy neighbour’s!’

“‘Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of the poor in his cause!’ (Ex. 23:6). ‘From every unjust matter, keep thee far! The innocent and righteous, thou shalt not slay! Thou shalt not justify the wicked! And thou shalt not take a gift [or a bribe]! For gifts blind the eyes of them that see, and pervert righteous words.’

“Of this divine law, then, Moses, who also was God’s servant, was made the Minister both to all the World and chiefly to the Hebrews..., and gave them a Law and taught them these things. Of this great and wonderful Law, which tends to all righteousness, the ten heads are such as we have already rehearsed....

“And when the people transgressed the Law which had been given to them by God, God being good and pitiful, unwilling to destroy them in addition to His giving them the Law, afterwards sent forth also Prophets to them from among their brethren, to teach and remind them of the contents of the Law and to turn them to repentance that they might sin no more.... The voice of the Gospel teaches still more urgently concerning chastity” etc. Theophilus: *To Autolycus*, II:15 and III:9 & 11 & 13.

In his *First Apology* (14), Justin Martyr of Samaria condemns “fornication” and “magical arts.” And in his *Dial. with Trypho* (chs. 75 & 95), he states: “Thus it is written: ‘And the Lord spake to Moses, ‘Say to this people, ‘Behold, I send My Angel before thy face to keep thee in the way – to bring thee into the land which I have prepared for thee. Give head to Him, and obey Him, do not disobey Him! For He will not draw back from you; for My Name is on Him!’” (Ex. 23:20-21)....

“For it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them!’... But if those who are under this Law appear to be under a curse for not having observed all the requirements – how much more under a curse shall all the nations appear to be who practise idolatry; who seduce youths; and commit other crimes?”

Athenagoras of Athens, in his *Plea for the Christians* (32-35), states: “**We** have a Law which makes the measure of rectitude to consist in dealing with our neighbour as ourselves.... Whosoever marries another [being married], commits adultery.” He condemns sodomy (“males with males committing shocking abominations”). Then he adds: “Who...can accuse us of murder?... We say that those women who use drugs to bring on abortion, commit murder.... Those who expose them [infants], are chargeable with child-murder.”

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Cf. too **Irenaeus of Lyons**: “The righteous fathers had the meaning of the Decalogue written in their hearts and souls.... And it enjoined love to God, and taught just-dealing towards our neighbour...through the medium of the Decalogue.... The Lord Himself did speak in His Own Person to all alike the words of the Decalogue. And therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us – receiving by means of His advent in the flesh extension and increase but no abrogation.” *Against Heresies*, IV:16:3-4.

Cf. too **Clement of Alexandria**: “If rulers are not a terror to a good work – how shall God, Who is by nature good, be a terror to him who sins not? ‘If you do evil, be afraid!’ – says the Apostle (Rom. 13:3-4).... We are expressly prohibited from exercising a deceptive art: ‘For thou shalt not make,’ says the Prophet, ‘the likeness of anything which is in Heaven above or in the Earth beneath!’” *Exhortation to the Heathen*, ch. 4. “‘Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain! For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain’....

“We may comprehend the Commandments in two. As the Lord says, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself.’ Then from these He infers, ‘on this hang the Law and the Prophets.’

“Further, to him that asked, ‘What good things shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?’ – He answered, ‘thou knowest the Commandments!’ And on him replying, ‘Yea!’ – He said, ‘This do, and thou shalt be saved!’...

“We have the Decalogue given by Moses, which, indicating by an elementary principle, simple and of one kind – defines the designation of sins in a way conducive to salvation: ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery! Thou shalt not worship idols! Thou shalt not corrupt boys! Thou shalt not steal! Thou shalt not bear false witness! Honour thy father and thy mother!’ And so forth. These things are to be observed!.... Such are the Laws of the Word...which were written by the finger of the Lord but inscribed on men’s hearts...imperishable.” *The Instructor*, I:9 and III:11 & 12.

“Observance of the Commandments...is the attainment of a secure life.... From the Commandments spring both wisdom...and...righteousness.... To know the Law is the characteristic of a good understanding.... The Law proclaims at once the righteousness and goodness of God.... The [pagan] Greeks expose the offspring of man – though long ago and prophetically the Law...threw a check in the way of their cruelty....

“The Law says, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery!’ And the Gospel says: ‘whosoever looks at a woman lustfully, has already committed adultery.’ For this, ‘Thou shalt not covet!’ – which is pronounced by the Law – shows that it is one and the same God Who preaches through the Law and the Prophets and the Gospel...

“For Abraham is the father not only of the Hebrews, but also of the Gentiles. And if both the adulteress and the adulterer are punished by death (Deut. 22:22) – it is clear too that the precept which teaches ‘thou shalt not lust after thy neighbour’s wife!’ is addressed to the Gentiles too.

“‘Honour father and mother, that it may go well with you!’... ‘Behold, I set before thy face life and death – to love the Lord thy God, and to walk in His ways, and hear His voice, and trust in life. But if ye transgress the statutes and the judgments which I have given you, ye shall be destroyed with destruction. For this is life and the length of thy days, to love the Lord thy God’ (Deut. 30:15-16)” *Stromata*, II:18 and III:2 & 15 and IV:3 and V:11 and VII:16.

Cf. too **Tertullian of Carthage**: “The divine law proclaims, ‘Thou shalt make no idol!’... If you reverence the same God, you have His Law... If you look back, too, to the precept enjoining the subsequently-made similitude – do you, too, imitate Moses!... “In the first part of the Law, too – ‘Thou

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Caesarea and Cyprian of Carthage and Cyril of Jerusalem and in the *Apostolic Constitutions* and even in the later Augustine – in spite of the commencement of the Dark Ages in the third and fourth centuries when the idolatrous Mass and others unscriptural traditions of men first began to be substituted liturgically in the place of the Commandments of God.²⁰⁰

shalt not,’ saith He, ‘use the Name of the Lord thy God in a vain thing!’ That is, in an idol.” *On Idolatry*, chs. 4 & 5 & 20.

“For why should God, the Founder of the Universe, the Governor of the whole World, the Fashioner of humanity, the Sower of universal nations – be believed to have given a Law through Moses to one people, and not be said to have assigned it to all nations?... For in the beginning of the World, He gave to Adam himself and Eve a Law...

“For in this Law given to Adam, we recognize in embryo all the precepts which afterwards sprouted forth when given through Moses. That is, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God from thy whole heart and out of thy whole soul!; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself!; Thou shalt not kill!; Thou shalt not commit adultery!; Thou shalt not steal!; false witness thou shalt not utter!; honour thy father and mother!; and, that which is another’s, shalt thou not covet!’

“For the primordial Law was given to Adam and Eve, in paradise, as the womb of all the precepts of God.... In short, before the Law of Moses, written on stone tables, I contend that there was a Law unwritten which was habitually understood naturally.

“By the fathers, it was habitually kept. For whence was Noah ‘found righteous’ – if in his case the righteousness of a natural Law had not preceded? Whence was Abraham accounted ‘a friend of God’ – if not on the ground of equity and righteousness, [in the observance] of a natural Law? Whence was Melchizedek named ‘priest of the most high God’ – if, before the priesthood of the Levitical law, there were not ‘levites’ who were wont to offer sacrifices to God?...

“Moses said to the people: ‘Remember the day of the sabbaths, to sanctify it: every servile work ye shall not do therein, except what pertaineth unto life!’ Whence we [Christians] understand that we still more ought to observe a sabbath.” *An Answer to the Jews*, chs. 2 & 4.

“God Himself...said not only, ‘Be fruitful and multiply!’ – but also, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery!’ and ‘Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife!’ And [it was He] Who threatened with death the unchaste, sacrilegious, and monstrous abomination both of adultery and unnatural sin with man and beast.” *Against Marcion*, Book I, ch. 29.

“Let the Gospels wait a little – while I set forth their root, the Law!... ‘I am,’ says He, ‘God – thy God, Who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Thou shalt have no other gods besides Me! Thou shalt not make unto thee a[ny] likeness etc.” *Scorpiace*, ch. 2.

²⁰⁰ Note that the Law was still being read in Christian church liturgies right down into the third and fourth centuries, also and indeed especially after the A.D. 321 nominal christianization of the Roman Empire. Cf. Maxwell’s *op. cit.*, pp. 17,27,38ff, and cf. Matt. 15:2-9! See too **Origen** (*De Princ.* II:4:1-2 & IV:1:19 [both the Latin and the Greek versions] and *Comment. on Matt.*, Book 11:8-10); **Cyprian** (*Epistle* 72:19; and *Treatise 11 Exhortation* 1-5; and *Treatise 13 3rd Book Testimonies* 10-13); **Cyril** (*Catechetical Lecture* 7:15); and the **Pseudo-Clementine Liturgies**.

Compare especially the **Apostolic Constitutions** I:1:1-2 & II:4:36 (“Have before thine eyes the fear of God, and always remember the Ten Commandments of God – to love the one and only Lord God!... Thou shalt observe the Sabbath!... Reject every unlawful lust!... Honour thy parents!... Avoid swearing falsely!”). Also note VIII:2:12 (describing the horrible transgressions of God’s Moral Law from the fall

V.

THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS' EXPOSITION OF THE MORAL LAW

However, Calvin in his *Metrical Decalogue* restored the commemoration of the Ten Commandments in weekly worship.²⁰¹ And this was continued in the 1552 *Book of Common Prayer* of the Reformed Church in England,²⁰² in the 1574 *Decrees of the Synod of Dordt*,²⁰³ in the 1637 *Scottish Book of Common Prayer*,²⁰⁴ and in the 1661 Puritan Reformed liturgy of Richard Baxter²⁰⁵ (*etc.*) – as well as in many other Reformed liturgies right down to this very day.²⁰⁶

“The Moral Law, then” – let us conclude this section in the words of Calvin²⁰⁷ – “being contained under two heads, the one of which simply enjoins us to worship God with pure faith and piety, the other to embrace men with sincere affection, is the true and eternal rule of righteousness prescribed to the men of all nations and of all times who would frame their life agreeably to the will of God.” For (as Scripture declares), although

through to Sodom *etc.*, even before the time of Moses)! Also digest VIII:3:22 (“Thou Who didst instruct Esdras [alias Ezra] Thy Servant to read Thy Laws to the people (Neh. 8) – do Thou now also at our prayers instruct Thy Servant [the Preacher in Worship Services]” to do likewise!

Note also the works of **Augustine** (such as *On Holy Virginity* 30 and *On Lying* 23, *etc.*). See too **all of the Patristic Fathers** – on Bible texts like Romans 13:1-8 & I Pet. 2:11 & Tit. 3:1 *etc.* Compare them, for example, under the “Index of Texts” at the back of each volume of Schaff’s ed. of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* and the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.

²⁰¹ Cf. Maxwell: *op. cit.*, pp.114-115.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 115n & 149,152.

²⁰³ Cf. A. Kuiper: *Our Liturgy [Onze Eerendienst]* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok), 1911, p. 213.

²⁰⁴ Maxwell: *op. cit.*, pp.154-155.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

²⁰⁶ E.g., many of the Reformed Presbyterian churches throughout the World, and specifically in the Christian Reformed Church and the Protestant Reformed Church in the United States and Canada; the various Reformed denominations in Holland and Germany; all the various Reformed denominations in South Africa; and in many Episcopalian churches throughout the World, *etc.*

²⁰⁷ Calvin: *Institutes* IV:20:16.

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God's Commandments were already "exceeding broad" even in their Old Testament applicability to human life (Ps. 119:96) – when Christ Himself came to Earth at His incarnation, He would even "magnify the Law" for which all of the nations were waiting (Isa. 42:4,21 *cf.* Matt. 5:17-39f).

VI. THE *WESTMINSTER STANDARDS* ON THE CEREMONIAL LAWS

We have seen that Calvin's *Harmony of the Pentateuch* subsumes the ceremonial and the judicial laws under the Ten Commandments, in spite of considerable overlap.²⁰⁸ And we have also seen that the *Westminster Larger Catechism* in its discussion of the Decalogue makes copious references both to the ceremonial and to the judicial laws.²⁰⁹ However, having shown the interrelationship between the Moral Law on the one hand and the ceremonial and the judicial laws on the other – we now need to discuss their clear **differences**. We start with the ceremonial laws (which some have seen as commencing soon after man's fall and even as early as at Gen. 3:21).

Now the *Westminster Confession* teaches that Christians have “freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law to which the Jewish Church was subjected.” This means freedom from cultic ordinances such as circumcision in particular (quoting “Gal. 4:1-7 and 5:1f and Acts 15:10-11” [*cf.* verses 1-2,5,24]).²¹⁰

Elsewhere,²¹¹ the *Confession* states that the ceremonial laws contained “several typical ordinances.” These ordinances were “partly of worship – prefiguring Christ,” foreshadowing things to come, and preparing Israel for the first advent of the Messiah.

At Christ's inauguration of the New Testament at the time of His death, “all” of these “ceremonial laws” were “abrogated”²¹² (or repealed and recalled) when all bloody sacrifices and oblations ceased and when all of the ceremonial ordinances were thoroughly inactivated.²¹³ “Col. 2:14-16 and Dan. 9:27 and Eph. 2:15-16” *etc.*²¹⁴ But

²⁰⁸ Cf. Sect IV above.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Sect. V above.

²¹⁰ *W.C.F.* 20:1g.

²¹¹ *W.C.F.* 18:3d, *cf.* Heb. ch. 9 & 10:1 & Gal. 4:1-3 & Col. 2:17.

²¹² *W.C.F.* 19:3e.

²¹³ This term “thoroughly inactivated” is our own rendition of the Greek *katargeesas* as used in Eph. 2:15 (which is quoted in the *W.C.F.* 19:3e); and as used elsewhere in Scripture (such as in Luke 13:7 & Rom. 3:3,31 & 4:14 & 6:6 & 7:2,6 & I Cor. 1:28 & 2:6 & 6:13 & 13:8,8,10,11 & 15:24,26 & II Cor. 3:7,11,13,14 & Gal. 3:17 & 5:3,4,11 & II Thess. 2:8 & II Tim. 1:10 & Heb. 2:14).

²¹⁴ Observe that the *W.C.F.* 19:3f correctly cites Col. 2:14-17 & Dan. 9:27 & Eph. 2:15-16 in support of its claim that all of the “ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament.” It should be noted that the *Confession* does not claim that the ceremonial laws were abolished, but only that they were “abrogated” (or “recalled”). And indeed, the texts quoted – while supporting abrogation or recall – hardly teaches abolition or destruction of the ceremonial laws.

For Dan. 9:27 predicts the consummation of blood sacrifices at Calvary. Indeed, it predicts also the later destruction of the temple at the hands of the Romans in 70 A.D.

Col. 2:9-10 teaches the Calvary removal of the list of debts incurred by transgressing the ceremonial laws, rather than the abolition of those laws themselves, although the observance or non-observance of those laws after Calvary was no longer to be made a test of Christian fellowship. The passage may perhaps be paraphrased thus: “In Christ dwells all the fullness (*pleerooma*) of the Godhead bodily, and you have been fulfilled (*pepleeroomenoi*) in Him. God has forgiven you all the transgressions

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those “several typical ordinances”²¹⁵ also functioned by “partly holding forth divers instruction of **moral** duties.”²¹⁶

The nature of those “moral duties” is then illustrated by the *Confession* in its references to the texts I Cor. 5:7 and II Cor. 6:17 and Jude 23. Indeed, the latter text is re-quoted in the *Larger Catechism* under its treatment of the Ten Commandments.²¹⁷

These references in the original footnotes²¹⁸ are not to Old Testament texts describing the earlier functionings of the Old Testament ceremonial laws in Old Testament times. They are references to New Testament texts describing the later Post-Calvary functionings of the “moral duties” previously held forth in the Old Testament ceremonial laws.

These references thus represent the unfolded functionings of the “moral duties” contained in the ceremonial laws – new functionings in New Testament times and for Post-Calvary people in the Christian Church. For these New Testament functionings are the further developments and directives of what the *Confession* itself apparently considers to be the unabridged and unabolishable “moral duties” enshrined within the form of the “now abrogated” Old Testament ceremonial laws themselves.²¹⁹

(*paraptoomata*), having cancelled (*exaleipsas*) the list of debts against us (*to kath' heemoon cheirographon*) – the debts to the ceremonial ordinances (*tois dogmasin* cf. v. 20 & Eph. 2:15) of ‘don’t touch!’ and ‘don’t taste!’ and ‘don’t handle!’ (cf. vv. 20-21’s *dogmatizesthe* etc.). This list of debts (*ho*) was against us [rather than the ceremonial laws, *hois*, which were never “against” us]. But He took the list of debts and not the ceremonial laws (*ho* and not *hois*) out of the way (*ek tou mesou*), having nailed it (*auto* and not *autois* or *hois*) to the cross. And, having stripped naked [like a circumcised male member stripped of its foreskin (cf. v. 11)] the principalities and the powers – God openly made a show [of them], triumphing over them in Christ. Therefore, let no man judge you in food and in drink, etc..... So you must not be subject to ceremonial ordinances (*dogmatizesthe*) such as ‘don’t touch!’ and ‘don’t taste!’ and ‘don’t handle!’ (vv. 20-21ff).”

Eph. 2:14-16 can be paraphrased: “For Christ is our Peace Offering (*Eireenee*) Who has made both parts one [for He has joined both the Jewish part and the Gentile part into the one body of His Church]. And, having dissolved the middle wall of the partition with His Own flesh – He thoroughly inactivated (*katargeesas*) the **hostility** of the law of the ceremonial ordinances (*teen echthran en tee, sarki Autou ton nomon toon entoloon en dogmasin*), in order that by making peace He might in Himself create the two [Jewdom and Gentiledom] into one new humanity [Christendom] and reconcile both of them in one body for God, through His Own cross, having in the cross killed the hostility” (but not the ordinances).

²¹⁵ *W.C.F.* 19:3d.

²¹⁶ *W.C.F.* 19:3e.

²¹⁷ *W.L.C.* 99.6z.

²¹⁸ The seventeenth-century original British and the first (eighteenth-century) American footnotes give the foregoing New Testament references (I Cor. 5:7 & II Cor. 6:17 & Jude 23). The 1971 (Southern) Presbyterian Church in the United States’ footnotes, however, refer only to two Old Testament texts [namely to “Lev. 5:1-6; 6:1-7, and similar passages.”]. Yet the 1973 and 1977 formulations of the Presbyterian Church in America at this point follow the original British and not the (Southern) Presbyterian Church in the United States’ footnotes. Cf. notes 5-8 above.

²¹⁹ *W.C.F.* 19:3ef. Cf. too Calvin’s *Institutes* IV:20:14: “We must attend to the well-known division which distributes the whole Law of God, as promulgated by Moses, into the moral, the ceremonial, and the

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Indeed, all of the Bible texts quoted in the original *Confession*²²⁰ as authority for the New Testament abrogation of the ceremonial laws themselves – viz. the texts Col. 2:14-16 & Dan. 9:27 & Eph. 2:15-16 – seem to be referring to cultic worship and hence **only to the abrogation of the liturgical form** of the ceremonial laws. For these texts do not seem to be referring to the abrogation of what the *Confession* itself calls the “moral duties” contained in those laws.

Apparently, then, the *Confession* is teaching here that the ceremonies of the ceremonial laws are no longer to be observed at all – having now been completely inactivated²¹³ by the finished work of Christ (to which they still point us and of which they still remind us). Yet although these ceremonial laws have now been abrogated or recalled as to their liturgical use, the “moral duties” contained in those laws are still binding.

For moral duties always must be binding. Namely, as far as those moral duties in the ceremonial laws – or, as it were, “the general equity thereof may require.”²²¹

This then implies that the “moral duties” (or the “general equity”) contained in those ceremonial laws have never been abrogated or recalled at all. What has been abrogated, then, are the outward ceremonies of the laws themselves.

We can go still further. Not only does the *Confession*²²² copiously refer to the ceremonial laws. Still more, the *Larger Catechism* too – in its statements on the abiding force of the Decalogue in the life of Christians today – also quotes from the ceremonial laws.

judicial law. And we must attend to each of these parts – in order to understand how far they **do** or **do not** pertain to us.

“Meanwhile, let no one be moved by the thought that the **judicial** and **ceremonial** laws relate to **morals**. For the ancients who adopted this division, though they were not unaware that the two latter classes had to do with **morals**, did not give them the name of Moral [Law] – because they might be changed and abrogated without affecting **morals**.”

“They give this name [viz. that of ‘Moral Law’] specially to the first class, without which true holiness of life and an immutable rule of conduct cannot exist. The Moral Law...is the true and eternal rule of righteousness prescribed to the men of all nations and of all times who would frame their life agreeably to the will of God. For His eternal and immutable will is that we are all to worship Him [cf. the First Table of the Decalogue (F.N. Lee)] and mutually love one another [cf. the Second Table of the Decalogue (F.N. Lee)].” My emphases – F.N. Lee.

²²⁰ The original texts quoted in the original 1647 *W.C.F.* 19:3f, are Col. 2:14-16 & Dan. 9:27 & Eph. 2:15-16. The 1971 (Southern) Presbyterian Church in the United States’ version of this section of the *W.C.F.*, however, at this point refers also to Mark 7:18-19 & Gal. 2:4 & Col. 2:17. Again, the 1973-1977 Presbyterian Church in America’s version follows the original British and not the Southern Presbyterian footnotes.

²²¹ Cf. *W.C.F.* 19:3-4.

²²² *W.C.F.* 19:3.

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Indeed, it does so at some length. For inasmuch as they seem to be grounded in the ceremonial passages of the *Torah*,²²³ it appears that even the ceremonial laws were employed by the Westminster Assembly's many theologians as a key to unlock the full meaning of the Ten Commandments as the criterion for Christian conduct.

Thus, in expounding the Decalogue, the *Catechism* frequently quotes²²⁴ from respectively Ex. 32:5 & 32:8 & 34:13 and Lev. 23:3 and Ex. 34:21 and Lev. 6:2 (*cf.* Luke 19:8) and Lev. 5:1 *etc.* It was fitting, therefore, that even Calvin should have stated in respect of the ceremonial day of atonement that “we must now appropriate the substance of this type to our own use.”²²⁵

Let us now apply all of this to matters such as yokes and vows and unclean things. Do the Mosaic laws concerning yokes (such as the laws of Deut. 7:2-3 & 22:10) still have any kind of New Testament application, even in a new sense? From II Cor. 6:14 and from the *Westminster Confession*, it would appear that this is indeed the case.²²⁶

And do the Mosaic laws concerning vows (like Lev. 19:12 & ch. 27 and Num. 5:19-21 & ch. 6 & 30:5-13 and Deut. 23:21-23) in any sense still apply to New Testament churches? From the *Westminster Confession* and the *Larger Catechism* – and especially from the New Testament itself (Matt. 6:16f & 17:21 and Acts 18:18 & 21:23-27 and I Cor. 7:5 and I Tim. 5:9-12) – this would indeed seem to be so.

Again, do the Mosaic laws concerning unclean things – the laws of Lev. 11-15 and Num. 19:11-16 (*etc.*) – still apply to us in any way at all? According to both the New Testament (II Cor. 6:17 & 7:1) and the *Confession*, in some sense they still do.

Hence, the “moral duties” and the “general equity” of all of these Mosaic laws still apply – so that Christians too should keep their vows²²⁶ and avoid unequal yokes²²⁷ and refrain from touching the unclean things.²²⁸ For the Christian Church or the New Testament Israel is the same ‘Temple of Jehovah’ as was Old Testament Israel, having the same Lord and being the same people of God²²⁹ and growing on the same “olive tree” (Rom. 11:17f).

It may well be true that the blood of Christ has now cleansed certain previously unclean foods, thus rendering them now edible (*cf.* for instance Acts 10 to 11 & Col.

²²³ Such as Ex. 20:23-26 & chs. 25-40, and Lev. chs. 1:17 & chs. 21 to 24:9 & ch. 27, and Num. chs. 1 to 10 & 15:1-31 & chs. 28 to 29, and Deut. chs. 16 & 18:1-8.

²²⁴ *Cf.* *W.L.C.* 109i & 109k & 117d & 121v & 141m & 145k.

²²⁵ Calvin: *Commentary* on Lev. 16:16.

²²⁶ On yokes, *cf.* *W.C.F.* 24:3fg, quoting II Cor. 6:14.

²²⁷ On vows, *cf.* *W.C.F.* 22:1a-7r (copiously quoting Old and New Testament texts) and *W.L.C.* 112q & 113q (quoting Ecclesiastes 5:2-6 & Deuteronomy 23:18 & Acts 23:12,14).

²²⁸ On unclean things, *cf.* *W.C.F.* 19:3e, quoting II Cor. 6:17 & Jude 23. *Cf.* too Calvin's *Harmony of the Pentateuch*, II (on Lev. 15:2, quoting II Cor. 7:1); Andrew Bonar's *Leviticus* (at 15:16-18, quoting II Cor. 7:1); and Meyrick's *Leviticus* (in the *Pulpit Commentary* [New York: Randolph, n.d., p. 232, in the “Exposition” of Lev. 15:18, where reference is also made to “I Cor. 7:5.”]).

²²⁹ Ex. 29:45 & Lev. 26:12 *cf.* II Cor. 6:16 & Rom. 2:27-29 & 11:16-18 & I Pet. 2:5,9,11.

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2:12-21 & I Tim. 4:1-5). But is it really a matter of complete indifference to God, if and when Christians **eat everything without exception** – even including poisonous rattlesnakes? Or do Christians in this regard not have “moral duties” to heed at least the “general equity” at the root of the Old Testament dietary laws?

Interestingly – just like the Decalogue³⁴ – the distinction between clean and unclean animals is **Pre-Mosaic** and even **Noachic** if not **Adamic** (Gen. 1:26-29 & 6:18 through 7:2 & 8:20ff & 9:1-16). An awareness of this fact seems to have been behind the Christian Church’s first General Assembly decree at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:20-29 and 16:1-5).

Moreover, it is perhaps also significant that Calvin himself remarks²³⁰ that “agreeably to the **dictates of nature**” (which remind men of their ‘moral duties’),²³¹ the saints who lived even before the time of the Moses and his laws “spontaneously avoided certain foods.” Calvin even adds that also “**at present**, no one will hunt wolves or lions for food nor desire to eat serpents and other venomous animals.”

There is further evidence of **remaining “moral duties”** in the ceremonial laws, even after the abrogation of the laws themselves at Calvary. Thus the Westminster Assembly’s own *Form of Presbyterial Church-Government*, in discussing the obligation of New Testament Elders to protect the holy table of the Lord against unclean “dogs” and “swine,” also quotes the ceremonial laws of Lev. 13:5 and Num. 9:7 (about avoiding lepers and corpses) as authority for the obligation of New Testament Elders “to keep unclean persons from holy things.”²³² Note too how also the *Confession* 29:8q refers to Matt. 7:6!

In this sense, then, “moral duties” (or “general equity”) of the abrogated ceremonial laws – **still** apply. For, as the great Hengstenberg remarked, the ceremonial laws embody

²³⁰ Calvin: *Harmony of the Pentateuch*, in his *Commentary* on Lev. 11:2.

²³¹ *W.C.F.* 19:3e and 1:6p cf. sections III & VI above and VII below.

²³² Westminster Assembly’s *Form of Presbyterial Church-Government*, “Of Congregational Assemblies,” Thirdly, *q* and *r* quoting Matt. 7:6 and II Thess. 3:6,14,15 and I Cor. 11:27 and Jude 23 and Lev. 13:5 and Num. 9:7. Note too that the Westminster theologians also quoted Jude 23 in the same sense, both in their *Confession* (19:3e) and in their *Larger Catechism* (99.6z).

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a Moral Law in spite of their divestible outward ceremonial form (which outward form was indeed abrogated at Calvary).²³³

²³³ E.W. Hengstenberg: *History of the Kingdom of God Under the Old Testament* (Cherry Hill, N.J.: Mack), 1972, I. pp. 325-326.

VII. THE *WESTMINSTER STANDARDS* ON THE JUDICIAL LAWS

In distinguishing between the ceremonial and the judicial and the moral laws, the *Westminster Standards* are not alone. So too did the Early Church. So too did many of the classic Protestant Confessions. Indeed, so too do many of the later Symbols.

Thus the Lutheran *Wittenberg Confession* notes: “We acknowledge the Law of God, whose abridgment is in the Decalogue.... And we hold that man is bound to obey the moral precepts of the Decalogue. Neither are those precepts which are contained in the Apostles’ writings a new law, but are branches of the Old Law. It is needful to teach men that they must not only obey the Law, but also how this obedience pleases God.”

The same is true of early Calvinistic Confessions. Thus the 1559 *French Confession* of Calvin and his pupil Chandieu (articles 9 & 23) states: “We believe that man was created pure and perfect in the image of God, and that by his own guilt he fell from the grace which he received.... Gen. 1:26 & Eccles. 7:10 [*cf.* 7:29].... The [judicial] ordinances came to an end at the advent of Jesus Christ; but, although the ceremonies are no more in use, yet their substance and truth remain in the Person of Him in Whom they are fulfilled. And, moreover, we must seek aid from the Law and the Prophets for the ruling of our lives – as well as for our confirmation in the promises of the Gospel.”

Even some four years before Calvin died, his pupil Knox wrote about the liberty of the Gospel in his 1560 *Scots Confession of Faith*. That states: “We do not think we are so freed by the liberty – as if we owed no obedience to the Law. We confess the contrary!”

Also articles 14 & 21 & 24f & 36 of the 1562 *Belgic Confession* are germane. They teach: “We believe that God created man...after His Own image and likeness – good, righteous and holy.... He transgressed.... Jesus Christ...restored that which He took not away.... We embrace Christ our Righteousness.... It is impossible that...faith can be unfruitful.... A faith that worketh by love...excites man to the practice of those works which God has commanded.... The ceremonies...of the law ceased at the coming of Christ.... All the shadows are accomplished.... Yet the truth and substance of them remain with us.... We still use the [judicial] testimonies taken out of the Law and the Prophets...to regulate our life in all honesty, to the glory of God, according to His will.... God, because of the depravity of mankind, hath appointed...magistrates, willing that the World should be governed by certain laws.”

The 1563 *Heidelberg Catechism* too takes a strongly Trininomic line. Question 100, on “the profaning of God’s Name” (Matt. 28:19), states that because “no sin is greater or more provoking to God than the profaning of His Name – therefore He even commanded it to be punished with death.” And also Question 105 reminds us that, “to restrain murder, the magistrate is armed with the sword.”

Further, chapter 4 of Calvin’s associate Bullinger’s 1566 *Swiss Confession of Faith* clearly states: “God is an invisible Spirit.... We do therefore reject not only the idols of

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the Gentiles, but also the images of Christians. For although Christ took upon Him man's nature, yet He did not therefore take it so that He might set forth a pattern for carvers and painters! He denied that He came 'to destroy the Law and the Prophets' (Matt. 5:17); but images are forbidden in the Law and the Prophets (Deut. 4:15 & Isa. 44:9)... Who would then believe that the shadow or picture of His body doth any whit benefit the godly?....

"The Lord commanded to **preach the Gospel** (Mark 16:15) – **not to paint** and instruct the laity by pictures! He also instituted Sacraments, but He nowhere appointed images.... Therefore we approve the judgment of [the A.D. 300f] Lactantius, an ancient writer who says 'Undoubtedly there is no religion where there is a picture.' And we affirm that the [A.D. 400] blessed bishop Epiphanius did well who – finding on the church-doors a veil that had painted on it the picture...of Christ or some saint or other – he cut and took it away!"

Chapter 12 states: "We teach that the will of God is set down unto us in **the Law of God**; to whit, what He would have us to do, or not to do; what is good and just, or what is evil and unjust. We therefore confess that 'The Law is good and holy' (Rom. 7:12); and that this Law is, by the finger of God, either 'written in the hearts of men' (Rom. 2:15) and so is called the Law of nature – or engraven in the two tables of stone, and more largely expounded in the books of Moses (Exod. 20:1-17 & Deut. 5:22). For plainness sake, we divide it into the Moral Law which is contained in the Commandments or the two Tables expounded in the books of Moses; into the ceremonial, which does appoint ceremonies and the worship of God; and into the judicial law, which is occupied about political and domestic affairs.

"We believe that the whole will of God and all necessary precepts for every part of this life, are fully delivered in this Law. For otherwise, the Lord would not have forbidden that 'anything should be either added to or taken away from this Law' (Deut. 4:2 & 12:32)... We remember the words of the Lord, saying 'I came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets but to fulfil them' (Matt. 5:17)... We condemn all things which the old or new heretics have taught against the Law of God."

Chapter 24 states that "the Lord's Day itself, ever since the Apostles' time, was consecrated to religious exercises and to a holy rest. Which also is now very well observed by our churches, for the worship of God and the increase of charity."

Chapter 29 states that "wedlock...was ordained by the Lord God Himself... We therefore condemn polygamy, and those who condemn second marriages.... We do detest unclean single life, licentious lusts, and fornications."

And chapter 30: "We condemn the Anabaptists." Why? Because they, "as they deny that a Christian man should bear the office of a magistrate, deny also that any man can justly be put to death by the magistrate or that the magistrate may make war or that oaths should be administered by the magistrate."

Also the Puritan Archbishop Ussher's 1615 *Irish Articles* (21 & 84) emphasize the importance of the Decalogue. "Man being at the beginning created according to the

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image of God..., had the Covenant of the Law ingrafted in his heart whereby God did promise unto him everlasting life upon condition that he performed entire and perfect obedience unto His Commandments.... No Christian man whatsoever is freed from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral.

This Ussher was appointed a Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, which greatly reflected his perspective. Indeed, even article 14 of the 1925 *Basis of Union* of the United Church of Canada (consolidating Congregationalists and Methodists and Presbyterians into one body), confessed: “We believe that the Moral Law of God, summarized in the Ten Commandments, testified to by the Prophets and unfolded in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ – stands forever in truth and equity and is not made void by faith but on the contrary is established thereby.”

Now the *Westminster Confession* does seem **to distinguish** very clearly – and very rightly – between the ceremonial and the judicial laws. For after describing the abiding “moral duties” held forth in the ceremonials, it further states that “all of the ceremonial laws are now abrogated [or recalled or repealed or rescinded] under the New Testament” – and that it was precisely at the cross that they were so abrogated.²³⁴

But the *Confession* then also goes on to declare²³⁵ that only “sundry [or several] judicial laws...expired together with the State [or *Politeia*]” of the people of Israel – many decades **after the cross**, when the Romans destroyed the Israelitic body politic in A.D. 70. Moreover, the *Confession* implicitly teaches²³⁶ that even those “sundry judicial laws” still oblige all people to obey them – as far as “the general equity thereof may require.”

Hence, all the **ceremonial** laws have been abrogated at the cross. But sundry **judicial** laws were not abrogated at the cross at all; only expiring together with the State or *Politeia* of ancient Israel some four decades later.

Again, the **ceremonial** laws as such do not obtain at all under the New Testament economy. Yet the sundry **judicial** laws of ancient Israel still obtain among all nations – and oblige all people to obey them, as far as “the general equity thereof may require.”²³⁷

Not surprisingly, the *Confession* then goes on to declare that “the Spirit of Christ” subdues and enables the will of man to do that “freely and cheerfully which the will of God revealed in the Law requireth to be done.”²³⁸ So God’s revealed will **requires** that all men keep the Moral Law;²³⁸ and the general equity in even the expired sundry judicial laws **requires** that all men be obliged to keep them to the full extent of that general equity.²³⁷ Moreover, as we shall demonstrate a few paragraphs later, the non-sundry judicial laws are Pre-Mosaic and indeed still binding.

²³⁴ *W.C.F.* 19:3, cf. Eph. 2:15-16, etc.

²³⁵ *W.C.F.* 19:4.

²³⁶ *Idem*.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 19:4g.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 19:7.

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Now the *Confession* teaches that God “gave **sundry** judicial laws which expired together with the State [or *Politeia*] of that people” of Israel in 70 A.D.²³⁹ This word “sundry” apparently means “sundered” or “some.” In its one and only usage in the 1611 *King James Bible* (as requoted in the 1647 *Westminster Confession*), the word “sundry” alias *polumeroos* – like its accompanying word “divers” or *polutropoos* – apparently means “many” or “quite a few” (but not “all”).²⁴⁰

Also to Westminster’s theologians themselves, the meaning of “sundry” was apparently similar²⁴⁰ to that of “divers”²⁴¹ or “several,”²⁴² and seemed to mean “a few” or “only some.” For in their *Sum of Saving Knowledge*, they remarked that although “the scribes and Pharisees...took great pains to discharge sundry duties of the Law, yet they cutted short the exposition thereof.”²⁴³ Matt. 5:20 and Matt. 15:2-9 and Matt. 23:23.

This obviously means that the Pharisees tried to observe only some of the duties of the Law, but by no means all of them. Consequently, it would then follow that the “sundry judicial laws” which “expired” in A.D. 70 according to the *Confession*,²³⁹ were only some of the judicial laws (but by no means all of them). And this would then mean that apart from the “sundry judicial laws” which expired, the rest of the judicial laws did not so expire but are even today still to continue in the World.

However, even as regards the “sundry judicial laws,” it should be noted that although those sundry laws have themselves “expired” – their “general equity” still continues to “require” its implementation and observance by all mankind, also today.²⁴⁴ For even those “sundry judicial laws” (e.g. Num. 35 and Deut 4:41-43 and Josh. 20) which were kept in Palestine even after Calvary, but which could and can no longer be kept exactly as enjoined either inside or outside that land after its Roman destruction in A.D. 70 – have a general equity which can and which must still be kept today by all men everywhere.

Now this **general equity** is apparently the **Ten Commandments** – Christ’s righteous fulfillment of which, His Holy Spirit gratuitously imputes to His people and implants into

²³⁹ *W.C.F.* 19:4g.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Heb. 1:1’s “at sundry times and in divers manners” (*polumeroos kai polutropoos*), as re-quoted in *W.C.F.* 1:1f.

²⁴¹ “Divers” – cf. *W.C.F.* 1:1c. In *W.L.C.* 110cgh, “divers” apparently means “few” or “three or four” – and is contrasted to “many” or “thousands.”

²⁴² “Several” apparently means “a few” rather than “very many” – cf. *W.L.C.* 125h & 150m and *W.S.C.* 32b & 36 & 64w. See too Westminster Assembly’s *Form of Presbyterian Church-Government*, “Classical Assemblies,” I, Fourthly, a.

²⁴³ Westminster Assembly’s *Sum of Saving Knowledge*, Evidences, 1st request, 9. Clearly, while indeed complying with “many” of the ecclesiastical “traditions of men,” the Pharisees discharged only “sundry” or “a few” of the duties of the God-given Law (and even then from improper motives) – and left “many” of the legally-required duties altogether undone! Matt. 5:20 & 15:2-9 & 23:2-3,23.

²⁴⁴ The *W.C.F.* 19:4g mentions I Cor. 9:8-10 to illustrate the “general equity” (in the judicial law of Deut. 25:4) – which “general equity” God does still “require” to be kept by every “people” or nation even today. Similarly, the same applies also in respect of Deut. 13:11 (cf. I Tim. 5:20) and Deut. 18:1 (cf. I Cor. 9:13) and Deut. 19:15 (cf. I Tim. 5:19) and Deut. 24:14 (cf. I Tim. 5:18b) and Deut. 25:4 (cf. I Tim. 5:18a), etc.

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their hearts. For Scripture itself teaches²⁴⁵ in Heb. 10:16-17 (*cf.* too 8:10-12) that God removes the non-equity or “in-iquiti-es” (or a-nom-ism” [or anti-nom-ianism]) of His people – precisely by graciously writing His “laws” or His “nom-ous” into their hearts. And the *Westminster Confession* too²⁴⁶ implies that the “general equity” is the way in which the Decalogue itself functions in the judicials. (For compare the quotations of Matt. 5:17f in the *Confession*.)²⁴⁷

Even Calvin (a good century before the *Westminster Confession*) seems to have drawn the same conclusions. For in his *Institutes*, he stated that the “judicial laws...delivered certain forms of equity and justice,”²⁴⁸ and that the “Law of God which we call Moral” constituted “this equity” in the judicials.²⁴⁹ Moreover, in commenting on the judicial laws concerning exorbitant rates of interest (while dealing with the Eighth Commandment of the Decalogue),²⁵⁰ the Genius of Geneva declared: that as to whether it “be lawful to receive usury upon loans, the law of equity will better prescribe than any lengthened discussions.” Indeed, the Calvin-istic *Westminster Larger Catechism* in the next century condemned in-iquit-ous “extortion” and “usury” (or exorbitant interest) as transgressions of the Eighth Commandment of God’s Moral Law of nature.²⁵¹

As distinguished from the recently-discussed²⁵² “non-sundry” judicial laws which did not expire in A.D. 70 but which still apply today in their entirety – the *Confession* specifies that the “sundry judicial laws” (except for their “general equity”) indeed “expired” in A.D. 70. Now these “sundry judicial laws,” it declares, are contained in “**Exodus chapter 21 [and] Exodus 22:1 to the 29th verse.**”²⁵³ However, the *Catechism*²⁵⁴ quotes precisely the “judicial law” of Ex. 21:15 in support of the Fifth Commandment of the Moral Law.

So too, in its treatment of the Sixth Commandment of the Moral Law, it also quotes²⁵⁵ the judicial laws of “Ex. 22:2-3” and of “Ex. 21:18f.” Clearly, then – the Westminster theologians only distinguished but never divorced the judicials from the Moral Law.

Moreover, when the *Confession* mentions²⁵⁶ Ex. 21 and 22:1-29, this is only illustrative of the judicials. For such mention is certainly not exhaustive of the full

²⁴⁵ The *King James Version*’s “equity” translates the Hebrew word *yaashar* (or “righteousness”) in the Old Testament, and translates the Greek words *anomia* (or “lawlessness”) or *adikia* (or “unrighteousness”) in the New Testament – *cf.* Matt. 7:23 & 13:41 & 23:38 & 24:12 & Rom. 4:7 & 6:19 & II Thess. 2:7 & Tit. 2:14 & Heb. 1:9 & 8:10-12 & 10:16-17. Note esp. Matt. 7:23’s *anomia* – “ye that work law-lessness (or in-iquity).”

²⁴⁶ *W.C.F.* 19:4.

²⁴⁷ *W.C.F.* 19:4g & 19:5k, *cf.* notes 285-286 below.

²⁴⁸ Calvin: *Institutes* IV:20:15.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, IV:20:16.

²⁵⁰ Calvin: *Commentary* on Ex. 22:13.

²⁵¹ *W.L.C.* 142,kl; *cf.* Matt. 23:35 & Ezek. 22:12 & Ps. 15:5 & note 114 above.

²⁵² *Cf.* the beginning of Section VIII above.

²⁵³ *W.C.F.* 19:4g.

²⁵⁴ *W.L.C.* 128c.

²⁵⁵ *W.L.C.* 136gx.

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scope of the laws concerned. Indeed, it immediately thereafter²⁵⁷ goes on to mention a number of other texts on this matter – concluding with I Cor. 9:8-10.

Now this latter text is based on Deut. 25:4 (rather than on the previously-mentioned Ex. 21 & 22:1-29 quoted in the relevant footnote of the *Confession*). Accordingly (whether a “sundry” or a “non-sundry” judicial law), it raises the whole matter as to the precise extent to which judicial-laws-as-such are found in the *Torah* (Genesis through Deuteronomy) – as well as the precise extent to which they are to be followed today.

Furthermore, it also raises the broader question as to the further functionings of the judicials in the Psalms, in the Proverbs, in the Prophets, and even in the New Testament itself. Indeed, it requests an answer also to the question as to the precise extent to which those functionings there are to be followed today too.

In the *Torah* alias the Pentateuch, even in **the book of Genesis** there are pre-Mosaic “judicial” passages. Such passages would perhaps include Gen. 1:26 & 2:17 & 3:12ff & 4:9 & 9:6 & 9:21ff & 18:19 & 36:7 & 38:11ff & 38:24 & 37:21ff. Now all of these passages are quoted by the Westminster theologians in their treatment of the Moral Law. For these texts are referred to in at least twelve places in the *Catechism* where it treats of the Decalogue.²⁵⁸

Coming now to the Mosaic legislation proper, there is abundant evidence that the Westminster theologians regarded the “judicial laws” in **the book of Exodus** as being of abiding value for our obedience to the Moral Law today – even under the New Testament economy. For example, inasmuch as the *Confession* specifies²⁵⁹ that Exodus chapters 21 & 22:1-29 are included under the now-expired “sundry judicial laws,” it would certainly seem that also Exodus chapter 22:30 to 23:33 are implicitly included either under these now-expired “sundry judicial laws” or else under the never-expired “(non-sundry) judicial laws.”²⁶⁰ Indeed, Exodus 23 is quoted from repeatedly in the Westminster theologians’ exposition of the Ten Commandments. For in its treatment of the Decalogue, the *Catechism* in at least three places²⁶¹ quotes respectively from Ex. 23:12 and 23:4 and 23:10.

The **rest of the Torah** is also quoted from. For even the post-Exodus “judicial laws” are cited among the *Catechism*’s many and various proofs texts demonstrating the full meaning of the Decalogue.²⁶²

Leviticus (chapters 18 to 20 and 24 to 26), for example, is frequently quoted from. For in at least fourteen places,²⁶³ the *Catechism* in its treatment of the Ten Commandments

²⁵⁶ *W.C.F.* 19:4g.

²⁵⁷ *Idem*.

²⁵⁸ *W.L.C.* 92c & 145,1 & 141r & 141,1 & 136d & 130c & 145n & 99a & 145q & 130m & 145d & 135h – *etc.*

²⁵⁹ *W.C.F.* 19:4g.

²⁶⁰ Cf. the beginning of Section VIII above.

²⁶¹ *W.L.C.* 118f & 141x & 145n.

²⁶² Cf. *W.L.C.* 91-153.

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respectively quotes Lev. 20:6 and 24:11 and 19:3 and 19:32 and 19:32 and 18:1-21 and 19:29 and 25:35 and 25:17 and 19:15 and 19:17 and 19:11 and 19:16.

The same applies to **Numbers** (chapters 15ff & 26 & 30 & 35 to 36). For in at least two places,²⁶⁴ the *Catechism* in its treatment of the Decalogue respectively quotes Num. 15:39 and 35:31.

Now this is also especially true of the book of **Deuteronomy** (chapters 4 to 8 and 12 to 15 and 17 to 28). For in at least twenty-two places,²⁶⁵ the *Catechism* in its treatment of the Decalogue respectively quotes Deut. 26:17 and 6:5 and 8:17 and 17:18 and 6:13 and 7:5 and 13:6 and 12:30 and 13:6-12 and 4:15 and 4:2 and 23:18 and 18:10-14 and 28:58 and 21:18 and 6:6 and 17:17 and 22:8 and 23:17 and 22:1 and 19:14 and 13:8. Moreover, it is entirely fitting that the *Westminster Standards* quote so frequently from Deuteronomy, “the [book of the] second Law.” For both the New Testament in general and the Lord Jesus in particular also quote from Deuteronomy and its law code more copiously than they do from any other book in the Bible.

But even apart from the *Torah*, **the rest of the Old Testament too** – wherever it refers back to the “judicial laws” – is much quoted from in the Westminster theologians’ treatment of the **Moral Law**. Thus, in at least sixty-seven places in its treatment of the Decalogue,²⁶⁶ the **Psalms** are quoted from – Pss. 1:1 & 8:1-9 & 12:3 & 14:1 & 15:1-5 & 16:4-5 & 19:7-13 & 22:18 & 24:4-5 & 29:2 & 32:11 & 35:15 & 36:4 & 37:1-11,21 & 39:1-14 & 45:11 & 50:16-21 & 51:4-5 & 52:1-4 & 55:12-15 & 62:10 & 63:6 & 66:5 & 68:4 & 69:10 & 71:19 & 73:2-3,14 & 76:11 & 78:17,22,34-37 & 81:11 & 82:4 & 88:2 & 92:1,13 & 95:6-7 & 101:5 & 102:1-5,18 & 106:39 & 112:9-10 & 118:22-24 & 119:69 & 122:7-9 & 127:2-3 & 130:7 & 139:20.

Again, in at least seventy-six places in its treatment of the Decalogue,²⁶⁷ the *Catechism* refers especially to the **Proverbs**. For it cites respectively from Prov. 1:10-19 & 2:1-5,14-20 & 3:29-30 & 4:3-4 & 5:7-9,19-20 & 6:1-6,16,19,30-35 & 7:5,10-14,21-22,24 & 8:33-36 & 10:4 & 11:15,26 & 12:18 & 14:5,25 & 15:1 & 16:26 & 11:1 & 14:30 & 17:9,15,22 & 18:9 & 19:5,26 & 20:25 & 21:17,20 & 22:1 & 23:5,20,22,29,33,35 & 24:11 & 25:9,16,23 & 26:24 & 27:22-27 & 28:13,19 & 29:1,10-12,15,24 & 30:9-11,17-20 & 31:8-11,23,27-28.

Also, the **Prophets**’ many inspired comments on the “judicial laws” need to be weighed. For the *Catechism* itself quotes from them at least one hundred and forty times.

²⁶³ *W.L.C.* 105a & 113m & 127,1 & 127n & 139q & 139x & 139y & 141x & 142i & 144k & 145clsx.

²⁶⁴ *W.L.C.* 109a & 136e.

²⁶⁵ *W.L.C.* 104oy & 106i & 108qwz & 109efg & 109o & 1132e & 114v & 128f & 129m & 130d & 135f & 139y & 141x & 142f & 145k.

²⁶⁶ *W.L.C.* 95x & 99ovv & 104 prtdef & 105npwhof & 108 xx & 109p 110d & 11211mvwx & 113ikrsyhn & 121qr & 127x & 135ilq & 141k & 142acgltw & 144etz & 145ffioptvefv & 147c & 148f & 150m & 151ygbfk.

²⁶⁷ *W.L.C.* 99qt & 113f & 124b & 127mqqwx & 128ghs & 135gimnrzb & 136lss & 137film & 139nsvyef & 141qstww & 142cenprtxyy & 144dkpvwy & 145ddgnllnpzz & 151gmooryaaceow & 153kk.

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Thus, from **Isaiah** (1:3-17 & 3:5,16 & 5:4,8,12,23 & 8:13 & 19:21 & 22:13 & 23:15-17 & 26:4,10 & 30:22 & 38:1,21 & 40:18 & 42:25 & 43:10,22-24 & 44:6 & 45:23 & 49:23 & 53:22ff & 56:2-7,10-11,23 & 57:17 & 58:3-5,13 & 59:4,13 & 65:3-5,11). From **Micah** (2:1-2 & 4:5 & 6:8,16 & 7:23). And from **Jeremiah** (2:8,20,27-28,32,35 & 3:3 & 4:2-30 & 5:3-7 & 6:16 & 7:4-31 & 9:3-5 & 13:15 & 14:22 & 17:5-27 & 23:10-38 & 26:15-16 & 31:18 & 32:39 & 34:8-11 & 38:4 & 42:5-21 & 44:17 & 48:10,27 and **Lamentations** 1:7 & 3:39).

In its discussion of the Decalogue, the *Catechism* also cites from **Ezekiel** (8:5-15 & 13:19-22 & 14:5 & 16:26-49 & 17:16-19 & 18:18 & 20:12-20 & 22:12-29 & 23:14-40 & 33:30-32 & 34:2-4 & 36:21-23) and **Daniel** (3:4-18 & 4:30 & 5:22-23). Indeed, it further quotes from **Hosea** (3:2-4 & 4:1-12 & 5:11), **Joel** (2:12-13), **Amos** (4:8-11 & 8:5), **Habakkuk** (1:4-13), **Zephaniah** (1:12 & 2:8-11), **Zechariah** (5:2-4 & 7:4-12 & 8:16-17 & 13:2-3), and **Malachi** (1:6-14 & 2:2-16 & 3:14-16).²⁶⁸

Too, the *Catechism* even refers to the **Historical Books** of the Old Testament at least one hundred and eleven times in its discussion of the Decalogue.²⁶⁹ Here, it quotes from **Job** (1:5,22 & 4:6 & 13:7 & 15:34 & 20:19 & 27:5-6 & 29:12-17 & 31:1-29 & 32:7-9 & 36:21,24), **Joshua** (7:19-21 & 22:20 & 24:15), **Judges** (8:1-3), **First Samuel** (2:12-31 & 3:13 & 4:3-5 & 6:7-9 & 8:7 & 10:27 & 12:23 & 13:11-14 & 14:45 & 15:21-22 & 17:28,43 & 19:4-5 & 22:9-14 & 24:9-12 & 25:22,32-34 & 26:15-16 & 28:7,11) and **Second Samuel** (1:9-16 & 2:22 & 10:3 & 12:7-14 & 14:20 & 15:1-12 & 16:3-5,22 & 18:3 & 13:12-28). Too, it also cites **First Kings** (1:6 & 2:19 & 3:28 & 8:55-56,75 & 11:4,9-10,33 & 12:13-33 & 15:12 & 18:4,26-28 & 21:4-14), **Second Kings** (2:12 & 5:13-26 & 9:30 & 13:14 & 17:30,35 & 19:22 & 23:7), **First Chronicles** (10:13-14 & 28:9), **Second Chronicles** (19:9), **Ecclesiastes** (2:22-24 & 3:4-13 & 4:8-13 & 5:1-12 & 6:2 & 7:20 & 8:11 & 9:3 & 12:1,12), **Esther** (3:7 & 5:13 & 6:2-3,12-13 & 9:24 & 10:3), **Esra** (4:12-13 & 9:10-24), and **Nehemiah** (2:10 & 6:6-8 & 9:14 & 13:15-22).

Let us now hear Calvin and Bullinger and the Westminster theologians and Hodge on the important subject of the Moral Law's need of the many judicial laws of the **Old Testament**. By this we mean the Moral Law's need of the "moral duties" and the "general equity"²⁷⁰ present in the judicials of ancient Israel – in order to be able adequately to explain to us even the Decalogue itself.

Wrote **Calvin** on Exodus 22:25 (anent money-lending): "The judicial law...which God prescribed to His ancient people, is only so far abrogated as that which charity dictates

²⁶⁸ *W.L.C.* 91n & 95w & 99.4v & 101e & 104oqvwacilm & 105oqrsvklmpsyzhik & 106,1 & 108vxz & 109cfhlnstz & 110fg & 112kqptby & 113ghlnpsacp & 114v & 116y & 117bd & 119gik & 121qswx & 124g & 127,1 & 128a & 129t & 130ade & 135dp & 136firt & 139txybcegh & 141,kq & 142gio & 144b & 145cfhmrwlt & 150m & 151nstahkptvxbeginpqstvxcf.

²⁶⁹ *W.L.C.* 91n & 99.5w & 99.7a & 104osx & 105cadfg & 106m & 109dlv & 112,ls & 113himnorty & 114w & 117b & 118f & 121pt & 124ef & 127nt & 128abde & 129klqty & 130hio & 132w & 133z & 135cfhirstzb & 136q & 138xd & 139pyh & 141q & 142mrzv & 144fghir & 145bgloelipsyz & 147c & 148df & 149i & 151loqtylncryz.

²⁷⁰ *W.C.F.* 19:3e & 4g.

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should remain.²⁷¹ And again on Deuteronomy 20:5 (as regards conscriptees during warfare): “We have said that the lazy and timid were sent home, so that the Israelites might learn that none were to be pressed beyond their ability.... This also depends upon that rule of equity which dictates that we should abstain from all unjust oppression [French: ‘and this is a part of that common equity to which the Eighth Commandment has reference.’].”²⁷²

Similarly, Calvin’s contemporary Reformer and very good friend **Bullinger** (author of the Calvinistic *Second Swiss Confession* of 1566) clearly declared²⁷³ that “besides the ceremonies (or the ceremonial law), there is much written also in the Law concerning civil polity, ordinance, judgment – to live peaceable and well in city and land; of buying and selling; of war and peace; of inheritances and properties; of laws matrimonial; of the punishment of the wicked; of the judgment and council; of lending and borrowing; *etc.* It is no news at all, and serveth altogether for the declaration of the six commandments of the second table.” For “the substance of God’s judicial laws is not taken away or abolished, but...the ordering and limitation of them is placed in the arbitrement of good Christian princes.”²⁷⁴

Again, it is of note that even the **Westminster theologians themselves** did not hesitate to use the judicial law in defence of the parochial system of boundary demarcation between one Christian congregation and its neighbouring congregations. For in their 1645 *Form of Presbyterial Church-Government*, the Westminster theologians quoted Deuteronomy 15:7 (on the obligation to care for the poor “within any of thy gates” of any of Israel’s cities) – as authority for the proposition that “it is lawful and expedient that there be fixed congregations...[and] that they should be divided into distinct and fixed congregations...by dividing Christians...by the respective bounds of their dwellings.... Because they who dwell together, being bound to all kind of moral duties one to another, have the better opportunity thereby to discharge them; which moral tie is perpetual; for Christ came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it.”²⁷⁵

Here we refer also to **Charles Hodge**, who had the following to say about the moral elements or general equity contained in the judicial laws: “Many of the judicial or civil laws of the ancient theocracy; laws regulating the distribution of property; the duties of husbands and wives; the punishments of crimes” (*etc.*) – “were the application of general principles of justice and right to the peculiar circumstances of the Hebrew people.... It is often difficult...to decide whether they are still obligatory or not.... If it be asked, How are we to determine whether any judicial law of the Old Testament is still in force? – the answer is: First, When the continued authority of such a law is recognized in the New

²⁷¹ Calvin: *Commentary* on Ex. 22:25.

²⁷² Calvin: *Commentary* on Deut. 20:5.

²⁷³ Bullinger: *Antiquissima Fides et Vera Religio*, 1541 (Cambridge, England: Parker, translated by Coverdale), 1844, p. 47ff.

²⁷⁴ Bullinger: *Five Decades of Sermons*, 1575, printed posthumously (Cambridge, England: Parker), 1850. IIIrd Decade, p. 280.

²⁷⁵ Cf. Westminster Assembly’s *Form of Presbyterial Church-Government*, “Of Particular Congregations,” first three paragraphs.

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Testament; that, for Christians, is decisive. And secondly, If the reasons or ground for a given law is permanent, the law itself is permanent.”²⁷⁶

Now the original *Westminster Confession*²⁷⁷ refers not only to Old Testament texts²⁷⁸ with regard to the judicial laws. It **quotes also New Testament texts**²⁷⁹ (such as Matt. 5:17,38-39 and I Cor. 9:8-10) as authority for the proposition that God gave the people of Israel “sundry judicial laws which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.” Indeed, a careful examination of these New Testament texts in the light of the *Westminster Confessional Standards* and especially of the Bible itself – will enable us to establish exactly what the Westminster theologians meant by this.

It seems clear that the Westminster theologians²⁸⁰ apparently grounded **First Corinthians 9:8-10** upon the “judicial law” of Deuteronomy 25:4. For there was and is a “general equity” in that Deuteronomic text – an “equity” which would still “require” that even the Non-Israelitic Christians among the people of Corinth (and by implication everywhere else even today)²⁸¹ should allow their Preachers to be fed from the church collections there, in a similar way to that in which the Israelites were to allow their oxen to be fed from the corn which those animals themselves threshed.

Deuteronomy 25:4 should be compared also with First Timothy 5:17-18. Indeed, it should further be noted that both First Corinthians 9:7-15 and First Timothy 5:17-18 are also quoted in the *Catechism*’s treatment of the Second Commandment of the Moral Law.²⁸²

This again shows that the “general equity” of Deuteronomy 25:4 is indeed the equity of the Commandments of the Decalogue itself. Hence, New Testament Christians are still to obey the Old Testament judicial laws as far as “the general equity thereof may require.”²⁸⁰

Obviously, the *Confession*’s reference²⁸³ to **Matthew 5:17ff** does not imply that the Ten Commandments were replaced by Christ Himself. For the *Confession* next²⁸⁴ quotes the same Matt. 5:17ff (together with Jas. 2:8ff and Rom. 3:31) to prove that “the Moral Law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof” –

²⁷⁶ C. Hodge: *Systematic Theology* (London: Nelson), 1874, III, pp. 268-269.

²⁷⁷ Significantly, the 1971 Presbyterian Church in the United States’s diluted version of the *Westminster Confession*, in dealing with the “general equity” of the judicial laws, has dropped the original reference to “Matt. 5:17 with ver. 38, ver. 39” and restricted it to “Matt. 5:38-39” – thereby eliminating the “general equity” of the Moral Law in the judicial laws. *Per contra*, the original British *W.C.F.* 19:5k’s reference to Matt. 5:17!

²⁷⁸ *W.C.F.* 19:4g, quoting Ex. 21:1 through 22:29 & Gen. 49:10.

²⁷⁹ *W.C.F.* 19:4g, quoting I Pet. 2:13-14 & Matt. 5:17,38-39 & I Cor. 9:8-10.

²⁸⁰ *W.C.F.* 19:4g.

²⁸¹ I Cor. 9:7-15 cf. 1:1-2 & 7:17 & 16:1-2ff.

²⁸² Cf. *W.L.C.* 108t.

²⁸³ *W.C.F.* 19:4g.

²⁸⁴ *W.C.F.* 19:5k.

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and to prove that “neither doth Christ in the Gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen [and much strengthen] this obligation.”

This is the way the Westminster theologians always understood Matt. 5:17ff. For elsewhere in the *Confession*,²⁸⁵ this very same text is quoted to prove that the Fourth Commandment was not terminated when “fulfilled” by Christ but must continue to be kept by God’s people “to the end of the World.” Interestingly, the very same passage is cited to the same effect also in the Answer to Question 116 of the *Westminster Larger Catechism*. Indeed, in the Westminster Assembly’s 1645 *Form of Presbyterian Church-Government* we are told that even for “Christians” the “moral tie is perpetual; for Christ came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it (Matt. 22:39 and 5:17).”²⁸⁶

Now the Westminster Assembly’s usage of Matthew 5:17ff, far from suggesting that Christ destroyed or even only abrogated the judicial laws,²⁸⁷ much rather suggests that He came to fulfil and to “much strengthen” the perpetuity of the Moral Law – while paying the full penalty for His people’s transgression of it. For He came to save His people from their sins (alias their transgression of the Moral Law) and from the penalty they deserve for their breaking of that Moral Law – to save them **unto** holiness or lawabidingness.²⁸⁸

The quoted text Matt. 5:17ff itself declares that Christ came “not...to destroy the Law.” That quotation’s immediate context (Matt. 5:16-34) makes it clear that it is introducing a discussion centrally concerning the Moral Law (and not centrally concerning the judicials). Indeed, the *Confession* at this particular point²⁸⁹ even refers to “Matt. 5:17 with vv. 38-39” – in order to show that Christians should not normally have to settle their differences with one another by resorting to “judicial” litigation (before Pharisees and Romans and other unbelievers). Rather should they do so by “moral” or “non-judicial” arbitration in church courts (*cf.* First Corinthians 6:1-5) – and even then, only as a last resort (Matt. 5:23-26,38-39 *cf.* I Cor. 6:7).

Hence – principally concerned with the Moral Law rather than with the judicials (in His Sermon on the Mount) – Christ did not in Matthew five in any way disapprove or modify the judicial application of the judicial laws (which were not centrally there under discussion). If anything, in the Sermon on the Mount (centrally concerning the Moral Law of God),²⁹⁰ Christ peripherally or obliquely approved of the unmodified application of the judicial laws (mentioned in Matt. 5:21b-22,25-26,40) to Israelitic society then. For He there approved of their application not after the manner of the Pharisees but in the way indicated by the Torah itself (where they were rightly restricted only to judicial

²⁸⁵ *W.C.F.* 19:5k & 19:1a & 21:7n. See too *W.L.C.* 116y.

²⁸⁶ Westminster Assembly’s *Form of Presbyterian Church-Government*, “Of Particular Congregations,” paragraph 3.

²⁸⁷ *W.C.F.* 19:4g; *cf.* too esp. note 293 below.

²⁸⁸ Matt. 1:23; Rom. 8:4; I John 3:4.

²⁸⁹ *W.C.F.* 19:4g.

²⁹⁰ F.N. Lee: *Mt. Sinai in the Sermon on the Mount*, Wildwood Presbyterian Church (PCA), Tallahassee, 1979.

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matters and never to be employed for personal revenge). Thus, all that Christ really did in this regard here in the Sermon on the Mount, was to recommend a non-judicial way for Christians to try to follow – before as a last resort instituting litigation (Matt. 5:31-39).

We have just tried to show that even the New Testament teaches that at least the “general equity” of the Old Testament judicial laws is still to be observed. But now we further need to understand as well, that many of the **New Testament injunctions** are themselves **only extensions and refinements of the Old Testament Laws**, and may perhaps themselves even be called “**The New Testament Judicials.**”

Against ultra-dispensationalism, which divorces the Ten Commandments from the New Testament, it should be noted not only that the New Testament itself repeatedly endorses each of the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament for practice by the New Testament Church. It should also be noted that the “New Testament judicials” themselves constitute an elaboration of some of the ways in which the Ten Commandments were to be applied after Calvary in the New Testament Church. This is why the *Westminster Larger Catechism* (in QQ. 92 to 153) expounds and applies the Decalogue by referring even these “New Testament judicials.”

Thus, in QQ. 92 to 102, it explains the **duties of and the Preamble to the Decalogue**. It does so, by referring consecutively (among many other texts) even to the “New Testament judicials” Rom. 2:14 & Luke 10:26-27 & Luke 1:74-75 & Acts 24:16 & I Tim. 1:8 & Rom. 7:12 & Jas. 2:10-11 & Rom. 7:25 & 8:4 & 7:22 & Tit. 2:11-14 & Matt. 22:37-40 & 5:21-22 & 7:14 & 5:27-28,33-34,37-39,43-44 & Col. 3:5 & I Tim. 6:10 & Matt. 4:9-10 & 15:4-6 & Eph. 4:28 & Heb. 11:25 & 10:24-25 & I Th. 5:22 & Jude 23 & Gal. 5:26 & Col. 3:21 & I Tim. 5:22 & Eph. 5:11 & Acts 17:24,28 & Rom. 3:29 & I Pet. 1:14,17 & Luke 10:27.

Further, the *Catechism* (QQ. 103 to 106) expounds the **First Commandment** (to worship only the Triune God) by referring consecutively even to “New Testament judicials.” Such include: Matt. 4:10 & Rom. 12:11 & Phil. 4:6 & Jas. 4:7 & Eph. 2:12 & I Th. 1:9 & Acts 17:23,29 & Tit. 1:16 & Heb. 12:16 & Rom.1:30 & II Tim. 3:2 & Phil. 2:21 & I John 2:15-16 & Col. 3:2,5 & I John 4:1 & Heb. 3:12 & Gal. 5:20 & Tit. 3:10 & Acts 26:9 & Rom. 2:5 & Matt. 4:7 & Rom. 3:8 & II Tim. 3:4 & Gal. 4:17 & Rom. 10:2 & Luke 9:54-55 & Rev. 3:16 & 3:1 & Rom. 10:13-14 & Acts 10:25-26 & Rev. 19:10 & Matt. 4:10 & Col. 2:18 & Rom. 1:25 & Acts 5:3 & II Cor. 1:24 & Matt. 23:9 & Acts 7:51 & Eph. 4:30.

Again, the *Catechism* (QQ. 107 to 110) expounds the **Second Commandment** (to worship God in a spiritual manner) by referring consecutively even to “New Testament judicials.” Such include: Matt. 28:20 & Acts 2:42 & I Tim. 6:13-14 & Matt. 28:19 & I Cor. 11:23-30 & Matt. 18:15-17 & 16:19 & I Cor. 5 & 12:28 & Eph. 4:11-12 & I Tim. 5:17-18 (cf. Deut. 25:4!) & I Cor. 9:7-15 (cf. Deut. 25:4) & I Cor. 7:5 & Acts 17:16-17 & Rev. 2:12,13,15,20 & 17:12,16-17 & Acts 17:29 & Rom. 1:21-25 & Gal. 4:8 & Acts 17:22 & Col. 2:21-23 & Matt. 15:9 & I Pet. 1:18 & Gal. 1:13-14 & Acts 8:18 & Rom. 2:22 & Matt. 22:5 & 23:13 & 13:44-45 & I Th. 2:15-16 & Rev. 15:3-4 & I Cor. 10:20-22.

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Moreover, the *Catechism* (QQ. 111 to 114) expounds the **Third Commandment** (to honour the Name of God and all of His works) by referring consecutively even to “**New** Testament judicials.” Such include: Matt. 6:9 & Rev. 15:3-4 & I Cor. 11:24-29 & I Tim. 2:8 & Acts 1:24,26 & Col. 3:17 & I Pet. 3:15 & Phil. 1:27 & I Cor. 10:31 & I Pet. 2:12 & Acts 17:23 & Col. 2:20-22 & Acts 23:12-14 & Mark 6:26 & Rom. 9:14,19-20 & 3:5,7 & 6:1-2 & Matt. 5:21-48 & II Pet. 3:16 & Matt. 22:24-31 & I Tim. 1:4,6-7 & 6:4-5,20 & II Tim. 2:14 & Tit. 3:9 & Acts 19:13 & II Tim. 4:3-4 & Rom. 13:13-14 & Jude 4 & Acts 13:45 & I John 3:12 & II Pet. 3:3 & I Pet. 4:4 & Acts 13:45-46,50 & 4:18 & 19:9 & I Th. 2:16 & Heb. 10:29 & II Tim. 3:5 & Matt. 23:14 & 6:1-2,5,16 & Mark 8:38 & I Cor. 6:5-6 & Eph. 5:15-17 & II Pet. 1:8-9 & Rom. 2:23-24 & Gal. 3:1,3 & Heb. 6:6.

Similarly, the *Catechism* (QQ. 115 to 122) expounds the **Fourth Commandment** (to hallow the sabbath day) by referring consecutively even to “**New** Testament judicials.” Such include: I Cor. 16:1-2 & Acts 20:7-9 & Matt. 5:17-18 & Mark 15:42 & Acts 4:10-11 & Matt. 22:39 & 7:12.

Too, the *Catechism* (QQ. 123 to 133) expounds the **Fifth Commandment** (to respect one’s superiors) by referring consecutively even to “**New** Testament judicials.” Such include: Matt. 7:12 & Eph. 6:1-2 & I Tim. 5:1-2 & Eph. 6:4 & II Cor. 12:14 & I Th. 2:7-8,11 & I Cor. 4:14-16 & Eph. 5:21 & I Pet. 2:17 & Rom. 12:10 & I Pet. 3:6 & I Tim. 2:1-2 & Heb. 13:7 & Phil. 3:17 & Eph. 6:5-7 & I Pet. 2:13-14 & Rom. 13:1-5 & Heb. 13:17 & 12:19 & I Pet. 2:13-14 & Rom. 13:1-5 & Heb. 13:17 & 12:9 & I Pet. 2:18-20 & Tit. 2:9-10 & Matt. 22:21 & Rom. 13:6-7 & I Tim. 5:17-18 & Gal. 6:6 & Matt. 15:4-6 & Col. 3:19 & Tit. 2:4 & Heb. 7:7 & I Pet. 3:7 & I Tim. 5:8 & 4:14 & Tit. 2:3-5 & 2:15 & Phil. 2:21 & John 5:44 & 7:18 & Acts 4:17-18 & 14:8 & Mark 6:24 & John 7:46-49 & Col. 3:21 & I Pet. 2:18-20 & Heb. 12:10 & Acts 18:17 & Eph. 6:4 & I Pet. 2:17 & Rom. 12:10 & 12:15-16 & Phil. 2:3-4 & Rom. 13:8 & II Tim. 3:3 & Acts 7:9 & Gal. 5:26 & III John 9 & Luke 22:24.

Also, the *Catechism* (QQ. 134 to 136) expounds the **Sixth Commandment** (to respect life) by referring consecutively even to “**New** Testament judicials.” Such include: Eph. 5:28-29 & Acts 23:12,16-17,21,27 & Eph. 4:26-27 & Matt. 4:6-7 & Jas. 5:7-11 & Heb. 12:9 & I Th. 4:11 & I Pet. 3:3-4 & I Tim. 5:23 & II Th. 3:10,12 & Rom. 13:10 & Luke 10:33-34 & Col. 3:12-13 & Jas. 3:7 & I Pet. 3:8-11 & Matt. 5:24 & Eph. 4:2,32 & Rom. 12:17,20-21 & I Th. 5:14 & Matt. 25:42-43 & Jas. 2:15-16 & Matt. 5:22 & I John 3:15 & Rom. 12:19 & Eph. 4:31 & Matt. 6:31,34 & Luke 21:34 & Rom. 13:13 & Gal. 5:15.

The *Catechism* (QQ. 137 to 139) expounds the **Seventh Commandment** (to promote sexual integrity) by referring consecutively even to the “**New** Testament judicials.” Such include: I Th. 4:4 & I Cor. 7:34 & Col. 4:6 & I Pet. 3:2 & I Cor. 7:2,35,36 & Acts 24:24-25 & I Tim. 2:9 & I Cor. 7:2,9 & I Pet. 3:7 & Heb. 13:4 & Gal. 5:19 & I Cor. 5:1 & Rom. 1:24,26-27 & Matt. 5:28 & 15:19 & Col. 3:5 & Eph. 5:3-4 & II Pet. 2:14 & I Tim. 4:3 & Mark 6:18 & Matt. 19:10-11 & I Cor. 7:7-9 & Matt. 19:5 & 5:32 & I Cor. 7:12-13 & Eph. 5:4 & Mark 6:22 & Rom. 13:13 & I Pet. 4:3.

Once more, the *Catechism* (QQ. 140 to 142) expounds the **Eighth Commandment** (to respect property) by referring consecutively even to “**New** Testament judicials.” Such

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include: Rom. 13:7 & Luke 19:8 & 6:30,38 & I John 3:17 & Eph. 4:28 & Gal. 6:10 & I Tim. 6:6-9 & Gal. 6:14 & I Tim. 5:8 & 6:17-18 & Matt. 11:8 & I Cor. 7:20 & John 6:12 & I Cor. 6:1-9 & Phil. 2:4 & Matt. 22:39 & Jas. 2:15-16 & I John 3:17 & I Tim. 1:10 & I Thess. 4:6 & Luke 16:10-12 & Matt. 23:25 & Acts 19:19,24,25 & Luke 12:15 & I Tim 6:5 & Col. 3:2 & Matt. 6:25,31,34 & II Th. 3:11.

Next, the *Catechism* (QQ. 143 to 145) expounds the **Ninth Commandment** (to promote the truth) by referring consecutively even to “**New** Testament judicials.” Such include: III John 12 & II Cor. 1:17-18 & Eph. 4:25 & Heb. 6:9 & I Cor. 13:7 & Rom. 1:8 & II John 4 & II John 3-4 & II Cor. 2:4 & 12:21 & I Pet. 4:8 & I Cor. 1:4-5,7 & II Tim. 1:4-5 & I Cor. 13:6-7 & John 8:49 & Phil. 4:8 & Acts 6:13 & Luke 19:8 & 16:5-7 & Acts 5:3,8-9 & II Tim. 4:16 & John 2:19 & Matt. 26:60-61 & Jas. 4:11 & Rom. 1:29-30 & Gal. 4:29 & I Cor. 6:10 & Matt. 7:1 & Acts 28:4 & Rom. 2:1 & Rom. 3:8 & II Tim. 3:2 & Luke 18:9,11 & Rom. 12:16 & I Cor. 4:6 & Acts 12:22 & Matt. 7:3-5 & Acts 7:56-57 & I Cor. 13:5 & I Tim. 6:4 & Matt. 21:15 & 27:28-29 & Jude 16 & Acts 12:22 & Rom. 1:31 & II Tim. 3:3.

Too, the *Catechism* (QQ. 146 to 148) expounds the **Tenth Commandment** (to be content) by referring consecutively even to “**New** Testament judicials.” Such include: Heb. 13:5 & I Tim. 6:6 & Rom. 12:15 & I Tim. 1:5 & I Cor. 13:4-7 & 10:10 & Gal. 5:26 & Jas. 3:14,16 & Rom. 7:7-8 & 13:9 & Col. 3:5.

Finally, the *Catechism* (QQ. 149 to 153) also describes the **keepability** and the **heinousness of transgressing** the Decalogue and the **aggravations** of sins and their **punishment** and **repentance** therefrom. Here it refers consecutively also to “**New** Testament judicials.” Such include: Jas. 3:2 & John 15:5 & Rom. 8:3 & I John 1:8,10 & Gal. 5:17 & Rom. 7:18-19 & 3:9-19 & Jas. 3:2-13 & John 19:11 & I John 5:19 & I Cor. 5:1 & Jas. 4:17 & Luke 12:47-48 & Rom. 2:17-24 & Gal. 2:11-14 & Matt. 21:38-39 & Acts 5:4 & Rom. 2:4 & Heb. 2:2-3 & 12:25 & 10:29 & Matt. 12:31-32 & Eph. 4:30 & Heb. 6:4-6 & Jude 8-9 & II Cor. 12:15 & Matt. 18:6 & I Cor. 6:8 & Rev. 17:6 & I Cor. 8:11-12 & Rom. 14:13,15,21 & Rev. 18:12-13 & Matt. 23:15 & I Th. 2:15-16 & Col. 3:5 & I Tim. 6:10 & Jas. 1:14-15 & Matt. 5:22 & 18:7 & Rom. 2:23-24 & 11:21-24 & John 15:22 & Rom. 1:26-27 & 1:32 & Tit. 3:10-11 & Matt. 18:17 & III John 10 & II Pet. 2:20-22 & I Cor. 11:20-21 & John 13:27,30 & Jas. 2:10-11 & I John 3:4 & Rom. 7:12 & Eph. 5:6 & Gal. 3:10 & Matt. 25:41 & Heb. 9:22 & I Pet. 1:18-19 & Acts 22:21 & Matt. 3:7-8 & Luke 13:3,5 & Acts 16:30-31 & John 3:16,18.

Hence, even though sundry of the Old Testament judicial laws of ancient Israel themselves did expire with the destruction of the political State of that people in A.D. 70 at the hands of the Roman armies, the “general equity” even of those sundry judicial laws of Israel underwent further development and application precisely in Christian circles. This development took place in the form of “**New** Testament judicials.” *E.g.*: Deut. 17:6 & 19:12-17 *cf.* Matt. 18:15-18, and Deut. 25:4 *cf.* I Cor. 9:8-10 & I Tim. 5:17-19 *etc.*

Further development also proceeded even thereafter. *E.g.*, in the *Codes of Theodosius and Justinian*. Accordingly, it should come as no surprise that the *Westminster Larger Catechism* in its treatment of the Sixth Commandment requiring the “avoiding [of] all

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occasions...which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any”²⁹¹ – quotes as support the “general equity”²⁹² of the judicial law of Deut. 22:8. That required: “When you build a new house, then you shall make a battlement for your roof, so that you do not bring blood upon your house if anyone falls off of it.”

Indeed, it was but to be expected that the Westminster Assembly’s *Form of Presbyterian Church-Government* would advocate the parochial system of dividing congregations – by appealing to both the “general equity” in the judicial law concerned (cf. *Westminster Confession* 19:4g) as well as to the Moral Law (cf. the Confession 19:5). For there²⁹³ we read: “It is lawful and expedient that there be fixed congregations...divided into distinct and fixed congregations.... The ordinary way of dividing Christians into distinct congregations, and more expedient for edification, is by the respective bounds of their dwellings.... Because they who dwell together, being bound to all kinds of Moral duties [cf. the *Confession* 19:3e] one to another, have the better opportunity thereby to discharge them; which Moral tie is perpetual; for Christ came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it (Deut. 15:7,11 [judicial law]; Matt. 22:39 & 5:19 [Moral Law]).”

Nor is it strange that the 1977 Sixth General Assembly of the continuing Presbyterian Church in America condemned abortion, after accepting a report centering on the “moral duties” and the “general equity” of the Sixth Commandment as found in Ex. 21:22-25. This passage, the *Westminster Confession* specifically categorizes as part of the judicial laws.²⁹⁴ There can thus be very little doubt at all, then, that the abiding “general equity” contained in the “sundry judicial laws” which expired, is the ongoing general equity of the “Moral Law of nature” – as found in some or other perverted form among all people, and as most clearly expressed in the Ten Commandments of the infallible Decalogue itself.

Incidentally, while on this issue of abortion, the Mosaic Law in Deut. 22:6-7 seems to be at least obliquely relevant. There it states: “If a man find a bird’s nest, he may take the young ones – but he must let the dam [alias the mother bird] go, when she broods her eggs or her young ones” *etc.*

In a sermon on that passage, Calvin argues: “Why does God not rather say that if a man see a mother nursing her child, he shall not trouble her but rather succour her and help her and in any way beware that he not touch her? For that would be a hurting of the infant!.... Why does God not speak in that manner? What need was there for it to go say that a man should let a bird alone when she broods her young? Hereby He [God through Moses] meant to express the better – how greatly He abhors all cruelty. For if He cannot bear with it when it extends but to the little birds – shall a man escape unpunished, when

²⁹¹ *W.L.C.* 135fgh.

²⁹² *W.C.F.* 19:4g.

²⁹³ Westminster Assembly’s *Form of Presbyterian Church-Government*, “Of Particular Congregations.”

²⁹⁴ Cf. *Minutes of Sixth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America* (Decatur, Ga.: Committee for Christian Education and Publications), 1978, pp. 71ff, 270ff.

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he falls to hurting the **image of God Himself**; that is to say, when he offers wrong to another **human being**” however tiny?

“As I said before, God does not stand to the bird, to put any great perfection therein. But He meant to teach us by an argument from the lesser to the greater – after what manner we ought to behave ourselves towards our neighbours.... If a man disquiet a nurse or a **mother** in doing her duty toward her child – surely it is **double** cruelty!”

Even more interestingly, in his sermon on the New Testament passage Eph. 6:1-4, Calvin insisted: “In honouring our fathers and mothers, we yield God the service that He requires of us and which we owe to Him.... There is such rigorous punishment in the Law against them that are rebels against their fathers and mothers. Whoever despised his father or mother or uttered any curse against them or did them any harm, was to be stoned (Lev. 20:9)....

“God will have them despatched out of the World, for they are monsters and an infection to pollute the whole Earth.... If the father and mother have once given their witness ‘behold this our child is incorrigible’ – immediately upon this, let him be stoned...and let the World be rid of such an infection (Deut. 21:18-21)!”

Thus “the judicial law” of the ancient Israelites, declared Calvin,²⁹⁵ was “given them as a kind of polity” or political constitution containing “certain forms of equity.” And “the judicial form, though it looked only to the best method of preserving that charity [or love] which is enjoined by the eternal Law of God – was still distinct from the precept of [equity or] love itself.” Consequently, even “when these judicial arrangements are removed – the duties and precepts of charity can still remain perpetual.”

Careful note should therefore be taken of “two things connected with all laws – *viz.* the enactment of the law, and the equity on which the enactment is founded and rests.... Now, as it is evident that the Law of God which we call ‘Moral’ is nothing else than the testimony of Natural Law and of that conscience which God has engraven on the minds of men – the whole of this equity of which we now speak, is prescribed in it. Hence, it [viz. this equity] alone ought to be the aim, the rule, and the end of all laws.” Thus Calvin.

Especially the Old Testament judicial laws against incest are practically indispensable also for today’s Church (*cf.* I Cor. 5:1-13). For nowhere in the Bible is incest clearly defined – except in Leviticus 18 and 20.

Hence, as Calvin remarks:²⁹⁶ “The Roman laws accord with the rule prescribed by God – as if their authors had learnt from Moses what was decorous and agreeable to nature.... It is true, indeed, that this (Leviticus 18:6) was a part of the political constitution [or the ‘judicial laws’] which God established for His ancient people.

²⁹⁵ Calvin: *Institutes* IV:20:15-16.

²⁹⁶ Calvin: *Commentary* on Lev. 18:6.

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“Still, it must be borne in mind that whatever is prescribed here – is deduced from the Source of rectitude Himself, and from the natural feelings implanted in us by Him.... Since it flows from the Fountain of nature Himself and is founded on the general Principle of all laws – Which is perpetual and inviolable....

“I do not see that under the pretext of its being a political law (French: ‘under the pretext that the Law of Moses has ceased’) the purity of [the Law of] Nature is to be abolished – from whence arises the distinction between the statutes of God and the abuses of the Gentiles.... Reasonable men will acknowledge that even amongst heathen nations, this Law was accounted indissoluble – as if implanted and engraved on the hearts of men....

“If it be objected that such marriages are not prohibited to us in the New Testament, I reply that the marriage of a father with his daughter is not forbidden [there].... But shall it therefore be lawful for those who are near of kin to form promiscuous connexions?” No! Having been prohibited in the Old Testament – in the absence of a specific New Testament rescission, this law against incest continues to operate throughout this post-Calvary period of history too.

It should therefore come as no surprise, that the *Westminster Confession* too appeals to the **Mosaic Laws on marriage**. For first,²⁹⁷ it condemns marriages between such as profess the Reformed religion on the one hand and heretics on the other (quoting Exodus 34:16 and Deuteronomy 7:3-4). Next, it condemns incestuous marriages (quoting Leviticus chapter 18). *Cf.* too the *Confession*’s original version (questionably amended by the U.S. Southern Presbyterian Church in 1886), which also quotes Lev. 20:19-21.²⁹⁸ And finally, under strict conditions, it sanctions²⁹⁹ public divorce (quoting Deuteronomy 24:1-4).

At this point, we can draw the following conclusions about the **vast scope** of the “judicial laws.” They each contain a “general equity” which is of **abiding** value. It is impossible really to grasp the full implications of the Decalogue itself without a thorough knowledge of and a healthy respect for all of these various judicial laws. Although they are well stated in the *Torah* – in order fully to understand their total thrust comprehensively, we need to study their occurrence in the rest of the Old Testament too and also in the New Testament (where they are not only quoted with approval but also expanded and augmented even by the “New Testament judicials”).

²⁹⁷ Cf. *W.C.F.* 24:3g.

²⁹⁸ Cf. *W.C.F.* 24:4h (revised American version), to which the British version adds 24:4k.

²⁹⁹ Cf. *W.C.F.* 24:6p.

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In this respect, **the whole Bible** is so undergirded by these various judicial laws, that one cannot ignore them without misunderstanding everything else in the Bible. Hence, we cannot get a complete picture of the New Testament teaching and even of the Gospel itself – if we do not appreciate what the general equity of all of these judicial laws still requires of us also today.

VIII. CALVINISM ON THE LEGAL DUTIES OF CIVIL MAGISTRATES

It remains for us to examine the various Calvinistic standards on the duties of the civil magistrates relative to the Law of God. Thereby we would hope to help establish the extent to which magistrates are today to enforce the general equity of the judicial laws in general and their penalties in particular.

The 1559 *French Confession* of John Calvin and his pupil Chandieu (articles 39 & 40) states: “We believe that God wishes to have the World governed by laws and magistrates, so that some restraint may be put upon its disordered appetites. As He has established kingdoms, republics, and all sorts of principalities...and all that belongs to a just government and wishes to be considered as their Author – so He has put the sword into the hands of magistrates to suppress crimes against the First as well as against the Second Table of the Commandments of God.... We detest all those who would like to reject authority, to establish community and confusion of property, and overthrow the order of justice.”

Also Calvin’s friend Henry Bullinger’s German *Tetrapolitan Confession* states that “the office of governmental persons is such a holy one that only God could have given it to man. Hence those who rule, are also called ‘gods’ in Scripture [cf. Ex. 4:14-16; 7:1; 18:19f; Ps. 82:6 & John 10:33-36].... Hence, governmental offices are appraised in the worthiest way by the best and most pious Christians.”³⁰⁰

John Calvin himself insisted on the threefold use of the Law (the *usus paedagogicus*, the *usus normativus*, and the *usus politicus* [or *civilis*]).³⁰¹ He also noted even in his *Institutes* that “the duty of magistrates extends to both Tables of the Law” of the Ten Commandments – according to Scripture, and according to “profane writers.”³⁰²

Calvin’s *Commentary* on Deut. 13:5 is most instructive³⁰³ regarding the *usus civilis* of the Law of God: “In a well-constituted polity [or political commonwealth], profane men by whom religion is subverted, are by no means to be tolerated.... God might, indeed, do without the assistance of sword in defending religion; but such is not His will. And what wonder, if God should command magistrates to be avengers of His glory – when He neither wills nor suffers that thefts, fornications, and drunkenness should be exempt from punishment....

“Capital punishment shall be decreed against adulterers.... It is superfluous to contend by argument, when God has once pronounced what is His will. For we must needs abide by His inviolable decree.”

³⁰⁰ Bullinger’s *Tetrapolitan Confession*, ch. 23.

³⁰¹ Calvin: *Institutes* II:7:10.

³⁰² Calvin: *Institutes* IV:20:9.

³⁰³ Calvin’s *Commentary* on Deut. 13:5 (in *Harmony of the Pentateuch*).

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However, “it is questioned [by some] whether the law [of capital punishment against adultery *etc.*] pertains to the kingdom of Christ – which [they say] is spiritual and distinct from all earthly dominion; and there are some men, not otherwise ill-disposed, to whom it appears that our condition under the Gospel is different from that of the ancient people under the Law.... But **when** human judges consecrate their work to the promotion of Christ’s kingdom, I deny that on that account its nature is changed.”

For God “did not impose on Himself an eternal law that He should never bring kings [and judges] under His subjection, nor tame their violence, nor change them from being cruel persecutors into the patrons and guardians...and...nursing fathers of the Church... And this is admirably expressed in the words of Moses [to the magistrates] – when he reminds them that judgment must be passed according to the Law of God.”

“The Law of God,” continues Calvin,³⁰⁴ “forbids to steal. The punishment appointed for theft in the civil polity of the Jews, may be seen in Exodus 22. Very ancient laws of other nations punished theft by exacting the double of what was stolen.... Subsequent laws made a distinction between theft manifest and not manifest. Other laws went the length of punishing with exile, or with branding – while others made the punishment capital.

“Among the Jews, the punishment of the false witness was to ‘do unto him as he had thought to have done to his brother’ (Deut. 19:19). In some countries, the punishment is infamy; in others hanging; in others crucifixion.

“All laws alike avenge murder with blood, but the kinds of death are different. In some countries adultery was punished more severely, in others more leniently. Yet we see that amidst this diversity, they all tend to the same end. For they all with one mouth declare against those crimes which are condemned by the eternal Law of God.”

There are certainly differences in the kinds and intensities of punishment inflicted – differences between one country and another, and differences with “regard to time and place and the condition of the people” concerned (thus Calvin). Yet all societies on Earth punish their members for transgressing the Moral Law of nature (as each country currently understands it).

Saudi Arabia, for instance, orders: thieves’ hands cut off; adulterers stoned; drunkards flogged; and rapists publicly beheaded. And Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates recently joined Saudi Arabia in spearheading “Islamic banking” – chiefly to eliminate interest on loans, in keeping with the (partly Biblical and partly pagan) *Koran*. Also Iran re-instituted Islam’s death penalty for adultery *etc.* So too did Pakistan, where sometimes even the hands of thieves are amputated.

Especially prior to the 1789 godless French Revolution and its pernicious proliferation of humanism worldwide, there was a greater international consensus on the appropriate punishments for various crimes. Yet even today, it is remarkable how many societies to

³⁰⁴ Calvin: *Institutes* IV:20:16.

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some extent still are in **agreement with one another even as to the type of punishment** which should be inflicted for breaking the Moral Law enshrined to a greater or lesser extent in their various national legislations.

Many societies prescribe exactly the same penalties as did the Mosaic Law. Indeed, there may throughout the World today be much merit in constitutionally enacting legislative penalties more agreeable with those expressed in the judicial laws of ancient Israel³⁰⁵ (rather than say the cruel and unusual punishments currently being meted out to the millions of unborn babies criminally being aborted throughout the World while their killers remain unpunished).

Hence, as Calvin suggested, the enforcement of the Mosaic Law and its penalties was (and may indeed yet prove to be) “the best method of preserving that charity which is enjoined by the eternal Law of God.”³⁰⁶ Indeed, that certainly seems to be the case.

Let us then again hear John Calvin at this point (quoting from his *Commentary* on Deut. 22:22):³⁰⁷ “It appears how greatly God abominates adultery, since He pronounces capital punishment against it.... If a man had broken faith...by having connexion with a harlot, it was not a capital offence. But if any man, though a bachelor, had committed adultery with the wife of another – he was to die.... Nay, by the universal law of the Gentiles, the punishment of death was always awarded to adultery. Therefore it is all the baser and more shameful in Christians, not to imitate at least the Heathen!

“Adultery is punished no less severely by the (pagan) Julian law than by that of God; while those who boast themselves of the Christian name, are so tender and remiss that they visit this execrable offence with a very light reproof. And lest they should abrogate God’s law without a pretext, they allege the example of Christ Who dismissed the woman taken in adultery (whereas she ought to have been stoned) – just as He withdrew Himself into a mountain, **so that He might not be made a king by the multitude** (John 8:11 and 6:15).”

Yet “if we consider what the **office** was which the Father delegated to His only-begotten Son, we shall not be surprised that He was content with the limits of His vocation and **did not discharge the duties of a Judge** [at that time of His first advent]. But those who have been invested with the sword for the correction of crime, have absurdly

³⁰⁵ Cf. J. Frame: *Review of Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (in *Presbyterian Journal* [Asheville, N.C.], Aug. 31, 1977, p. 18). Says Frame: “The uniqueness of that Old Testament theocracy needs closer examination. But even if Israel is unique, even if its legal structure is not as such to be reproduced by modern governments – still Christians will have to address the question of what constitutes political justice today.

“The alternative, is political impotence.... Where is such political wisdom to be found? It might turn out that our search will lead us after all to a closer imitation of the old covenant order, not out of Biblio-theological necessity but out of a general political wisdom. For ‘what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you [Israel] this day?’ (Deut. 4:8).”

³⁰⁶ Calvin: *Institutes* IV:20:15.

³⁰⁷ Calvin: *Commentary* on Dt. 22:22.

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imitated His example – and thus their relaxation of the penalty has flowed from gross ignorance.”

Rev. Dr. John Calvin’s *Sermons on Deuteronomy*³⁰⁸ are a mine of information toward the reconstruction of a Biblical penology. There, in his 89th Sermon anent Deut. 13:5’s death penalty for false-prophets, he states: “Let us not think that this Law is a special law for the Jews, but let us understand that God intended to deliver us a general rule to which we must tie ourselves!”

Similarly, in his 103rd Sermon, on Deut. 17:2-6, he favours the death penalty for apostasy – and in his 104th Sermon, for those who refuse the decision of a judicial tribunal. Also in his 115th Sermon, on Deut. 19:16-21, he upholds capital punishment against perjurers who falsely allege others had committed capital crimes.

Better known, perhaps, is his 123rd Sermon on Deut. 21:18-21 – on capital punishment for an incorrigibly violent juvenile delinquent. “Such a one is a monster,” explains Calvin; “and whatever is against nature, we ought to loathe and abhor it.... Judges be here called by God – yes, and expressly commanded by Him – to punish the disobedience that is committed against earthly fathers and mothers!”

No different is the 1560 *Scots Confession* of Calvin’s great pupil John Knox, the father of Scottish and Scots-Irish Presbyterianism. For Knox too upheld “the judges and princes to whom God has given the sword for the praise and defence of good men and the punishment of all open evil-doers.

“Moreover, we state that the preservation and purification of religion is particularly the duty of kings, princes, rulers, and magistrates. They are not only appointed for civil government but also to maintain true religion and to suppress all idolatry and superstition. This may be seen in David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, and others highly commended for their zeal in that cause.” Thus Knox.³⁰⁹

Similarly, Calvin’s other great pupil Guido de Bres declared in his Dutch or *Belgic Confession* of 1561 that God “has committed to the magistrate the sword for the punishment of evil-doers and for the protection of them that do well. And their office is not only to have regard to and watch for the welfare of the civil state; but also that they protect the sacred Ministry; and thus remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship; so that the kingdom of Antichrist may be thus destroyed and the kingdom of Christ promoted.”³¹⁰

Also Calvin’s close friend Henry Bullinger wrote ‘Of the magistracy’ in his 1566 *Second Swiss Confession*: “Let him draw forth this sword of God against all malefactors, seditious persons, thieves, murderers, oppressors, blasphemers, perjured persons, and all those whom God has commanded him to punish or even to execute! Let him suppress

³⁰⁸ Calvin: *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1987 rep. of 1583 1st Eng. ed.

³⁰⁹ Knox: *Scots Confession*, ch. 24.

³¹⁰ De Bres: *Belgic Confession*, art. 36.

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stubborn heretics (who are heretics indeed), who cease not to blaspheme the majesty of God, and to trouble the Church, yea, and finally to destroy it!”³¹¹

See too the similar statements in the *Bohemian Confession*, the *Waldensian Confession*, the *Confession of Saxony*, and the *Confession of the English Congregation in Geneva*. Also note the views of the great Calvinists Rivetus, Walaeus, Vitranga, John Elliott, Alexander Moncrieff, Thomas M’Crie, Dr. Begg, Principal Cunningham, C.J. Brown, Smeaton, Dr. D. Beaton in his *National Recognition of Religion* and his *Headship of Christ* and his *Dr. M’Crie’s Statement*, James Kerr’s *Church and State*, William Watson’s *Defence of National Churches*, Bannerman’s *The Church of Christ*, Edward Williams’s *Antipaedobaptism Examined*, and the various works of Professors William Symington, “Rabbi” John Duncan, Dr. Kennedy of Dingwall, and Malcolm Mackay of Nova Scotia. See too the undated *Christ’s Kingship over the Nations* (Westminster Standard, Gisborne, New Zealand).

The 1643f *Solemn League and Covenant* was of critical importance not only to the Parliament of England and to the Parliament of Scotland – both of which ratified it – but also to the Westminster Assembly itself (which similarly ratified it). In part, it states:

“We Noblemen, Barons, Knights, Gentlemen, Citizens, Burgesses, Ministers of the Gospel, and Commons of all sorts in the **kingdoms** of Scotland, England and Ireland – by the providence of God living under one king, and being of one Reformed Religion; having before our eyes the glory of God and the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...and calling to mind...the deplorable state of the Church and kingdom of Ireland, the distressed estate of the Church and kingdom of England, and the dangerous estate of the Church and kingdom of Scotland” – “have now at last...for the preservation of ourselves and our religion from utter ruin and destruction, according to the **commendable** practice of **these kingdoms** in **former times** and the example of God’s people in **other nations**..., determined to enter into a mutual and *Solemn League and Covenant*.” Therein “we all subscribe – and each one of us for himself – with our hands lifted up to the most High God.”

After the above Preamble, those making this *Solemn League and Covenant* swore to promote “the **preservation** of the Reformed Religion in the Church of Scotland” and “the **reformation** of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland...according to the Word of God...[so] that we and our posterity after us may as brethren live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us... We shall in like manner...endeavour the extirpation of popery...; superstition; heresy; schism; profaneness... We shall also, with all faithfulness, endeavour the discovery of all such as have been or shall be **incendiaries** [alias **arsonists**]...or evil instruments...[so] that they may be **brought to publick trial** and receive condign **punishment**, as the **degree** of their **offences** shall **require or deserve**.”

³¹¹ Bullinger: *Second Swiss Confession*, ch. 30.

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The document finally concludes: “The happiness of a blessed peace between these kingdoms, denied in former times to our progenitors, is – by the good providence of God – granted unto us.... We shall also – according to our places and callings in this common cause of religion, liberty, and peace of the kingdoms – assist and defend all those that enter into this League....

“We shall also, all the days of our lives, zealously and constantly continue therein – against all opposition.... These kingdoms [*viz.* of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales]...profess and declare, before God and the whole World, our unfeigned desire...to amend our lives – and each one to go before another in the example of a real reformation...[against] the yoke of antichristian tyranny.” We are “to join in the same or like association and covenant – to the glory of God; the enlargement of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ; and the peace and tranquillity of Christian Kingdoms and Commonwealths.”

Also contemporary to the *Westminster Standards*, was the greatest work ever written on the New Testament book of Hebrews. We refer, of course, to the great seven-volume commentary thereon by Rev. Dr. John Owen.

There, in his *Exercitation XXI:13-17 & 26-30*, Owen – the greatest of all British Puritans – wrote also about “penalties annexed unto the transgression of the Law...as men by God’s institution and appointment were enabled to inflict.... There were Officers who attended the service of the whole people as to the execution of justice and order called...‘Shoterim’.... Exod. 5:14.... They are afterwards distinguished from the Elders and Judges, Deut. 16:18....

“Coming up out of Egypt, during their abode in the wilderness, Moses presided over them with all manner of authority – as their Lawgiver, King, and Judge. He judged and determined all their causes...until, by the advice of Jethro, he took in others unto his assistance. Exod. 18:13-26.... The people was cast [or assigned] into...thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens – all which had their peculiar Officers or Rulers chosen from amongst themselves. Exod. 18:25 & Deut. 1:13-15....

“This also is certain, that God in sundry cases had appointed that some transgressors should be separated from the Congregation, devoted to destruction, and cut off – an instance of the execution of which institution we have [in] Ezra 10:7-8.... A double penalty is here threatened upon disobedient persons.... ‘All his substance (his goods and possessions) should be anathematized’....

“Civil penalties...were of three sorts. First, corporeal; second, such as respected the outward estate and condition of the offender; thirdly, capital.” Let us look at each.

“Corporeal punishment was that only of stripes not exceeding the number of forty, Deut. 25:2-3.... Many crimes, doubtless, rendered persons obnoxious to this penalty.... The Jews now reckon up seven instances of unlawful [though non-adulterous] copulation with women free and unmarried. For adultery [by a married man or with a married woman], as is known, was capital by the express sentence of the Law....

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“Punishments respecting les|state and condition were of two sorts. 1) Pecuniary, in a quadruple restitution, in case of theft. 2) Personal, in banishment or confinement unto the city of refuge for him that had slain a man at unawares – Num. 35:25.

“Capital punishments they inflicted four ways.” Without discussing the relevance of these ways today, here is Owen’s view of these ancient modes of capital punishment.

“1) By strangulation [alias hanging], Deut. 21:22 – which was inflicted on six sorts of transgressors: 1, adulterers; 2, strikers of parents; 3, man-stealers [alias kidnappers], 4, old men exemplarily rebellious against the law; 5, false-prophets; 6, prognosticators by the names of idols. 2) Burning, Lev. 20:14” in cases of “the adultery of the priest’s daughter” and “incest...with a daughter” or “with a son’s daughter” *etc.* 3) Death was inflicted by the sword, Exod. 32:37,...on the voluntary manslayer” and “on the inhabitants of any city that fell to idolatry. 4) By stoning, Deut. 21:21, which was executed for incest...with a mother” *etc.*, “adultery with a betrothed virgin, [sodomy alias] unnatural uncleanness with men, with beasts by men, with beasts by women, blasphemy, idolatry, offering to Moloch, a familiar spirit of Ob, of Jideoni, on impostors, on seducers, on enchanterers or magicians, profaners of the Sabbath, cursers of fathers or mothers, [and]...the dissolute and stubborn son....

“Unto the execution of these penalties, there were added two cautionary laws. First, that they that were put to death for the increase of their ignominy and terror of others should be hanged on a tree – Deut. 21:22. Secondly, that they should be buried the same day – verse 23.” Thus Rev. Dr. John Owen.

Immediately prior to the writing of the *Westminster Standards*, another document drawn up at that time – served to illustrate the nature of British Calvinistic thought on this subject. The *National Covenant of Faith* of the Kirk of Scotland, which had been subscribed to repeatedly ever since 1580, was again re-affirmed right before the Westminster Assembly, in 1639 and 1640, and again after the Westminster Assembly, in 1650 and 1651.

It approved of King James’s *Act of Parliament* that “all Kings and Princes...shall serve the same eternal God to the uttermost of their power, according as He hath required in His most holy Word, contained in the Old and New Testament; and according to the same Word, shall maintain the true religion of Christ Jesus...; and shall rule the people committed to their charge, according to the will and command of God revealed in His foresaid Word, and according to the laudable eternal God.”³¹² Indeed, in 1643 the *Grand Remonstrance* restated all past grievances against the king, followed by a demand for Cabinet Ministers – the first premonitions of the shot that went round the World with the

³¹² *The Confession of Faith of the Kirk of Scotland: or the National Covenant* (in *The Subordinate Standards and Other Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland*, p. 270).

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later *Declaration of Independence* of the United States of America and her *Bill of Rights*.³¹³

Now the original 1647 British version of the *Westminster Confession* propounded essentially the same doctrine as did the previous Calvinistic Reformers: “The civil Magistrate...hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed [by the Church], and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed [by the State]. Isa. 49:23; Ps. 122:9; Ezra 7:23-28; Lev. 24:16; Deut. 13:5-6,12; II Kgs. 18:4; I Chron. 13:1-9; II Kgs. 24:1-26; II Chron. 34:33 & 15:12-13, *etc.*”

The above-mentioned Bible prooftexts in the footnotes of this original British version of the *Westminster Confession*, clearly evidence **sweeping penalties** for disobedience to “magistrates and judges” (Ezra 7:23) – also in New Testament times, as well as in the days of the Westminster Confession. For “whosoever will not do the Law of thy God and the Law of the King,” the original *Confession* insisted³¹⁴ – “let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death or to banishment or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment (Ezra 7:26)!”

Indeed, “he that blasphemeth the Name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death (Lev. 24:6)” – the original *Confession* continues. Similarly, it then goes on to say,³¹⁴ the “[false-]prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death (Deut. 13:5).” For thus it was, concludes the original *Confession*, even when all Judah and Benjamin “entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, ...that whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death, whether man or woman (II Chron. 15:12-13).”

Now in 1738 the North American Synod of the Presbyterian Church in America denomination amended the above paragraph of the original 1647 British version of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. It was amended chiefly by this denomination (and its offshoots) in North America.³¹⁵ Yet there were then, and there are still today, yet other American Presbyterian denominations which have never amended it.³¹⁴

³¹³ Cf. Presbyterian Church in the United States: *Confession of Faith* (Richmond, Va.; P.C.U.S. Board of Christian Education), 1971, p. 14. Cf. too Billington (& Others): *The Making of American Democracy* (New York: Rinehart), 1951, I, p. 82ff. And also cf. *Presbyterians and the American Revolution* (Presbyterian Historical Society of the United States of America), Vol. 52:4, 1974, p. 309ff.

³¹⁴ Original British version of the *W.C.F.* 23:3ef. Note that the magistrate here authorizes the Church to clean up its own ecclesiastical iniquities, while Magistrates themselves settle and administer and observe all the political ordinances of God in the different and Non-Church realm of the State. Cf. too notes 322 & 334 below.

³¹⁵ *W.C.F.* 23:3 (original 1788 American text); 1977 Presbyterian Church in America (or Orthodox Presbyterian Church in America) Bible references at 23:3ghi. Note that the *Confession*'s phrase that the civil magistrate “take order...that...ecclesiastical assemblies be held” – means that the magistrate is to see to it that this takes place. For the 1656 Cambridge University authoritative Latin translation of the *W.C.F.*'s 1647 phrase “to take order,” is *providere* – which Latin word can only mean “to see to it” or “to provide.”

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It was amended thus, only in North America (but to this very day by conservatives nowhere else in the whole World). It was amended only in part, and the original part concerned was replaced by this 1738 North American Synod's version. That replacement portion was still upheld in 1973 and thereafter by the Presbyterian Church in America. It runs as follows: –

“As nursing-fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the Church of our common Lord...(Isa. 49:23).... And, as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in His Church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians according to their own profession and belief (Ps. 105:15). It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect...and to take order [or to provide] that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance (Rom. 13:4; I Tim. 2:2).”

Here the American wording differs from the original British version (still followed throughout the rest of conservative World Presbyterianism and also by some Presbyterian denominations here in the United States even today). But in both versions, **the duty of the civil magistrate to protect and promote and provide for the worship not of Judaism nor of Islam nor any other Non-Christian religion but specifically for that of the “Church of our common Lord and “ecclesiastical assemblies” of “Christians” even “as Jesus Christ hath appointed” is clear – particularly in the 1788 American version.**³¹⁵

For indeed, the 1788 American version³¹⁶ replaced the original 1647 British version³¹⁷ of this section³¹⁸ of the *Confession* not in order to deny the magistrate's obligation to enforce the Ten Commandments in political life (which is still taught elsewhere in both the 1647 British and the 1788 American versions).³¹⁹ It replaced it, merely to make the actual intention of the original version even clearer here – namely that this section³¹⁸ of the *Confession* was not intended “in any such sense as to suppose the civil magistrate hath a controlling power over synods with respect to the exercise of their ministerial authority,” as the North American Synod had already pointed out in 1729 some some sixty years before this was further clarified by way of the adoption of the 1788 American version itself.³²⁰

³¹⁶ Cf. in Section VIII above.

³¹⁷ Cf. in Section VII above.

³¹⁸ *W.C.F.* 23:3.

³¹⁹ Cf. *W.C.F.* 20:4qr & 23:1-2; and *W.L.C.* 99:7a & 124fg & 127q & 128b & 129pqrs & 130defo & 135fg & 136cgwx & 145cg, etc.

³²⁰ Cf. A.A. Hodge: *The Confession of Faith* (London: Banner of Truth Trust), 1958 reprint, p. 21, where the *Adopting Acts* of the 1729 original Synod in North America re-emphasized precisely its continuity with the British understanding of the *Confession* at this point – by declaring that it did not receive 23:3 of the *Confession* “in any such sense as to suppose the civil magistrate hath a controlling power over synods with respect to the exercise of their ministerial authority; or power to persecute any for their religion, or in any sense contrary to the Protestant succession to the throne of Great Britain.” Emphasis mine – F.N. Lee.

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The 1788 amendment therefore only intended to remove the last vestiges of possible **Erastianism** from the original *Confession*. It no way wished to deny the State's obligation to promote the Church, nor to stifle laws applying the Biblical penalties against crimes.

Rev. Professor Daniel Morse, in his 1986 article *The Teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith on the Civil Magistrate* (in Dr. Joe Morecraft III's Atlanta journal *The Counsel of Chalcedon* VIII:6), rightly insists that chapter 19 of the *Westminster Confession* teaches that the Law of God is still relevant and applicable for today – **so that we will obey it**. What is in the forefront of 19:4 in the *Confession*, is not Israel's typological significance – since that cannot possibly have any bearing on other States that have no typological significance – but Israel as it shares common features with all other political entities. All the common everyday problems of crime and punishment, war and defence – and the common features of economics, business, politics, interpersonal relationships *etc.* that all nations face – Israel faced. God gave answers to Israel for all those problems and situations – so that Israel could be a lighthouse to the other nations in this dark World.

Morse then correctly concludes that Ancient Israel helps us to know what God requires of nations today. The *Confession* says that while the judicial law itself (that is the specific formulation of the law) expired with the State of Israel in 70 A.D., the general equity is still required of other States. And it is important to notice that it is not just general equity as such which is required – but the general equity of Old Testament Israel's judicial laws ("**thereof**"). It is **very** specific – **the** general equity of the **sundry judicial laws** originally given to **Israel**.

Morse adds that some cases apply to all times – such as death for adultery. For adultery is the same in all times and places.

Other cases, such as the requirement that a fence be put on the roofs of newly-constructed houses (cf. Deuteronomy 22:8), have little relevance to us today **as they stand**. For our roofs are not flat, and we do not use them for social gatherings. There are, however, similar situations and equivalent circumstances today (such as high porches and swimming pools). And by studying the Mosaic legislation, we can discern how we should properly apply the Moral Law **equitably** to our modern situation. Thus Rev. Professor Morse.

So then, the *Westminster Confession* 19:4 no way teaches the abolition of the general equity within the judicial laws of Ancient Israel. To the contrary, the *Confession* here insists that there is indeed a "general equity" within those judicial laws – a general equity which "**doth require**" to be upheld also today.

Incidentally, the continuation of this "general equity" even after A.D. 70 – can be seen very clearly also in the very next chapters (as an essential part of the wider context of chapter 19:4 in the *Confession*). For in its chapter 20:4, we are assured that those who undermine "the light of nature or the known principles of Christianity...may lawfully be called to account and **proceeded against** – by the...power of the civil magistrate."

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Modern deviants dishonestly try to re-interpret the 1788 amendment from the perspective of their own erroneous view advocating a “neutral” or Non-Christian State. But truth demands that the 1788 amendment be interpreted in the sense in which it was then intended. And that view advocated merely a functional separation between an essentially Christian Church (regardless of denomination) and an essentially Christian State.

Hence, both the 1647 British and the 1788 American versions of chapter 23 of the *Westminster Confession* made it clear that the State’s political officials are never to interfere in Church matters – but the 1788 American version does so even more clearly.³²¹ Yet the immediately preceding (1647 British and 1788 American) sections of the *Confession*, also make it abundantly clear that magistrates or civil governments are indeed to wield “the power of the sword”³²² in their God-ordained “defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil-doers.”³²³

Now the *Confession* implies that “them that are good” are Commandment-keepers, and that “evil-doers” are Commandment-breakers³²⁴ – compare too I John 3:4,12. However, the 1788 American version of the *Confession* – just like Calvin of old – not only requires the magistrates “to maintain piety, justice, and peace” and as “nursing-fathers” to “protect the Church of our common Lord.”³²⁵ Still more, it even insists that the magistrates themselves “must be just, ruling in the fear of God.”³²⁶

According to the *Confession*, this means that the magistrates must also themselves personally keep the First and the Sixth and the Eighth and the Ninth and the Tenth (*etc.*)

³²¹ American *W.C.F.* 23:3e.

³²² We have already seen that the 1788 American amendment to the *Confession*’s 23:3 only sought to clarify that the magistrate has no controlling power over synods with respect to the exercise of the ecclesiastical authority of the latter. Consequently, the amendment cannot rightly be regarded as disapproving of the original 1647 British version of 23:3 where the latter states that the magistrate also has the duty “to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed (Isa. 49:23; Ps. 122:9; Ezra 7:23-28; Lev. 24:16; Deut. 13:5,6,12ff, II Kgs. 18:4; I Chr. 13:1-9; II Kgs. 24:1-26; II Chr. 34:33; II Chr. 15:12-13),” *q.v.*! Hence, while the *Confession*’s 23:1-2 describes the magistrate’s direct political actions, both the 1647 British and the 1788 American versions of the *Confession* at 23:3 describe the magistrate’s direct promotion of the Christian religion (as opposed to the enforcement of Christian worship upon the unwilling, – which also the original British version of 23:3 nowhere advocates).

Significantly, this is also how the great American Presbyterian A.A. Hodge understood even the 1788 American version of the *Confession*’s ch. 23:3 almost a century later in 1869. See in our main text. In addition, the original British version of the *W.C.F.* (at 20:4r & 23:3fg) also describes the magistrate’s punishment of crimes according to the Biblical correctives (cf. the Bible texts quoted recently above, and cf. note 334 below). So too does (the British and American) *W.L.C.* (at 99.7a & 124cdefg & 127q & 128bdef & 129rs & 136cd & 139q & 141m & 151.1,nt & 151.2xf). Cf. too notes 335-353 below.

³²³ *W.C.F.* 23:1.

³²⁴ *W.C.F.* 23:1a cf. Rom. 13:1-4(-10), I Pet. 2:13ff.

³²⁵ *W.C.F.* 23:2c and American version’s 23:3g.

³²⁶ *W.C.F.* 23:2c, cf. II Sam. 23:3 (cf. too Ex. 18:21-26 & Eccl. 12:13-14).

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Commandments – by respectively fearing God devoutly, abhorring violence, giving alms to the people, shunning false accusations, and being content with their own wages. This is what the *Confession* maintains.³²⁷

The Moral Law is the only unchanging standard of goodness and justice in the World, according to the *Catechism*.³²⁸ Hence it must necessarily follow (as the *Catechism* also implies) that the civil authorities are perpetually required by God to uphold the Decalogue as such, both in their own private lives as well as in their affairs of State.³²⁹

The same position is borne out elsewhere in (the 1647 British and 1780 American version of) the *Westminster Confession*.³³⁰ For there one reads that those who oppose “any lawful power, ...whether it be civil or ecclesiastical,” by “publishing...opinions or maintaining practices contrary to that light of nature” or God’s Moral Law of nature³³¹ “or to the known principles of Christianity, ...may lawfully be called to account.”³³⁰

What are the pernicious practices and opinions for which men are lawfully accountable?³³⁰ According to the *Confession*’s footnotes at this point,³³² such would include the following: idolatry and Sodomy and Lesbianism (“knowing the judgment of God that they which commit such things are worthy of death, Rom. 1:32”);³³³ incest and fornication and covetousness and railing and drunkenness and extortion (“I Cor. 5:1,5,11”); antichristian doctrine (“II John 10-11”); disobedience (“II Thess. 3:14”); ungodliness (“I Tim. 6:3-5”); vain talk and deceit (“Tit. 1:10-13”); church-splitting or heresy (“Tit. 3:10”); blasphemy (“I Tim. 1:19-20”); irreconcilability (“Matt. 18:15-17”); evil and lies and Balaam-like opposition to covenant-keeping and Nicolaitan-like antinomianism and Jezebel-like instruction in seduction (“Rev. 2:2,14,14,20”); and synagogic Satanism (“Rev. 3:9”); *etc.*³³⁴

³²⁷ Cf. *W.C.F.* 23:2d, which quotes Luke 3:14 & Acts 10:1-2.

³²⁸ *W.L.C.* 93-98.

³²⁹ *W.L.C.* 124g & 151,2f.

³³⁰ *W.C.F.* 20:4pq.

³³¹ Cf. at the beginning of our Section III above.

³³² *W.C.F.* 20:4q.

³³³ Note that Rom. 1:23-32 seems to be describing the unnatural and lascivious nature of idolatry and its connection with homosexual practices. Cf. too *W.L.C.* 139q.

³³⁴ Note further that the original **British** version (*W.C.F.* 20:4r) also specifies in its footnote that perpetrators of the following further unnatural practices may also “lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against...by power of the civil magistrate”: the worship of other gods than Jehovah (death penalty), “Deut. 13:6 to the 12th”; doing evil (penalty of magistrate’s wrathful sword), “Rom. 13:3-4”; anti-christ-ian doctrine, “II John 10-11”; breach of the Law of God (speedy execution of the magisterial judgment “whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment, Ezra 7:23-28”); whoredom (death penalty), “Rev. 17:12-17”; public sabbath desecration by trading (threatened arrest and corporeal punishment), “Neh. 13:15-22”; religious intermarriage between covenant and non-covenant people, “Neh. 13:25,30”; idolatrous priesthood (destruction of idols and also the death penalty), “II Kgs. 23:5-21”; abominable heathenism (removal of the abominations), “II Chr. 34:33”; idolatry among the covenant people (death penalty and/or removal from office), “II Chr. 15:12-16”; and opposition to godly leaders (death penalty and destruction of property), “Dan. 3:29.” Indeed, political authorities are to be prayed for, so that peace and godliness and honesty may thrive, “I Tim. 2:2”; kings are to be nursing-fathers of the Church (so that Monarchs and/or Presidents are to protect

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Even the unamended (British and American) *Westminster Larger Catechism* corroborates the foregoing obligation of political and other superiors to punish overt public transgression of God’s Moral Law. For “that which is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavour that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duties of their places (Ex. 20:10; Lev. 19:17; Gen. 18:19; Josh. 24:15; Deut. 6:6-7.”³³⁵ And this duty of encouraging those subject to us to keep the Moral Law falls on “all superiors in age (I Tim. 5:1-2) and gifts (Gen. 4:20-22 & 45:8); and especially [on] such as, by God’s ordinance, are over us in [a] place of authority, whether in family (II Kgs. 5:13), church (II Kgs. 2:12 & 13:14 & Gal. 4:19), or commonwealth (Isa. 49:23).”³³⁶ Indeed, “commonwealth” means **political government!**

Inferiors, or those subject to such functional “superiors,” should give “willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels (Eph. 6:1-7 and I Pet. 2:13-14 and Rom. 13:1-5 [*cf.* vv. 8-10] and Heb. 13:17 and Prov. 4:3-4 & 23:22 and Ex. 18:19,24).”³³⁷ They may not engage in “rebellion” (II Sam. 15:1-12) against their persons (*cf.* Ex. 21:15 & Deut. 21:18f requiring the death penalty for smiting parents, both of which texts are cited in the *Westminster Larger Catechism* 128). Nor may they rebel against their superiors’s “places” – in their “lawful counsels, commands, and corrections” (*cf.* Deut. 21:18-21, requiring the death penalty for incorrigible rebels and gluttons and drunkards).³³⁸

Similarly, however, “superiors” in their turn must constantly be “commending and rewarding such as do well (I Pet. 2:14 and Rom. 13:3 and Est. 6:3)”³³⁹ – and “discountenancing, reprovng, and chastising such as do ill (Rom. 13:3-4 and Prov. 29:15

God’s Christian people), “Isa. 49:23”; and idolatry and lies are to be exterminated or put an end to, “Zech. 13:2-3.”

These formulations have never been challenged by Non-American conservative Presbyterian denominations (*e.g.* the Free Church and the Free Presbyterians in Scotland and the Westminster Standard Presbyterian Church of New Zealand and the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia). Only in some of the United States’ Presbyterian Churches (but nowhere else throughout the conservative Presbyterian World) was this *W.C.F.* 20:4r omitted. And even in the United States itself, small Presbyterian groups such as the Reformed Presbyterians (or Covenanters) and the Free Presbyterians and the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America and the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States still uphold 20:4r together with the original unamended version of the *Confession*’s 23:3fg as well. Other modern presbyterial Churches which still resist possible revision of the similar art. 36 of the *Belgic Confession*, include the Reformed Church in America (thus Rev. Terlouw), the Reformed Churches of Australia, of New Zealand, of Ceylon, of South Africa (the R.C.S.A., the D.R.C. of S.A., and the N.H.K.A. [and all of their daughter Synods]), and the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. And even within the liberal Reformed Church of Holland (Hervormde Kerk), conservatives like Hoedemaker and Haitjema and Van Ruler have strongly defended the unamended original version of Art. 36 (which cites Isa. 49:23 & II Kgs. 15:22 in its defence). Before this 2004 3rd ed. this may have changed.

³³⁵ *W.L.C.* 99.7a.

³³⁶ *W.L.C.* 124cdefg.

³³⁷ *W.L.C.* 127q *cf.* *W.C.F.* 19:5.

³³⁸ *W.L.C.* 128bdef.

³³⁹ *W.L.C.* 129pq.

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and I Pet. 2:14).³⁴⁰ Yet it must always be borne in mind that it is a sin for political officers: (a) to indulge in “unlawful profit or pleasure (Isa. 56:10-11 and Deut. 17:17)”,³⁴¹ (b) to command others to do “things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform (Dan. 3:4-6 and Acts 4:17-18 and Ex. 5:10-18 and Matt. 23:2-4)”,³⁴² and (c) to lessen their own authority “by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behaviour (Gen. 9:21 and I Kgs. 12:13-16 & 1:6 and I Sam. 2:29-31).”³⁴³

The sins forbidden in the *Westminster Larger Catechism’s* exposition of the Sixth Commandment include that of the unjust “taking away the life of others (*cf.* Gen. 9:6, requiring the death penalty for murder but not for manslaughter),³⁴⁴ except in case of publick justice (Num. 35:31,33), lawful war (Jer. 48:10 and Deut. 20:1ff), or necessary defence (Ex. 22:2-3).”³⁴⁵ Similarly, the Seventh Commandment seems to require the death penalty for homosexuality and bestiality (“Lev. 20:15-16”).³⁴⁶

The Eighth Commandment seems to require multiple restitution of goods unlawfully detained (“Lev. 6:2-5 and Luke 19:8”) ³⁴⁷ – according to the *Westminster Larger Catechism*. Clearly, its understanding of the Ninth Commandment forbids “all prejudicing the truth..., especially in public judicature (Lev. 19:15 and Hab. 1:4),”³⁴⁸ and all “passing unjust sentence (Prov. 17:15 and I Kgs. 21:9-14)”³⁴⁹ and all “undue silence in a just cause (Lev. 5:1 and Deut. 13:8).”³⁵⁰

Moreover, some sins and crimes are indeed “more heinous than others.” They “receive their aggravations” either “from the persons offending” (such as those in political “office”),³⁵¹ or “from the parties offended” (like “superiors” or “men of eminency”).³⁵²

In Deut. 22:25-28, the original Hebrew seems to prescribe the death penalty for **rape** (as distinct from fornication). As Calvin states in his sermon on that passage: “He who ravishes a maiden, is here likened to a thief.... The act, of itself, is beyond measure outrageous and intolerable.... God, to show the grievousness of the fault, says it is a kind of open thievery and murder – if a man meet with a maiden and deflower her specially by force. This is an unpardonable offence.... [But] if a man finds a maiden and...she without

³⁴⁰ *W.L.C.* 129rs.

³⁴¹ *W.L.C.* 130d.

³⁴² *W.L.C.* 130ef.

³⁴³ *W.L.C.* 130o.

³⁴⁴ *W.L.C.* 136cd. Observe, however, that the pre-Mosaic text cited (Gen. 9:6), needs to be interpreted in terms of the Mosaic Num. 35 (*cf.* *W.L.C.* 136w) – in order to be able to distinguish bloodshed by murder from bloodshed by manslaughter, and in order to be able to apply the death penalty only to the former kind of bloodshed. *Cf.* too note 345 below.

³⁴⁵ *W.L.C.* 136efg.

³⁴⁶ *W.L.C.* 139q.

³⁴⁷ *W.L.C.* 141m.

³⁴⁸ *W.L.C.* 145bc.

³⁴⁹ *W.L.C.* 145g.

³⁵⁰ *W.L.C.* 145k.

³⁵¹ *W.L.C.* 151.1,nt, quoting II Sam. 12:7-9, *etc.*

³⁵² *W.L.C.* 151.2xf, quoting Jude 8 and Num. 12:8-9.

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forcing yield herself, he shall be quit – by giving money for the marriage of the maiden, and by taking her to wife.”

Just a few months after the adoption of the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, in the same year 1648, the *Solemn Acknowledgement of Publick Sins and Breaches of the Covenant* evidences the same conviction that both governors and governees were subject to the Moral Law of God even in their relationship to one another. For then it was solemnly lamented that “neither have the privileges of the Parliaments and liberties of the subject been duly tendered; but some amongst ourselves have laboured to put into the hands of our king an arbitrary and unlimited power, destructive to both.”³⁵³

The great American Calvinist Rev. Professor Dr. A.A. Hodge made an important remark in 1869 – almost a century after the 1788 North American Synod of the Presbyterian Church in America denomination had amended chapter 23:3 of the *Westminster Confession* (to which amendment Hodge himself fully subscribed). In his famous book on *The Confession of Faith*, Hodge rightly states:

“God as Creator, as revealed in the light of nature, has established civil government among men from the beginning, and among peoples and nations, of all ages and generations. But in the development of the plan of redemption, the God-man as mediatorial King has assumed the government of the universe. Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9-11; Eph. 1:17-23. As the universe constitutes one physical and moral system, it was necessary that His Headship as Mediator should extend to the whole and to every department thereof – in order: that all things should work together for good to His people and His glory; that all His enemies should be subdued and finally judged; and that all creatures should worship Him as His Father determined. Rom. 8:28; I Cor. 15:25; Heb. 10:33; 1:6; Rev. 5:9-13.

“Hence the present providential Governor of the physical universe and ‘Ruler among the nations’ is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, to Whose will all laws should be conformed, and Whom all nations and all rulers of men should acknowledge and serve. ‘He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a Name written, ‘**King of kings, and Lord of lords!**’” Rev. 19:16.

“The proximate end for which God has ordained magistrates, is the promotion of the public good, and the ultimate end is the promotion of His Own glory... The specific way in which the civil magistrate is to endeavor to advance the glory of God, is through the promotion of the good of the community (Rom. 13:4) in temporal concerns – including education, morals, physical prosperity, the protection of life and property, and the preservation of order...by the explicit recognition of God and of Jesus Christ as ‘Ruler among the nations’; and by the enactment and enforcement of all laws conceived in the true Spirit of the Gospel, touching all questions upon which the Scriptures indicate the

³⁵³ *A Solemn Acknowledgment of the Public Sins and Breaches of the Covenant*, 1648 (in *The Subordinate Standards and Other Authoritative Documents of Scotland*, p. 282).

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will of God specifically or in general principle, and especially as touching questions of the Sabbath-day, the oath, marriage and divorce, and capital punishments, etc.”³⁵⁴

Note that even Hodge’s above-mentioned examples of laws which the magistrate is to enact and to enforce, are all taken from the Ten Commandments! And note further that the plural ‘capital punishments’ implicitly suggest their imposition not only for murder (Num. 25:16-21,30-33), but also for rape (Deut. 22:25) and kidnapping (Deut. 24:7) etc. – as opposed to the non-capital crimes of manslaughter (Num. 35:1-15,22-29) and perjury (Deut. 19:15-21) and theft (Ex. 22:1ff) – in accordance with the very Law of nature itself!³⁵⁵

Hodge states further, on pages 287 & 327 of his 1887 *Popular Lectures on Theological Themes*: “If you do not faithfully maintain the crown rights of Jesus the King of men..., religious liberty cannot be retained by men who in civil matters deny their allegiance to the King. In the Name of the adorable Victim of that bloody and agonizing sacrifice whence you draw all your hopes of salvation; by Gethsemane and Calvary, I charge you, citizens of the United States, afloat on your wide wild sea of politics – there is another King, one Jesus! The safety of the State can be secured only in the way of humble and whole-souled loyalty to His Person and of obedience to His Law....

“The Kingdom of God on Earth is not confined to the mere ecclesiastical sphere, but aims at absolute universality and extends its supreme rule over every department of human life. It follows that it is the duty of every loyal subject to endeavour to bring all human society, social and political as well as ecclesiastical, into obedience to its Law of righteousness. It is our duty, as far as lies in our power, immediately to organize human society and all its institutions and organs upon a distinctively Christian basis. Indifference or impartiality here between the Law of the Kingdom and the law of the World or its prince the devil, is utter treason to the King of Righteousness.

“The Bible, the great statute-book of the Kingdom, explicitly lays down principles which when candidly applied, will regulate the action of every human being in all relations. There can be no compromise. The King said, with regard to all descriptions of moral agents in all spheres of activity – ‘he that is not with Me, is against Me!’”

Hodge adds in his *Evangelical Theology* (pp. 256-287): “If Adam had not apostatized, the entire course of human history would have been a normal development in fellowship with God. The central principle of loyalty to God [would] have been preserved intact, the whole moral nature of man would have grown healthily, and all his faculties in all their exercises and all his relations with his fellows would have been correspondingly normal.

“But sin introduced rebellion against the supreme authority of God. The human character has been radically corrupted – and human society disorganized.... In consequence of this state of facts, the God of Heaven has set up a Kingdom in

³⁵⁴ A.A. Hodge: *The Confession of Faith*, pp. 294-295.

³⁵⁵ Cf. Sections III & VII & VIII above.

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antagonism to the kingdom of Satan and to all temporal kingdoms organized in Satan's interest.

“This Kingdom shall never be destroyed – but, breaking in[to] pieces all its antagonists, shall stand for ever. This Kingdom of the God of Heaven was introduced immediately after the Fall....

“This Kingdom is to endure for ever – gradually to embrace all the inhabitants of the Earth, and finally the entire moral government of God in Heaven and on Earth. The little stone which breaks the image, will become a great mountain and fill the whole Earth. Daniel 2:35. This Gospel of the Kingdom is to be preached to all nations [Matthew 24:14 *cf.* 28:19]. Then all the kingdoms of this World shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever [Revelation 11:15]....

“The process by which this Kingdom grows through its successive stages toward its ultimate completion, can of course be very inadequately understood by us. It implies the ceaseless operation of the mighty power of God working through all the forces and laws of nature, and culminating in the supernatural manifestations of grace.... This Kingdom from the beginning and in the whole circle of human history, has been always coming. Its coming has been marked by great epochs....

“The chiefest of these, have been: the giving of the Law; the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and session of the King on the right hand of the Father; and the mission of the Holy Ghost.... The great end in which all the providential activities of God culminate in this World, is the establishment of a universal Kingdom of righteousness which is to embrace all men.... The Moral Law still binds the unregenerate.... It should **ever** continue in this life – to the regenerated and progressively sanctified Christian [as] the transcendent measure and test of right....

“If the national life in general is organized upon Non-Christian principles, the churches which are embraced within the universal assimilating power of that nation will not long be able to preserve their integrity.... When human society was reconstructed after destruction by the Flood, the laws of differentiation and dispersion prevailed for millenniums....

“But when Christ assumed the reins of His Kingdom at the right hand of the Majesty on high, the tendency was instantly reversed. His commission was: ‘Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them; teaching them; and lo I am with you to the end of the ages!’ The banner of the Kingdom was set up in Jerusalem, and carried throughout the Roman Empire; then throughout Europe; thence throughout the World.”

Now Hodge's above-mentioned “light of nature”³⁵⁴ by which “God as Creator has established civil government,” is verifiable in Scripture and is developed in British and American and Australian Common Law, the *Westminster Confession*, the *Declaration of Independence*, and the U.S.'s *Bill of Rights* – all of which largely grew up out of the soil of the Holy Scriptures. For **Holy Scripture** states that even the Heathen or “the

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Gentiles...by nature...show the works of the Law written on their hearts” (Rom. 2:14-15 cf. Eccl. 7:29 and Acts 14:11-28).

The **Common Law** of America and Australia and Britain *etc.* in its turn derives from the Law of nature’s God and the Laws of Scripture.³⁵⁶ The *Westminster Confession*³⁵⁷ and the *Larger Catechism*³⁵⁸ both repeatedly appeal to the “light of nature” and to the “Law of nature” (quoting Rom 2:14-15 and Eccl. 7:29). And the *Declaration of Independence of the U.S.A.* grounds itself on the “laws of nature and of nature’s God.”³⁵⁹

No different is the view of the great nineteenth-century Southern Presbyterian theologian Robert Lewis Dabney. Having cited the Old Testament capital punishments for the crimes of murder, parricide and religious imposture³⁶⁰ – he then goes on to declare that “the laws of Moses, therefore, very properly made adultery a capital crime; nor does our Saviour, in the incident of the woman taken in adultery, repeal that statute or disallow its justice. The legislation of modern, nominally Christian nations, is drawn rather from the grossness of Pagan sources than from Biblical principles!”³⁶¹ Indeed, the Neo-Paganism of the ungodly 1789 French Revolution – now spread World-wide – has exacerbated this.

Yet in 1978, the continuing Presbyterian Church in America – then true to the Scripture, to Calvin, to the *Westminster Standards*, and to Dabney – determined to oppose the abortionistic legislation of modern nations based on “the grossness of Pagan sources.” It resolved to resurrect “Bible principles” in this field too.

Accordingly, it declared that the Saviour’s Great Commission injunction to His Apostles to instruct the disciplined nations – “teaching them to observe all” that Christ commands in Matt. 28:19-20 – “implies that we...are to proclaim His Word of both Law and Gospel,” while “relating the universality of God’s Law for His creation.” Now even though “the government of the United States” falls “far short of bringing its sphere of responsibility under God’s Law” – it “ought to conform to God’s Law....

“Clearly there is the responsibility of government to obey God’s Law, and...we as citizens must do all we can to assure the State’s conformity to that Law.” For “the State is not exempt from the authority of God. God’s Law is directed to both institutions, Church and State, as regards their respective functions....

“The Civil Magistrate is responsible to God. He is to discharge his duties according to God’s will.... The Church is culpable if she does not inform the State about God’s will.... Consequently, when the Civil Magistrate trespasses the limits of his authority..., when

³⁵⁶ H. Rand: *Digest of the Divine Law* (Birmingham, England: Destiny Pubs., 1943, pp. 51, 100); cf. P.D. Edwards: *Law and Civilization* (Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1959, pp. 343 & 353).

³⁵⁷ *W.C.F.* I:1a & 6o; 19:1ab; 19:5hi; 20:4q; 21:1a; 21:7k, cf. 4:2gh (quoting Eccl. 7:29 & Rom. 2:14-15).

³⁵⁸ *W.L.C.* 17rs, 20n, 92o, 93pr, 94t, 95vw, 96b, 97il & 89m (*etc.*, quoting Eccl. 7:29 & Rom. 2:14-15).

³⁵⁹ *U.S. Declaration of Independence*, first paragraph.

³⁶⁰ Dabney: *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 1972, p. 402ff.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 407ff.

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laws are proposed or enacted which are contrary to the Law of God – it is the duty of the Church to oppose them and expose their iniquity.³⁶²

The Westminster Standards, then, clearly teach that civil government is even today to apply the Biblical remedies in its punishments of the various kinds of crimes and in its insistence upon restitution for the damage done by the criminal.³⁶³ According to both the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible, such crimes include overt misdemeanours such as public witchcraft and idolatry and blasphemy and sabbath desecration, as well as both public or private acts of rebellion (against parents or civil government), violence (such as murder and manslaughter and assault), sex offences (such as adultery and incest and rape and sodomy and lesbianism and bestiality), theft (such as kidnapping and robbery and pilfering), and criminal misrepresentation (such as perjury and contractual deceit), *etc.*³⁶⁴

³⁶² *Minutes, 6th General Assembly*, pp. 72,277-80.

³⁶³ Cf. *W.C.F.* 19:4g & 20:4g & original r & original 23:3f & *W.L.C.* 120pqrs & 136cdefgwx & 139q & 141m & 151.3wx, and consult the Bible texts quoted in those confessional passages. Such texts include: Ex. 21 to 22:1-29 (*q.v.!*); Gen. 49:10 (“and the obedience of the nations is His [Shiloh the Messiah’s]”); I Pet. 2:13-14 (“governors...are sent...for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of them that do well”); Matt. 5:17ff (“think not that I am come to destroy the law”); I Cor. 9:8-10 (“it is written in the Law of Moses ‘thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.’ ... For our sakes, no doubt, this is written”); Rom. 1:32 (Sodomites and Lesbians are “worthy of death”); I Cor. 5:1,5 (“deliver such an one [an incestuous fornicator] unto Satan for destruction of the flesh”); I Tim. 1:19-20 (“Hymeneus and Alexander...I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme”); Rev. 2:2 (“thou has tried them...and hast found them liars”); Rev. 2:14 (“I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that...eat things sacrificed to idols and...commit fornication”); Rev. 2:15 (“so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes [or mob-rule antinomian law-breakers] which things I hate”); Deut. 13:6-12 (*q.v.!*); Rom. 13:3 (rulers are to execute wrath upon evildoers).”

Ideally, when publically affirmed by a national covenant, the following results would seem to follow. Ezra 7:23-28 (“set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people... Whosoever will not do the Law of God, ...let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment!”); Neh. 13:15-22 (public sabbath desecrators to be arrested); II Kgs. 23:5ff (idolatrous officers to be suspended); II Chr. 34:33 (public idols to be removed); II Chr. 15:12-16 (publically idolatrous statesmen to be deposed); I Tim. 2:2 (prayers are needed that politicians publicly promote peace and godliness and honesty); Isa. 49:23 (Statemen are to protect the Church); Zech. 13:2 (idolatry is to be abolished); Ps. 122:9 (the State is to be well-disposed toward the Church); Lev. 24:16 (public blasphemers are to be punished); Deut. 13:5-12 (public witchcraft is to be suppressed); II Kgs. 18:4 (public idols are to be destroyed); Acts 16:28 & Gen. 9:6 & Num. 35:31-33 (suicide and murder are capital crimes); Jer. 48:10 & Deut. 20:1ff (refusal to fight in a godly war is a punishable crime); Ex. 22:2 (violent self-defence is not a crime); Ex. 21:18-36 [cf. Num. 35:11-15,22-29,32] (manslaughter is punishable, yet not by death); Rom. 1:24-32 & Lev. 20:15 (homosexuality and bestiality are capital crimes); and Lev. 6:2-5 [cf. 24:21 & Ex. 21:22] & Luke 19:8 (multiple restitution is required after goods have been detained unlawfully). Note that the worship of false gods is punishable by death (Ex. 22:20). Whoredom too is a punishable offence (Num. 14:33 & ch. 35 and Deut. 23:7-18). Note, however, that fornication between other consenting unmarried persons is not a crime – but indeed a civil delict and, of course, also a sin (Ex. 22:16-17 & Deut. 22:17,19,28-29).

³⁶⁴ Public witchcraft and apostasy (cf. the First Commandment): Ex. 22:18-20 & Lev. 20:2,27 & Num. 22:5 & 25:2 & 31:16 & Deut. 13:1-17 & 18:20 *etc.*, cf. the New Testament texts II Pet. 2:15-16 & Jude 11,13 & Rev. 2:14 & 21:8 & 22:15. Public idolatry (cf. the Second Commandment): Ex. 32:4-8 & Lev.

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Even in this regard, there is no tension between the Old and the New Testaments. For the specific New Testament procedures in every case solidly rest upon their Old Testament foundations, of which they are the clear continuations and the harmonious expansions.³⁶⁵

Merely the threat of grave punishment or multiple restitution for a crime is often a sufficient deterrent to restrain would-be criminals, so that the penalties themselves frequently never need to be inflicted.³⁶⁶ But however gradually,³⁶⁷ and by whatever anti-

26:1,30 & Deut. 4:15-19 & 16:21-22 & Ezek. 7:19-27 & 8:5-18 & 16:17, *etc.*, cf. the New Testament texts John 4:24 & Acts 17:16,23-25; Rom. 1:19-23,32; I John 5:32; Rev. 14:9f & 21:8 & 22:15. **Public blasphemy** (cf. the Third Commandment): Lev. 24:11-23 & II Kgs. 19:22, *etc.*, cf. the New Testament texts II Pet. 2:10-11 & Jude 8-10ff & Rev. 13 & 17 to 18, noting that the *Heidelberg Catechism* Q. 100 mentions the death penalty against this transgression. **Public sabbath desecration** (cf. the Fourth Commandment): Ex. 31:14 & 35:2 & Num. 35:31-36 & Neh. 13 & Jer. 17, *etc.*, cf. the New Testament texts Matt. 24:20 & Luke 4:16 & 23:56 & Heb. 4:9-11 & Rev. 14:13. **Public or private rebellion** (cf. the Fifth Commandment): Ex. 21:15-17 & 22:28 & Lev. 20:9 & Deut. 17:8-13 & 21:18-21, *etc.*, cf. the New Testament texts Matt. 15:4 & Mark 7:10 & Acts 23:5 & Eph. 5:22f. & 6:1-4 & I Tim. 2 to 3 & II Tim. 3:2 & Tit. 2:11 to 3:2 & I Pet. 2:11 to 3:7. **Public or private violence** (cf. the Sixth Commandment): Gen. 9:5-6 & 37:21-22 & Ex. 21:12-36 & 22:2-3 & Lev. 19:12-18 & Num. 35:16-33 & Deut. 22:8 & Job 31:19-20 *etc.* (noting that the *W.L.C.* 128f, in citing Deut. 21:18-21, implicitly prescribes the death penalty for incorrigible juvenile delinquents), cf. the New Testament texts Matt. 25:35-36 & Acts 25:11,25 & Rom. 12:19 & I Tim. 1:9-13 & Rev. 21:8 & 22:15. **Public or private sex crimes** (cf. the Seventh Commandment): Gen. 19 & Ex. 22:19 & Lev. 18 & 20 & Deut. 22:21-27, *etc.*, cf. the New Testament texts Rom. 1:16-32 & I Cor. 5:1-5 & II Pet. 2:6 & Jude 7-13 & Rev. 17:16 & 18:9 & 21:8 & 22:15. **Public or private theft** (cf. the Eighth Commandment): Ex. 21:16,22; Ex. 21:16,22; Lev. 6:2-5 & 19:13 & 24:21 & Deut. 19:14 & 24:3-15 *etc.*, cf. the New Testament texts Luke 19:8 & Rom. 13:8-9 & Eph. 4:28 & I Th. 4:6,11 & II Th. 3:11; Phm. 18; I Tim. 1:10 & 5:8; & Jas. 5:4 – noting that stealing men, alias kidnapping, carries the death penalty in Scripture (Ex. 21:16 & Deut. 24:7). **Public or private criminal misrepresentation** (cf. the Ninth Commandment (Ex. 23:1 & Lev. 5:1 & 19:2, vv. 11-16 & Deut. 19:18-21 & Prov. 19:5 & 6:16-19, *etc.*, cf. the New Testament texts Mark 10:19 & Acts 6:13 & Rom. 1:29 & I Cor. 6:10 & Col. 3:9 & Jude 16 & Rev. 21:8 & 22:15. (**Covetousness** condemned by the Tenth Commandment, being internal and not an overt act, though a sin, is, of course, not a crime.) Compare, however, on the **Second Table of the Decalogue as a whole**, Ex. 23:4-5 with the **New Testament texts** Matt. 5:44 & Rom. 12:20.

³⁶⁵ Matt. 5:44 (cf. Ex. 23:4-5 & Rom. 12:20); Matt. 15:4 (cf. Ex. 22:28 & Acts 23:5); Luke 12:47-28 (cf. Deut. 25:2-3 & II Cor. 6:5 & 11:23-24); Luke 19:8 (cf. Ex.22:1); Luke 23:41 (cf. Deut. 21:22); Acts. 7:38,58 (cf. Ex. 21:1 & Deut. 33:2); Acts 18:14-15 & 23:3,5,6,9,29 & 25:7-11,19,25 & 26:31-32 & 28:18 (cf. Ex. 22:28 & Deut. 25:1-3 & Matt. 15:4 *etc.*, cf. esp. notes 363 and 364 above); Rom. 1:24-27,32 (cf. Lev. 18:22-23 & 20:13,16); Rom. 10:6-8 (cf. Deut. 30:12-14); Rom. 12:19 (cf. Lev. 19:17-18 & Deut. 32:35); Rom. 12:20 (cf. Ex. 23:4-5); Rom. 13:4 (cf. Gen. 9:5ff & Num. 35); Rom. 13:9 (cf. Lev. 19:18 & Deut. 12:28); I Cor. 9:8-9 (cf. Deut. 25:4); I Cor. 9:13ff (cf. Lev. 6:16); I Cor. 10:5 (cf. Num. 14:29); I Cor. 10:6 (cf. Num. 11:4); I Cor. 10:9 (cf. Num. 21:6); I Cor. 10:10 (cf. Num. 14:37); I Cor. 14:34 (cf. Gen. 3:16ff); II Cor. 6:14 (cf. Deut. 7:2-3 & 22:10); II Cor. 6:16 (cf. Ex. 29:45 & Lev. 26:12); II Cor. 13:1 (cf. Num. 35:30 & Deut. 17:6); Gal. 3:10 (cf. Deut. 27:26); Gal. 3:12 (cf. Lev. 18:5); Gal. 3:13 (cf. Deut. 21:23); Gal. 5:14 (cf. Lev. 19:18); I Tim. 5:18 (cf. Deut. 25:4); I Tim. 5:19 (cf. Deut. 19:15); Heb. 3:17 - 4:2 (cf. Num. 14:22,30); Heb. 10:26-29 (cf. Num. 15:30); Heb. 10:30 (cf. Deut. 32:35-36); Heb. 12:7 (cf. Deut. 8:5); Heb. 12:10 (cf. Lev. 11:44); Heb. 12:29 (cf. Deut. 4:24); Heb. 13:15 (cf. Lev. 7:12); Jas. 5:4 (cf. Lev. 19:13 & Deut. 24:15); and I Pet. 1:16 (cf. Lev. 11:44); *etc.*, *etc.*

³⁶⁶ Ex. 23:27ff; Deut. 13:5,11 cf. Rom. 1:16-32.

³⁶⁷ Ex. 20:10,12,17; 23:10,15-20; Lev. 25:2ff; 26:1ff; Num. 32:5-21; 34:2ff; Deut. 7:22 & 15:1-6 & esp. cf. v. 4; Josh. 13:1ff.

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revolutionary and constitutional means available,³⁶⁸ a return must be made as soon as possible to the Biblical basis of our British/American/Australian Common Law.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁸ Ex. 23:27-31; Josh. 13:1ff; Ps. 130:5-6; Isa. 28:13-16; I Cor. 7:18-24.

³⁶⁹ Cf. the text of our essay at the references to its notes 354-359 above.

IX. SUMMARY REGARDING THE MOSAIC LAWS OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

The ceremonial laws can be demarcated from the judicial laws. Indeed, both can clearly be distinguished from the Moral Law of nature. Yet all of them overlap one another – both in the Old Testament economy (Ex. 20:1 to 25:1ff & Deut. 5 to 28) as well as in the New Testament economy (Rom. 7:2-25 & Heb. 8 to 10, & especially 9:4).

“Every sin,” declares the *Westminster Confession*, “is a transgression of the righteous Law of God (I John 3:4).”³⁷⁰ But “Christ hath purchased for believers...freedom from the guilt of sin,” and from “the curse of the Moral Law” or the ultimate penalty prescribed against breakers of the Decalogue³⁷¹ (which Decalogue even believers are, of course, still required to keep).³⁷² Christ has paid the full price for His people’s transgression of the whole of the Law – moral and ceremonial and judicial.

At Calvary, Christ abolished the enmity of our sins, fulfilled the Moral Law, and abrogated or recalled the ceremonial laws – while sundry judicial laws expired within that very generation in A.D. 70. All of the ceremonial and the sundry judicial laws of Israel – except insofar as their “moral duties” and “general equity” may still “require” – no longer obtain for anybody. But God’s Moral Law still binds everybody – fully, and forever. Hence, the Moral Law is still to be kept by saved Christians too – right down to its tiniest detail.

Moreover, even what the *Confession* calls the “moral duties” of the ceremonial laws and the “general equity” of the sundry judicial laws³⁷³ – that is to say, the “light of nature” or the laws of nature or the moral Decalogue at the root of all of the Old Testament legislation – still applies in the New Testament economy even today. And the Moral Law applies not just in Church but also in State – and, indeed, throughout all Society.

Precisely the Ten Commandments indeed “require” men to do their comprehensive “moral duties” (previously even expressed in the ceremonial laws), and to practise “general equity” (previously also expressed in the sundry judicial laws). The ancient Israelitic forms of “sundry judicial laws” no more obtain after the termination of the ancient Israelitic State in A.D. 70. But, as the great John Macpherson pointed out in his 1887 book *The Westminster Confession of Faith: With Introduction and Notes* – although the “formal” in the sundry judicial laws “perishes; the substance endures.”³⁷⁴

³⁷⁰ *W.C.F.* 6:6n.

³⁷¹ *W.C.F.* 20:1a.

³⁷² *W.C.F.* 19:5hik.

³⁷³ *W.C.F.* 19:3-4.

³⁷⁴ Edinburgh: Clark, 1882, p. 119 cf. p. 137.

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Accordingly – as suggested by the *Confession's*³⁷⁵ understanding of Matt. 5:17ff – the “moral duties” and the “general equity” enshrined in all those ceremonial and sundry judicial laws will last to the very end of the World – just like the non-sundry judicial laws and the Decalogue itself. As such, these “moral duties” and this “general equity” should be recognized by all men everywhere. Indeed, they must be upheld today too and throughout all ages-to-come by the Christians (as God’s true chosen people). For, as Calvin himself correctly observed:³⁷⁶ “Although the political laws of Moses are not now in operation, still the analogy is to be preserved – lest the condition of those who have been redeemed by Christ’s blood should be worse amongst us, than that of His ancient people.”

Even before Calvin’s death, the 1562 Calvinistic *Belgic Confession* declared the Reformed faith to the nation of the Netherlands: “We believe, that the **ceremonies** and figures of the Law ceased at the coming of Christ – and that all the shadows are accomplished... Yet the truth and **substance of them – remain with us**... In the meantime, we still use the [judicial] testimonies taken out of the Law and the Prophets...to regulate our life in all honesty, to the glory of God, according to His will.”³⁷⁷

The “truth and substance” of the “accomplished” ceremonial laws, then, “remain with us” – with us **Christians!** And the judicial laws are still very much in use among us Christians. For “we still use the testimonies...to regulate our life.” This means, as many of the Reformed theologians of the Netherlands have again recently declared, that “the spirit of the civil laws of Moses, as declared by Christ, is of permanent validity... For even though the Old Testament ordinances strictly speaking referred to quite different situations and relationships (cf. Ex. 22:21-27 & 23:1-22 & Deut. 15:1-11 *etc.*), a mighty message is still preached by their concrete application of the commandment of love – especially as regards problems relating to property and social relationships, over against all kinds of neo-liberalistic and neo-socialistic influences.”³⁷⁸

³⁷⁵ *W.C.F.* 19:4g & 5k.

³⁷⁶ Calvin: *Commentary* on Lev. 25:42.

³⁷⁷ *Belgic Confession*, art. 25.

³⁷⁸ F.L. Bos (ed.): *The True Christian Confession of the Churches of Holland* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok), 1957, p. 129.

X. CONCLUSION – THE MOSAIC LAWS FOR TODAY?

The Westminster theologians' own "*Sum of Saving Knowledge or a Brief Sum of Christian Doctrine Contained in the Holy Scriptures and Holden Forth in the Foresaid Confession of Faith and Catechisms*," is a very significant document. For there, the word "law[s]" – with the meaning of Moral Law[s] – occurs no fewer than one hundred and eleven times within the brief space of fourteen pages.³⁷⁹ We close by giving some very pertinent quotations from that Westminster document in the following concluding paragraphs.

"God...made...Adam and Eve...both upright and able to keep the Law written in their heart, which Law they were naturally bound to obey."³⁸⁰ "God the Son, appointed Redeemer, ...would...submit Himself to the Law...by giving obedience" on behalf of His elect.³⁸¹ "He gives them repentance...and love of righteousness.... He sanctifies them, by making them go on and persevere in...obedience to the Law of God."³⁸²

"By His means, the Law loses nothing, because the righteousness of the Law is best fulfilled this way. First, by Christ's giving perfect active obedience in our name unto it in all things. Next, by His paying in our name the penalty due to our sins in His death. And lastly, by His working of sanctification in us who are true believers, who strive to give new obedience unto the Law and walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."³⁸³

"God hath made a gift of Christ unto His people as a Command-er: which office He faithfully exerciseth, by giving to His Kirk and people Laws and ordinances...; by keeping Courts and assemblies among them, to see that His Laws be obeyed.... The Word of God serveth to teach men how to carry themselves towards God, as friends, after they are reconciled to Him – viz., to be loath to sin against Him, and to strive heartily to obey His Commandments....

"He who hath believed on Jesus Christ, though he be freed from the curse of the Law, is not freed from the command and obedience of the Law, but tied thereunto by a new obligation and a new command from Christ.... For 'this is His Commandment (saith John), that we believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He hath commanded us.' The first part of which command, enjoining belief in Him, necessarily implieth love to God, and so obedience to the first table; for believing in God, and loving God, are inseparable. And the second part of the command enjoineth love to our neighbour, (especially to the household of faith,) and so obedience to the second table

³⁷⁹ Cf. in *The Subordinate Standards and Other Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland*, pp. 251-264.

³⁸⁰ *Westminster Sum of Saving Knowledge*, Head I:2.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Head II:2.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, Head IV:1:3-4.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, Practice, Use IV, last paragraph.

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of the Law... Whosoever...is fled to Jesus Christ, hath engaged his heart to the obedience of the Law of love.³⁸⁴ Yes, to the **Law** of love!

“Now, for evidence of true faith by fruits” – it is “required that the believer be soundly convinced, in his judgment, of his obligation to keep the whole Moral Law, all the days of his life; and that not the less, but so much the more as he is delivered by Christ.... To convince the believer...of his obligation to keep the Moral Law, among many passages, take Matt. 5 (:16-19ff): ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works.... Think not that I am come to destroy the Law!... For verily I say unto you, till Heaven and Earth pass [away], one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass [away] from the Law’....

“Our Lord...giveth Commandment to believers, justified by faith, to give evidence of the grace of God in them before men, by doing good works.... He gives them no other rules for their new obedience, than the Moral Law.... He teacheth that **the end of the Gospel** and covenant of grace is to procure men’s obedience to the Moral Law....

“The obligation of the Moral Law, in all points unto all holy duties, is perpetual, and shall stand to the World’s end.... The breaking of the Moral Law and defending the transgressions thereof...doth **exclude men both from Heaven** and justly also from the fellowship of the true Kirk; so the obedience of the Law...proveth a man to be a true believer.”³⁸⁵

“A true Christian...must acknowledge the full extent of the spiritual meaning of the Law, and have a respect to all the Commandments.... Unfeigned faith is able to make conscience good and the heart pure, and the man lovingly obedient to the Law. For when Christ’s blood is seen by faith to quiet justice, then the conscience...sets the man...to obey all His Commandments out of love to God.... ‘For this is the end of the Law indeed!’

“Whosoever doth daily employ Christ Jesus for cleansing his conscience...and for enabling him to give obedience to the Law in love – he hath the evidence of true faith in himself.... But to employ Christ Jesus daily for cleansing of my conscience...from...sins against the Law, and for enabling me to give obedience to the Law – is necessary for evidencing of true faith in me. Therefore, this I **must** study to do – except I would **deceive** myself and **perish!**”³⁸⁶

In the middle of the twentieth century, at her coronation oath, Queen Elizabeth II was asked: “‘Will you to the utmost of your power **maintain the Laws of God** and the true profession of the Gospel? Will you to the uttermost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion?’....

“The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland brought to the Queen, the **Bible**. And he said to her these words: ‘Our gracious Queen, to keep Your

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Warrants to Believe (1st Warrant: Fourthly; 2nd Warrant, 4; 3rd Warrant, 5).

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Evidences, 1st Requisite, 1-8.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Evidences, 1st Requisite (9) through 3rd Requisite; and last section.

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CONCLUSION – THE MOSAIC LAWS FOR TODAY?

Majesty ever mindful of the **Law** and the **Gospel** of God as the **rule** for the **whole life and government** of Christian princes – we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this World affords.’

“Then the Archbishop of York, receiving it from the Lord Great Chamberlain, presented the **sword** of civil power to the Queen with these words...: ‘With this sword, do **justice!** Stop the growth of **iniquity!**’

“‘Protect the holy **Church** of God! Help and defend widows and orphans! **Restore** the things that are gone to decay!’....

“When the orb with the cross was given to the Queen, the Archbishop declared: ‘Receive this orb set under the cross, and remember that the **whole World** is **subject** to the power and **Empire** of **Christ!**’” Thus also the American Presbyterian Rev. George Miladin – in his great book *Revolution, Martyrdom, Flight, and Reconstruction*, Perspective Press, Lookout Mountain Tennessee, 1976, pp. 8f.

* * * * *

So, then – let all Christians everywhere heed the words of what Calvin rightly called ‘the **Gospel** according to Isaiah’:³⁸⁷ “To the **Law** and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.... For the **Lord** is our Judge, the **Lord** is our Lawgiver, the **Lord** is our King. He will save us!”

“And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments. He that saith, ‘I know Him!’ but keepeth not His Commandments – is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”³⁸⁸

“Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the Law. For sin is the transgression of the Law.”³⁸⁹ “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him – because we keep His Commandments.”³⁹⁰

“And he that keepeth His Commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him.”³⁹¹ “By this we know that we love the children of God – when we love God, and keep His Commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments. And His Commandments are not grievous.”³⁹²

“And the dragon...went to make war with the remnant...which keep the Commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”³⁹³ “Here is the patience

³⁸⁷ Cf. Isa. 8:20 & 33:22.

³⁸⁸ I John 2:3-4.

³⁸⁹ I John 3:4.

³⁹⁰ I John 3:22.

³⁹¹ I John 3:24.

³⁹² I John 5:2-3.

³⁹³ Rev. 12:17.

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of the saints: here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”³⁹⁴

“He that overcometh, shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.”³⁹⁵ “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars – shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”³⁹⁶ “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still! And he which is filthy, let him be filthy still! And he that is righteous, let him be righteous still! And he that is holy, let him be holy still!”³⁹⁷

“Blessed are they that do His Commandments, [so] that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city!”³⁹⁸ “For outside are dogs [or sodomites?], and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie!”³⁹⁹ So then – “if you love Me, keep My Commandments!”⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁴ Rev. 14:12.

³⁹⁵ Rev. 21:7.

³⁹⁶ Rev. 21:8.

³⁹⁷ Rev. 22:11.

³⁹⁸ Rev. 22:14.

³⁹⁹ Rev. 22:15, cf..Dt. 23:17f & Phil. 3:2f.

⁴⁰⁰ John 14:15.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Francis Nigel Lee was born in 1934 in the Westmorland County of Cumbria (in Great Britain). He is the great-grandson of a fiery preacher whose family disintegrated when he backslid. Dr. Lee's father was an Atheist, yet he married a Roman Catholic who raised her son Nigel Lee in that faith. Yet, when Nigel was seven, his father led him into Atheism.

During World War II, the Royal Navy appointed Nigel Lee's father Chief Radar Officer (South Atlantic). So the family then moved to South Africa. There, Nigel became a Calvinist; had the great privilege of leading both of his parents to Christ; and then became a Minister of God's Word and Sacraments in the Dutch Reformed Church of Natal and an Advocate (Barrister) of the Supreme Court of South Africa.

Emigrating to the U.S.A., Dr. Lee attended the very first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America; transferred his ministerial credentials to that denomination; and pastored Congregations in Mississippi and Florida. He was also: Professor of Philosophy at Shelton College in N.J.; Visiting Lecturer in Apologetics at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Ms.; Staley Distinguished Visiting Lecturer at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis; Research Scholar-in-Residence at the Christian Studies Center in Memphis; Academic Dean of Graham Bible College in Bristol, Tn.; and incidental Lecturer at several other Colleges, Seminaries, and Universities. He was at that time the only person in the World serving on the Executives of both the British Lord's Day Observance Society and the Lord's Day Alliance of the U.S.

Preacher, Theologian, Lawyer, Educationist, Historian, Philosopher and Author, Lee has produced more than 330 publications (including many books) – and also a multitude of long unpublished manuscripts. Apart from an honorary LL.D., he has 21 earned degrees – including eleven earned doctorates for dissertations in Education, Law, Literature, Philosophy and Theology.

Lee has visited 110 countries; and every Continent except Antarctica. He is in demand as a Promoter of Doctoral Students in Australia, England, Germany, South Africa and the U.S. He has lectured and/or preached in all of those countries – as well as in Brazil, Scotland, Korea, Japan, Namibia, New Zealand, and Zambia.