

PASTORAL AND SOCIAL ETHICS
Lecture Outline, Part Four: Exposition of the Law of God:
Third, Fourth and Fifth Commandments

by John M. Frame

III. The Third Commandment: “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.”

Q. 112: What is required in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment requires, That the name of God, his titles, attributes, ordinances, the word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, his works, and whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing; by an holy profession, and answerable conversation, to the glory of God, and the good of ourselves, and others.

Q. 113: What are the sins forbidden in the third commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the third commandment are, the not using of God’s name as is required; and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning or otherwise using his titles, attributes, ordinances, or works, by blasphemy, perjury; all sinful cursings, oaths, vows, and lots; violating of our oaths and vows, if lawful, and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful; murmuring and quarreling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God’s decrees and providences; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines; abusing it, the creatures, or any thing contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices; the maligning, scorning, reviling, or any wise opposing of God’s truth, grace, and ways; making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by unconformable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walking, or backsliding from it.

A. Main Thrust.

1. The Name of the Lord.

a) Functions of names in Scripture (cf. Lordship attributes).

(1) Naming is an exercise of sovereignty (Control).

(a) One who names has control over the person or thing that is named. The father names the child, the conqueror names the conquered city, God names his people. God also names himself, indicating his aseity, his self-control.

(b) It was thought that to know someone’s name was to have power over that person—hence the belief in verbal magic, the use of names in curses to bring injury, etc. As with all pagan belief, this one is parasitic on the truth.

- (i) Knowing someone's name involves knowing something about him [cf. ii., below], and hence having a certain advantage in our dealings with him.
 - (ii) When we know someone's name, we can call on him and thus locate him [below, iii.] and elicit a response.
 - (c) Sharing one's name with someone else, then, creates a quasi-covenantal bond. It presupposes a particular kind of trust based on obligations and expectations.
 - (d) Remarkably, God shares his name with his people in Scripture.
 - (i) He reveals it to them, enabling them, not to use it as a kind of verbal magic, for their own purposes, but rather to call upon him for help (cf. Proverbs 18:10; Psalm 20:1f.). They have no power over him, but they may avail themselves of his power for the sake of the covenant. This is remarkable; it is very much like having power over God. Cf. Genesis 32:22-32, especially verse 29.
 - (ii) He calls the people by his name, identifying his future with theirs. Thus, his omnipotence will never fail to keep them safe.
- (2) Naming is characterizing (Authority).
- (a) In the biblical period, a person's name usually meant something; it was not, as often today, a mere marker chosen for its sound. Cf. the interpretations of "Abraham," "Israel," the name changes, etc. Cf. also the use of "name" for "reputation," 1 Kings 4:31 (of Solomon), Proverbs 22:1, etc. God's name is great, Psm. 8:1, 9.
 - (b) God's names also characterize him: *El Shaddai* as "God Almighty," etc.
 - (c) Therefore, God's name is revelation; it communicates knowledge of him. And God's revelation is always authoritative. Both second and third commandments focus on the revelation of God and its bearing on our lives.
 - (d) To deny God's power violates the name *El Shaddai*; to claim God's favor by our own righteousness violates "The Lord our righteousness" (Horton).
- (3) Naming is locating (Presence)
- (a) A name also serves to mark a person; it furnishes a way of locating a person in a crowd. We find him by calling his name, because where the name is, he is.
 - (b) The name becomes closely identified with the person. When someone laughs at your name, or forgets it, or mispronounces it, you feel slighted. This is even more true in the broader use of "name" to mean "reputation" (Proverbs 22:1, e.g.). To injure my good name is to injure me; to revere my name is to revere me, etc.
 - (c) God, too, is identified with his name.

- (i) To praise the name is to praise him, to despise the name is to despise him, etc. We are saved for “his name’s sake,” Psm. 106:8. Glory is due his name (Psm. 29:2, 66:2, 96:8).
 - (ii) To say that God’s “name” dwells in the angel of the Lord, or the tabernacle, or the temple, or Israel, etc., is to say that God, Himself, dwells there.
 - (iii) The name has divine attributes: Deuteronomy 28:58, Psm. 8:1, 9, etc. We praise it, call upon it, etc. The name is God himself.
- b) Breadth and narrowness of the name.
- (1) Specific “names” of God: *Elohim*, *Yahweh*, *El Shaddai*, etc.
 - (2) The “name” is God’s total revelation of himself to man.
 - (3) The “name” of God himself [above, a.iii.].
- c) Bearers of the name.
- (1) Theophanies: the glory, the angel, the tabernacle, and the temple.
 - (2) Christ, Acts 4:12, Phil. 2:9-11, John 1:14, Rev. 13:5-9.
 - (3) God’s people.
 - (4) Creation. (Note here the way Jesus speaks in Matthew 5:33-37, an exposition of the third commandment, and Matthew 23:16-22. One cannot, he teaches, avoid the obligations of the commandment by substituting the name of a creature for the name of God. The reason is that all creation is inseparable from God, intimately involved with him. To invoke creation, then, is to invoke the name of God. Cf. Kline on creation as a reflection of the Glory-cloud.)
- d) Implications.
- (1) Since God’s name includes his total revelation of himself, extending to all creation and particularly including God’s own people, this commandment has unlimited breadth. God’s name is abused, not only when we misuse a word like “God” or “Jesus,” but also when we abuse ourselves (note interesting linguistic parallels in Psalm 24:4) or despise God’s creation. All sin, then, may be seen as violation of the third commandment.
 - (2) We can also see how the commandment is fulfilled in Christ. The name of Christ is the name of God *par excellence*, the only name by which we must be saved. He is the final revelation of God. To despise the name of God, ultimately, is to despise Jesus Christ.
2. “Taking” the Name.
- a) We generally take the third commandment as a rule concerning our language, and certainly that is proper. However, the commandment itself does not refer to “speaking” or “uttering” the name (*amar*, *dibber*), but rather to “taking it up” (*nasa’*: bear, carry, lift up).
 - b) “Bearing” God’s name certainly includes our use of the name in our speech, but not only that: it includes all of our relationships to the name of God.

- (1) God's people bear God's name in the sense of carrying it in their own persons [cf. above, 1.c.]. Note, then, the remarkable parallel to the third commandment in Psalm 24:4. The reference to false swearing alludes to the commandment, and "lifted up his soul unto vanity" is a precise linguistic parallel to the commandment, with "his soul" substituted for "the name of the Lord thy God." That very substitution is a remarkable thing. God is so identified with us that to defile our own souls is in effect to defile his name. Cf. the second commandment which, as we have seen, guards the uniqueness of man, particularly of redeemed man, as "image of God." The commandments always have an existential reference.
 - (2) Note also our relationships to the name of God in creation and in Christ. All created things will either be "lifted up" to God or to vanity.
 - (3) Note, therefore, the narrowness and breadth of the commandment. A commandment about false swearing but, by implication, about all of life.
3. "Vanity".
 - a) The normal meaning of the Hebrew term is "emptiness," "purposelessness". On that basis, the commandment forbids us to use God's name for unworthy purposes.
 - b) Some have suggested that in this context the term ought to mean "falsely," since that is emphasized in parallels such as Leviticus 19:12, Psalm 24:4. Linguistic evidence for that use is lacking, however, and the hypothesis is really unnecessary. Falsehood is one kind of vanity, granted the first interpretation. Thus, even on the first view, Leviticus 19:12 and Psalm 24:4 present valid applications of the commandment.
 - c) Similarly, it could be argued that vanity is a form of falsehood. If you use God's name in a pointless or worthless way, you are falsifying it, exchanging it for a lie (cf. Romans 1).
 - d) Thus, the argument between the two interpretations is somewhat academic.
 - e) On either view, we note again the breadth of meaning here. Not only are we forbidden to make false statements using God's name, but also to make any use of it which is unworthy of God. I Corinthians 10:31.
 4. The sanction: "for the Lord will not hold him guiltless."
 - a) Blasphemy is considered a particularly serious crime in Scripture. The death penalty is administered for it—even to "strangers," Leviticus 24:15f. Cf. the penalty for cursing parents, Exodus 21:17. The crucifixion of Christ was based on a charge of blasphemy. The worst sin noted by Jesus himself was the "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 12:22-32; Mark 3:22-30). This somberness, then, is reflected here in the lack of a blessing sanction.
 - (i) Douma, 80: "*willfully* misunderstanding and branding as a *devilish* act what in fact comes from the Holy Spirit." The Jews

had seen with their own eyes the work of God, in such a way that it could not have been missed.

(ii) Compare Heb. 10:26-31.

(iii) Though said to be against the Spirit, the focus of this sin is the Spirit's witness to the work of Christ. It is in effect blasphemy against the holy name of Jesus.

- b) The curse formula does not mean that forgiveness is excluded. The same curse attaches to every sin and is borne by Christ on behalf of his people. However, that blasphemy which, by its very nature, rejects forgiveness and rejects it unalterably will never be forgiven (Matthew 12:22-32, parallels).

5. Relation to First Two Commandments (see chart).

- a) The first commandment requires us to worship God exclusively; the second requires us to worship him only according to his word. The third requires us, in our worship, to make a right use (*nasa'*) of the word (the name). It is not enough to have God's revelation; one must use it rightly.
- b) We can, then, see a parallel with the "three perspectives." The first commandment sets forth the situational perspective, the basic relation between the one God and his creatures. The second sets forth the normative perspective, the basic revelation by which they will be governed. The third sets forth the existential perspective, demanding a right application of that revelation.
- c) Note, then, a certain trinitarian structure: the one God, the word he speaks, and the application of that word (always associated in Scripture with the Holy Spirit). We could summarize by saying that God demands wholehearted covenant loyalty to him in the fullness of his triune being, honoring his triune works. The first three commandments together are a "love command," requiring exclusive covenant loyalty to the triune God.
- d) The three together (as well as individually) encompass, in a striking way, the totality of human life. Love for God is demanded in our basic heart-orientation [I.], in word (our life-norms) [II.], and in deed [III.—the act of application]. In III, the word is applied to the heart as to all of life, completing the circle. Of course, each, obeyed seriously, involves obedience to the others.

B. Positive Uses of the Name of God.

We have seen that the commandment applies to all of life. Here, however, we shall focus on some of the matters to which the commandment applies more narrowly and specifically, namely, the uses of the divine name in speech. (Even these, to be sure, have a tendency to broaden out, as we shall see!) As a convenient division, let us consider the uses of God's name in terms of man's kingly, prophetic, and priestly functions (reflecting God's control, authority, covenant solidarity). These uses are oath (kingly), confession (prophetic), and blessing (priestly).

1. Oaths (kingly function).

- a) Concept: In an oath, we call God to witness concerning the truth of a statement ("assertory") or promise ("promissory"). We call upon God to

use his power against us if we lie, hence the emphasis on the power of an oath (kingly function). Cf. Hebrews 6:16.

- (1) As such, an oath is an act of worship. It has a godward reference. The honor of God is primarily in view in the third commandment, the dangers of false oaths to our fellow men being central in the ninth commandment. In this regard, cf. Deut. 10:20-21, Isaiah 45:23, 19:18, 65:16; Deuteronomy 6:13; Psalm 63:11, where swearing by God's name is a mark of those who belong to God. (Notice how this "specific application" of the third commandment itself becomes in Scripture a figure for the whole covenant relation. In Romans 14:11 and Philippians 2:10, the "swearing" is equated with confession and the latter with recognition of Christ's lordship.)
 - (2) An oath also has a manward reference. It is a way of maintaining stability, dependability, in a fallen world. Under certain circumstances, a man's word was to be accepted without corroboration on the basis of an oath (Exodus 22:10f.). The oath has always been a vital aspect of the administration of civil law. Where the oath is despised, the result is government corruption, civil injustice.
 - (3) It is possible to be under oath in effect even without uttering the name of God, although in general, oaths involve such utterances.
 - (a) Adjuration: In an adjuration, we are in effect put under oath by another party, generally, someone in authority. Cf. Joshua 7:19; Matthew 26:63f.
 - (b) Solemn attestation, without specific use of a divine name: Genesis 42:15, 31:53; Exodus 24:7; Deuteronomy 27:11ff.; I Samuel 1:26; Joshua 24:19-22; Jesus' "Verily, verily."
 - (c) Such borderline cases help us more clearly to see how, in a sense, the believer is always under oath. Cf. b.iv., below.
 - (4) A vow is a promise to God that we will perform a particular act. It is therefore, in effect, an oath-commitment.
- b) Obligation.
- (1) Scripture commands us to swear in God's name: Exod. 22:10-11, Deuteronomy 6:13, 10:20; Isaiah 65:16; Jeremiah 12:16; cf. Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10.
 - (a) The point is not that we ought to take oaths every so often as a means of grace; rather, it is that when an oath is necessary, it ought to be taken in the name of the true God, rather than in the name of another god.
 - (b) But once we come to believe in the true God, taking an oath is an act of religious worship (Deut. 10:20, Isa. 19:18), a way of confessing our faith in the true God.
 - (2) Examples.
 - (a) God himself: Genesis 22:16 (Hebrews 6:13-17), 26:3, Psalm 89:3, 49, 110:4, 132:11; Jeremiah 11:5; Ezekiel 33:11; Luke 1:73.

- (b) Jesus accepts the adjuration, Matthew 26:63f., gives solemn attestations (“verily”).
 - (c) Paul: Romans 1:9, 9:1f.; II Corinthians 1:23, 11:31; Galatians 1:20; Philippians 1:8; I Thessalonians 2:5, 10, 5:27.
 - (d) An angel in Rev. 10:5-6.
 - (e) Many other biblical characters: Genesis 14:22ff., 21:23f., etc.
 - (f) Common practice, Heb. 6:13-20.
 - (g) Many examples of vows: cf. also Psalm 22:25, 50:14, 65:1, etc., where the paying of vows is a synecdoche for the whole of religious worship.
- (3) Oath-bound commitment is the essence of covenant obligation and religious confession: Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10.
- (4) The prohibition of oaths in Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12.
- (a) In view of (1) –(3) above, it would be strange indeed if these passages intended to forbid oaths as such. Nowhere else in Scripture is there any hint of rebuke to anyone for the mere act of taking an oath (though, of course, there are examples of false oaths, unwise oaths, etc.) The fact that oath-bound commitment is essential to our relation with God is a particularly telling datum. The fact that God himself swears is also important—more important than it may appear on the surface. It might be argued that God’s right to swear does not imply our right to swear. On the other hand, in the context of Scripture, it is clear that God has far less reason to swear than we do. If he, who is perfectly trustworthy and self-attesting, sometimes confirms his word with an oath, surely, there are times when we ought to do the same.
 - (b) The context of Matthew 5:33-37 (cf. 23:16-22) suggests that Jesus is opposing a particular misuse of the oath, namely, the use of substitutes for the divine name to escape full obligation. Cf. below, c., also Murray, *Principles*, 168-174. James may be summarizing Matthew 5:33-37 to people already aware of that context. “Do not swear *at all*” means do not swear at all by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, etc.
 - (c) In Rabbinic sources, with strikingly similar language, the distinction is made between frivolous and unnecessary oaths on the one hand and solemn oaths on the other. The former are forbidden with the formula “Let your yes be yes and your no, no.” Jesus, doubtless, has this sort of problem in mind.
 - (d) So these passages in effect place us under continuous oath. Our yea is to be yea and our nay, nay. We are not to use the institution of the oath as an excuse for carelessness with the truth when not under oath (cf. the child’s “I said I would, but I didn’t promise.”) All of our speech ought to partake of the quality of “solemn attestation” [above, a.iii.b)]. The use of the oath ought, at most, to

be an accommodation to a fallen situation. More on this under the ninth commandment.

c) Oaths Resulting in Sin.

(1) Oaths with wrong content (normative).

- (a) Idolatrous: in the name of a false god, Exodus 23:13, cf. Deuteronomy 6:13, 10:20, etc.
- (b) Pledging something unlawful, 1 Sam. 25, Matthew 14:7; Acts 23:12.
 - (i) It is often argued that general oaths of secrecy fall under this category—i.e., pledges to secrecy without knowledge of what is to be kept secret. Vs. secret societies, etc.
 - (ii) Similarly, oaths required in secret societies and labor unions to put the interests of the organization above all others—vs. the biblical “chief end of man.”
- (c) The Catechism says that we should not even keep an existing oath if it is “of things unlawful.” When an existing oath requires us to sin, it at that point becomes an unlawful oath and we are released from keeping it. An oath cannot compel to sin.
 - (i) Scripture does tell us to keep oaths “to our own hurt” (Psm. 15:4), but not to the hurt of others, or injury to the name of God.
 - (ii) An oath of office may not require us to obey unjust orders from governmental superiors (Nazis, etc.)
 - (iii) An oath of secrecy may not compel us to keep secret matters that God requires us to reveal.

(2) Oaths not kept (situational).

- (a) Lying oaths, perjury, Leviticus 19:12; Psalm 109:17-19, cf. Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Psalm 66:15f.; Mark 14:71.
- (b) Reneging on a vow which involves self-sacrifice, Psalm 15:7; Acts 5:4.
- (c) Breaking vow to enemies: Gibeon, Josh. 9:1-27, 2 Sam. 21:1-14.
- (d) Evasions through use of substitutes for God’s name. [Cf. A.1.c., above; also Murray, 168-174].

(3) Oaths arising from wrong attitudes (existential).

- (a) Rash, foolish oaths, I Samuel 14:24f.; Judges 11. On the difficult question of Jephthah’s vow, I follow (with some hesitation) the view that Jephthah dedicated his daughter to serve God in perpetual virginity. [Cf. Keil and Delitsch, *ad loc.*]
- (b) Presumptuous swearing, Isaiah 48:1f.—i.e., assuming our right to swear in God’s name despite unrepentant sinfulness.
- (c) Over-frequent or trivial swearing, [cf. above, b.iv.b) & c). Also, iv., below].

d) Trivialization of God’s Name.

- (1) In an oath, we invoke the name of God to solemnize an affirmation or promise. In the last section c), we saw how certain oaths violate the solemnity and sanctity of the divine name, though all oaths assume that solemnity and appeal to it. However, it is also possible to sin by renouncing this solemnity altogether—by frivolous or trivial use of God’s name. Such use of God’s name is, in one sense, the opposite of the oath commanded in Scripture.
- (2) Trivial cursing.
 - (a) “Damn,” “Hell,” etc., even “My God,” “Jesus,” used casually in our society, as mere exclamations.
 - (b) “Darn,” “gosh,” “golly,” “jeez:”
 - (i) Many are not even aware of the religious origins of these terms.
 - (ii) If used in serious oaths, they would be a form of attempted mitigation (Matt. 23:16-22) condemned by Jesus; but most people don’t take them as such.
 - (c) There is here usually no explicit intention to blaspheme, as in the curses condemned in Scripture. So we should not consider them to be as serious sins as self-conscious blasphemies.
 - (d) Still, such curses are a symptom (Douma) of the prevalent unbelief in society, unbelief that we cannot take casually. Were our society fully Christian, God’s name would be taken much more seriously.
 - (e) It is impossible to rebuke every such curse that we hear. (Generally, it is impossible to rebuke every sin that we observe; there are just too many.) But we should be alert to opportunities to use these moments in witness.
- (3) Irreverence
 - (a) T-shirt: “This blood’s for you.” Wrong?
 - (b) Irreverence can be in the mind of the beholder. The wearer might have mainly an evangelistic motive: a holy desire to begin a conversation with someone about Christ. Perhaps there are things to be said both pro and con here.
 - (c) Use of popular musical styles in worship. See my CWM.
- (4) Does this principle rule out all use of God’s name, even of God’s revelation, in humor?
 - (a) Ephesians 5:4 condemns “foolish talk” and “coarse jesting,” probably describing pointless silliness and gutter-type language. All humor, however, cannot be shown to have these qualities.
 - (b) There is humor in the Bible, but the jokes are too old and familiar for us to appreciate. Matthew 19:24, 23:24; Acts 12:12-16, etc.
 - (c) Humor has constructive, even serious purposes at times: to display graphically the Creator / creature distinction, etc. Even as sheer entertainment, it can have a recreative function. “Let there be light” uttered while pulling the light switch—shows, in an ironic way, both the analogy and the ridiculous disparity between man’s

technology and God's. Scripture always speaks well of a "cheerful," "merry" or "glad" heart: Proverbs 15:13; II Corinthians 9:7, etc.

2. Confession (prophetic function): In confession, we acknowledge God's covenant name as our own, ourselves as part of the covenant. In confessing before men, we also proclaim to them the word of the Lord.
 - a) Obligation (note connection with salvation): Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9f; I Peter 3:15.
 - b) Related Sins.
 - (1) Concealing our allegiance, John 12:42.
 - (2) Denying Christ, Matthew 26:69ff.
 - (3) Heresy.
 - (4) Blasphemy, Psalm 74:10-18; Isaiah 52:5f.; Revelation 16:9, 11, 21.
 - (a) Punished by death, Leviticus 24:16, even if a "stranger."
 - (b) The most serious sin: blasphemy against the Spirit, Matthew 12:31, persistent, defiant refusal to acknowledge God in the face of the clearest knowledge.
 - (5) Giving occasion to pagans to blaspheme, 2 Sam. 12:14, Ezek. 36:20-32.
 - (6) Confessing God in a context in which it will likely lead only to ridicule and blasphemy. (Douma: sometimes "speech is silver, but silence is golden"), Matt. 26:63, 27:14.
 - (7) Invoking God's name in support of causes without biblical warrant, 1 Phil. 3:6, Tim. 1:13. "God on our side." "This is God's will." Afrikaners, Nazis.
 - (8) Using Scripture to support heresy, 2 Pet. 2:1-3, 3:16.
3. Blessing (priestly function): Given to God by man, the blessing is equivalent to praise; directed to other men, it identifies them with God's name and thereby declares their right to inherit the covenant promises. It is a form of prayer for them in the name of God as well.
 - a) Obligation: Scripture calls us both to bless God's people and to intercede for all men in prayer.
 - b) Related Sins:
 - (1) Reviling man, Matthew 5:22; Ephesians 4:29; James 3:9.
 - (a) To mock the poor is to insult his maker, Prov. 17:5. Cf. Cursing the deaf, Lev. 19:14.
 - (b) The passages do not place a general condemnation on strong language. The prophets and apostles frequently use strong language against their hearers. Remarkably, Jesus Himself, having condemned some for using *moros* (Matthew 5:22), uses the same term against the Scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:17, 19). [Cf. Paul, Galatians 1:8f].
 - (c) Evidently, just as there is a righteous and an unrighteous anger (cf. sixth commandment), so there is an unrighteous and a righteous use

of strong language. The question is whether we are venting our own (murderous) hatred or being zealous for the honor of God.

(2) Incantations, use of God's name to control him, Acts 19:13-17.

C. Language in Literature and Drama.

1. I have sometimes been asked, particularly in the light of Ephesians 4:29, whether it is ever legitimate for a Christian actor to utter blasphemies, e.g., while impersonating a character, or for a Christian writer to put foul language in the mouth of a character.
2. Ephesians 4:29 clearly does not mean to forbid the mere physical act of uttering an unedifying expression. Scripture itself records (and when we read Scripture, we read) the unedifying and even blasphemous words of God's enemies. Of course, it records these for our edification: unedifying words in an edifying context.
3. The question, then, becomes: does a literary or dramatic blasphemy serve an edifying purpose in its larger context? It does, I think, when (as Scripture) it aims to portray unbelief as unbelief—when its portrayal is, on Christian criteria, true.
4. On this criterion, there ought, probably, to be more blasphemy and vulgarity in Christian drama than there usually is. These sins utterly pervade our society today, and any truthful portrayal of that society ought to be consistent with that pervasiveness.
5. We are not, however, on this basis, to wallow in filth for its own sake. Whether we like it or not, that is what our sinful nature would have us do. And we have great skill in rationalizing such desires.
6. The point is to present sin in its true colors—as something ugly, destructive and, in a certain way, ridiculous. That is the challenge to the Christian artist.
7. “Method” acting—where an actor motivates himself to portray, e.g., hate by generating feelings of hate within himself will often be forbidden to the Christian. Yet, I suspect that morality and dramatic effectiveness are not thereby opposed to one another. A good artist must maintain both empathy with and distance from his subject, as did Jesus when he loved and suffered for sinners, without losing his own identity as the sinless, divine savior. A “method” which insists on identification without distance cannot express redemptive involvement.

IV. The Fourth Commandment: “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (Exodus 20:8-11). In Deuteronomy 5:12-15, it reads: “Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord thy God commanded thee. Six days shalt thou labor . . . nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And thou shalt remember that thou was a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God

brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.”

WLC, Q116: What is required in the fourth commandment?

A116: The fourth commandment requires of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian sabbath, and in the New Testament called The Lord's day.

Q117: How is the sabbath or the Lord's day to be sanctified?

A117: The sabbath or Lord's day is to be sanctified by an holy resting all the day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to betaken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God's worship: and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose and seasonably dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day.

Q119: What are the sins forbidden in the fourth commandment?

A119: The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are, all omissions of the duties required, all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them; all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful; and by all needless works, words, and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreations.

A. Place of the Fourth Commandment in the Decalogue (recall chart preceding discussion of First Commandment).

1. Despite Meredith Kline's refutation of the traditional "two table" notion, there is a broad progression in the Decalogue from commandments focusing on our relation to God to others focusing on our relation to one another.
2. In this progression, the Fourth Commandment is something of a transition from the one focus to the other.
 - a) Like I-III, it stresses the nature of God's covenant with us and demands a certain kind of worship.
 - b) Like V-X, it emphasizes our obligation to love one another, to give rest as well as to rest ourselves, to relativize social distinctions.
3. The Fourth Commandment is more specific than I-III on the kind of obedience required. It begins the recapitulation of the creation ordinances which continues through X.

B. The Divine Sabbath (the rest of God himself from his creative work—Genesis 2:2f; Exodus 20:11).

1. The divine Sabbath is essentially a celebration of God's lordship over creation.

- a) At the start of the divine Sabbath, God’s creative work (including his creation of man) was finished. It was at this point, then, that the creator first stood over against a finished creation. The covenant-lordship relation was fully established by creation itself. The divine Sabbath, then, was not enjoyed in the isolation of intra-divine life. From its beginning, it was the celebration of a relation.
 - b) Meredith Kline (“Primal *Parousia*,” *WTJ*, Spring, 1978, 259ff.) describes the divine Sabbath as an “enthronement,” citing parallels with God’s enthronement in the microcosmic “temple-house”. The enthronement follows divine victory and judgment (over the deep and darkness) and the creation of the world as his royal dwelling.
2. The Sabbath celebrates the lordship of God in its three aspects.
 - a) Control: Celebrates the divine victory—the “penetration of the darkness by the divine theophanic glory” (Kline, 263).
 - b) Authority: The Sabbath begins with the declaration that creation is good and finished. Cf. Kline, 261.
 - c) Presence in blessing and judgment:
 - (1) Presence of the glory-theophany is his completed temple.
 - (2) Judicial approbation [b., above], self-glorifying; cf. union of Sabbath with “Day of the Lord”—the day of judgment (and grace) (Kline). On this day, he judges all that he has made, and declares it good.
 - (3) When God blesses his own Sabbath, he blesses us. [cf. B.3.; C.1., below]
 3. The divine Sabbath was offered to Adam and Eve.
 - a) In Hebrews 3-4, the divine Sabbath is an eschatological promise, representing the consummation of redemptive blessing that follows the last judgment. God entered the Sabbath at the end of creation, and his redeemed are to enter it at the end of this age. Note 4:4.
 - b) Since from the beginning the Sabbath celebrated a relation [1.a., above], it must have involved Adam and Eve in some way.
 - c) Since the account of the divine Sabbath follows the “cultural mandate”, the command to work, it is hard to avoid the assumption that in the divine Sabbath God was promising rest to the man and woman as the fulfillment of this labor: had they completed the cultural mandate obediently, they would have entered the rest of God.
 - d) This inference is only a probable one; so far as I can tell, no passage of Scripture sets forth these concepts in so many words. However, throughout Scripture, the divine Sabbath does function as an eschatological promise, and it would be surprising if it did not also have that function before the fall.
- C. The Human Sabbath: Its Meaning.
1. Human Sabbath and Divine Sabbath.
 - a) When God blessed his own Sabbath in Genesis 2:3, he did it with man in view [cf. B.1.a., above; also 3.b.].

- b) When God blessed his own Sabbath, he did it as an example for man (Exodus 20:11): Israel is to cease from work because God ceased from work.
 - c) When God blessed his own Sabbath, he also blessed man's. Exodus 20:11 clearly refers to the human Sabbath, which is the subject of the fourth commandment.
 - d) Exodus 20:11 seems to assume some sort of unity between the divine Sabbath and the human Sabbath, even though the former is unending and the latter is a weekly occurrence.
 - (i) "The" Sabbath referred to in the verse is the human Sabbath [above, c.], but also the divine Sabbath (context of Genesis 2:3).
 - (ii) Ex. 20:11 says that God blessed the human Sabbath in Gen. 2:3.
 - e) We shall see that the human Sabbath is a covenantal sign and seal, a sacrament in effect. In that framework, we could perhaps speak of the divine Sabbath as "present" in the human sacrament, as God is present in Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In the weekly Sabbath, we not only symbolize, but also enjoy by anticipation the divine Sabbath promised to God's people.
 - f) At the very least, the human Sabbath is a replica of the divine, as man himself is made in the image of God. As man himself is made to reflect God's glory, so the human Sabbath is made to reflect the glory of the divine Sabbath.
2. The Human Sabbath as a Meeting with God.
- a) On the Sabbath, God's rest and man's intersect [1., above]. God who rests from his creative labors invites his creatures to share his rest in anticipation of their final rest.
 - b) If we share God's rest, then he must share ours. As his day belongs to us, so ours, our Sabbath, belongs to him. Our human Sabbath is set aside as his day.
 - (1) Exodus 20:8: We are to "remember" (active memorializing, not just recollecting) to keep the Sabbath "holy" (i.e., set apart, given over to him). Cf. Exodus 31:13-17; Jeremiah 17:22; Isaiah 58:13; Ezekiel 44:24. To "keep" God's Sabbaths, Lev. 19:3, 30, Isa. 56:4, Ezek. 20:10.
 - (2) Verses 9, 10: "Thou shalt labor . . ." "do all thy work," sharply contrasted with "the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." The six days are for our work; the seventh exclusively for him.
 - (3) The contrasts between our pleasure and his day are frequent in the Old Testament. Note, e.g., Isaiah 58:13: "If thou turn thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day. . . ." (note repetitions of these contrasts in the passage).

- (4) That the human Sabbath belongs particularly to the Lord is to be expected, since it reflects the divine Sabbath, a celebration of God's Lordship, B.3.
 - (5) Note the association of Christ with the Sabbath as its Lord: Matthew 12:8, parallels, John 5:16f.
 - (6) The "Lord's day," Revelation 1:10—D., below.
 - (7) As a covenant sign [3.b., below], the Sabbath is a mode of God's presence among his people.
 - (8) Parallels between Sabbath and temple: Leviticus 19:30, 26:12; Matthew 12:5f.
 - (9) Parallel between the disciples' Sabbath behavior and David's holy soldiers, the holy labors of priests: I Samuel 21:1-6; Matthew 12:3ff.
 - (10) Sabbath legislation emphasizing the sanctification of the Sabbath (Exodus 31:12-17) follows legislation on the sanctification, the tabernacle and priesthood (25:1-31:11).
 - (11) Note relations between the Sabbath as the divine day of judgment, association of divine attributes with the latter, Kline, "Primal *Parousia*," 265.
- c) Thus, the Sabbath is a day of worship.
- (1) Even if no cultic rites were prescribed, the Sabbath would be an act of worship, merely on the basis of what we have already said.
 - (a) To "meet with God" is to worship [2.a.].
 - (b) To "remember" a particular day, to keep it holy, is an act of worship [2.b.].
 - (c) Celebrating the Lordship of God [2.b.iv.] is an act of worship.
 - (2) References to worship on the Sabbath.
 - (a) Remember that "Sabbaths" are not only weekly Sabbaths, but also feast days.
 - (b) Weekly meetings of local worshippers (Lev. 23:3, the synagogue). Jesus did endorse the synagogue pattern in this respect: Luke 4:15ff., parallels.
 - (c) Sabbath offerings: Numbers 28:9f.; Ezekiel 45:17, 46:3; Nehemiah 10:32f.; Cf. Matthew 12:15f.
 - (d) Song for the Sabbath Day, Psm. 92:1.
 - (e) New Testament references to the first day of the week.
 - (i) Days on which the risen Christ meets his people: Matt. 28:9, Luke 24:13-51; John 20:1, 19, 26; Revelation 1:10. Did Mary rest in Luke 10:38-42 because the divine Sabbath was present in Christ (Cf. Matt. 11:28)? Cf. Christ as the temple-Sabbath, Matthew 12:5f.
 - (ii) Days on which the church met to worship, doubtless in celebration of the Lord's victory, Acts 2:1, 20:6f., I Corinthians 16:1f., Revelation 1:10.

3. The Human Sabbath is an Imitation of God.

The human Sabbath is one with God's [above, 2.] but also distinct from it. It is a "finite replica" (Kline). Thus, on the Sabbath, we not only share God's rest, but we also seek to copy that rest at a finite, recurring level. In copying it, we not only honor God's lordship [B.1.; C.2.]; we also seek to reflect that lordship in our own vassal kingship. We exert our own lordship in its "control, authority, presence."

a) Control: the sabbatical pattern as labor and rest.

(1) Labor: ". . . six days shalt thou labor"

- (a) It is sometimes overlooked that the fourth commandment deals not only with rest, but also with labor. It presupposes that we will work six days!
- (b) Calvin argues that the language of the commandment does not present us with an obligation as much as a gift: God gives us six days to do our work. There is much truth in this, but, of course, divine gifts always come wrapped in obligations (and *vice-versa!*).
- (c) In the larger context of Scripture, labor is a creation ordinance (Genesis 1:28ff.). In all periods of redemptive history, idleness is condemned (Proverbs; II Thessalonians 3:10f.).
- (d) This commandment does not mean that we must work for a particular employer 48 hours out of every week. "Labor" in the Scriptural context, of course, includes more than the earning of family income. It includes maintenance of the home, general cultural activity, etc.
- (e) Clearly, too, the commandment does not mean that we may rest from labor only on Sabbath! Daily rest, nourishment, recovery from illness, etc., is presupposed. Fanatical labor (the modern "workaholic") is condemned as lacking trust in God (Psalm 127:1f.). Cf. also Jesus in Mark 6:31.

(2) Rest.

- (a) The Sabbath is essentially the celebration of a completed work.
 - (i) Cf. above, B.2. on the divine Sabbath.
 - (ii) Tabernacle and temple construction indicate provisional fulfillment of God's judgments and victory. Note sabbatical pattern in their consecration (Kline); also passages like Exodus 39:43, 40:33.
 - (iii) At the human level, the Sabbath is a pause from our labors to take satisfaction in them as we consecrate them to God.
 - (iv) As such, the Sabbath anticipates (and participates in!) the final rest from labor which we will enjoy in God's presence. Cf. b., below.
- (b) What kind of work is prohibited?

- (i) *Daily* labor (Ex. 31:13-17), including plowing and harvesting (34:21), commerce and transport of goods (Amos 8:4-6, Jer. 17:21).
- (ii) Building of fires (Ex. 35:3, Num. 15:32-26)? I suspect these texts do not pertain to fires for heating and cooking. See James Jordan, *Sabbath Breaking and the Death Penalty*.
 - (A) Pi'el form in Ex. 35:3 typically refers to ceremonial burning (Lev. 6:12, Neh. 10:35, 2 Chron. 4:20, 13:11, etc.), or the fire of divine judgment (Ezek. 20:48, 39:9f, Isa. 4:4, etc.).
 - (B) On the Sabbath, God's altar-fire ("hearth fire") was intensified (Num. 28:1-10).
 - (C) So evidently this is a case like the "strange fire" in Lev. 10:1. No human fire must be intensified to rival God's ceremonial fire on the Sabbath day.
 - (D) The wood gatherer in Num. 15 is held in custody, because the precise penalty for his sin has not been revealed (verse 34).
 - 1. Evidently his crime is not that of ordinary work on the Sabbath, but a "high handed" sin (discussed in context, verses 22ff). Mere working on the Sabbath was not a capital crime in Ex. 16:27-30, Neh. 13:19-22.
 - 2. Evidently he was *attempting* to stoke up his fire in a way forbidden by Ex. 35:3.
- (iii) So I take these references as ceremonial laws, not binding on New Testament Christians.
- (c) After the fall, the Sabbath is a rest, not only from labor, but also from the toil and misery associated with labor in a fallen world. Hence its redemptive significance, cf. b., below.
- (d) The rest is physical, not merely spiritual. Note emphasis on bearing burdens, Jeremiah 17:21f., Nehemiah 13:15ff, refreshment, Ex. 23:12, delight, Isa. 58:13.
- (e) The Sabbath thus draws our attention to our nature as historical creatures, the importance of progress, development, goal.
- (f) A blessing, Mark 2:27.
- (3) Recreation: Does resting on the Sabbath preclude it?
 - (a) If recreation is pleasurable activity different from one's daily labors, then the Sabbath-rest is recreation, *par excellence*.
 - (i) Note earlier references to the Sabbath as a "celebration," association of Sabbaths with Old Testament feasts.
 - (ii) The Sabbath a "delight"—Isaiah 58:13f.
 - (b) As for the propriety of "pleasurable activities" on Sabbath, Scripture says nothing specific.

- (i) Isaiah 58:13f. forbids doing your “own pleasure” as opposed to God’s. “Pleasure” here, however, means “will”.
- (ii) “Rest” is clearly not mere inactivity. If “rest” includes activities, these must be classified as recreations.
- (iii) Note reference to “refreshment” in Exodus 31:17, 23:12.
- (c) The *Westminster Confession* forbids on the Sabbath all “works, words and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations. . . .” (XXI:8) because it sees the function of the day wholly in terms of worship. We shall discuss later [below, D.] the precise nature of the New Covenant obligation. In the Old Covenant, at any rate, such a statement would not be appropriate:
 - (i) Because under the Old Covenant, the day was not spent wholly in “public and private” worship, except insofar as the sanctification of the day itself was an act of worship.
 - (ii) Because the principle of “consecration of labor” requires that we think and speak about the activities of the six days.
 - (iii) Because the Old Covenant emphasis is upon rest rather than worship (at least worship in the cultic sense). The WCF sees rest only as a ceasing from daily labor to make time for worship. But in Scripture, the rest is important in itself. It speaks of “rest” and “refreshment” apart from worship.
- (d) Clearly, however, even the Old Covenant forbids, by implication, any recreation that detracts from the meaning of the day.
- (4) Works of Necessity.
 - (a) God did not intend the Sabbath to destroy man, but to be a blessing, Mark 2:27. This is characteristic of the law in general (cf. earlier discussion of the law as way of life).
 - (b) What is necessary to life and worship, therefore, may be done on the Sabbath.
 - (i) Eating, Matthew 12:1-8.
 - (ii) Arrangements for worship, Matthew 12:5f.
 - (iii) Healing, Matthew 12:10-13; Luke 14:1ff.; John 5:1ff. Actually, these passages are better characterized as “works of mercy” [c., below], since it was not strictly necessary for these to be done on Sabbath. However, the two categories do overlap. “Necessity” is a relative matter. It could be argued that even eating is not strictly “necessary”. Yet, it is approved.
 - (iv) Rescuing of people and animals, Luke 14:5. Clearly, also certain forms of business maintenance are also necessary, by implication. Not only must oxen be rescued, but also fed, milked, etc. One might argue that the work of tending animals is forbidden to a strict Sabbatarian; however, Scripture never draws this inference. This work, though not absolutely

necessary, and even though it involves some Sabbath labor, is accepted as a godly occupation.

(v) Warfare

(A) It was generally accepted that a people could defend themselves against attack on Sabbath (cf. I Maccabees 2:41)—an implication of the last point, as I see it.

(B) Israel circled Jericho seven times on the Sabbath, after which the walls fell down (Josh 6:15-20).

(C) Jehoiada the priest carried out plot against wicked Queen Athaliah on Sabbath (2 Kings 11, 2 Chron. 22:10-23:15).

(vi) Travel to consult a prophet (2 Kings 4:23): Shunammite woman traveled 20 miles.

(vii) Possibility of an alternate day of worship for those who must travel on business, Num. 9:9-13 on the Passover. See Jordan, *Sabbath Breaking and the Death Penalty*, 89-90.

(viii) The “necessity” in view here, then, is not some sort of abstract “absolute” necessity, but the necessity of those activities which keep human life on an even keel. It can be only vaguely defined, and its application requires spiritual perception. There are many situations in modern business life, e.g., when some Sabbath work appears “necessary” on the above criteria. It is difficult to be dogmatic in such areas, but one must ask if the Sabbatarian does not have a responsibility to seek to minimize the cases where alleged, or even real, necessities arise.

b) Authority: the Sabbath as covenant sign, Ex. 31:13, Isa. 56:4, Ezek. 20:18-30.

The Divine Sabbath is a day on which God authoritatively declares his victory. Similarly, the human Sabbath, is a day on which the truth of God is to be declared and which, by its very nature, proclaims the covenant victory of God.

(1) Declaring God’s acts: Three dimensions of God’s Lordship over time.

(a) Past.

(i) Creation, Genesis 2:3; Exodus 20:11. The victory of God over the “deep darkness”. (?)

(ii) Redemption:

(a) From Egypt, Deuteronomy 5:15.

(b) Judgment on Canaan (Kline).

(c) The New Testament Lord’s Day as memorial of the Resurrection.

(b) Present: God’s meeting with us now as his Sabbath intersects ours [above B.; C.1; C.2.].

(c) Future: God’s eschatological victory (Kline).

- (2) Declaring our membership in the covenant.
- (a) Before the fall, the Sabbath may have conveyed the promise of blessing within the Covenant of Works (Kline's *Covenant of Creation*). If Adam had obeyed, the blessing would have been his.
 - (b) The Sabbath was given as a sign to Israel, Exodus 31:13-17; Ezekiel 20:12, 20.
 - (i) It declares the Lordship of God, 31:13, and, thus, Israel's relation to God.
 - (ii) Sabbath-breaking is not only sin against God, but cuts one off from God's people, (v. 14).
 - (iii) The Sabbath is identified with the covenant, v. 16.
 - (iv) The Sabbath therefore marks Israel as God's holy nation. It has a sacramental function.
 - (c) The prohibition of Sabbath labor, however, extended to "strangers," whose covenant status was ambiguous. (Some were uncircumcised and, thus, incapable of taking the Passover, or of sharing the liberation at the Jubilee. Yet, they had certain privileges and protections under the law, and they were involved in long-range covenant promises—e.g., Ezekiel 47:22ff.)
 - (d) The Sabbath's sacramental function is also seen in the fact that it signifies and embodies the presence of God's own rest [above, C.1., 2.]. On Sabbath and in the Sabbath, God is sacramentally present with his people.
 - (e) Revelation 1:10 suggests a sacramental significance for the "Lord's day" (*Kuriake hemera*) in the New Covenant. Cf. the Lord's Supper as *deipnon kuriakon* in I Corinthians 11:20. The "Lord's day" bears the same relation to the final "day of the Lord" as the "Lord's Supper" bears to the final Supper of the Lamb. Cf. below, D.4.c.i.c).
- c) Presence in blessing and judgment: Man is to imitate God by dispensing blessing and judgment on the Sabbath. Judgment is seen in the disciplinary and preaching functions of the church to some extent (Isaiah 6), but the Scriptural emphasis (as with the divine Sabbath) is on the Sabbath as mercy. "Deeds of mercy" are presented in Scripture, not as a mere exception to the general prohibition of labor (as some Reformed treatments suggest), but as a central function of the Sabbath.
- (1) Giving rest.
- (a) We are not only to rest ourselves, but also to give rest—to our families, servants, animals, strangers (Exodus 20:10, 23:12; note particular emphasis on this point in Deuteronomy 5:14f.).
 - (b) Thus, the Sabbath is given covenantally—to the whole body, not just to individuals. [Cf. b.ii., above.] But notice also the ambiguous status of the "stranger", b.ii.c).

- (c) “The poor live as princes for one day a week,” D. Wallace. On this day, no one gains economic advantage over anyone. As we come together before God, our essential oneness becomes clearer, and our priorities are adjusted.
 - (d) In the system of Sabbatical years, an extension of the weekly Sabbath, we also give rest to the land. Exodus 23:10f.; Leviticus 25:1ff. This is important to a biblical ecology, but also has reference to the needs of the poor, strangers, etc. Cf. Deuteronomy 15:1-6.
 - (e) Note contexts of Isaiah 58:13f., verses 3ff.
 - (f) The Sabbath law thus forbids God’s people from giving supreme priority to economic gain or the other rewards of daily life.
 - (g) As noted earlier, the Sabbath typifies rest from toil, not from sin as such. Yet, indirectly, it does encourage trust in grace rather than works. Our weekly rest must be taken, whether earned or not, because God has given it. The consummation of our week, its “meaning”, is not the result of anything we have done. Our “meeting with God” is not by works.
- (2) Giving liberty.
- (a) The Sabbath commemorates liberation from bondage, Deuteronomy 5:15. [Cf. above, i.c)-d)].
 - (b) Release of debts in sabbatical years, release of Hebrew servants, Exodus 21:1ff.; Deuteronomy 15:1-18; Jeremiah 34:8ff.
 - (c) Release of debts and return of sold property in the Jubilee, Leviticus 25:8-17. Note extensive implications of this for the economy of Israel, outlined in the rest of Leviticus.
- (3) Healing: It appears that Jesus healed on the Sabbath, not out of necessity, but out of deliberate choice. He made this choice, not merely to provoke the Pharisees, but because of his conviction as to the nature of the Sabbath: Matthew 12:9-13; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 6:6-10; John 5:1-17. Even on the Sabbath, God desires “mercy and not sacrifice” (Matthew 12:8). It is “lawful to do well” on the Sabbath (12:12). The Pharisees had put such emphasis on the aspect of physical rest that they had missed this “weightier matter” of the law.
- (4) Judgment: 1 Cor. 5:4-5, 11:31-2, 14:29.
- d) Summary.
- We are called to imitate God in rest, in declaring our union with him, and in showing mercy. In all of these activities, we declare that God is our Lord, that our hope is not bound up with our daily activities, but with his promise. Thus, we do not compete with one another for God’s blessing, but we share it liberally.
4. Sins connected with the Sabbath (Douma)
- a. Working for selfish gain, Neh. 13:15-22.
 - b. Resting, but plotting ways of defrauding others, Amos 8:5.

- c. Scribes and Pharisees: defining Sabbath-breaking so precisely as to add to God's Word, John 5:9-10.

D. The Sabbath as a New Covenant Obligation.

1. Reformed Views (moving from "least" to "most" Sabbatarian).

- a) Calvin (*Institutes*, II, viii, 31-34) (Reflected in continental Reformed creeds).
- (1) With the coming of the New Covenant, there is no particular day (or even weekly interval) at which Christians are obligated to abstain from work and engage in worship, etc.
 - (2) Such days are shadows which pass away in Christ. Calvin quotes Colossians 2:17; Galatians 4:10f.; Romans 14:5. He comments, "Who but madmen cannot see what the apostle means?"
 - (3) Positively, we keep the Fourth Commandment today:
 - (a) By laying aside our works and trusting God's grace for salvation.
 - (b) By consecrating all our time to the Lord.
 - (c) By giving rest to servants, etc., and setting aside time for worship.
- b) Donald Carson, *From Sabbath to Sunday* (Zondervan).
- (1) As with Calvin, the Sabbath is abolished in the New Covenant: "If we keep the Sabbath in this dispensation, we are again denying Christ."
 - (2) However, the Sabbath is now replaced by the Lord's Day, which commemorates the Resurrection and symbolizes the accomplishment of our rest in Christ.
 - (3) We are obligated to keep the first day of the week (no other) as a day of worship. No cessation of work is required.
- c) Early Kline (from my student notes in Old Testament Biblical Theology)
- (1) Same as i., ii. under c., above.
 - (2) In the Mosaic Covenant, the emphasis is placed upon rest, rather than worship, as the essence of the Sabbath command.
 - (3) Therefore, the Westminster Confession cannot be followed when it insists that the whole day be taken up in deeds of worship, necessity and mercy. Rest, and hence recreation, are also appropriate, even centrally important, to the meaning of the day.
 - (4) Later, Kline revised his position to argue that in the New Covenant the Sabbath is a day of worship, but not a day of resting from all labor. He argued that the rest from labor was part of the "union of culture and cult" under the Mosaic theocracy. I don't find that view persuasive, and I will not discuss it here.
- d) The "Puritan" view (Westminster Standards).
- (1) The New Testament Lord's Day is essentially the same as the Old Testament Sabbath, now properly observed on the first day of the week rather than the seventh.

(2) On this Christian Sabbath, believers must rest “from their own works, words and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, XXI, 8).

(3) The whole day is to be taken up “in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.”

2. Sabbath and Creation.

- a) A creation ordinance is a divine institution or command which is in effect from man’s creation until the consummation, such as labor (Genesis 1:28ff.), marriage (1:28; 2:24f.).
- b) Creation ordinances do not pass away as the history of redemption progresses, because they are grounded in man’s nature as:
 - created and
 - not yet glorified—conditions which exist until the consummation.
- c) Exodus 20:11 teaches that God’s blessing of “the Sabbath” in Genesis 2:3 was in effect the sanctifying of man’s Sabbath, and that, for that reason alone, the Sabbath must be observed, apart from anything peculiar to the Mosaic economy. [Cf. argument in C.1.a-c., above].
- d) Note the “creation sanction” also in Exodus 31:17. Although this ground of Sabbath-keeping is not mentioned in Deuteronomy 5:12-15, the phrase “as the Lord thy God commanded thee” clearly refers back to Exodus 20:11 and reaffirms what was said there.
- e) There is a lack of evidence for Sabbath-keeping prior to the Exodus from Egypt, and that poses a problem for the view that the Sabbath is a creation ordinance. If it were a creation ordinance, ought it not to have been observed perpetually?
 - (1) Exodus 16:22-30 shows that Sabbath observance was known before the giving of the Decalogue, and it presupposes some common knowledge of the custom.
 - (2) Many divine laws, clearly revealed, were neglected for long periods of time: monogamy, the Old Testament sabbatical years and Jubilee, etc.
- f) Mark 2:27, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”
 - (1) Here, Jesus grounds the Sabbath ordinance in the needs of man as man, not in anything distinctive to the Mosaic economy (*Anthropes*—generic man)
 - (2) “Was made” harks back to the original institution of the Sabbath at creation—with man on the scene.
 - (3) In context, Jesus draws a parallel between his disciples, who fed themselves on the Sabbath, and David’s men, who took the consecrated bread. He says that the Sabbath was not intended to frustrate such natural needs, but to meet them. Again, the created nature of man (needing food and rest) is in view.
 - (4) Jesus here gives no hint that in his kingdom there will be any change in the nature of the Sabbath. One might have expected him to do so, by analogy with his teaching about the place of worship in John 4.

- g) Mark 2:28, “. . . so that the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”
- (1) It is unlikely that “Son of Man” here means simply “man.” Rather, it is a title of Christ, correlate with his distinctive lordship over the Sabbath.
 - (2) “Son of Man” does not often focus on the distinctively human nature of Christ, but in this case, it does. Jesus says that the Sabbath is for man and that he is Lord of it by virtue of his Lordship over what pertains to man, that Lordship summarized in the expression “Son of Man.”
 - (3) In Dan. 7, it appears that the Son of Man is a representative of “the saints” (verses 18), by whom the saints receive the kingdom (22). Compare Paul’s description of Christ as second Adam.
 - (4) Again, Jesus is dealing with his relation to mankind as such. He is not speaking specifically as Israel’s Messiah, nor of any element of the Sabbath institution distinctive to Israel.
 - (5) In claiming Lordship “even” of the Sabbath, Jesus makes a momentous claim indeed. The Sabbath has always been “the Sabbath of the Lord your God”. Jesus now places himself in the position of *Yahweh*. Yet, even in such a claim, Jesus gives no suggestion that he will abrogate or substantially alter the Sabbath obligation. Our impression is that he Sabbath continues in Jesus’ kingdom as before, under his Lordship as Son of Man.
- h) John 5:17: “My father worketh hitherto, and I work.”
- (1) Here, Jesus makes a clear claim to deity, for which the Jews seek to kill him (v. 18).
 - (2) As deity, then, Jesus claims the right to set the terms for Sabbath observance.
 - (3) As incarnate deity, Jesus expresses submission to the Father. He is only imitating what the Father does, sharing the work of the Father (mercy). He claims the right to imitate not only the Father’s Sabbath rest, but also the Father’s Sabbath activity.
 - (4) Again, there is no hint of any basis for Sabbath observance distinctive to the Mosaic economy, or any major change to be brought in by Jesus. The basis of Sabbath observance here is the imitation of God’s rest, the “creation sanction” of Exodus 20:11 and Genesis 2:3.
- i) Hebrews 4.
- (1) Here, the “rest” promised to the people of God is traced back to creation (compare 4:3f., 10 with Genesis 2:3). Note, also, the references to creation in Psalm 95 (quoted in Hebrews 3:7ff.) as the basis for the exhortation to hearken and enter God’s rest.
 - (2) The Sabbath, as we have seen, is a sign of that eschatological rest, entered by God at creation, promised to man at the consummation (Gaffin in *OPC Minutes of the 40th General Assembly*).
 - (3) Thus, (however one translates *sabbatismos* in 4:9), the basis of Sabbath observance is traced back to the creation order, not to the distinctive provisions of the Mosaic Covenant.

(4) Hebrews, incidentally, is much concerned with distinguishing the permanent from the temporary in God's purposes. But there is no indication here that Christ has abolished Sabbath observance .

j) Summary.

- (1) Scripture presents the creation order as a sufficient ground of Sabbath observance. Since that creation structure will not change until the consummation, the Sabbath obligation continues along with it.
- (2) These considerations more or less eliminate the views described as 1.a-b., above. I say "more or less" because we have not yet considered some New Testament texts thought to militate against what we have said here. However, any view placing great weight on those texts must address itself to the arguments advanced here.
- (3) Since the original creation ordinance deals with a cessation from work, and, since all references to the Sabbath which refer to creation speak in terms of a rest from labor, view 1.c. must be seriously questioned. However, we have yet to consider some of Kline's argumentation which attempts to account for the data.

3. Sabbath as Redemptive Promise.

- a) Although the creation order is a sufficient ground for Sabbath observance, it is not the only ground given for it in Scripture. Scripture also calls us to keep the Sabbath because we are the redeemed people of God. Briefly: we are to remember our past deliverance from toil and to anticipate our future deliverance.
- b) Rest as a redemptive blessing.
 - (1) Rest becomes a redemptive blessing because of the curse on the ground and on man's labor, Genesis 3:17-19. Had man not fallen, rest would have been a physical necessity and a precious time of communion with God, but would not have been a specifically redemptive category.
 - (a) References to man's labor as toil and misery, Ecclesiastes 2; Psalm 90.
 - (b) The wicked have no genuine peace, rest: Isaiah 48:22; 57:21.
 - (c) God gives his people rest: Psalm 127:2; Matthew 11:28 (rest in taking on a yoke!); Revelation 14:13. Note the descriptions of the toil in Egypt from which the people were redeemed.
 - (2) The focus in these passages is not on rest as a relief from sin as such, but as a relief from toil, sorrow, misery which sin brings into the world. Labor itself is not sinful, but is cursed because of sin. Similarly, rest is not itself redemption, but is a fruit of redemption, a blessing brought by redemption.
- c) Sabbath as redemptive rest.
 - (1) The Sabbath is a present rest which recalls the redemptive rest given in the past and anticipates the greater rest to come.
 - (a) Deuteronomy 5:15 emphasizes this, and it is implicit in Exodus 20, when verses 8-11 are seen as motivated by the preface (verse 2).

- (b) This is also the major thrust of Hebrews 3-4, though as we mentioned earlier, the creation sanction is also in view here.
- (2) As in the general references to rest [above, b.], these passages do not picture the Sabbath as a symbol of redemption as such, but as a symbol of rest from the toil and misery brought into the world by sin and the curse. The Sabbath, after all, is not a rest from sin, but from labor (which is good, though difficult). We are not told to sin six days and to be righteous the seventh, but to work six days and rest the seventh.
- (3) If the Sabbath directly symbolized redemption from sin, one could argue that it is abrogated in the New Covenant since redemption has already been achieved. But on the contrary: the Sabbath symbolizes something still future—the final rest from toil. (Cf. Gaffin’s arguments on the future reference of “rest” in Hebrews 3 and 4.) Thus, the Sabbath is not superfluous. As a symbol and a foretaste, it remains a great blessing.
- (4) Review the passages dealing with Jesus’ relation to the Sabbath: Mark 2:27f. and parallels; John 5:17f.; Hebrews 3:7-4:13. None of these suggest that Jesus intended the Sabbath to be abrogated or drastically changed in his kingdom. [Cf. above, 2.f. Cf. also Luke 4:15-28, parallels, 23:56].
- d) Summary: There is nothing in the nature of the redemptive promise that would suggest some basic alteration in the law governing the weekly Sabbath. On the contrary, the continued keeping of the Sabbath is appropriate in the New Covenant as a type and foretaste of the final consummation rest which is yet to come.
4. “Day-Keeping” in the New Covenant: Romans 14:5; Galatians 4:9ff.; Colossians 2:16f.
- a) These passages represent the strongest argument in favor of Calvin’s view. On that view, the passages present the Sabbath and all “day-keeping” as Old Covenant “shadows” which pass away in Christ. The views of Carson and others can also appeal to these passages as presenting a radical change in the application of the fourth commandment.
- b) Although I favor the “early Kline” view on the basis of the evidence presented under 2 and 3 above, I am not fully persuaded that adherents of this view have given a fully adequate account of these texts.
- c) There are, however, some considerations which suggest alternative exegetical possibilities and which weaken arguments from these texts adduced to prove “less Sabbatarian” views.
- (1) Clearly, these texts cannot be used to exclude day-keeping of every sort; for, elsewhere in the New Testament, day-keeping is required.
- (a) The early church met at specific times, obviously, and Hebrews 10:25 makes it clear that attendance at such meetings is not an optional matter. Thus, in the New Covenant, there are some days and times set aside for certain specific purposes. [Cf. C.2.c.ii.d), above].

- (b) For the Corinthian church, Paul ordains a certain day, the first day, on which offerings are to be brought, I Corinthians 16:1f.
 - (c) The “Lord’s day” (*kuriake hemera*) in Revelation 1:10.
 - (i) Not the final “day of the Lord”. The context makes clear that this is a day in John’s present experience.
 - (ii) It was probably a time of worship, as is suggested, but not required, by the phrase “in the Spirit”.
 - (iii) Clearly, it is a day which belongs to the Lord in a special way. [Cf. *deipnon kuriakon* in I Corinthians 11:20. For sacramental sense, see above C.3.b.ii.e)].
 - (iv) The regular Scriptural reference to Sabbaths as “sabbath of the Lord” [C.2.b., above] suggests that the Lord’s Day here is also a Sabbath.
 - (v) In any case, clearly, this is a special day, one which bears a distinctive relation to the Lord. It is not proper, in this case, to “regard every day alike” (Romans 14:5).
 - (vi) Justin Martyr (*Dialogue with Trypho*) refers to the Jewish Sabbath as *kuriake*. For other church Fathers, *kuriake* is Sunday (*Didache*, 14:1, Ignatius, *Magnesians* 9:1). Other references in Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon* under *kuriakos*.
 - (d) Though the Jews charges Paul with error on matters such as circumcision and the temple, there is no record of their charging him with breaking the Sabbath.
 - (e) Evidently, therefore, Romans 14:5 etc. do not rule out all observance of days or even make such observance optional in every case. It thus becomes necessary, on any view, to distinguish in these passages what sort of obligation is denied and what sort is not denied. Such a distinction, on any view, will not appear on the surface. So, it is not a question of one view taking these texts at “face value” while the other views must engage in elaborate theological rationalizations. All must do some “theologizing” in interpreting these texts. We cannot simply take them at “face value” because it is clear that the first readers of these letters would have made certain assumptions, certain distinctions that do not appear evident to us from the passages themselves.
- (2) Neither the Romans nor the Galatians passage mentions specifically the Sabbath. There were many other “days” observed in the Old Covenant economy, and it is certainly not impossible that the passages refer to these other days, or even to extra-biblical festivals. Remember that we must assume the Galatians and Romans capable of making some distinctions not explicitly noted in the passages. [Above, i.d.]
- (3) Rom. 14:5
- (a) In context, may refer to days of fasting; but the Sabbath, of course, is a day of feasting.

- (b) Note that it says we may abstain from any food; but obviously it is not saying that we may abstain from the Lord's Supper.
- (4) Galatians 4:10
- (a) The specific problem in Galatians is works-righteousness. It is certainly possible to see Paul arguing here, not against observance of days as such, but against observance of days (even the Sabbath!) as a means of self-justification. Similarly: Paul might appear to be forbidding circumcision in Galatians 5:2f.; but, under other circumstances, when the issue of justification was not at stake, Paul not only permitted but performed circumcision, Acts 16:3. More broadly: Paul's whole argument in Galatians opposes the doing of good works for justification. Yet, none of this argument forbids us to do good works or denies their obligation.
 - (b) Paul may well have the *Jewish* Sabbath (Saturday) in mind here.
- (5) Colossians 2:16-17
- (a) This passage does mention "sabbath" specifically, and it includes such Sabbaths among the "shadows" which pass away in the New Covenant. However, *sabbath* applied not only to the weekly Sabbath, but to various feast days of the Old Covenant calendar. The latter were clearly distinguished from the weekly Sabbath in the Old Testament, and it is not impossible to assume that the Colossians also made such distinctions naturally. Notice that Paul speaks of "a" Sabbath, not "the" Sabbath.
 - (b) John Mitchell made the argument that "feast, new moon and sabbath" regularly denotes official sacrifices in the Old Testament. (Report, *Minutes of the 40th General Assembly*, OPC, pp. 99ff.). On this basis, the "shadows" would be occasions of Old Covenant sacrifices, not the weekly Sabbath. (Cf. Hebrews 10).
 - (c) Or the passage may refer to the weekly Sabbath; but then, the most likely reference is to the *Jewish* Sabbath (Saturday). This is the most common understanding among Sabbatarians and the one I find most persuasive.
 - (d) As Douma points out, the "shadows" are no longer in effect; but there is a positive relation between the OT shadows and continuing NT ordinances: circumcision/baptism; passover/Lord's Supper. Why not also Sabbath/Lord's Day?
- d) Summary: The New Testament texts on "day-keeping", therefore, do not present any evidence clearly contradicting strong Sabbatarian views, though it would certainly help matters if we could reach more definitive exegetical conclusions on the meanings of these passages.
 - e) Church-Historical Difficulty: It appears that the early Christians did not take off work on the first day of the week, or connect Sunday observance with the Fourth Commandment.

- (i) The Lord's Day is honored by early writers, as the replacement of the Sabbath: Didache, Ignatius (*Magnesians*), Papias, Justin Martyr, Dionysius of Corinth, Tertullian. Only Tertullian (200 AD) mentions laying aside daily business on Sunday. The council of Laodicea (360) is the first to ask Christians to work Saturday and quit work on Sunday.
- (ii) Douma suggests that the Fourth Commandment is not often invoked here, because of the predominant tendency to read the commandments allegorically.
- (iii) But all regarded the Lord's Day as a day for joyfully celebrating redemption, as the OT Sabbath.
- (iv) And attending worship meant to some extent setting normal work aside.
- (v) And to keep the day as a Lord's *Day* (rather than hour or other period) naturally entailed a broader cessation from labor. In time the church came to see this.
- (vi) Once this fact became evident, the parallel between the Lord's Day and the fourth commandment became obvious, and theologians came to urge the Lord's Day as a means of keeping the fourth commandment.

E. The Form of the Sabbath Under the New Covenant.

The above discussion indicates that the Sabbath continues under the New Covenant in a form not drastically different from its Old Covenant form. However, clearly, there are some changes, and we must also specify more concretely those modes of Sabbath observance sanctioned by both covenants. The general meaning of the Sabbath has been discussed under C, above. Now, we seek to translate the Sabbath-symbolism into specific policies particularly for our own period in redemptive history.

1. Worship and Rest.

- a) See D.1., above, for various views.
- b) My own position is closer to the "Early Kline view" than to the others.
 - (1) Clearly, the Sabbath is worship, the consecration of a particular day to the Lord [C.2.]. In that sense, the Westminster Standards are correct: the whole day is a day of "worship" because the whole day is to be consecrated to God in a special way.
 - (2) However, the Confession is perhaps a bit too quick to equate "worship" with cultic exercises, thus reaching the conclusion that except for deeds of necessity and mercy the whole day is to be devoted to such exercises.
 - (a) Physical rest on the Sabbath (including recreation) does have a sacramental (and, thus, worshipful) function as it anticipates our sharing in the divine rest.

- (b) If the consecration of the day may be fulfilled only by cultic exercises, then “deeds of necessity and mercy” are appropriate to the day only by way of awkward exceptions.
 - (i) But mercy, as we’ve seen, is a central function of the Sabbath. This can be seen only if the idea of rest is made more central than in the Confession: mercy is a giving of rest [C.3.c.]. Thus, if rest is central, the emphasis on the Sabbath as a day of mercy becomes intelligible.
 - (ii) “Deeds of necessity” are also appropriate, because, on our view, the Sabbath has a manward reference as well as a Godward reference (Mark 2:27). In Scripture, “deeds of necessity” are not merely works necessary to keep men alive so they can worship (Jesus’ disciples might have fasted on Sabbath if that was the point), but, rather, those works necessary to maintain man’s full enjoyment of the Sabbath celebration. (Cf. Isaiah 58:13f.)
 - (3) I do not deny, of course, the appropriateness of cultic exercises on the Sabbath, only that these are exclusively appropriate. Certainly, no other day of the week is equally suited to the cultic “meeting” between God and his people [C.2.]. And no one may take it upon himself to spurn the assembly (Hebrews 10:25).
 - (4) Conclusion: The balance of the evidence indicates that under the New Covenant God requires us to consecrate the Sabbath and thereby to worship him, not only in cultic exercises, but also in resting from our labors, delighting in that rest, and sharing it with others in deeds of mercy.
2. The Change of day.
- a) The problem: Apparently, the Old Covenant people of God rested on Saturday, the seventh day of the week, by divine order. Somehow, the New Covenant people of God have come to observe Sunday, the first day instead. But where in Scripture is there a divine command to make this change? And is it thinkable that such a change would be made without divine authority?
 - b) Ambiguity of “change of day”: Before discussing this matter, we must get clear on what we mean when we talk about a “change of day”. The phrase is not as perspicuous as it appears.
 - (1) “Change from Saturday to Sunday”: This could mean merely a change in the name of the day on which we rest. But certainly, that is not what is at issue here. There is no divine mandate requiring the Sabbath to have a certain name. Names for the day rightly vary from language to language. Whether we call the Sabbath “Saturday” or “Sunday” is a matter of godly human initiative.
 - (2) “Change from the day observed in the Old Testament to the day following”:

- (a) Since the calendar has changed so often, in so many respects, we really do not know on what day of our week the Sabbath was observed in the Old Testament period. Even during that period, it is doubtful that the calendar remained entirely constant.
 - (b) Even when it did remain constant, the Sabbath may not have fallen regularly on the seventh day of the week, though it did occur at seven-day intervals. Cf. Rushdoony, *Institutes*, 134ff.
 - (i) The 15th of Abib, the first month (roughly =April) must be a Sabbath, for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The other Sabbaths are dated from this one, in Lev. 23:6-7, 11, 15-16, 21.
 - (ii) So the day of the month is constant, the day of the week variable, like your birthday. It did not fall regularly on Saturday.
 - (c) During the New Testament era, the calendar has also changed frequently, so we do not know precisely which day of our week was the “first day” of the apostolic church.
 - (d) Surely, it cannot be argued (especially in the New Testament period) that there is a divinely commanded calendar. Our inability to locate the precise day on which the biblical characters rested is not due to sin.
 - (e) There is no divinely commanded location for the international date line. Therefore, there must be some element of human initiative involved in determining which day of the week will be the seventh and which will be the first, etc.
 - (f) The idea, then, of determining the precise day on which the Old Testament people worshipped and setting aside the day following that one is an impossible notion, certainly not a matter of divine command, and not what is meant by “change of day” in this context.
- (3) “Change in Symbolic Weight”:
- (a) This, in my view, is the precise nature of the change under discussion. It is a change in the meaning of the day, a change in symbolism from end to beginning.
 - (b) In theory, the early church might have observed the new symbolism by continuing to worship on the seventh day, but regarding that seventh day as the first day of a cycle and investing that day with first-day symbolism. Such an approach, however, would have been inadequate in their situation, because:
 - (i) The change had to do with the appearances of the risen Christ on the day following the Jewish Sabbath. For them to have retained the old day would have obscured that fact.
 - (ii) A private change of calendar for the Christians only would have obscured their witness to the world and especially to the Jews.

That witness required observation of a day different from that of Judaism.

- (iii) Thus, a mere symbolic change without actual change of the time of worship would have been inexpedient in the first century. Similarly, it would be inexpedient in most situations today. Yet, there is nothing inherently wrong with worshipping on another day as long as that day is seen as “first”, with all the symbolic weight attached to that “firstness”.
- (4) The problem then becomes: what divine authorization is there for this change in symbolic weight?
- c) Even during the Old Covenant, there was some Sabbatical symbolism associated with the “first day” or “eighth day” in a sequence.
 - (1) The divine Sabbath of Genesis 2:2f. began on the first complete day of man’s existence. God’s Sabbath (which he intended to share with man) marked the beginning of man’s life. Our life is the gift of God’s creation, his completed work, just as our salvation is the gift of God’s completed redemptive work. Note:
 - (a) Christ is the second Adam.
 - (b) Redemption is a new creation.
 - (2) First-fruits and Pentecost, Leviticus 23:9-21.
 - (a) Wave-offering on “morrow after the Sabbath,” v. 11.
 - (b) Meal-offering on “morrow after seventh Sabbath,” v. 16.
 - (c) Both days are Sabbaths, though the word is not used (14, 21). “Holy convocation,” “no servile work”.
 - (d) Symbolism: Christ, the first-fruits of the dead, Pentecost as the first-fruits of the gospel.
 - (e) Thus, even under the Old Covenant, God called his people to observe occasional first-day Sabbaths and, thus, to anticipate the coming great harvest, the accomplishment of redemption.
 - (3) Blowing of trumpets, Leviticus 23:24—on the first day of the seventh month. Trumpets tend to symbolize the approach of the divine presence.
 - (4) Feast of tabernacles, Leviticus 23:33-44.
 - (a) First- and eighth-day Sabbaths, vv. 35, 39.
 - (b) Symbolism: Christ tabernacling among his people.
 - (5) Jubilee, Leviticus 25:8-17.
 - (a) The Jubilee is the fiftieth year in the sequence, following the normal Sabbatical year, v. 10.
 - (b) Symbolism: the final rectification, the consummation.
 - (6) The Old Testament, therefore, pictures the coming (New Testament) history of redemption in Christ by a series of first-day Sabbaths. One might even be led to anticipate that when these events are fulfilled, the

first day will then achieve more prominence in the life of God's people.
Possibly:

- (a) Even Israel's seventh-day Sabbath was, in a sense, a "first day yet-to-come".
 - (b) Christ brings the first day in principle.
 - (c) In the consummation, God's seventh day again becomes fully our first day, as at creation.
- d) The first day in the New Covenant.
- (1) The essence of the Sabbath is the "meeting with God" (C.2.). But in Christ is the definitive meeting point of man with God. He is the Sabbath.
 - (a) He calls the disciples, in effect, to drop all their own work to follow him. Peter and the others, of course, did return to fishing from time to time during Jesus' earthly ministry, but notice how often he interrupts their fishing to draw their attention to himself.
 - (b) Did Mary, as opposed to Martha, recognize the presence of the Sabbath in Jesus (Luke 10:38-42)? Contrary to the normal pattern of guest / host relations, she saw her role to be one of rest, worship and enjoyment in the presence of Jesus.
 - (2) First-day resurrection and resurrection appearances, Luke 24:13-51 (36-47, maybe 48-52); John 20:1, 19, 26.
 - (3) First-day gatherings of the apostolic church: This is the only day concerning which there is apostolic example: Acts 2:1, 20:6f.; I Corinthians 16:1f.
 - (4) In the post-apostolic period, the first-day gatherings were taken for granted; they were non-controversial. That presupposes apostolic warrant.
 - (5) Conclusion:
 - (a) Apostolic practice justifies the use of the first day as the Christian day of worship.
 - (b) In all probability, the significance of the day is that it is a memorial to the day of resurrection. This fact, in turn, embraces all of the rich Old Testament symbolism concerning the first day.
- e) Is Sunday the New Testament Sabbath?
- (1) Douma:
 - (a) Both Sabbath and Sunday are special days, commemorative.
 - (b) Both are feasts.
 - (c) Both are days of worship.
 - (d) Both are "made for man."
 - (e) Both are violated by selfish labor and by Pharisaic casuistry.
 - (2) Calvin: since Sabbath symbolizes resting from works righteousness, we should celebrate it every day.
 - (a) But God rested only one day.

- (b) He appointed Israel to observe one day, though in the OT also the Sabbath symbolized God's deliverance.
 - (c) The chief symbolism of the Sabbath is not rest from legalist works, but rest from the toil that sin brings into the world. We are not told to spend six days in legalistic works and rest on the seventh.
- (3) Days of worship, "holy convocation," were Sabbaths in the Old Testament. The day of worship and the day of rest are never separated. Previous discussion shows the theological necessity of this.
- (4) Since there is clearly a change in symbolic weight, from a predominantly seventh-day symbolism to a predominantly first-day symbolism, under the New Covenant, and, since that symbolic weight has been attached to the Sabbath [i., above], the day has, therefore, been changed.
- (5) But do we still keep the letter of the fourth commandment, which specifies a sequence of six days of work and a rest on the seventh?
- (a) The New Testament Sabbath is, like the Old, a day of rest between one six-day period and another. What do we rest from? As in the Old Covenant, we rest from the preceding six days of work.
 - (b) The Sabbath in either covenant, then, is both backward looking and forward looking. It is a memorial to God's acts in the past and a consecration of our own past labors, but also an anticipation of the history of redemption to come.
 - (c) The difference lies, not in any drastic change, not even a drastic change of symbolism, but in a change of symbolic weight. The New Testament Sabbath carries the same symbolism of the Old Testament Sabbath, but refocuses it to account for its distinctive historical position: it changes the Old Testament symbolism by stressing the new beginning made by the finished accomplishment of redemption.
 - (d) Thus, we still rest on the seventh day, as the fourth commandment says—the seventh day from the beginning of the work-week. But that seventh day is our first day in Christ.
3. Sabbath as a New Covenant Sign.
- a) In all ages, the Sabbath is a distinguishing mark of God's people [C.3.b.; E.1.b.iv.d)]. Yet, it is given to the whole human race in creation and probably also in the earliest redemptive covenants (see earlier discussion of Kline).
 - (1) Since it "distinguishes" the whole race as God's covenant people, there is a sense in which it does not distinguish at all. All are given the Sabbath as a sign of promise.
 - (2) Though all have the obligation to keep the Sabbath, few do; that is one aspect of the covenant-breaking that characterizes the human race.
 - (3) Thus, Israel is called to be a nation of Sabbath-keepers. The language in Exodus 31:12ff. does not suggest that the Sabbath is something unknown to other nations or distinctive to Israel, but, rather, that Israel

is to be unique as a Keeper of the Sabbath. In Exodus 20:8, Israel is told to remember the Sabbath. Again, the impression is that Israel is to observe a law that has been previously known but not observed.

b) Thus, the sign- or sacramental-character of the Sabbath does not distinguish the church in the sense that those outside the church are forbidden to observe it. It is not parallel to baptism and the Lord's Supper in this respect. Note again the obligation of "strangers" (Exodus 20:10) whether circumcised or not (Exodus 12:48).

c) Blue laws.

(1) There is, therefore, nothing theologically wrong with urging unbelievers to keep the Sabbath, just as we urge them not to kill or steal.

(2) Since we are called, as Sabbatarians, not only to rest, but also to give rest, it is proper for us to seek in society a slackening of the pace so that the populace as a whole may rest one day in seven, and also (incidentally!) to reduce the economic pressure on Christians to break the Sabbath in order to compete. The Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27)—a creation ordinance written into our being. We need to rest one day in seven. To promote this is to promote health in the fullest sense, not just to promote a feature of a particular redemptive covenant.

(3) For the role of government, see discussion of the fifth commandment. Generally, I see no objection to the use of the powers of government to enforce Sabbath-observance, though this may not be desirable in every situation. Even if one denies to government the right to enforce religion, one certainly must acknowledge the right of government to protest religion and to promote rest in society [above, ii.].

4. Sabbath Years and Jubilee

a) These have to do with the rest of the land.

b) So I take it that these were given to Israel as a theocracy, not to the Gentile nations who have no divine land grant.

c) Though not mandatory, they express important principles (see below).

5. Broader Implications.

a) Ecology.

(1) In the sabbatical years, and in the Jubilee, the land was to rest, just as on the weekly Sabbath, man was to give rest to his family, servants and animals. This completes the reference to those under man's dominion. Exodus 23:10f.; Leviticus 25:1-17.

(2) Thus, the cultural mandate is not intended as an exploitation of creation, but a "guarding and keeping", (Genesis 2:15).

(3) Scripture warns us, therefore, against coveting prosperity in such a way that we destroy the God-given source of our wealth. God's people not only take from the earth, but also give back.

b) Care for the poor.

- (1) In the sabbatical years, debts were remitted and Hebrew slaves set free, unless they voluntarily agreed to accept lifetime servitude, Deuteronomy 15:1-6, 12-18.
- (2) One reason for the rest of the land was so that “the poor of thy people may eat” (Exodus 23:11).
- (3) Again, then, we are being warned against precisely the acquisitive spirit so common in modern America. The Sabbath, in all its forms, means that we will not put our own wealth ahead of the needs of others. [Cf. C.3.c.].
- (4) Hence, the condemnation of Amos against the Sabbatarians of his day, 8:4-10. They kept the Sabbath, so far as the letter of the law was concerned, but they eagerly awaited the end of the Sabbath so that they could resume their oppression of the poor. Thus, they had not begun to appreciate the meaning of the Sabbath ordinance. The Sabbath commandment requires a Sabbatarian attitude of heart—a willingness to serve.

V. The Fifth Commandment: “Honor thy father and thy mother (Deuteronomy: as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee), that thy days may be long (Deuteronomy: and that it might go well with thee) in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

WLC, Q124: Who are meant by father and mother in the fifth commandment?

A124: By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.

Q125: Why are superiors styled Father and Mother?

A125: Superiors are styled Father and Mother, both to teach them in all duties toward their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations; and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents.

Q126: What is the general scope of the fifth commandment?

A126: The general scope of the fifth commandment is, the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals.

Q127: What is the honor that inferiors owe to their superiors.?

A127: The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior; prayer and thanksgiving for them; imitation of their virtues and graces; willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels; due submission to their corrections; fidelity to, defense and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they may be an honor to them and to their government.

Q128: What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors?

A128: The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against, their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such

refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government.

Q129: What is required of superiors towards their inferiors?

A129: It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors; to instruct, counsel, and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; and discountenancing, reprovng, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body: and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, honor to themselves, and so to preserve that authority which God hath put upon them.

Q130: What are the sins of superiors?

A130: The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counseling, encouraging, or favoring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or any way dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.

Q131: What are the duties of equals?

A131: The duties of equals are, to regard the dignity and worth of each other, in giving honor to go one before another; and to rejoice in each other's gifts and advancement, as their own.

Q132: What are the sins of equals?

A132: The sins of equals are, besides the neglect of the duties required, the undervaluing of the worth, envying the gifts, grieving at the advancement of prosperity one of another; and usurping preeminence one over another.

Q133: What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment, the more to enforce it?

A133: The reason annexed to the fifth commandment, in these words, That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, is an express promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good, to all such as keep this commandment.

A. Place in the Decalogue

1. Transition from duty to God, to our duty to man.
 - a) Note Kline's reservations: no division between two tables.
 - b) But a striking transition nonetheless:
 - (1) Worship, reverence to God in I-IV
 - (2) Parallel (!) reverence to human beings in V. (How reconcile??)
2. The second creation ordinance
 - a) Worship and Sabbath, I-IV
 - b) Family, V-VII (Can murder be construed as a family crime? Note Gen. 4:1-15, restriction of vengeance in family context. No corresponding restriction outside that context, Romans 13:4. In some ways the human race is a family; in other ways not.)

c) Labor VIII-X

(Can “false witness” be construed as a crime against property, an attempt to gain economic advantage through legal authority?)

B. General Thrust

1. Honor, *Kabad*: Calvin' distinctions still helpful.
 - a) Reverence, respect (Existential perspective)
 - (1) “Fear” used in parallel texts: Leviticus 19:3, Romans 13:7, I Peter 2:18
 - (2) Parallels language used concerning our worship of God.
 - (a) Sometimes Scripture contrasts the honor due to God with that due to any human being, Acts 4:19, 5:29, even father and mother! Matthew 10:35-37, Mark 10:29f, Luke 14:26f. (Strong testimony to the deity of Christ.) First commandment!
 - (b) But in the fifth commandment, reverence to father and mother is a consequence of our reverence to God.
 - (i) Deut. “as the Lord thy God commanded thee”
 - (ii) Leviticus 19:32, Ephesians 6:1ff, Colossians 3:20ff
 - (iii) Matthew 15:4-6, Mark 7:10ff, *Corban*
 - (a) Pledge of money to temple, or legal notice disclaiming responsibility for parents' debts?
 - (b) In either case, an attempt to divest self of obligation, by religious, legal oath. Cf. Exodus 21:17.
 - (c) Jesus condemns this competition between loyalty to God and to parents. It actually dishonors by making his word void.
 - (c) Need for balanced perception
 - (i) Roman Catholic reverence of men: *latreia*, *douleia*, *uperdouleia*, clergy titles
 - (ii) Protestants + exaggerated reverence for theologians, pastors, traditions.
 - (iii) Existential perspective: need to “see as.”
 - (d) Importance of deference, Gen. 31:35, 1 Kings 2:19, 1 Tim. 5:1.
 - (e) Seriousness of cursing, Ex. 21:17, Lev. 20:9, Prov. 20:20, 30:11.
 - b) Submission (Normative perspective)
 - (1) General: reverence or respect entails hearing with respect, expecting to learn, being willing to change, not assuming too quickly that we know more than the one we listen to.
 - (a) I Timothy 5:1 - not blind obedience: we can exhort. But age is a factor in determining how we exhort.
 - (b) I Peter 5:5. In both of these-passages, “elder” may mean simply “older man,” not necessarily a church officer.
 - (c) Proverbs: the elderly are assumed to be wise, worth hearing. When they are not, they are pathetic cases.
 - (d) Note the negative example of Rehoboam, 1 Kings 12.
 - (e) Scripture presents parents (and the elderly generally) as *teachers*: Deut. 6:6-7, Prov. 1:10, 2:1, 3:1. Accepting the wisdom of parents-teachers leads to long life (Prov. 3:1-2, 4:10). The concept of

- parents as wisdom teachers is the logical link between honoring parents and the promise of long life and prosperity (Douma).
- (2) Obedience: This is a particular form of submission, not submission itself. Sometimes submission entails obedience, sometimes not.
 - (a) Children and parents: for a child, submission to parents involves obedience, Ephesians 6:1, Colossians 3:20. But when the child comes of age, little is said about obedience. “Honor” then takes primarily the form of respect (a) and financial support (c).
 - (b) Civil authorities, Titus 3:1, I Peter 2:13f.
 - (c) Church authorities, Hebrews 13:17, Phil. 2:12, II Thes. 3:14.
 - (d) Wives, I Peter 3:6
 - (e) Servants, Colossians 3:20, I Peter 2:18ff (even to the cruel!)
 - (f) Limit on obedience: we must disobey human authorities when they command us to disobey God. When we sin against God, we may not offer as an excuse that we were commanded to do so by lawful authority. Ex. 1:17, 19-21, I Samuel 22:17ff, I Kings 12:28-30, 2 Chron. 26:16-21, Daniel 6:22f, Matt. 10:37, Luke 3:13f, 14:26, Acts 4:18-20, 5:29.
 - (i) Hezekiah followed his ancestor David, rather than his father Ahaz, 2 Kings 18:3.
 - (ii) Jesus was not uncritical of his parents (Luke 2:49), but was subject to them (2:51).
 - c) Financial support (Situational perspective)
 - (1) Financial connotation of *kabad*, Proverbs 13:9, Gen. 13:2, Isaiah 43:23, Malachi 1:6, 3:8; time, I Timothy 5:17.
 - (2) NT Obligation: I Timothy 5:4ff (note especially verse 8), Mark 7:10ff.
 2. Father and Mother: The Larger Catechism sees the Fifth Commandment as covering all interpersonal relations: between superiors, inferiors, equals. Can this rather broad understanding of “father and mother” be justified?
 - a) Structure of family metaphors in Scripture
 - (1) Elders, rulers, military chiefs: Ex. 12:21, Duet. 5:23, II Kings 5:13, Gen. 45:8, Isaiah 49:23, Judges 5:7
 - (2) Prophets, wisdom teachers, church leaders: Ps. 34:11f, Proverbs 1:8, 10, 15, II Kings 2:12, 13.14, I Cor. 4:15, Gal. 4:19, I Thes. 5.12f (“esteem”), 1 Tim. 1:2, Tit. 1:4.
 - (3) Older people: I Timothy 5:1
 - (4) God: Malachi 1:6, Matt. 6:9, Ephesians 3:15
 - b) Family is the fundamental sphere from which all other spheres are derived; therefore, family “honor” is the tie that binds all society.
 - (1) Historically
 - (a) Adam played all roles: prophet, priest, king
 - (b) Noah: human race born anew in a single family
 - (c) Israel: its institutions are elaborations of its original family structure
 - (d) New Covenant: a new family, Matthew 12:48ff, Mark 10:29f, Ephesians 1:5, Romans 14: 10ff

- (2) Developmentally: For young children, the family still performs all the functions of society: teaching, discipline, employment, religious leadership.
- (3) Logically: “rule” in all spheres is similar, I Timothy 3:4, David as shepherd and king.
- c) Similar “honor” required in all authority spheres: reverence, submission, support, promise of prosperity, “unto the Lord.” Proverbs 3:1-2, Ephesians 5:22ff (note verse 22, 6:5, 7, 9), Colossians 3:23ff, I Peter 2:17 [cf. Exodus 22:28, Proverbs 24:21, Psalm. 82:6].
- d) Universality of “honor” in Scripture
 - (1) Honor attaches to all persons
 - (a) Romans 13:7 - probably an allusion to fifth commandment; note reference to other commandments in verse 9.
 - (b) I Peter 2:13, 17.
 - (2) Mutual submission in the church
 - (a) Romans 12:10 - in honor preferring one another
 - (b) Ephesians 5:21ff - note reciprocal responsibilities.
 - (c) I Peter 1ff - note “honor” due the wife in verse 7, promise of prosperity in verse 9.
 - (d) I Corinthians 7:2-4 - surprising mutual “ownership”
 - (e) I Corinthians 11:11 - lest readers draw wrong inferences from female submission
 - (3) Pattern of office in the new covenant, John 13:12-17, Matthew 20:20-28, I Peter 3. Unusual: instead of the “inferior” being preoccupied with the needs of the superior, *vice versa*. There ought to be an atmosphere of love in the church entirely different from that found in any secular institution.
 - (4) Still, there is a real authority structure. Christ is over the church, parents have authority over children, husbands over wives. (Ephesians 5:21 does not make husband and wife equal authorities.)
 - (5) Vs. egalitarianism, authoritarianism.
 - (a) God places all of us under authority. In itself, this is not demeaning or oppressive, contra feminism.
 - (b) God has not made us all equal in gifts and abilities.
 - (c) But no human ruler should claim divine power over all aspects of human life.
 - (d) And rulers should rule for the good of their subjects.
- 3. Promise of Prosperity
 - a) For obedience to God, but also for obedience to his representatives, Colossians 3:25, I Timothy 5:8, I Peter 2:18, 3:8-12.
 - b) Functions in new covenant as well as old: Mark 10:30, Colossians 3:24, Ephesians 6:1, I Peter 3:10 (quotes Psalm 34:12, which alludes to fifth commandment). “Land” is the whole earth now.
 - c) Does distinguish the righteous from the wicked, I Kings 3:14, Malachi 4:6.

- d) Not automatic, however. Some faithful people die young. That can be a blessing, 1 Kings 14:13, 2 Kings 22:20. But the ultimate fulfillment of this promise is in the life to come.
- e) Still, there is blessing in this life for honoring God and his representatives, Mark 10:29-31, 1 Tim. 4:8.
- f) Why is this promise attached specifically to the fifth commandment?
 - (1) Similar sanctions attached to worship, honor of God, obeying him: second commandment, Deuteronomy 6:3, 18 (note parallel language).
 - (2) Point of fifth commandment: attaches same sanctions to God's representatives.
 - (3) Extends to sources of life generally: 12:25, 28 (blood not to be eaten); 22:6f (don't take mother bird and eggs). Ecological implications.
 - (4) Parents as wisdom teachers: following their wisdom brings long life (Prov. 3:1-2, 4:10, Psm. 1). Compare the function of God's law "for your good" (Deut. 6:24, 10:13, 12:28).

B. Sphere-relations: Historical Survey

1. Sophists
 - a) Ethical irrationalism: moral norms neither true nor false.
 - b) Ethical rationalism: man is the measure of all things.
 - c) Irrationalism leads to anarchy in society.
 - d) Rationalism leads to totalitarianism ("Justice is the interest of the stronger.")
2. Plato
 - a) Rationalism: philosopher knows the forms, so he ought to rule.
 - b) Hence, totalitarianism
 - (1) No private property
 - (2) Communal wives, children for upper classes
 - (3) Eugenic supervision of marriages, births
 - (4) Compulsory education
 - (5) Censorship of art, literature
 - c) Tyranny? But it is supposed to bring fulfillment to each individual.
3. Aristotle: State is more important than the individual, since the whole is more important than any part. It is the partnership that includes all partnerships.
4. Stoics: similar reasoning, leading to conclusion of world government.
5. Aquinas
 - a) Doctrine of the state can be established by natural (Aristotelian) reason.
 - (1) State is highest social whole of which all are parts.
 - (2) "Subsidiarily:" Let the parts do what they can.
 - b) If man hadn't fallen, the state would be enough; but because of sin, we need the church also.
 - c) The two are distinct, each autonomous in its own realm (nature/grace).
 - d) Since grace is the higher sphere, the church is superior to the state. It is the extension of the incarnation itself.
 - (1) It prevails where conflict.
 - (2) It instructs the state concerning natural law (since the fall, it has a superior understanding of nature).
 - (3) The state may enter the sphere of grace insofar as it helps the church.

- (4) Boniface VIII: earthly power is delegated to the pope. He may remove a heretical ruler.
- (5) Bellarmine - more moderate
 - (a) Church and state are like soul and body.
 - (b) Church's principal responsibility in state is to enlighten rulers, people on the extent and limits of their obligations.
 - (c) The church has a right to intervene in temporal matters which affect the spiritual realm.
- 6. Maritain (modern, pre-1967 Roman Catholic)
 - a) State is supreme embodiment of natural reason.
 - b) Its work: promote the common welfare, maintain law, administer public affairs.
 - c) Church is superior because man is spiritual.
 - (1) That supremacy, however, must be applied "analogously" - differently in different situations.
 - (2) In democracy, authoritarianism inappropriate. A more spiritual approach better befits the church's nature: moral enlightenment.
 - (3) Don't compromise with moral law, but don't enforce rules too heavy for the common good.
 - d) State may help church
 - (1) By creating conditions of order
 - (2) By acknowledging God
 - (3) Specific help (no more than it would give to any other group)
- 7. Vatican II - now room for all sorts of views in Roman church.
- 8. Machiavelli (1469-1527)
 - a) Christianity makes men passive, discourages political involvement; thus power of the church must be sharply curbed.
 - b) Law alone makes men virtuous, hunger alone makes him industrious.
 - c) Until population is purified, the state requires as absolute despot to maintain strength.
 - d) That despot may do anything (lie, trick, force) to achieve his ends. He is above the sphere of individual morality.
- 9. Bodin, Hobbes, Rousseau: "Social contract." Once the people have transferred their authority to the state, the state becomes absolute in authority, irrevocably in power.
- 10. Locke: Social contract modified in direction of Rutherford.
- 11. Anabaptism (Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*)
 - a) Sword-bearing of state is radically incompatible with Jesus' teaching concerning non-resistance.
 - (1) Rev. 13: state is satanic.
 - (2) Romans 13
 - (a) State is one of the tribulations the church must endure until the last day (verses 11-14).
 - (b) Church must relate to state in attitude of suffering love (Chap. 12, 13:8-10), meek submission.

- (c) "Be subject" - not obedience, but subordination. Christians may often have to disobey, but must accept the penalty.
 - (d) "Ordained by God" - ordered by God; so no divine approval involved.
 - (e) "Good (4) and "evil" are not obedience or disobedience to the state, but living according to the standards of Rom. 12.
 - (f) "Minister of God" - the Christian, not the civil magistrate.
 - (g) Use of force is evil. True power only in suffering.
 - (h) Conclusion: state is an evil which God uses for his purpose.
- b) So Christians ought not to participate in the state at all.
- c) Reply:
- (1) Does no justice O.T.
 - (2) Hard to eliminate element of divine sanction from Romans 13.
 - (3) *Hypotasso* does regularly mean to obey out of obligation, not just to submit to superior force. See Luke 2:51, 10:17, 20, Rom. 8:7, 1 Cor. 14:34, 37, 16:16, Eph. 5:24, Col. 3:18, 1 Pet. 2:13, 18, 3:1, 5, 5:5, Tit. 2:9, 3:1, Jas. 4:7, Heb. 12:9.
 - (4) Anabaptist reading of "good," "evil," and "minister of God" not plausible.
 - (5) Is power as force always evil? 1 Tim. 6:15, Rev. 5:5, 12, 12:5, 21:24.
 - (6) Anabaptists accept authority of parents, husbands, teachers. Why not of state?
12. Lutheranism: "the doctrine of the two kingdoms"
- a) God approves of state, but it is less than God's best.
 - b) It is an emergency measure to preserve life, order, family after fall.
 - c) Uses forces unleashed by the fall, but in interest of love.
 - d) "God's left hand." Contradiction in God's nature? (Thielicke)
 - e) Powers of state, then, must be limited.
 - f) Kingdom of God: based on entirely different principles. Rule only through word, spirit.
 - g) Prince can be Christian, but in different order.
 - h) Cf. law/gospel distinction: threat may never be a means to a godly end.
 - i) Church and state
 - (1) State not arm of church, but ought to be Christian.
 - (2) Ought to protect church, help organize it.
 - (3) Cannot intervene in purely religious issues.
 - (4) Erastianism: church under state control.
13. Calvin
- a) State is a gracious provision of God. (vs. RC, Anabaptist, Lutheran)
 - b) Scripture determines the state's prerogatives.
 - c) Church and state: difference is competence, jurisdiction.
 - d) Limits of state's jurisdiction: somewhat unclear.
 - e) Ground of revolution? Generally no, but:
 - (1) Sermon on Daniel 6:22 - When rulers rise against God, people should put them down.

- (2) Last page of *Institutes*: lesser magistrates must not simply agree to unjust policies.
14. S. Rutherford (*Lex, Rex*, 1644)
- a) Government is from God, but ratifies by people (Saul, David).
 - b) King is subject to God's law.
 - c) In accepting a ruler, the community does not surrender all its rights (as Rousseau thought), but only the right to do violence. They maintain the right of self-defense.
 - d) If the king breaks the contract, the people are free from their obligations.
 - e) Romans 13 includes “inferior magistrates.”
 - (1) So the king is not the sole interpreter of the law.
 - (2) Separation of powers is desirable.
 - (3) Inferior judges also have power of sword.
15. A. Kuyper (*Lectures on Calvinism*. 1898)
- a) Authority of the state is from God, subject to the word.
 - b) Its responsibilities: Compel mutual respect, defend the weak, collect taxes or national purposes
 - c) Other spheres also sovereign - their rights from God, not state.
 - d) Thus state must respect their rights - basis of freedom. May not interfere in their “internal workings”
 - e) State is “unnatural” institution. (vs. Van Ruler)
 - (1) Post-fall
 - (2) Vs. man's natural impulses - replaces organic with mechanical motivation.
 - (3) But necessary in fallen world.
 - f) State under God's law, but not theocracy (Urim)
 - (1) Must protect church
 - (2) Cannot extirpate idolatry, since state not competent to decide which church is right.
 - (3) Ought to penalize blasphemy, not because of its impiety, but because God rules over the state.
 - g) Comments
 - (1) Not specific enough in reference to Scriptural law.
 - (2) Limits on state not precise.
 - (3) Reformed resistance, though, to anarch/totalitarian dialectic.
16. Dooyeweerd
- a) More elaborate account of family, church, state as belonging to distinct spheres, freedom grounded in this diversity under God.
 - b) Problems: grounding for distinctions, precision on powers, limits of state power.
 - c) His disciples, therefore, differ greatly in their view of the power of the state: cf. the conservative Van Riessen, the socialistic Bob Goudswaard. No “limit in principle” to governmental interference, because no clearly exegetical approach.
17. Theonomy (see general discussion of normative perspective)
- a) Scripture sets limits on state powers.

- b) O.T.: church/state distinguished by priesthood/kingship.
 - c) Emulate OT laws (with cultural and redemptive-historical adjustments).
18. Clowney ("The Politics of the Kingdom")
- a) Kingdom of God: the coming of God himself in Christ.
 - b) Kingdom power - radically different from earthly power.
 - c) Christ fulfills creation mandate, Matthew 28, Ephesians 4:10, dominion promises to Israel.
 - d) Our work: not to seek dominion, but to endure the sufferings of Christ in bringing the gospel to the world. The glory comes later.
 - e) The church is the new theo-political form of the kingdom, but radically different from the O.T. theocracy. No sword.
 - (1) It is the form of the heavenly city, while the state is the form of the earthly city.
 - (2) Sword is for Christians, non-Christians alike (Genesis 9); cf. Kline.
 - f) Applications
 - (1) Don't link Christianity to political hopes.
 - (2) Cultural mandate no longer in force.
 - (3) God does not promise us skill in world politics, etc.
 - (4) Don't amass wealth, but give to the needy.
 - g) Comments
 - (1) Brings out more clearly than the Kuyperians the distinctive nature of the church.
 - (2) Cultural mandate and great commission: see previous discussion.
 - (3) Secularity of the state.
 - (a) Scripture does teach that the civil magistrate does not lose his authority because of unbelief.
 - (b) But why should we not strive to increase Christian influence in the state? Unbelieving magistrates may have lawful authority, but they are hardly ideal.
 - (4) God does give worldly wisdom to Christians: Proverbs
 - (5) Christians are promised prosperity; and prosperity is necessary if we are to help the needy in meaningful way.
19. Frame, "Toward a Theology of the State."
20. Some conclusions (tentative)
- a) Scripture must govern our thinking in this area in detail as well as general drift.
 - b) The church is the fundamental form of the kingdom of God. As such it performs for God's people many functions otherwise performed by the state.
 - c) Authority of the state is limited:
 - (1) By God's commission which is limited.
 - (2) By other institutions, especially church.
 - (3) By Scriptural norms.
 - d) Insofar as state is obedient to Scripture, it may be and ought to be Christian.
 - e) Cautious imitation of Old Covenant Israel is desirable for avoiding subjectivism, maintaining liberty.
 - f) Should churches be politically active?

- (i) The church should proclaim the whole counsel of God, which often bears upon questions of political debate: freedom of religion, abortion, care for the poor, race, gender roles, homosexuality, political corruption, and many others.
- (ii) This proclamation should not be limited to church services. It is appropriate for Christians to write letters to representatives, write to public media, picket, demonstrate, etc. to make their desires known.
- (iii) Any genuine application of the Word is legitimate in preaching and teaching. In some situations, it might even seem necessary to oppose or endorse a particular candidate (Hitler as limiting concept!), though a church could forfeit its tax exemption if it makes a partisan endorsement.
- (iv) But on many issues, political decisions require expertise not generally found among preachers:
 - (A) Federal budget allocations, military hardware, effects of government on the economy, etc. More humility is required on such matters.
 - (B) Making decisions on issues that are not black and white.
 - (C) Deciding what weight to put on each issue when making a political decision.
- (v) Often, churches can provide better services than government to alleviate social problems: Christian schools, working with the homeless, etc.
- (vi) Churches need to be alert to attacks on their liberty to proclaim Christ: anti-church zoning policies, restrictions on religious speech, draconian restrictions against anti-abortion demonstrations, etc.

C. Civil Disobedience, Revolution

1. Generally, Scripture is anti-revolutionary.
 - a) Suffering obedience, even to froward, cruel rulers: Romans 13, I Peter 2, Revelation 13, Matthew 22:15-22. (taxes were 40%)
 - b) Emigration is a possibility if matters are intolerable.
2. Nevertheless, we must refuse any command contrary to God's will [I, B, 1, b, ii].
3. Obedience to law is fundamentally obedience to the whole system.
 - a) We may break a lower law if we believe that a higher law transcends it. (Often we must, to obtain justice.)
 - b) Calvin: Lower magistrates must resist tyranny from the higher, for the higher magistrate is accountable to the law.
 - c) Sometimes, therefore, a ruler must be replaced.
 - (i) Best if peaceful.
 - (ii) In an extreme situation, perhaps violence is justified. Police and military power should be used not only to quell lawlessness among the subjects, but also among the rulers.

- (iii) Vs. anarchy, however. The leadership must either be part of the governing body already, or must represent a viable alternative regime. The American Revolution?
- 4. A government may cease to be a government. (Hard to judge)
 - a) Losing all standards of justice, becoming like a crime organization (*contra* Romans13)
 - b) Becoming too weak to maintain order.
 - c) Breaking contracts with the people.
- 5. If power is being contested, the Christian is under no obligation to support the previous status quo. Make the decision using biblical criteria of justice.
- 6. An alternative government must be available. Anarchy is not an acceptable result. The Christian is under authority (Romans13).

D. Punishment

- 1. Theories
 - a) Deterrence (of offender or of others in society): Proverbs 22:15, Deuteronomy 13:11, Cleansings, offerings.
 - b) Reformation (Proverbs, I Corinthians 5:5)
 - c) Restitution (most prominent in biblical theft-law)
 - d) Restraint (quarantine, exile, capital punishment)
 - e) Taxation (not in Scripture - a non-moral motive)
 - f) Retribution (*talion*; basic to all punishment)
- 2. Problems today
 - a) Deterrence and reformation have contrary applications.
 - b) Little restitution in modern civil law.
 - c) Resistance to retribution (but what basis do we have for punishing anyone, or “curing” anyone, if that treatment is not deserved?)
- 3. Forms of civil punishment
 - a) Imprisonment
 - (1) In Scripture, prison used only to hold people for trial. No prison terms as penalties.
 - (2) Prison terms as-punishments are a modern idea designed for humanitarian and reformatory purposes.
 - (3) Prison systems are dismal failures on both counts.
 - (4) Biblical alternative:
 - (a) Double restitution for theft (strict justice: the criminal loses precisely what he would have gained).
 - (b) Incurable criminals: execution.
 - (i) Contempt for society (“High hand”)
 - (ii) Vs. development of criminal class.
 - b) Restitution (above)
 - (1) Strict justice
 - (2) Benefit to victim
 - c) Slavery (“household apprenticeship”)
 - (1) Various forms: enslavement through war, voluntary slavery. We will consider the enslavement of believers for debt or theft.
 - (2) Live with family, learn a trade, learn responsible habits.

- (3) Beating allowed, since lack of motivation.
- (4) Set free in 7th year.
- (5) Gifts for celebration, establish in trade, Deuteronomy 15:14, 18.
- (6) Model of “second childhood”
- (7) Slavery in American South
 - (a) Based on kidnapping, a capital crime in Scripture.
 - (b) Based on racism
 - (c) Believing slaves were not set free after six years, nor were they trained for post-slavery responsibilities.
- d) Capital Punishment: objections
 - (1) Sixth commandment
 - (a) But Sixth commandment is opposed to unlawful killing (*ratzach*). Lawfulness is relative to Scripture.
 - (b) Background of Sixth commandment is Genesis 9:6 which provides precisely for the shedding of blood by the state.
 - (c) The law as a whole provides for capital punishment.
 - (2) “N.T. prohibits revenge.”
 - (a) O.T. also teaches love of enemies, limits personal vengeance, yet sees no conflict with capital punishment.
 - (b) Note contrast between Romans 12 and 13.
 - (3) “Capital punishment doesn't deter.”
 - (a) Deterrence is not the final issue.
 - (b) Statistics on swift execution policy not available. Swiftmess and certainty are crucial to deterrence.
 - (c) Clearly the one executed is sufficiently deterred and that is a gain for society.

E. Women's Roles (Foh, Hurley)

- 1. In the home
 - a. Subjection to her husband (Eph. 5:22, Col. 3:18, Tit. 2:5, “headship” = authority).
 - b. Joint authority with him (Ex. 20:12, Lev. 19:3, Prov. 23:22).
 - c. Mutual “ownership” (1 Cor. 7:2-4).
- 2. In the church
 - a. I Corinthians 14 context of judging the prophets.
 - b. I Timothy 2: office of elder in view, not general teaching.
 - c. General principle: a woman can do anything in the church that an unordained man can do.
 - d. Diaconate? Yes, because it is a servicing office (Phoebe).
 - e. Older women as the primary teachers of younger women (Tit. 2:4).
 - f. Women teaching men and women in non-official capacity, Acts 18:26.
- 3. In society
 - a. Does Titus 2:5 require women to be homemakers?
 - i. The verse seems to presuppose that most women were homemakers, that being their usual cultural occupation.
 - ii. But anyone charged with home responsibilities should be busy with them, as they should be “self-controlled” and “pure.”

- iii. Prov. 31 implies a wider social role for women, though still centered in the home.
 - iv. The calling of Deborah, Ruth, the NT prophetesses, the NT order of widows, and others indicate that God sometimes calls women to work outside the home, or without a home-centered focus.
 - v. It depends on age, gifts, marital status, etc.
 - vi. Women seem to be uniquely equipped to be the primary nurturers of young children. See my paper on “The Biblical Doctrine of the Family.”
- b. Should female equality be mandated in society?
- (i) Although I think women may legitimately work outside the home under some conditions, I certainly do not think that all occupations should contain equal populations of male and female workers. There are good reasons why there are and should be fewer women than men in many professions.
 - (ii) Equal pay for equal work? A proper policy must, of course, take into account the fact that women tend to attain less seniority than men, tend more often to work part-time, etc. Better: equal pay for equal value.
 - (iii) These issues require consideration of individual cases and are best resolved in the marketplace rather than in government.