

Presbyterianism 101

ALL TO GOD'S GLORY:
The Law of God
(WCF 19)

1

Outcome of New Birth

- **Justification, Adoption, Sanctification:**
Exclusively Acts of God for benefit of the elect
- **Sanctification:** work of God He does as well as enables and empowers in the believer
- **Perseverance of the Saints**
 - Grounded in election of God, Covenant
 - Triune work in the salvation of sinners
 - How can we have assurance of salvation?

2

The Christian Life

- **New Section of WCF:** Law and Liberty, Worship and Church, Civil Government
- **What is the relationship of the Christian to the Law of God?**
- **Is the Law of God simply an "Old Testament thing?"**

3

The Covenant of Works (19.1)

4

God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it: and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

The Covenant of Works (19.1)

5

- **Law Given at Creation:** written on Adam's heart in His conscience; Adam had ability to obey fully
- **Obligations, Rewards of Covenant of Works**
 - Perfect, Perpetual, Personal Obedience
 - Eternal Life Promised; a gracious covenant in that reward far outweighs the obligation
- **Covenant of Works or Covenant of Life?**

The Nature of the Law (19.2)

6

This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables: the four first commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six our duty to man.

The Nature of the Law (19.2)

7

- **Objective Standard of Righteousness:** Law is not primarily given to restrain sin, but to declare good
 - Morality does not change
 - The Moral Law (summarized at Sinai) is binding on all people everywhere
 - Moral Law is grounded in the changeless nature of God, it reveals something about God
- **Sinai was not republication of CoW**

The Nature of the Law (19.2)

8

- **Moral Law revealed essentially in the conscience; conscience sufficient in the Garden**
 - Adam able and commanded to keep
 - Adam represented all mankind
- **Christ took up the Covenant of Works where Adam left it and fulfilled it on our behalf**
- **Obedience is not the ground of salvation, but necessary consequence of New (Spiritual) Life**

The Nature of the Law (19.2)

9

- **Moral Law summarized in Ten Commandments**
 - How to love God and love Man
 - Two tables (1-4, Love God; 5-10, Love Man)
- Matthew 22:36-40**, *“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*

Laws Under the Old Covenant

10

- **Some Old Covenant Laws are Abrogated, Fulfilled;**
- **Some Old Covenant Laws Abide Forever**
 - Popular Criticism of Christianity re: Laws
 - God's Moral Law does not change, but not every law is primarily moral in scope
- **Many OC Laws designed to be temporary and limited in focus and scope**

Ceremonial Law (19.3)

11

Beside this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the new testament.

Ceremonial Law (19.3)

12

- **Ceremonies, rites a shadow of things to come and patterned after things of heaven**
 - Elaborate symbols to convey truth re: Christ to church under age (cf. Gal 3.24)
 - Purpose and aim of OC Laws accomplished

Mat. 27:50-53, *And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.*

Ceremonial Law (19.3)

13

- **Ceremonies, rites a shadow of things to come and patterned after things of heaven**
 - Elaborate symbols to convey truth re: Christ to church under age (cf. Gal 3.24)
 - Purpose and aim of OC Laws accomplished
- **Preparations for Christ in the Ceremonies**
 - Sacrifice: prepare for Christ's suffering
 - Moral Duties: damage of sin
 - Cleansing Rituals: prefigure Christ's benefits
 - Clean Foods: teach we do not live like the worldlings

Ceremonial Law (19.3)

14

- **Ceremonies, rites a shadow of things to come and patterned after things of heaven**
 - **Ceremonial Law helpful to illustrate the gospel, but not for reenactment or spiritual tourism**
- Col 2:15-17, He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*

Civil Laws (19.4)

15

To them also, as a body politic, He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require

Civil Laws (19.4)

16

- **Especially Exodus 21-23:** given for a political commonwealth that no longer exists; expired
- **Purposeful period of redemptive history:** show the need for a new kind of king, lay the pattern for what christ would do
- **Judicial Laws convey moral truths re: God;** they continue to apply only insofar as they teach moral principles (general equity) about the Creator

The Moral Law of God (19.5)

17

The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it: neither doth Christ, in the Gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.

The Moral Law of God (19.5)

18

- **When the NT wants to teach us how to live as Christians, authors usually appeal to OT Law!**
- **Moral Law revealed through OC abides forever**
- **Gospel strengthens authority of Moral LAW**

Matt. 5:17-19, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

19

Titus 2:11-14, For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works

20

The Moral Law of God (19.5)

- **The Moral Law reflects God's character**
 - Cohesive Whole; cannot pass away
 - When we reject a portion of the Moral Law, it impacts our view of God
- **OT and NT are unified whole:** there is grace as the ceremonies point to Christ in the OT and Christ's saving grace in the NT strengthens the obligation to keep the Law

21

Use(s) of the Law (19.6)

22

Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned) yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs, and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of His obedience.

Use(s) of the Law (19.6)

23

It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin: and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve; and what afflictions, in this life, they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof; although not as due to them by the law, as a covenant of works. So as, a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law; and not under grace.

Uses of the Law (19.6)

24

- **Cf. Calvin's Three Uses of the Law**
 - Pedagogical: Show need of/lead to Christ
 - Civil: Restrain sin in Society
 - Sanctification: Guide to grace and godliness
- **Westminster Three Uses of Law** (slightly different)
 - Rule of Life
 - Signpost to Christ (i.e. expose sin, humble)
 - Restrain Sin in the Christian

Uses of the Law (19.6)

25

- **Cf. Calvin's Three Uses of the Law**
- **Westminster Three Uses of Law**
- **Promises and Threats of Law:** those under grace do care greatly about sin and holiness

"The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof; although not as due to them by the law, as a covenant of works"

Law and Gospel (19.7)

26

Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; (w) the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that, freely and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.

Uses of the Law (19.6)

27

- **The Use of the Law is not Contrary to Grace!**
- **Christian life fueled by grace:** but that does not mean we ignore promises or threatenings
- **Spirit's Work:** The spirit of Christ promised in the OT to enable people to keep the Law in the NC

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jeremiah 31:33)
