

Sunday School

Second London Baptist Confession Chapter 24: Of the Civil Magistrate

Introduction

I. The Differences Between the Confession

- A. Comparisons on Slides
- B. The WCF (original British edition) affirms
- C. The American edition of 1788 affirms
- D. The principles of the 2LBC
 1. It recognized sphere sovereignty
 2. It recognized religious or soul liberty. The right of an individual to worship God according to conscience. Cf. 2LBC 21.2

I. The Sovereignty of God Ordains and Orders Magistrates

- A. Ordained civil magistrates to be under Him and over the people
 1. God-ordained rulers ~ Dan. 2:20-21; 4:17
 2. Genuine sphere of operational authority
God has ordained govt/state over people.
- B. Ordained purposes of government/state
 1. For His own glory and the public good
 2. Armed them with the power of the sword
Gen. 9:6; Rom. 13:14; 1 Pet. 2:14
 3. For the defense and encouragement of them that do good
For the punishment of evildoers

II. The Validity of Christians Being Civil Magistrates (2)

- Why would the Confession have to affirm this?
- A. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute public office
Joseph, Daniel, Nehemiah,
 - B. They are to serve the purposes of justice and peace
Wholesome laws
 - C. They may wage war upon just and necessary occasions



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III. The Christian's Obedience to the Magistrate

A. Obedience in all things lawful

Christians should be good citizens, following the laws of the land and living in subjection to ordained authority.

The obedience is not absolute. Absolute obedience only belongs to God.

This is not to be understood, as if magistrates were above the laws, and had a lawless power to do as they will without opposition; for they are under the law, and liable to the penalty of it, in case of disobedience, as others; and when they make their own will a law, or exercise a lawless tyrannical power, in defiance of the laws of God, and of the land, to the endangering of the lives, liberties, and properties of subjects, they may be resisted, as Saul was by the people of Israel, when he would have took away the life of Jonathan for the breach of an arbitrary law of his own, and that too without the knowledge of it, 1 Sam. 14:45 but the apostle is speaking of resisting magistrates in the right discharge of their office, and in the exercise of legal power and authority¹

B. Not only to avoid punishment, but also for conscience's sake

Rom. 13:5

C. Christians should pray for the magistrates

1 Tim. 2:1-4

¹ John Gill, [*An Exposition of the New Testament*](#), vol. 2, The Baptist Commentary Series (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1809), 553.

