

SIC ET NON: VIEWS IN REVIEW

Westminster Seminary California Distinctives? Part III

II. The Reformed Two Kingdoms Doctrine

By Jeffrey C. Waddington with Response by David VanDrunen

It is Not Good for Natural Law to Be Alone

INTRODUCTION

In this article I will attempt to wrestle with the question of whether natural law was ever meant to function on its own. We should note up front that this article will take the form more of an *op ed piece* or a *thought experiment* than a research paper. Our primary concern here is with the *ideas* of natural law, the covenant of works, and the dual kingship of Christ. In other words, we are concerned to offer a conceptual analysis or a systematic appraisal. I come at this topic as a confessional Presbyterian who embraces the insights of the likes of Geerhardus Vos and Cornelius Van Til as well as many of the other theological giants of the Reformed faith. We look first to define what natural law *is* and *how* it functions. Then we will consider whether natural law was ever meant to function *all on its own* or whether it was meant to *interrelate* with special revelation from the beginning. Consideration of whether natural law is meant to function on its own requires that we look at the covenant of works and how it relates to natural law. Is the covenant of works a natural revelation covenant only, or does it involve special revelation? We will also need to give some thought to the putative Christological basis for the sole function of natural law among the nations outside the church in the so-called “dual kingship of Christ” doctrine. In the end I hope to demonstrate that natural law was never intended by God to function in isolation from special revelation either *before* or *after* the Fall. In other words, from God’s perspective, *it is not good for natural law to be alone*.¹

NATURAL LAW

Natural Law Defined

What exactly is natural law? Is it different from natural or general revelation? I take these expressions to be

virtually synonymous. Before explaining what I mean it should be noted that the doctrine of natural law has been subject to various formulations and is not necessarily a doctrine limited to the Christian tradition. Greek philosophers, for instance, have offered a variety of definitions of natural law and it may be that some of these have influenced the Christian tradition. We can grant that as with other doctrines of the Christian faith, there have been non-biblical influences at work. Of course to grant the influence of non-biblical sources in the formulation of natural law theory is not the same thing as to say these sources are *unbiblical* or *anti-biblical*. In many instances this is in fact the case.² But it is not necessarily so. For the sake of argument

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¹ I want to be very careful here and note that we may discover some tensions within the Reformed tradition about certain doctrines. That is, we may come to realize that there is room for further refinement of doctrines that have suffered relatively benign neglect in the past.

² For a discussion of the ways unbiblical and unconfessional philosophical thought have entered into the stream of natural law theory, see William Dennison’s “Review of David VanDrunen’s *Natural Law and Two Kingdoms*” in the *WTJ* 75 (2013): 349–70. That unbiblical and unconfessional forms of natural law theory have been promulgated does not necessarily require a rejection of the idea of natural law any more than poorly formulated forms of the doctrine of justification require that we jettison the doctrine of justification altogether (God forbid!). This is as good a place as any to note that there is a difference between natural law/natural revelation and natural theology. Natural law/natural revelation is communicated by God and natural theology is fallen or regenerated man’s reflection upon God’s natural law/natural revelation. *Natural law theories are a species of natural theology*. Natural law as such is not to be confused with various human attempts to capture its essence. For instance, various Roman Catholic formulations and pro-homosexual formulations of natural law theory do not in themselves constitute the proper content of natural law. We already possess a divine delineation of natural law, *i.e.*, the Decalogue (Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5).

let us grant something about natural law theory that is true for all Christian doctrine: there are more and less biblical (not to say more or less faithful confessionally Reformed) forms of the doctrine. Our concern here is whether the doctrine of natural law can be construed along biblical and confessionally Reformed lines. We believe a confessionally faithful and biblical formulation of natural law can be set forth. For instance, one Reformed confession put it this way:

THE LAW OF NATURE. And this law was at one time written in the hearts of men by the finger of God (Rom. 2:15), and is called the law of nature (*the law of Moses is in two Tables*), and at another it was inscribed by his finger on the two Tables of Moses, and eloquently expounded in the books of Moses (Ex. 20:1 ff.; Deut. 5:6 ff.).³

This gets us back to the earlier question of whether natural law is synonymous with natural or general revelation. It may be that natural or general revelation is a broader category than natural law, but they most assuredly overlap. Or even better we can say that natural law, if not coterminous with natural or general revelation, is a subcategory of it. We typically define natural or general revelation as that revelation given by God both through creation and directly implanted in man by which man knows *about God and his moral standards* and knows God *covenantally and existentially*. This revelation is given to *all men through nature*. God purposefully reveals himself in and through his creation and that includes his human creation. To put it another way, God reveals himself through the consciousness of man, not just by means of man inferentially drawing conclusions about God by looking at creation and extrapolating the existence of a god and his moral will for creation. Rather, God has revealed himself to man

directly *as well as* mediately. That is, man knows God directly by the implantation of knowledge but also by means of rational inference.⁴ If natural law is not completely coterminous with this natural or general revelation it is clearly the moral element of it.

Natural law then can be said *to be* the moral law.⁵ This moral law, as we have already noted, is implanted in man's conscience and it can also be inferred from the observation of the way the world works. It is not an *either/or* situation but a *both/and* reality. Geerhardus Vos elaborates on this:

God reveals Himself to the inner sense of man through the religious consciousness and the moral conscience. He also reveals Himself in the works of nature without. It is obvious that the latter must rest on the former. If there were no antecedent innate knowledge of God, no amount of nature-observation would lead to an adequate conception of God. The presupposition of all knowledge of God is man's having been created in the image of God. On the other hand, the knowledge from inner nature is not complete in itself apart from the filling out it receives through the discovery of God in nature.⁶

We come into the world with natural knowledge of God and his will for us and we can infer further knowledge or further refinements of the implanted knowledge through our observations of the world and how it functions. If natural law is coterminous with natural or general revelation or is a subsection of it and if it is the moral law implanted in man's conscience, it is also, as the Westminster Standards remind us, "summarily comprehended" in the Ten Commandments.⁷

One place where we can find this spelled out in Scripture is Romans 1. There the apostle Paul tells us that all men know God and suppress that knowledge, and that knowledge includes not just the reality and existence of God but also his moral expectations for the human race. Paul goes so far as to say that we all know that our sinful inclinations and outward behavior deserve God's wrath and death. This natural knowledge is burned into our consciences even though we do our best to erase it from our consciousness.

So natural law from this perspective is virtually synonymous with natural or general revelation and all people have this knowledge, albeit in suppressed and perverted form since the time of the Fall. We know God and we know his moral expectations and this natural law is explicated for us in special revelation, specifically in the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20 and

³ This is taken from the *Second Helvetic Confession* 12.1.

⁴ See Michael Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, Ashgate Philosophy of Religion Series (Bristol, VT: Ashgate, 2010). I do not agree with all that this author argues for in this volume, but he raises some legitimate criticisms against the standard Reformed objections to natural theology. At the very least he demonstrates that the Reformed tradition has not been monolithic at this point and there may be some lack of clarity along the way.

⁵ David VanDrunen in his *Divine Covenants and Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law*, Emory University Studies in Law and Religion Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014) rightly notes that many Christian theologians have made this same equation, 91–92.

⁶ Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1975) 19.

⁷ See *Westminster Larger Catechism* Q & A 91–98, *Westminster Shorter Catechism* Q & A 39–42, and *Westminster Confession of Faith* 19.

Deuteronomy 5. If we need a *full explication* of natural law, and we do, it is found in Scripture.⁸ But the Decalogue is not the only place where we see how natural law and special revelation interact or interrelate to one another. That brings us to the next question.

Is Natural Law Ever Meant to Function Alone?

So we find that in order to understand the divine take on natural law/natural revelation, we need to turn to special revelation. This is not to discount our ability to learn lessons about natural law from the way the world works. But these lessons are a species of natural theology and so lack the absolute infallible divine imprimatur.⁹ Our reflection on natural law partakes of our fallible and fallen noetic structure. However, we would suggest that the relation of natural law to special revelation obtains *apart from* and *before* any consideration of

the Fall and the noetic effects of sin. That is to say, not only must we advert to special revelation for an infallible divine delineation of natural law, but also natural law/natural revelation is *constituted* in such a way as to require interaction with special revelation from the start.

We would argue that natural law is an essential element of the complex revelatory structure communicated by God to man. God communicates with us through both natural law/natural revelation and special revelation. Both depend upon one another and cannot properly function without each other. And this is the case from the time of creation onward. To put it another way, special revelation as well as natural law functioned together in the Garden of Eden.¹⁰

There is a form of special revelation communicated in the Garden of Eden to Adam and Eve prior to the Fall. This is “pre-redemptive” special revelation.¹¹ We

8 An example of a creedal basis for this is *Belgic Confession* article 14, “We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after his own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will, agreeably to the will of God. But being in honour, he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but willfully subjected himself to sin, and consequently to death, and the curse, giving ear to the words of the devil. *For the commandment of life, which he had received, he transgressed; and by sin separated himself from God, who was his true life, having corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he has lost all his excellent gifts, which he had received from God, and only retained a few remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us, saying: The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not: where St. John calls men darkness.* Therefore we reject all that is taught repugnant to this, concerning the free will of man, since man is but a slave to sin, and has nothing of himself, unless it is given from heaven. For who may presume to boast, that he of himself can do any good, since Christ says, No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him? Who will glory in his own will, who understands, that to be carnally minded is enmity against God? Who can speak of his knowledge, since the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God? In short, who dare suggest any thought, since he knows that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God? And therefore what the apostle says ought justly to be held sure and firm, that God worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. For there is no will nor understanding, conformable to the divine will and understanding, but that Christ has wrought in man; which he teaches us, when he says, Without me ye can do nothing.” Emphasis mine.

9 Or, as the Reformed Scholastics put it, natural theology can be classified as either true or false theology depending on whether it is formulated by fallen or regenerate individuals. See Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 – 1725* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003) 1:284ff, where Muller in sections 6.2 and 6.3 deals with the distinctions between natural and supernatural theology and implanted and acquired knowledge.

10 I am dependent upon the insights of Geerhardus Vos and Cornelius Van Til at this point. See Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 27–40 and Van Til’s “Nature and Scripture” in *The Infallible Word* (Paul Wooley and Ned Stonehouse, eds. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1946) 255–93. For a helpful discussion of Vos’s treatment of pre-redemptive special revelation, see Lane G. Tipton and Camden Bucy at the *Reformed Forum*: <http://reformedforum.org/podcasts/c331/> and <http://reformedforum.org/podcasts/c336/>.

11 Geerhardus Vos in his *Biblical Theology*, offers this lengthy rationale for a pre-redemptive special revelation, “In the foregoing it has been assumed for the sake of distinction that before the fall there existed a form of Special Revelation, *transcending the natural knowledge of God*. This is the point at which to explain its possibility, its necessity, and its concrete purpose. Its subject matter will be afterward discussed. *The possibility and necessity flow from the nature of religion as such. Religion means personal intercourse between God and man.* Hence, it might be *a priori* expected that God would not be satisfied, and would not allow man to be satisfied with an acquaintance based upon indirection, but would crown the process of religion with the establishment of face-to-face communion, as friend holds fellowship with friend. The same conclusion can be drawn from the concrete purpose God had in view with this form of supernaturalism. This is connected with the state in which man was created and the advance from this to a still higher estate. Man had been created perfectly good in a moral sense. And yet there was a sense in which he could be raised to a still higher level of perfection. On the surface this seems to involve a contradiction. It will be removed by closely marking the aspect in regard to which the advance was contemplated. The advance was meant to be from unconfirmed to confirmed goodness and blessedness; to the confirmed state in which these possessions could no longer be lost, a state in which man could no longer sin, and hence he could no longer become subject to the consequences of sin. Man’s original state was a state of indefinite probation: he remained in possession of what he had, so long as he did not commit sin, but it was not a state in which the continuance of his religious and moral status could be guaranteed him. In order to assure this for him, he had to be subjected to an intensified, concentrated probation, in which, if he remained standing, the status of probation would be forever left behind. *The provision of this new, higher prospect for man was an act of condescension and high favor. God was in no wise bound*

will argue below that the covenant of works is a product of special revelation as well as natural law/natural revelation. The covenant of works is not just a product of natural law.¹² For now let us note that, for instance, when God *spoke* to Adam in the garden (Genesis 2:16–17) and commanded him to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, this command presupposed Adam (and Eve’s) ability to distinguish between all other trees in the garden and this particular tree (of the knowledge of good and evil, and we could say the same thing about the tree of life). Adam and Eve could not have obeyed God (pre-redemptive special revelation) had they not had the ability (based upon natural law/natural revelation) to distinguish the different trees (whatever the distinctive qualities would have been, although it appears from the accounts that there was nothing necessarily distinctive in the appearance of the trees *per se*).

Without even considering the all of the specific details of the covenant of works at this point, we can see that there is a necessary interaction between natural

on the principle of justice to extend it to man, and we mean this denial not merely in the general sense in which we affirm that God owes nothing to man, but in a very specific sense that there was nothing in the nature of man nor of his creation, which by manner of implication could entitle man to such a favor from God. Had the original state of man involved any title to it, then the knowledge concerning it would probably have formed part of man’s original endowment. But this not being so, no innate knowledge of its possibility could be expected. Yet the nature of an intensified and concentrated probation required that man should be made acquainted with the fact of the probation and its terms. Hence the necessity of Special Revelation providing for this,” 22–23. Emphasis mine.

12 This would seem to conflict with the emphasis of VanDrunen in *Divine Covenants and Moral Order* in his first chapter on the covenant of creation and natural law, 39–94. I put it this way as he does allow for the presence of special revelation in the covenant of creation on pages 89–90 although it is not clear to what extent this allowance plays a substantial role in his understanding of the covenant.

13 We are aware that B. B. Warfield held that special revelation was only redemptive and that all communication from God in the Garden of Eden before the fall, verbal included, was a form of natural revelation. See his *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Vol. 1: Revelation and Inspiration* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 344. For a helpful study of Warfield’s views of revelation, see Jeffrey A. Stivason’s *From Inscrutability to Concursus: Benjamin B. Warfield’s Theological Construction of Inspiration’s Mode from 1880–1915* (Ph. D. dissertation. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 2013), especially chapter 5, 138–79. It would be interesting to ascertain whether Warfield’s classical approach to apologetic methodology is in anyway tied to his understanding of a verbal natural revelation.

14 Van Til, “Nature and Scripture.”

15 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Library of Christian Classics Series, 2 vols. (edited by John McNeill and translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1961) 1.6.1.

law/natural revelation and special revelation. This interrelation is built into the complex of divine revelation. It is not accidental and it precedes the Fall. Special revelation will take on a redemptive quality or color after the Fall, but special revelation is not a result or creation of or merely the divine *response* to the Fall.¹³ Post-Fall, redemptive special revelation *is* a response to the Fall, but this is *not* true of special revelation *per se*. As Vos noted in a footnote above, the necessity of pre-redemptive special revelation arises from the nature of desired communion between God and man and from the eschatological nature of the probation. God communicated his revelation in two forms or by two media in the Garden of Eden before the Fall, and he continues this after the Fall now with a redemptive focus.

Subsequent to the Fall we now realize that natural law/natural revelation cannot be properly understood without the aid of redemptive special revelation. Again, natural law and special revelation presupposed and mutually entailed one another before the Fall. This relation has simply been *intensified and redemptively colored* since the Fall. In his essay “Nature and Scripture,” Cornelius Van Til has aptly described this mutually entailing and enriching and mutually interpretive relationship between natural law/natural revelation and special revelation in terms of each sharing in the four divine perfections of authority, clarity, necessity, and sufficiency. Each medium of revelation shares these perfections and together they form one divine revelatory complex.¹⁴

So we have seen that natural law and special revelation work together in God’s plan from the beginning of creation, and since the Fall, special revelation takes on a redemptive hue such that, as John Calvin has noted, Scripture serves as corrective lenses to our understanding of God in nature.¹⁵ But we have argued that the necessity of special revelation for properly understanding natural law/natural revelation is not limited to the post-Fall context but is in fact built into how the divine revelatory complex properly functions from the onset of creation. With the Fall the interrelation of natural law/special revelation is such that special revelation is *required* properly to (1) *interpret* natural law/natural revelation because of the noetic effects of sin (our fallen propensity to twist and suppress the truth of the natural law) and properly (2) to *delineate* the specific details of natural law from an absolute and infallible divine perspective. We now want to turn to a more specific consideration of the nature of the covenant of works and of the doctrine of the dual kingship of Christ over the nations and over the church.

THE COVENANT OF WORKS

We are not concerned at this point with every aspect of the covenant of works, but with the question of whether the covenant of works reflects its foundation in natural law alone or in the complex of both natural law and pre-redemptive special revelation. We have already tipped our hat in the direction we expect this exploration to go. But we want to examine the covenant of works in greater detail to ascertain whether our conclusion holds once we have greater specificity. We believe it does.

The first question we need to consider is whether the covenant of works is coterminous with creation or subsequently imposed.¹⁶ The *Westminster Confession of Faith* 7:1 seems to suggest that the covenant of works is imposed subsequent to creation in that man would have no “fruition” of his relation to God without the covenant relation. “Seems” and “suggest” are the right words to use here. Is it possible for God to relate to man apart from covenant? It may be that we have to split the question. Is it possible to make a distinction between a covenant of creation and the covenant of works? Typically these are synonymous terms, but is it better to see the covenant of creation as broader than the covenant of works?¹⁷ Let’s think about this a little. It would be a mistake to think of God creating the world and its inhabitants in a bare or naked state upon which he subsequently imposed a covenant relation. Can we say that God created the world with a covenant relation we can term the covenant of creation? This covenant involves the direct implantation of the moral law/natural law in man’s conscience (what John Calvin referred to as the *sensus divinitatis* or *semen religiosus*) and also involves man’s ability to fine-tune this implanted revelation through inferential or ratiocinative processes. This covenant involves man’s obligation to obey God’s law personally, perfectly, and perpetually. Adam and Eve owed God this obedience by virtue of being creatures and by virtue of being creatures created in the *imago Dei*. Could it be that we limit the term “covenant of works” to the heightened probation/prohibition regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?¹⁸

Clearly God’s communication with Adam in the Garden of Eden regarding the prohibition of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil entails more than the natural law/moral law implanted in Adam’s conscience. At the very least we ought to note that this prohibition was *spoken*.¹⁹ The natural law/moral law implanted in the consciousness of man is not spoken in the sense that this prohibition was. The prohibition was a revelatory *word* from God. Adam was not to think apart from the word of God. There is here no room for

autonomous thinking on Adam’s part. In other words, even before the Fall, man (here represented by his federal head Adam) is to “think God’s thoughts after him.”

Geerhardus Vos, in his chapter on pre-redemptive special revelation in his classic *Biblical Theology*, discusses four principles that are articulated in the covenant of works: the principle of life in its highest potency symbolized sacramentally in the tree of life, the principle of probation sacramentally symbolized by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the principle temptation and sin symbolized in the serpent, and the principle of death reflected in the dissolution of the body.²⁰ Each of these principles is indicative of God’s eschatological purpose for Adam and Eve (and therefore for the human race as a whole). God intended to lead Adam from a state of probation into a state of confirmed righteousness, a state of blessedness higher than the state in which he was originally created. Adam and Eve were created in a state of righteousness, holiness, and knowledge; but this was a mutable or changeable state. It was not only

¹⁶ This has become a hotly debated topic in current theological discussions. Our understanding ought to be determined by what the Westminster divines meant as we can ascertain it by textual evidence. VanDrunen addresses the question in *Divine Covenants and Moral Order*, 84–85, n. 105, where he notes that the language of WCF 7:1 could be construed as affirming a covenantal overlay on a bare creation. However, VanDrunen concludes that this reading is not required by the text of the *Confession*. He sees the language offering an abstract and theoretical account rather than a chronological one.

¹⁷ A fascinating discussion of this matter can be found in Richard C. Barcellos, *The Family Tree of Reformed Biblical Theology: Geerhardus Vos and John Owen: Their Methods of and Contributions to the Articulation of Redemptive History*, Reformed Baptist Dissertation Series # 2 (Owensboro, KY: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2010) 159–66. Barcellos notes that Owen understood creation and covenant to be in some sense coeval. Yet, with nuance, Owen looked upon the probation as the product of special revelation.

¹⁸ One entailment of this distinction between the broader covenant of creation and the more pointed covenant of works would be that there would be no republication of the covenant of works wherever the moral law/natural law comes into view. In other words, there can be a “republication” of the moral law/natural law in the Mosaic administration without all of the accoutrements of the more focally pointed covenant of works. VanDrunen argues in *Divine Covenants and Moral Order* that the probation is a heightening or focusing of the creational covenant and so is not distinct, pp. 83–86, especially 86.

¹⁹ Even Warfield noted that the probation was spoken and not just innate. See Warfield, *Revelation and Inspiration*, 344. However Vos’ observations noted above require that the verbal revelation in the Garden of Eden be categorized as special revelation since it was connected to the eschatological nature of Adam’s existence. But VanDrunen in *Divine Covenants and Moral Order* makes this eschatological direction integral to the natural law in the covenant of creation, pp. 39–94.

²⁰ Vos, *Biblical Theology*, pp. 27–40.

possible for Adam to advance to a state of blessed righteousness, but it was also possible for man to fall into a state of sin and misery. Unfortunately that is exactly what happened. But it was possible for Adam and Eve to advance to a higher plane for a time.

Our concern here is not to go into detailed discussion of Vos's exposition of the covenant of works. It is to see if the covenant of works was a natural-law-only covenant or whether it is the epitome of the complex of natural law/natural revelation and special revelation. Given God's eschatological goal of advance from probation to confirmed righteousness, a word of special revelation would seem to be necessary.²¹ Each of the principles articulated by Vos point to the presence and actuality of special revelation from God in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. There is here not just non-verbal natural law/natural revelation, but God verbalized a prohibition concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which was meant to further the principle of life in its "highest potency" exemplified in the tree of life (which we note returns in Psalm 69 and Revelation 21 and 22). All of this points to the presence of both natural law and special revelation in the Garden.

This state of affairs reminds us that there was no point from creation forward when God ever intended for natural law/natural revelation to function in isolation from his special revelation. This principle of revelatory

21 John Owen, in his *Biblical Theology* (Translated by Stephen Westcott. Grand Rapids, MI: Soli Deo Gloria, 1997), evidences the ambiguity of language when dealing with the question of special revelation in the covenant of works: "The whole covenant relationship in which the first man then stood, God's requirement that mankind should obey him (with the promise of eternal felicity and reward), are matters which concern God's gracious will and which could only be known by his free choice to reveal them. Nevertheless, as this knowledge or relationship to God was born with humanity, we may denominate it 'natural theology.' That which derives its nature from first principles is not inaptly styled 'necessary' or 'natural.' We might conclude that the light of the knowledge of God's will is *not* natural to mankind, for it is neither an attribute of human nature by necessity nor is it of such a quality that it cannot be separated from it. It cannot be derived from any inborn faculty of the soul by natural strength, yet it *is* natural to mankind in view of his historical status as having been created in rectitude of nature, and placed under God's law with ultimate regard to God's glory" (p. 21).

22 I want to thank the Rev. Dr. Alan D. Strange for his helpful criticisms and insightful feedback of this paper which I trust has made this section better. All infelicities are, of course, my own.

23 A helpful historical overview and assessment of the role of the dual kingship doctrine among the Scottish Covenanters can be found in David McKay, "From Popery to Principle: Covenanters and the Kingship of Christ" in *The Faith Once Delivered: Essays in Honor of Wayne R. Spear*. The Westminster Assembly and the Reformed Faith Series (Anthony T. Selvaaggio, ed. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007) 135-169.

reciprocity manifests itself in man's need to exercise his intellectual faculties in reliance and dependence upon God's natural and special revelation before as well as after the Fall. There was never a time or place where man was intended to live, move, or have his being without specifically special revelation working *in conjunction with* natural law.

Finally we turn to the doctrine that is understood to provide the Christological underpinnings of a realm (the nations outside the church) in which natural law functions by itself.

THE DUAL KINGSHIP OF CHRIST²²

The doctrine of the dual kingship of Christ is thought to provide a foundation for both the *sole* function of natural law among the nations and the doctrine of two kingdoms. Our concern here is only with the role of this doctrine as a foundation for the natural law functioning *on its own* among the nations. The doctrine goes back at least as far as the Westminster Assembly Scottish commissioners George Gillespie and Samuel Rutherford.²³ The doctrine is as follows: Jesus Christ rules the nations as the second person of the Trinity *through providence and natural law alone* by way of magistrates and he rules the church as the God-man mediator through Scripture by means of delegated church officers. This doctrine is understood as an entailment of the *extra Calvinisticum*. That is, the Son of God is not reduced to the God-man Jesus Christ or, to put it another way, the Son is not constrained by the physical limitations of the God-man.

It must be said that this is an intriguing doctrine and it does contain more than a modicum of truth. But to understand the details of this doctrine and be able to evaluate it, we need to be familiar with its original *sitz im leben*. To be clear, the original context in which Rutherford and Gillespie formulated this doctrine and today's context in which the doctrine of the dual kingship is advocated are not at all the same. Samuel Rutherford advocated and worked within a framework of the national covenant (the 1638 National Covenant and the 1643 Solemn League and Covenant). He lived, moved, and had his being beneath the long shadows of Christendom. Rutherford and Gillespie would have rejected the original Roman Catholic milieu of Christendom in which it was affirmed that there was one single source of authority at the foundation of the church and state: the Papacy (Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam*, 1302). While Rutherford strenuously upheld the *distinction* between church and state, his commitment to a (the!) national covenant shows that he was committed to the extension of some form of Christendom or sacred canopy.

This would put Rutherford clearly at odds with those who seek to use his dual kingship doctrine in today's world. In other words, whereas some today advocate a *form* of the dual kingship doctrine, the contemporary form ends up shorn of its national covenanting context and it gets dropped into the very different context of a desired naked public square.²⁴

Before assessing the validity of this doctrine its alternative should be noted. As David McKay has pointed out, the alternative is the doctrine of the *sole kingship* of Christ. That is, the Son of God as the God-man mediator rules over both the nations and the church *by way of both natural and special revelation*. What does one make of these options?²⁵ One portion of Scripture that is often resorted to in consideration of Christ's mediatorial rule is Colossians 1:15–20. Here we find these words:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. *For by him all things were created*, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. *He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent*. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross (ESV, emphasis added).

Here we see in Paul's letter that he makes a distinction between the Son as Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of all things *and* as Head of the church. So the distinction between Christ as head of the cosmos and head of the church is legitimate. But can we say that the Son rules the nations as the second person of the Trinity through providence and natural law alone? Why would anyone want to maintain such a view? After all, the text of Colossians 1 above suggests that Christ rules the world *for the benefit of the church or to create the context* in which he can rule the church. In other words, it could be understood that Colossians 1 recognizes a *distinction without a separation* in Christ's rule over cosmos and church which would seem to favor Kuiper's view of Christ's kingship noted above.

Samuel Rutherford labeled the *sole kingship* view virtual popery.²⁶ In other words, he claimed that this view was tantamount to the view held and practiced in the Roman Catholic Church. He held this view for at least two reasons. His first concern was that if Christ ruled the nations as the God-man mediator then that

would unseat or delegitimize non-Christian magistrates. It was not the case the Rutherford was opposed to Christian magistrates. Quite the contrary was true given his commitment to the national covenant.²⁷ But Rutherford knew from Romans 13 that magistrates were ministers of God, *whether they were Christian or not*. Rutherford's second concern was that Christ cannot be torn in pieces and that *Christ could not rule as Mediatorial King over the nations without also serving as Prophet and Priest*. Both of these are weighty concerns and ought not to be dismissed lightly. We do not want to tear Christ into pieces. And it does seem to make sense that Christ would not rule over those who are not his (*i.e.*, the elect). At least it makes sense to think that Christ would rule his own differently than he rules the non-elect. In other words, Christ's kingly relationship is *different* with regard to how he rules the elect from the non-elect. Christ's rule would involve affection and protection for his own and their affection and loyalty for him in return. This quality would seem to be absent with Christ's kingly relationship to the non-elect. As David MacKay points out, the *Westminster Larger*

24 It should be noted that there are those today who advocate *both* a dual kingship doctrine *and* some sort of national covenanting as Rutherford himself did. Not all those attempting to build on Rutherford's dual kingship doctrine have tossed off the idea that nations can and ought to enter into covenantal relations *as* nations with God.

25 R. B. Kuiper articulates this option in his book *The Glorious Body of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1998), in which he recognizes the distinction between the rule of the Son of God over the nations and the rule of the God-man Mediator who rules the church. Kuiper notes the distinction, but goes on to say that once the incarnation/death/resurrection/ascension occurs, it is the God-man Mediator who rules both the nations and the church (pp. 195–200). Kuiper does not seem to anticipate the objections raised by Samuel Rutherford which we look at below. Donald MacLeod (*The Person of Christ*. Contours of Christian Theology Series [Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1998] 197–223), advocates a position close to that of Kuiper as well.

26 Samuel Rutherford, *The Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication* (London, 1646) 601–2. Rutherford notes, "The Magistrate as Magistrate is not the Vicar nor Deputie of Jesus Christ as Mediator; 1. Because *this is the heart and soul of Popery*, that the Papiests teach that Christ as Mediator hath left a temporall, an earthly and visible monarch as his Vicar on earth. Now that learned and singular ornament of the Protestant church, Andreu Rivetu hath well said, "Christ has instituted neither Kings nor Princes in his church as his successors, nor any Vicars with a domination, but onely Ministers and Servants, who are to discharge their embassage, in the name of the onely Prince Christ; for an embassage cannot institute other ambassadors, either Kings or Princes, but onely Ministers, who do serve, not reign in the Kingdom of Christ, he himselfe onely reignes, the Servants of this great King promote the Kingdom of their Prince, nor do they ever usurpe the royall power..." Emphasis mine.

27 It could be said that for Rutherford, while there were nations that were not yet ready to enter into a national covenant, it ought to be the goal or outcome in nations where the gospel has been proclaimed.

Catechism Q & A 45 does cast Christ's kingship in light of his rule over his own people.²⁸ Rutherford's concern that Christ not be torn to pieces is a legitimate matter of concern. We agree that the integrity of Christ's threefold office (*munus triplex*) should be maintained. The question, however, remains: are there senses in which Christ's Prophetic and Priestly work do extend to the non-elect? Are there formulations of the doctrine of the kingship of Christ that retain the integral nature of the threefold office while recognizing that all three offices impinge in different ways on the elect and the non-elect while not blurring the antithetical relation of belief to unbelief? Is not common grace considered a benefit of the atonement? If so, then would it not be the case that there is at least this aspect of Christ's Priestly work that flows to the generality of the nations? Would it not also be true that we could say that Christ extends his Prophetic role to the nations in the proclamation of the well-meant offer of the gospel?

What is perhaps the most problematic aspect of the dual kingship doctrine is the idea that the Son rules the nations *through providence and natural law alone*. Of course this is not as cut and dried an idea as might at first seem to be the case. How so, one may ask? Here is why the matter is not so simple as what I have said: Rutherford understood that the natural law/moral law was also found in Scripture so that we in fact do possess an infallible, absolutely authoritative delineation of natural law/moral law in the Bible. One could go so far as to say that Rutherford *conceded* (as did Calvin) that in the absence of special revelation, a pagan ruler could draw on natural law/natural revelation. In other words (à la Acts 14), the pagan ruler was not left without some witness to the true God. Surely Rutherford thought Christians would live by God's Word and not just by natural law. And Rutherford agreed with Calvin's view that Scripture provided corrective lenses so that fallen now regenerate man could properly understand and benefit from his exposure to natural law/natural revelation.

It is clear from the history of Reformed thought and practice that some have thought that laws among the nations were only legitimate if they *replicated* Old Testament legislation. Even when someone like John Calvin argued that laws could vary from state to state reflecting

the general principle of equity (as the *Westminster Confession of Faith* 19:4 states it so well) regarding the second table of the law, he still thought the first table of the law should be modeled fairly closely on the Old Testament. The problem with this idea that the laws of nations are only legitimate insofar as they replicate or closely adhere to Mosaic legislation is that the following general maxim about Old Testament Israel needs to be kept in mind.

The theocratic state of Israel was unique among the nations and is *not* to be replicated in any nation state today. Israel as the people of God expanded to include people from every tribe, tongue, nation, and people group (per Romans 9). Israel was a unique church-state amalgam. To put it another way, Israel is transformed into the multinational church of Jesus Christ. Israel was, as Geerhardus Vos would put it, an eschatological foreshadowing and intrusion of the end-time consummated glory, holiness, and righteousness.²⁹

A missionary institution theocracy never was intended to be in its Old Testament state. The significance of the unique organization of Israel can be rightly measured only by remembering that the theocracy typified nothing short of the perfected kingdom of God, the consummate state of Heaven. In this ideal state there will be no longer any place for the distinction between church and state.³⁰

However, having said that, would it not be allowable that a nation comprised of mostly Christians reflects its Christian sentiment in its laws?³¹ This is why this is a complex matter. On the one hand, the laws of the nations ought to reflect natural law/moral law and the general principle of equity. On the other hand, in a land populated by Christians, Christians ought to be free to express their faith in their laws. There is in fact, no such thing as a naked public square. There is no area in God's creation that is neutral. All was created with God's approval. And all is now fallen under the divine curse due to human sin. All may in principle be improved by the proper application of biblical principles (notice that this is said with a due regard for the fact that until Christ returns there will often be pushback from unbelievers, and disagreement about principles and their application by Christians, and that Christians will *not* usher in the consummated kingdom by their human efforts). One could even say that Christian influence in culture is *indirect*. Christians are called to live Christianly in the world and in some instances this will result in changes in surrounding circumstances. But this is not necessarily so.

On another note, Abraham Kuyper's doctrine of

28 MacKay, "From Popery to Principle," p. 141.

29 Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 124–26.

30 Vos, *Biblical Theology*, pp. 125–26.

31 This does not necessarily have to yield a national covenant given the non-replication principle regarding Israel. The whole question of Christendom is tied to Christian attempts to knowingly or unknowingly replicate the unique conditions of Israel.

sphere sovereignty would seem to be aimed at similar concerns as those who advocate the dual kingship of Christ. While Christ looks out over creation and claims every square inch as his own, this does not translate into theonomy in the common understanding of that word. *Christ rules the church and world in equally comprehensive but different ways.* There are spheres such as the church, the state, the family, the school, etc. *Each is distinct from the others yet ultimately answerable to God and his Word.* And each sphere has some bearing on the others. Spheres are not hermetically sealed off from each other. The church as organization retains its unique ministry of Word and Sacrament and the church as organism disperses out into the world seeking to live all of life under the authority of Sacred Scripture as well as the natural law/moral law/natural or general revelation.

In the end we can sympathize with the dual kingship doctrine without embracing every detail of its historical articulation. We cannot and probably ought not seek to reprimand the sacred canopy of the national covenant and while we recognize the extremely important significance of the disputes with Roman Catholic political theory and practice, can we not affirm the gains from the thinking of a Rutherford or a Gillespie while also recognizing we live in different days and contexts?³² Can we not maintain that it is the one *Jesus Christ who as the God-man mediator rules over the nations and the church but in ways distinctly appropriate to each sphere of creation?*³³ One can also affirm, we think, that Christ rules his universe through the complex revelation involving the twin media of nature and Scripture because there is no place or time when these two media are not properly integrated. These two observations combine to yield the doctrine that Christ rules the cosmos and the church as *one King* who rules through the complex revelatory matrix of natural law and special revelation and he rules each realm (and the others) in ways appropriate to each while each are equally under his Kingship and his complex revelatory matrix.

CONCLUSION

In the end, then, we conclude that *it is not good that natural law should be alone.* When properly defined, natural law is nothing but the moral law, which itself is recorded in Scripture which in turn provides us with a divinely infallible authoritative delineation of the natural law directly implanted in the human conscience by God himself. We discovered that natural law was meant to integrate with special revelation from the beginning at creation and especially since the Fall brought about the need for redemption. We saw this confirmed in a closer

examination of the nature of the covenant of works as a product of both natural law and special revelation and as we considered the nature and value of the dual kingship doctrine. There is no time and place in all of God's creation from Eden to the New Jerusalem in which natural law was ever meant to function alone without recourse to and interaction with special revelation.³⁴

Response by David VanDrunen

Jeffrey Waddington and I were to have an exchange about the two kingdoms. For reasons not entirely clear to me, he has chosen to focus his present essay on the question of whether natural law was ever meant to function alone—an issue I never raised in my original article in 2012. Nevertheless, I will offer some comments on his discussion and claims. In large part I will express agreement, since I concur with most of the substantive claims he makes, although I will also mention some areas where I think modification or at least further nuance would be helpful.

Before I comment on his present essay, however, I am going to take up the invitation of the *Confessional Presbyterian* editors to interact with the response he wrote to me in our prior exchange of 2012. I am sorry to have to say this, but Waddington's response misrepresents my views in numerous ways. My brother states many things about me that are patently false, on several occasions making accusations for which he offers not a single piece of evidence to support his claims. If there is to be productive and fruitful discussion about the two kingdoms (or any other issue), interlocutors must present each other's views accurately. For that reason—and with some concern for injuries done to my good name (Westminster Shorter Catechism 78)—I begin by pointing out and correcting my brother's misrepresentations in his 2012 response.

Response to Waddington's Response (2012)

In this opening section I call attention to six claims or

³² I should make it clear that this is not the same argument as the one that suggests that the Reformation is over. Regarding the doctrine of justification, among many other doctrines, the Reformation is most certainly not over.

³³ We also maintain the *extra Calvinisticum*.

³⁴ It is readily conceded that there is room for further examination of the Reformed tradition and theologizing about the relation of the church and the state and how Christians relate to a pluralistic society and how Christ rules over his creation and the church and how they relate. Christ is surely King over all creation and the church and these two relate to each as more than two non-intersecting parallel tracks. Alluding to erstwhile Harvard scientist Stephen Jay Gould, the church and the state/world are *not* "non-overlapping magisteria."

discussions in Waddington's response in which he misrepresents my views and hence, I fear, has damaged the prospects of fruitful discussion of the two kingdoms and matters germane. I hope that these corrections and explanations will improve those prospects for the future.

CHRIST'S RULE BY NATURAL LAW AND SCRIPTURE

This first point is relatively brief, since it concerns the issue Waddington focuses upon in his new essay. In his original essay Waddington writes: "I want to challenge Dr. VanDrunen's notion that Christ rules the common realm by means of natural law alone and that he rules the spiritual realm via Scripture (DVD, 178)."¹ Is this actually my view? Waddington cites page 178 of my original article, but I do not say anything of the sort on that page, or anywhere else in the article. I do not believe I have embraced this view in anything else I have written. I will explain later how I evaluate the issue.

My point here is simply that Waddington has ascribed a view to me for which he offers no proof. He cites a page of my writing in which I do not even address the issue he mentions, and in any case on this page I am describing *other people's ideas*, not my own.

NATURAL LAW AND THE CANONS OF DORT

Shortly thereafter, Waddington quotes 3.3–4 of the Canons of Dort, which first affirms the existence of a light of nature remaining in humans after the fall, and then continues: "this light of nature is far from enabling man to come to a saving knowledge of God and conversion to him—so far, in fact, that man does not use it rightly even in matters of nature and society. Instead, in various ways he completely distorts this light, whatever its precise character, and suppresses it in unrighteousness. In doing so he renders himself without excuse before God." Then Waddington comments: "Clearly Dr. VanDrunen's understanding of the efficacy of natural law/natural revelation is significantly different from the clear and unambiguous statement made in the Canons of Dort" (Waddington, "Duplex," 193).

I subscribe to the Canons of Dort as a professor at the

1. Jeffrey C. Waddington, "Duplex in Homine Regimen: A Response to David VanDrunen's 'The Reformed Two Kingdoms Doctrine: An Explanation and Defense,'" *The Confessional Presbyterian* 8 (2012): 192.

2. Waddington does drop a footnote at this point, in which he merely says that it is "interesting" that my article, to which he was responding, did not discuss this section of the Three Forms of Unity ("Duplex," 193). It is actually not interesting at all. We were supposed to be discussing the topic of the two kingdoms, and my paper never raises the topic of natural law! Why *would* I discuss Canons 3.3–4?

3. David VanDrunen, *Divine Covenants and Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014).

seminary where I teach, so that is quite an accusation. From my heart I agree with what the Canons say. Yet Waddington does not just say that my understanding is different from the Canons, but says it is "clearly" different. Well, if it is clearly different, he should easily be able to find a good illustration from something I have written. Waddington does not offer a single citation.² My brother claims that I am *clearly* out of accord with the Canons and yet does not provide any evidence?

I wonder what exactly in Canons 3.3–4 Waddington thinks is clearly different from my view. He does not specify. I can only guess that he believes that I think unbelievers use natural law rightly and do not in fact suppress the truth in unrighteousness. I do hold that by divine common grace unbelievers discover many true things in natural revelation (for example, in scientific research) and often uphold an external, civil righteousness. But, as far as I am aware, these are uncontroversial beliefs in Reformed circles, and I am quite sure Waddington would affirm them too. If he really believes that I reject the notion that unbelievers suppress the truth of natural revelation in unrighteousness, he is free to read the fifth chapter of my recent book, *Divine Covenants and Moral Order*, which exegetes Romans 1:18–2:16 in detail.³ He may point out to me in private where my exegesis diverges from Reformed orthodoxy.

COMMON GRACE

In the next section of his response, Waddington turns to common grace, a topic (unlike natural law) that I actually discuss in the paper to which he's responding. He says that while we both believe in common grace, we have significant differences about its nature and function. His own view, he says, is that common grace serves to further special grace. My problem, he continues, is that I seem to follow Abraham Kuyper, who "allows it [common grace] to have a parallel and disconnected existence of its own, distinct and separate from special grace." Furthermore, Waddington says that I have an "idea of a *stand-alone common grace realm*," and that this idea "remarkably resembles the anthropology of Medieval Roman Catholicism with its nature/grace dichotomy." Where does he see the resemblance? "The analogy here is that just as Adam in his natural state could function adequately without the *donum superadditum* so with Dr. VanDrunen's common realm under the rule of natural law man can function adequately" (Waddington, "Duplex," 193–94).

Waddington packs a lot of serious claims into this section. In response, first, it would be helpful to know what exactly I have written suggesting that common grace has "a parallel and disconnected existence of its

own.” But again, Waddington does not explain or offer a single citation. Judging from what he says, he apparently assumes that I *don't* think that common grace serves to further special grace. But of course I think it does. Where does Waddington get the idea that I don't?

There is an interesting difference between the common grace theologies of Kuypers and Cornelius Van Til (I mention this since Waddington associates my view with Kuypers and I think he sees himself as a defender of Van Til's): whereas Van Til thought that common grace *only* serves to further the purposes of special grace, Kuypers held that common grace *also* had independent purposes of its own.⁴ I believe we should be cautious on this point, since there is limited biblical data to resolve it. But on the whole, Kuypers does seem to have the stronger hand. Surely God is honored in his own right, for example, when unbelieving image-bearers bring out the beauty of his creation. Do we have to say that the *only* meaning or purpose of unbelieving Mozart's Jupiter Symphony is found in the way it promotes the gospel? Surely the Jupiter Symphony's supreme beauty in and of itself glorifies God. Kuypers seems to have the better insight on this matter. But in response to Waddington, there is no question that common grace serves to further special grace, and the accusation that I give common grace a “disconnected” existence is simply inaccurate. Common grace is *distinct* from special grace, but it is not disconnected from it.

With regard to Waddington's sweeping claim that my views on common grace are analogous to the nature/grace dichotomy of medieval Roman Catholicism, if he would like to read carefully my detailed delineation of how I think my views compare to the nature-grace theology of historic Thomism, he may do so and we can have a serious conversation about this topic (VanDrunen, *Divine Covenants*, 22–36). As it stands, Waddington's comments amount to generalization and caricature.

Finally, Waddington says that I think that the common realm under natural law allows people to act “adequately.” Adequately? Adequately for what? What does he mean? Where does he get that? Where have I said this? He again offers no citation from anything I have written.

CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE

A little later, Waddington makes these comments: “Although not explicitly addressed in the article under consideration, Dr. VanDrunen, along with other advocates of two kingdoms theology, tend to downplay the influence of Christians outside the four walls of the church out in the world.” “It becomes somewhat silly if we go

around acting like we need to keep our Christian piety within the bounds of the church building and then exercise it only on Sundays.” This is not enough to convey his concern. He adds in footnote 20: “I am also of the opinion that the two kingdoms theology serves as a cover for political passivism. That is, two kingdoms devotees do not like the implications of the Christian faith for politics or culture and so they seek an out” (Waddington, “Duplex,” 194–95).

More strong words. I ask again: where is the evidence that I “tend” to downplay the influence of Christians in the world? How exactly have I made myself silly acting like we should exercise our Christian piety only on Sundays? Where is the proof that I support political passivism and use the two kingdoms doctrine as a “cover” for it (which is an accusation of dishonesty)? There is no citation, no proof, no evidence. My brother has never even met me, and yet he understands my way of life and motives well enough to suggest in print that I am using the two kingdoms as a cover for political passivism?

I struggle to know how to respond to these undocumented and unsubstantiated claims. In a footnote I will cite recent and soon-to-be published articles in which I discuss issues such as justice, rights, economic organization, Thomas Piketty's critique of capitalism, political liberalism, and religious liberty.⁵ Perhaps I should also offer to give Waddington a list of the many law schools (Protestant, Roman Catholic, and secular) at which I have spoken recently on many of these issues. Am I really living a life of political passivism that requires cover?

DISTINCTIVELY CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY

In his next section Waddington adds the following: “Dr. VanDrunen thinks that because Christian and non-Christian thought and activity occasionally overlap, there is no distinctively Christian activity or organization outside the visible church (DVD, 189). Is this really true? And can distinctively Christian attitudes be sequestered to the private subjective realm?... When Daniel and his

4. E.g., compare Cornelius Van Til, *Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974), 80; and Abraham Kuypers, *A Centennial Reader*, ed. James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 169.

5. “A Natural Law Right to Religious Freedom: A Reformed Perspective,” *International Journal for Religious Freedom* 5.2 (2012): 135–46; “The Market Economy and Christian Ethics: Refocusing Debate Through the Two-Kingdoms Doctrine,” *Journal of Markets and Morality* 17 (Spring 2014): 11–45; “Piketty's Absent Moral Philosophy: A Moral Analysis,” *The City* (Summer 2014): 18–21; “The Natural Law and Liberal Traditions: Heritage (and Hope?) of Western Civilization,” in *The Law of God: Exploring God and Civilization*, ed. Pieter Vos and Onno Zylstra (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 64–83; “Natural Rights in Noahic Perspective,” *Faulkner Law Review* (forthcoming).

compatriots in exile in Babylon desired to eat a different menu than that offered by the king, or refused to bow the knee to the golden statue or disobeyed the law of the Medes and Persians and prayed to the only God who is, are we really expected to say these were merely internal states or common actions and therefore cannot be properly denominated as Christian?" "Which God did he [Abraham] obey? I think it was the Triune God of Scripture because that is the only God there has ever been. If this is true then natural law is Christian because it is a revelation of the Triune God" (Waddington, "Duplex," 195).

Waddington does give a citation to my article here, to a page that discusses these issues. I do not think that what I wrote there is unclear, but Waddington misinterprets my position. Here is a clarification: my point is that in most ordinary affairs God imposes a common moral standard upon believers and unbelievers. God does not give believers a unique Christian way of doing most ordinary tasks, but he obligates believers and unbelievers alike to perform them with honesty, justice, industriousness, and in every other way consistent with how he made the world and ordained these activities. And yet Christians' subjective motivation (e.g., doing all things by faith and for God's glory) should always be unique in comparison to unbelievers' motivations, even when Christians are pursuing these moral standards that in themselves are not uniquely Christian. To illustrate: God holds believing and unbelieving airline pilots responsible for the same moral standards of excellence in their work of flying planes. I do not offer these ideas as something radical, only as a theological clarification of what many Reformed Christians probably already think.

WORLDVIEW

The notion of worldview is the final issue in Waddington's 2012 response that I wish to address. He writes: "Again, though not specifically mentioned in his article, Two Kingdoms advocates also have an apparent dislike of the idea of a Christian *worldview*" (Waddington, "Duplex," 195). Is that right? Where is the evidence of this? Waddington once more offers no citation in support, either from me or from one of these other unnamed "Two Kingdoms advocates." I do think some appeals to the idea of "worldview" are unhelpful, but whether I have a "dislike" of the idea of worldview depends entirely on what is meant by the term. So what does Waddington mean by "worldview?"

He explains: "What is a worldview? It is the lenses

6. David VanDrunen, "The Reformed Two Kingdoms Doctrine: An Explanation and Defense," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 8 (2012): 189.

through which we look at the world. Frankly, there is such a thing as a Christian worldview..." (Waddington, "Duplex," 195). Understood this way, yes, I agree. When Waddington says that I have an "apparent dislike" for the idea it is just another unsubstantiated assertion.

But Waddington is not yet finished. He adds this a few sentences later: "A criticism of worldview thinking would appear to proceed on the assumption that there are areas of neutrality that have no connection with the Christian faith or that cannot be thought of differently between Christians and non-Christians" (Waddington, "Duplex," 195). So he is saying that it "appears" that I (and unnamed others) work with an "assumption" that there are neutral areas of life. Of course he offers no citation. He might, however, have quoted the following from my article to which he was responding: "The [two kingdoms] doctrine illuminates the antithesis between believing and unbelieving thought by displaying why there is no neutral realm of human existence."⁶ Waddington says I "appear" to work with an "assumption" that there are neutral areas of life? In my article I *explicitly* deny this claim, and offer reasons why I think the two kingdoms doctrine illumines the fact that there is no neutral realm.

I truly regret that I have had to point out these matters in this response to my brother's response. But there is simply no prospect for constructive theological dialogue when one writer repeatedly misrepresents the other and seems little concerned about the obligation to document serious accusations against his interlocutor.

Response to Waddington's New Essay

In this second section I respond to Waddington's new essay, "It Is Not Good for Natural Law to Be Alone." Although this essay for the most part explores matters other than the two kingdoms, which was supposed to be our topic of discussion, I will try to comment, at least briefly, on all of the main issues he raises.

THE DEFINITION OF NATURAL LAW

Waddington first addresses the definition of natural law. He reflects on the relation of natural law to natural revelation, and seems to conclude that the two concepts are not quite coterminous, but that natural law is the "moral element" of natural revelation. I believe that is clearly correct. I also appreciate Waddington's remark that through natural law people know God "*covenantally and existentially*" (italics his). The fact that natural law is covenantal revelation is a major point of emphasis in my book, *Divine Covenants and Moral Order*.

Waddington goes on to say: "Natural law then can

be said *to be* the moral law.” I think that is basically correct, although a little more nuance could help to state matters more precisely. First, instead of saying that natural law *is* the moral law, it may be a bit more precise to say that natural law and the moral law communicate the same basic moral substance, with natural law communicating that substance by natural revelation and moral law communicating that substance by special revelation. As Francis Turretin usefully put it, the two are the same in substance but differ as to “mode of delivery.”⁷ I suspect Waddington would have no problem with this nuance.

Second, I think it would be helpful for Reformed people to move away from thinking of natural law in terms of a series of discrete moral rules. The book of Proverbs suggests that there is, in fact, a natural moral order that wise people learn to perceive, and by which they pursue flourishing lives in this world pleasing to God and beneficial to their neighbors. Discrete moral rules such as the Decalogue are important summaries of this natural moral order, but cannot be simply equated with it. We understand certain moral truths from wise perception of the natural moral order that we cannot understand merely by reading the moral law as revealed in Scripture. What we sometimes refer to as “matters of wisdom” are often serious moral issues, but at the same time can be resolved, not through exegesis of a biblical text, but through discernment of what sort of response to a concrete set of circumstances best accords with the natural moral order.⁸ Thus, while the natural and moral laws communicate the same basic moral substance, recourse to natural law (rather than simply to the moral law) is often necessary in order to understand the details and application of that basic substance. If we simply say that the natural law *is* the moral law, that nuance may get lost.

A third and final nuance on the relation of natural and moral law is that the natural law inherently communicates the message that those who violate it deserve judgment, whereas the moral law of special revelation sometimes, but not always, communicates this message. With respect to natural law, Paul says in Romans 1:32 that “they [all human beings, who receive God’s natural revelation] know God’s decree that those who practice such things [the sins in violation of natural law mentioned in the preceding verses] deserve to die.”⁹ Natural law, therefore, communicates not only our basic moral obligations before God but also his rightful judgment against the disobedient. Another way to put it is that the natural law communicates to all people the message of the covenant of works. It is natural *law*, after all; there is

no natural gospel underlying the promulgation of natural law. The moral law revealed in special revelation, however, although it can come with that warning of final judgment attached, does not have to do so. In fact, insofar as the moral law comes to us today as Christians, it *does not* carry the message of covenant-of-works judgment along with it. For example, when Paul issues the moral law in the latter half of Romans 13, he instructs us how to live as the justified and does not threaten us with eternal punishment. So, here is another nuance that may be lost if we simply say that natural law *is* the moral law.

NATURAL AND SPECIAL REVELATION BEFORE THE FALL
Waddington next offers some extensive remarks on the relationship between natural and special revelation before the fall into sin. His main conclusion seems to be this: “Special revelation as well as natural law functioned together in the Garden of Eden.” That claim seems obviously correct to me. The following conclusion also seems important to Waddington: “The covenant of works is not just a product of natural law.” That seems correct too, and obviously so. No disagreement here.

When I was originally reading this discussion, however, I had the feeling that Waddington believed that he was in fact opposing my views. My initial suspicion was confirmed by footnote 12, following his assertion that the covenant of works is not just a product of natural law. He writes: “This would seem to conflict with the emphasis of VanDrunen in *Divine Covenants and Moral Order* in his first chapter on the covenant of creation and natural law, 39–94. I put it this way as he does allow for the presence of special revelation in the covenant of creation on pages 89–90 although it is not clear to what extent this allowance plays a substantial role in his understanding of the covenant.”

This is a very odd statement. Where does Waddington pick up *any* idea from my book that I have a problem with the idea of special revelation before the fall? He says that his claims conflict with my “emphasis” in my chapter that he cites. Well, I suppose my emphasis is indeed upon the importance of natural law for the covenant of creation—it’s a book about natural law, after all, so what would he expect? But just because I focus

7. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 2, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1994), 6.

8. I explore this topic in detail especially in *Divine Covenants*, chapter 7.

9. Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

upon the importance of natural law before the fall does not carry any implication that I reject the presence of special revelation. But then Waddington says that I “allow for” the presence of special revelation in the covenant of creation. That makes it sound like I’m making a concession of some sort. Why does he think this? The only thing I can conclude is that Waddington is starting from some mysterious presupposition that I have a problem with the idea of special revelation before the fall. That presupposition is false.

NATURAL LAW AFTER THE FALL

Waddington continues: “With the Fall the interrelation of natural law/special revelation is such that special revelation is *required* properly to (1) *interpret* natural law/natural revelation because of the noetic effects of sin (our fallen propensity to twist and suppress the truth of the natural law) and properly (2) to *delineate* the specific details of natural law from an absolute and infallible divine perspective.” The first point certainly seems correct to me. (Although again I wonder: does Waddington think he’s disagreeing with me?) Regarding the second point, I am not sure exactly what it means to delineate the details of natural law *from an absolute and infallible divine perspective*. Are we finite humans ever able to take an *absolute* perspective (and what is that)? Are we sinners ever able to claim that we are working from an *infallible* perspective in anything we delineate? After all, because of the noetic effects of sin we misinterpret Scripture too. If Waddington simply means that Scripture offers an infallible divine perspective, and that we need Scripture to delineate natural law as accurately as possible, then I agree with his second point too.

THE COVENANT OF WORKS

Waddington focuses upon the covenant of works in his next major section. He states up front: “We are not concerned at this point with every aspect of the covenant of works, but with the question of whether the covenant of works reflects its foundation in natural law alone or in the complex of both natural law and pre-redemptive special revelation.” It seems obvious to me the covenant of works is founded in both natural law and special revelation. This too is Waddington’s position. I suspect, however, that Waddington believes he is carrying on an argument with me again at this point.

To step back for a moment, it is quite encouraging to me to see someone like Waddington—not just a generic Reformed writer but someone especially concerned to express his dependence upon Van Til—take a strong view of the existence and importance of natural law,

and in fact even be willing to use the terminology of “natural law” unapologetically. Would this kind of treatment of issues have transpired ten or twenty years ago? Probably not. I am grateful for whatever role I have been able to play in helping to bring natural law back into such Reformed discussions. What I do not understand is why Waddington at several points seems to want to make my views seem as ridiculous as possible. No special revelation before the fall? No special revelation as foundation for the covenant of works? I honestly do not understand why he imputes such views to me.

Waddington proceeds to ask “whether the covenant of works is coterminous with creation or subsequently imposed.” This is an interesting theological issue, although I note again that it seems rather extraneous to the question we were supposed to be discussing: the two kingdoms doctrine.

In the discussion that follows, he speculates on some issues related to creation and covenant. It is not entirely clear how exactly he would answer the main question he posed. He does say that it would be “a mistake to think of God creating the world and its inhabitants in a bare or naked state upon which he subsequently imposed a covenant relation.” I agree, and I am glad to hear Waddington affirm this. (In fact, if Waddington is looking to expose medieval nature-grace dualisms lingering in Reformed circles, the idea that God superadded the covenant of works upon a covenant-less nature seems like a much more plausible candidate than anything I have defended.)

In Waddington’s subsequent discussion, he wonders whether God may have created human beings in a “covenant of creation” (which involved implanting knowledge of the natural law in their consciences) and then entered the “covenant of works” subsequently through the words of probation and prohibition concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Waddington does not explicitly say that he holds this position, but asks whether this may be the right way to see things.

I think it is probably not quite the right way. A general reservation is that it seems speculative and not based in any clear exegesis of the biblical text. That, per se, does not make the position incorrect, but I do not see positively a decisive reason for affirming it. I cannot determine with certainty whether Waddington thinks the natural law implanted in the “covenant of creation” *only* communicates moral obligations and does not also communicate the fact that there are consequences of whether people obey those obligations. He only mentions obligations. If God did create man with knowledge of the natural law, as Waddington and I both believe, I think we should affirm that there is also at least some

knowledge of consequences from the outset of man's creation. As mentioned earlier, Romans 1:32 teaches that natural law communicates not only knowledge of our moral obligations but also knowledge of consequences of our response to the natural law: all people *know* that those who violate the natural law *deserve to die*.

In my most recent book I defend the idea that God created human beings in the covenant of works, and not simply in a more generic covenant of creation. I defend this position primarily through a thorough exegetical study of Genesis 1–2. Interested readers can read and evaluate my argument if they wish. An important part of the argument is that God created human beings in His image, and that being the image of God entailed both working like God *and resting like God*. The work-rest pattern of the covenant of works seems to be something not imposed upon or superadded to nature, but something inherent to human nature from the beginning. Thus, it seems best to understand the specially revealed prohibition and probation of Genesis 2:16–17 both as confirming generally what our first parents already knew by nature (that they not only had obligations, but also that consequences would follow) and also as focusing their obedience upon a particular issue (i.e., handling of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), about which they presumably did not know by nature (VanDrunen, *Divine Covenants*, chap. 1). Thus, I think it is not quite right for Waddington to claim: “Given God’s eschatological goal of advance from probation to confirmed righteousness, a word of special revelation would seem to be necessary.” Genesis 1–2 indicates that knowledge of a state of confirmed righteousness (as a consequence of obedience) was inherent to creation in the image of God, so special revelation was not *necessary* to communicate this precise point. Special revelation *did*, however, communicate this point, in confirmation and clarification of natural revelation.

Whether or not he agrees with all the details of my exegetical conclusions, my position would seem to fit well with Waddington’s general view of the relation of natural to special revelation, since my position concludes that special revelation before the fall both confirms the teaching of natural revelation and adds some things unknown through natural revelation.

THE DUAL KINGSHIP OF CHRIST

In the last section of his essay, Waddington finally turns to the topic of the two kingdoms, although only insofar as it relates to his overriding concern about the relationship of natural and special revelation. He begins this section: “The doctrine of the dual kingship of Christ is thought to provide a foundation for both the

sole function of natural law among the nations and the doctrine of two kingdoms. Our concern here is only with the role of this doctrine as a foundation for the natural law functioning *on its own* among the nations.”

Waddington helpfully acknowledges that many eminent Reformed theologians have asserted quite starkly that the Son (specifically as eternal God) rules the nations by natural law through civil magistrates and that the Son (specifically as incarnate mediator) rules the church by Scripture through ecclesiastical officers. Waddington mentions George Gillespie and focuses especially on Samuel Rutherford, but there are numerous other good examples too. Weighing this view against the position that there is just a sole kingship of Christ by which He rules the nations and the church by both natural and special revelation, Waddington expresses considerable appreciation for the former and some of the things it seeks to affirm, but he ultimately favors the latter. His final conclusion is this: “Christ rules the cosmos and the church as *one King* who rules through the complex revelatory matrix of natural law and special revelation and he rules each realm (and the others) in ways appropriate to each while each are equally under his Kingship and his complex revelatory matrix.”

Given the whole context of what he has written in his two essays, I have to assume that Waddington believes I agree unequivocally and without further nuance with the proposition that the Son rules the nations by natural law *alone* and rules the church by Scripture *alone*. The fact is, I do not embrace this proposition unequivocally and without further nuance. Waddington does not cite any place in my writings where I do so, and I do not believe he could—at least, I do not remember ever stating my agreement with this proposition in its bare form. I have explained and defended my view of the two kingdoms in my original article in this exchange with Waddington, and have explained and defended it in much more detail in my book *Living in God’s Two Kingdoms*, so I won’t try to reiterate that here. But let me offer a few remarks on God’s rule by natural law and Scripture, the focus of the end of Waddington’s essay.

First, I think it is theologically correct to say, as a general matter, that Christ rules the church by Scripture alone. This is essentially the point of important Reformed doctrines such as the ministerial and declarative authority of church officers and the regulative principle of worship, both of which I strongly support. The nuance I would offer, however, is the theological point affirmed in Westminster Confession of Faith 1.6: “there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common

to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence....” It is also interesting to consider texts such as 1 Corinthians 9, where Paul defends ministerial salaries in part through appeals to natural revelation. It is not as if natural law is simply irrelevant for the church.

Second, I find it difficult to agree or disagree with the claim that God rules the nations by natural law (and providence) alone; I need to know in more detail what exactly this claim means. What does Waddington think this claim means? At one point, in what he seems to present as a consideration against the claim that God rules the nations by natural law alone, Waddington writes: “One could go so far as to say that Rutherford *conceded* (as did Calvin) that in the absence of special revelation, a pagan ruler could draw on natural law/natural revelation. In other words (a la Acts 14), the pagan ruler was not left without some witness to the true God. Surely Rutherford thought Christians would live by God’s Word and not just by natural law. And Rutherford agreed with Calvin’s view that Scripture provided corrective lenses....” I think Waddington is presenting this as a point of tension in Rutherford’s thought (since he offers it as proof that the claim about God ruling the nations by natural law only “is not as cut and dried an idea as might at first seem to be the case”). So, if I am reading him rightly, Waddington thinks that the claim that God rules the nations by natural law alone means that Christians do not need to live by Scripture in their public, political lives, or, that Christians do not need to interpret natural law in the light of Scripture.

If this is what the claim means, then I fully agree with Waddington that the claim is false. Indeed, Christians ought to live according to Scripture in all things, and ought always to be eager to have Scripture guide and correct their interpretation of natural law. In fact, I think my book *Divine Covenants and Moral Order* is an illustration of this conviction at work: I spend some five hundred pages exploring and interpreting natural law in the light of detailed biblical exegesis. Thus, as a *normative* matter, God desires Christians (and, insofar as God wills that all people should believe in Christ, desires all people) to interpret natural law in the light of Scripture.

But I am not sure if Waddington hopes to make a *factual* claim as well as a *normative* claim. He does state his final conclusion as a matter of fact: Christ rules not only the church but also all other realms through “the complex revelatory matrix of natural law and special revelation.” But is this really true as a matter of fact? Does God really rule all the nations through special revelation as well as natural law? It would seem to be

the case, as a matter of fact, that God has *not* ruled most nations of the world through special revelation. To mention a couple of obvious contemporary examples, God is not ruling North Korea or Saudi Arabia through special revelation. Their magistrates cannot escape God’s natural law, but they are not reading or submitting to Scripture. Special revelation is simply not God’s instrument for ruling these nations; yet however much North Korean and Saudi magistrates would hate to hear it, God is ruling their nations by providence and natural law. I can think of nothing in Scripture that requires me to believe otherwise.

Thus, I conclude that as a *normative* matter God wills us to interpret natural law with the aid of Scripture in every area of life, but that as a *factual* matter God does not rule all nations (or all common activities and institutions) by special revelation. In many instances, apparently, natural revelation is sufficient for God to accomplish his inscrutable purposes in ruling the world.

Brief Rejoinder by Jeffrey C. Waddington

I am glad that I have had an opportunity to interact with Dr. David Van Drunen about whether natural law was ever meant to function in isolation from special revelation (There appears to have been a miscommunication *in that my goal in both articles which I wrote was to address natural law and not the two kingdoms doctrine* except where it impinged on the consideration of natural law/natural revelation). Dr. Van Drunen is indeed an accomplished scholar and I do not claim an expertise in his area of research. This is not a *surrejoinder* in the proper sense of that technical term. I will not be offering here a point by point rebuttal at this time.

Dr. Van Drunen argues in the first half of his response to me that I have accused him of holding positions he in fact does not hold. If I have done that I beg Dr. Van Drunen’s pardon. I have no desire to create a straw man. Debate is not furthered when one party paints the other party in unrecognizable colors. I would be most pleased if Dr. Van Drunen and I were in complete agreement on natural law (and the two kingdoms doctrine). While it is quite possible that the good doctor and I agree more than we disagree, I am not so sure. Perhaps in another venue or on another occasion I will be able to offer a point by point rebuttal of Dr. Van Drunen’s concerns. Until then I encourage readers to return to the original sources and discern for yourselves who has misread whom. ■