

## The 1788 American Revision of the Westminster Standards

Compiled by Lee Irons

On May 28, 1787 (while the Constitutional Congress was wrapping up its work in the civil arena), the Synod of Philadelphia and New York, meeting in Philadelphia, proposed certain amendments to the constitution of the Presbyterian church in light of the new relationship between church and state in America. The Minutes of the Synod take note of these momentous developments:<sup>1</sup>

The Synod took into consideration the last paragraph of the twentieth chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith; the third paragraph of the twenty-third chapter; and the first paragraph of the thirty-first chapter; and having made some alterations, agreed that the said paragraphs, as now altered, be printed for consideration, together with the draught of a plan of government and discipline ... And the Synod agreed, that when the above proposed alterations in the Confession of Faith shall have been finally determined on by the body, and the Directory shall have been revised as above directed, and adopted by the Synod, the said Confession thus altered, and Directory thus revised and adopted, shall be styled, "The Confession of Faith, and Directory for public worship, of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America."

Meeting again in Philadelphia the following year, on May 28, 1788, the Synod adopted and ratified the revised Confession. Quoting again from the Minutes:

The Synod having fully considered the draught of the form of government and discipline, did, on a review of the whole, and hereby do ratify and adopt the same, as now altered and amended, as the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, and order the same to be considered and strictly observed as the rule of their proceedings, by all the inferior judicatories belonging to the body. And they order that a correct copy be printed, and that the Westminster Confession of Faith, as now altered, be printed in full along with it, as making a part of the constitution.

Having adopted and ratified the amended Confession, the Synod added:

Resolved, That the true intent and meaning of the above ratification by the Synod, is, that the Form of Government and Discipline and the Confession of Faith, as now

---

<sup>1</sup> *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United State of America 1706-1788* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), pp. 539, 546-47.

ratified, is to continue to be our constitution and the confession of our faith and practice unalterable, unless two thirds of the Presbyteries under the care of the General Assembly shall propose alterations or amendments, and such alterations or amendments shall be agreed to and enacted by the General Assembly.

Thus far only the Confession itself was revised. But on the following day, the Synod

took into consideration the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and having made a small amendment to the Larger [by striking the words “tolerating a false religion” from question 109], did approve, and do hereby approve and ratify the said Catechisms, as now agreed on, as the Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church in the said United States.

Thus the American Presbyterian Church revised the Westminster Standards. Below I have placed the relevant sections of the original and the revised versions in parallel columns for ease of comparison. I have set the two versions side-by-side in order to cast into bold relief the definiteness with which the American church wanted to express its rejection of the older theocratic views of the civil magistrate and its adoption of a fundamentally new understanding of the teaching of the Word of God on this subject. Underlined sections indicate portions of the original text that have been removed or rewritten.

However, to merely show how that the text of the Westminster standards was revised would not sufficiently highlight the radical nature of the changes that were made. In addition to the amendments to the text of the Confession, the proof texts cited by the Westminster divines were also revised. Those for WCF XXIII:2-3 and XXXI:1-2 were revised, while those for the deleted clauses at WCF XX:4 and WLC # 109 were simply removed. Note that I have included paragraph 2 of WCF XXIII, both versions, even though the text itself was not revised. I have done so because the proof texts were revised, thus suggesting a shift in understanding of paragraph 2 in light of the changes made to

paragraph 3. Although the proof texts did not have binding constitutional authority, they illuminate the intent of both the Westminster divines and the Synod of Philadelphia and New York with respect to their doctrine of the civil magistrate.

As you read the 1788 Confession and its proof texts, in comparison with the original version and its proof texts, it ought to become apparent that the position held both by modern theologians and by the original Westminster divines (viz., that the civil magistrate is obligated to enforce in the civil arena the Decalogue's prohibition of false worship), was formally and intentionally repudiated by the American Presbyterian church. It follows that this theocratic conception of the civil magistrate continues to be repudiated, at least on paper, by those Presbyterian churches that have adopted the revised version.

Below I have placed the original and the revised versions in parallel columns for ease of comparison. For the original version, I have reproduced the text as printed in the hardbound copy of the Westminster Standards published by Free Presbyterian Publications (FPP).<sup>2</sup> I have attempted to copy the formatting of the FPP edition. For example, in the FPP edition, certain words and phrases are emphasized with the use of italics. For the American revision, I have relied on a 1797 publication by the PCUSA as reproduced in Evans Early American Imprints.<sup>3</sup> There were two earlier printings of the Constitution of the PCUSA, in 1789 and 1792,<sup>4</sup> but the 1797 printing is the earliest edition that I could find with proof texts appended. Unlike the FPP version, the American proof texts were originally printed without the use of italics to emphasize certain words and phrases. Note

---

<sup>2</sup> *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1958, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, printed in 1797 (Evans Early American Imprints # 32711).

<sup>4</sup> Evans # 22079 and # 24711, respectively.

that there are many additional differences in punctuation (commas, colons, semicolons) in the two versions. In many instances, both are different from the modern punctuation in the currently available printed copies of the Westminster Standards. I have copied everything as printed in the sources above, with a few minor exceptions: if the proof text is only cited but not printed out in full, I have on occasion printed the text in brackets. I have also taken the liberty to replace the Scripture references with more modern notations (e.g., “Rom. 13:1-8” instead of “Rom. xiii. 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> verse”). Note as well that the proof texts are largely from the King James Version of the Bible. I have also copied the proof texts as printed. Here too, there are differences here and there with the punctuation and spelling found in the KJV Bibles currently in print.

**ORIGINAL AND REVISED VERSIONS IN PARALLEL  
WITH PROOF TEXTS**

<b>ORIGINAL TEXT (1646)</b>	<b>AMERICAN TEXT (1788)</b>
<p><b>WCF XX:4</b></p> <p>And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God [1]. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account [2], and proceeded against by</p>	<p><b>WCF XX:4</b></p> <p>And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another, they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God [1]. And, for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either, in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church [2]; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by</p>

the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate [3].

[1] **Matt. 12:25** And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every *kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.* **1 Pet. 2:13-14, 16** *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well ... As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.* **Rom. 13:1-8. Heb. 13:17** *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

[2] **Rom. 1:32** *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* With **1 Cor. 5:1, 5, 11, 13** *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. Ver. 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Ver. 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. Ver. 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*

**2 John 10-11** *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.* And **2 Thess. 3:14** *And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.* And **1 Tim. 6:3-5** *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and*

the censures of the church [3].

[1] **1 Pet. 2:13-14, 16** *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: Whether it be to the king, as supreme; --- or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. --- As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.* **Heb. 13:17** *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.* See also **Rom. 13:1-8.**

[2] **Rom. 1:32** *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* **1 Cor. 5:1, 5, 11, 13** *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. --- To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus. --- But now I have written unto you and [sic - should read "not"] to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. --- But them that are without judgeth God. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*

[3] **2 Thess. 3:14** *And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.* **Titus 3:10** *A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject.*

destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: *from such withdraw thyself.* And **Titus 1:10-11, 13** For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: *Whose mouths must be stopped,* who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake ... This witness is true. Wherefore *rebuke them sharply,* that they may be sound in the faith. And **Titus 3:10** A man that is an heretick, *after the first and second admonition, reject.* With **Matt. 18:15-17** Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, *go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone:* if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, *then take with thee one or two more,* that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, *tell it unto the church:* but if he neglect to hear the church, *let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.* **1 Tim. 1:19-20** Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have *delivered unto Satan,* that they may learn not to blaspheme. **Rev. 2:2, 14-15, 20** I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou *canst not bear them which are evil:* and thou *hast tried them* which say they are apostles, and are not, and *hast found them liars.* Ver. 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that *hold the doctrine of Balaam,* who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. Ver. 15 So hast thou also them that *hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans,* which thing I hate. Ver. 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou *sufferest* that woman *Jezebel,* which calleth herself a prophetess, *to teach and to seduce* my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. **Rev. 3:9** Behold, I will make them of *the synagogue of Satan,* which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

[3] **Deut. 13:6-12** [And that prophet, or *that dreamer of dreams,* shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God ... to thrust thee out of the

way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. Ver. 6 If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers.] **Rom. 13:3-4.** With **2 John 10-11** [If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.] **Ezra 7:23-28** Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for *why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?* Ver. 25 And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, *set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.* Ver. 26 And *whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.* Ver. 27 Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem: Ver. 28 And hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as the hand of the LORD my God was upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me. **Rev. 17:12, 16-17** And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. Ver. 16 And the *ten horns* which thou sawest upon the beast, *these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.* Ver. 17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. **Neh. 13:15ff** In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, *which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.* Ver. 17 Then *I contended with the nobles of Judah,* and said

unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and *profane the sabbath day*? Ver. 21 Then *I testified against them*, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? If ye do so again, *I will lay hands on you*. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. Ver. 22 And *I commanded the Levites* that they should cleanse themselves, and that they *should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day*. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy. Ver. 25 And *I contended* with them, and *cursed* them, and *smote* certain of them, and *plucked off their hair*, and made them swear by God, saying, *Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves*. Ver. 30. Thus *cleansed I them from all strangers*, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business. **2 Kings 23:5ff** And he *put down the idolatrous priests*, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; *them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven*. Ver. 6 And he *brought out the grove from the house of the LORD*, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and *burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people*. Ver. 9 Nevertheless *the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem*, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren. Ver. 20 And *he slew all the priests of the high places* that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem. Ver. 21 And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant. **2 Chron. 34:33** And Josiah *took away all the abominations out of all the countries* that pertained to the children of Israel, and *made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the LORD their God*. And all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers. **2 Chron. 15:12ff** And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; Ver. 13. That *whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death*, whether small or great, whether man or



<p>woman. Ver. 16. And also concerning Maachah the mother of Asa the king, <i>he removed her from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron.</i>  <b>Dan. 3:29</b> Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, <i>shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill:</i> because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. <b>1 Tim. 2:2</b> <i>For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peacable life in all godliness and honesty.</i>  <b>Isa. 49:23.</b> And kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. <b>Zech. 13:2-3.</b> And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered; and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophecy, then <i>his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live;</i> for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord: and <i>his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through</i> when he prophesieth.</p>	
<p><b>WCF XXIII:2</b></p> <p>It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto [1]; in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth [2], so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the new testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions [3].</p> <p>[1] <b>Prov. 8:15.</b> <i>By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.</i> Ver. 16. <i>By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.</i> <b>Rom. 13:1, 2, 4.</b></p> <p>[2] <b>Ps. 2:10-12</b> <i>Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye</i></p>	<p><b>WCF XXIII:2</b></p> <p>It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto [1]; in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth [2], so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the new testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions [3].</p> <p>[1] <b>Prov. 8:15.</b> By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. Verse 16. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. <b>Rom. 13:1, 3, 4. 1 Pet. 2:13, 14.</b></p> <p>[2] <b>Ps. 82:3, 4</b> Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. --- Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. <b>2 Sam. 23:3</b> The God of Israel said,</p>

<p>perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. <b>1 Tim. 2:2</b> For kings, and for all that are in authority; <i>that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.</i> <b>Ps. 82:3-4</b> <i>Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.</i> <b>2 Sam. 23:3</b> The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, <i>He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.</i> <b>1 Pet. 2:13</b> Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme.</p> <p>[3] <b>Luke 3:14.</b> <i>And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages.</i> <b>Rom. 13:4. Mat. 8:9.</b> For I am a man under authority, <i>having soldiers under me:</i> and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. Ver. 10. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. <b>Acts 10:1.</b> And there was a certain man in Cesarea called <i>Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,</i> Ver. 2. <i>A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house,</i> which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. <b>Rev. 17:14, 16.</b> <i>These shall make war with the Lamb,</i> and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. Ver. 16. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these <i>shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.</i></p>	<p>the rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. <b>See 1 Pet. 2:13</b> [Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: Whether it be to the king, as supreme.]</p> <p>[3] <b>Luke 3:14.</b> And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages. <b>Mat. 8:9 and 10.</b> at large. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. <b>Acts 10:1, 2. Rom. 13:4.</b></p>
<p><b>WCF XXIII:3</b></p> <p>The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven [1]: <u>yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses of worship and discipline prevented or</u></p>	<p><b>WCF XXIII:3</b></p> <p>Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and sacraments [1]; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven [2]; or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith [3]. Yet, as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest in such a manner, that all ecclesiastical persons</p>

reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed [2]. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God [3].

[1] **2 Chron. 26:18** And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, *It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD*, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: *go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed*: neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. With **Matt. 18:17**. And if he shall neglect to hear them, *tell it unto the church*: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. And **Matt. 16:19**. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. **1 Cor. 12:28-29**. And God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? **Eph. 4:11-12**. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. **1 Cor. 4:1-2**. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. **Rom. 10:15**. *And how shall they preach except they be sent?* As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! **Heb. 5:4**. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

[2] **Isa. 49:23** And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. **Ps. 122:9** Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good. **Ezra 7:23, 25-28** (quoted above). **Lev. 24:16** And he that

whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging, every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger [4]. And, as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any commonwealth, should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief [5]. It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretence of religion or of infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever: and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance [6].

[1] **2 Chron. 26:18** And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, *It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord*, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense; go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed: neither shall it be for thine honor from the Lord God.

[2] **Matt. 16:18, 19**. At large. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. **1 Cor. 4:1, 2**. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. --- Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

[3] **John 18:36** Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: **Mal. 2:7** For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. **Acts 5:29** Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

[4] **Isa. 49:23** And kings shall be thy nursing fathers and their queens thy nursing mothers.

[5] **Ps. 105:15** Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm. **Acts 18:14, 15**. At large. [And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: But if

*blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death.*

**Deut. 13:5-6, 12** And that prophet, or *that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death;* because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God ... to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. Ver. 6 If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers. 12 If thou shalt hear say in any one of thy cities, which the Lord thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, &c. **2 Kings 18:4** *He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. [1 Chron. 13:1 to the 9<sup>th</sup> verse. 2 Kings 24:1 to the 26<sup>th</sup> verse.]* **2 Chron. 34:33.** And Josiah *took away all the abominations* out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and *made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the LORD their God.* And all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers. **2 Chron. 15:12-13.** And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel *should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.*

[3] **2 Chron. 19:8-11** Moreover in *Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and of the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD,* and for controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem. 9 And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart. 10 And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the Lord, and so wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren: this do, and ye shall not trespass. 11 And behold, Amariah the chief

it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. And he drave them from the judgment seat.]

[6] **2 Sam. 23:3. 1 Tim. 2:1 and 2.** At large. [I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.] **Rom. 13:4.** At large. [For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.]

<p>priest is over you in all matters of the Lord; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters: also the Levites shall be officers before you. Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be with the good. [2 Chron. Chapters 29 and 30.] <b>Matt. 2:4-5</b> <i>And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet.</i></p>	
<p><b>WCF XXX1:1-2</b></p> <p>1. For the better government, and further edification of the church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called Synods or Councils. [1]</p> <p><u>2. As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers, and other fit persons, to consult and advise with about matters of religion [2]; so if magistrates be open enemies to the church, the ministers of Christ, of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they, with other fit persons upon delegation from their churches, may meet together in such assemblies. [3]</u></p> <p>[1] <b>Acts 15:2, 4, 6.</b> When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissention and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, <i>unto the apostles and elders about this question.</i> Ver. 4. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received <i>of the church, and of the apostles and elders,</i> and they declared all things that God hath done with them. Ver. 6. <i>And the apostles and elders came together for to consider this matter.</i></p> <p>[2] <b>Isa. 49:23</b> <i>And kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. 1 Tim. 2:1-2.</i> I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: Ver. 2. <i>For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 2 Chron. 19:8-11. 2 Chron. 29-30</i> throughout. <b>Matt. 2:4-5</b> And</p>	<p><b>WCF XXX1:1</b></p> <p>1. For the better government and further edification of the church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called synods or councils [1]: and it belongeth to the overseers and other rulers of the particular churches, by virtue of their office, and the power which Christ hath given them for edification, and not for destruction, to appoint such assemblies [2]; and to convene together in them, as often as they shall judge it expedient for the good of the church [3].</p> <p>[1] <b>Acts 15:2, 4, 6.</b> When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissention and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders about this question. --- And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders; and they declared all things that God hath done with them. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider this matter.</p> <p>[2] <b>15 chap. Acts.</b></p> <p>[3] <b>Acts 15:22, 23, 25.</b> Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: --- And they wrote letters by them after this manner, The apostles, and elders, and brethren send greetings unto The brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.</p>

<p>when <i>he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes</i> of the people together, <i>he demanded of them</i> where Christ should be born. Ver. 5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet. <b>Prov. 11:14.</b> Where <i>no counsel is, the people fall:</i> but in the <i>multitude of counsellors</i> there is safety.</p> <p>[3] <b>Acts 15:22, 23, 25.</b> <i>Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church,</i> to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: Ver. 23. And they wrote letters by them after this manner, <i>The apostles, and elders, and brethren</i> send greetings unto The brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. Ver. 25. <i>It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord,</i> to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.</p>	
<p><b>WLC #109</b></p> <p>What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment? A. The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counselling, commanding, using, and any wise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; <u>tolerating a false religion</u> [1]; the making any representation of God, etc.</p> <p>[1] <b>Deut. 13:6-12</b> If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers ... 8 <i>Thou shalt not consent unto him,</i> nor hearken unto him; <i>neither shall thine eye pity him,</i> neither shalt thou spare, <i>neither shalt thou conceal him.</i> <b>Zech. 13:2-3</b> And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. 3 And it shall come to pass, that <i>when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.</i> <b>Rev. 2:2, 14-15, 20</b> I know thy</p>	<p><b>WLC #109</b></p> <p>The words “tolerating a false religion,” along with the proof texts, were deleted.</p> <p>Note: “tolerating a false religion” is erroneously printed in some recent editions of the Westminster Standards.</p>

works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and *how thou canst not bear them which are evil:* and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. Ver. 14 But I have *a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam,* who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. Ver. 15 *So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans,* which thing I hate. Ver. 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, *because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* **Rev. 17:12, 16-17** And the *ten horns* which thou sawest are *ten kings,* which have received no kingdom as yet; but *receive power as kings one hour with the beast.* Ver. 16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. Ver. 17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, *and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.*