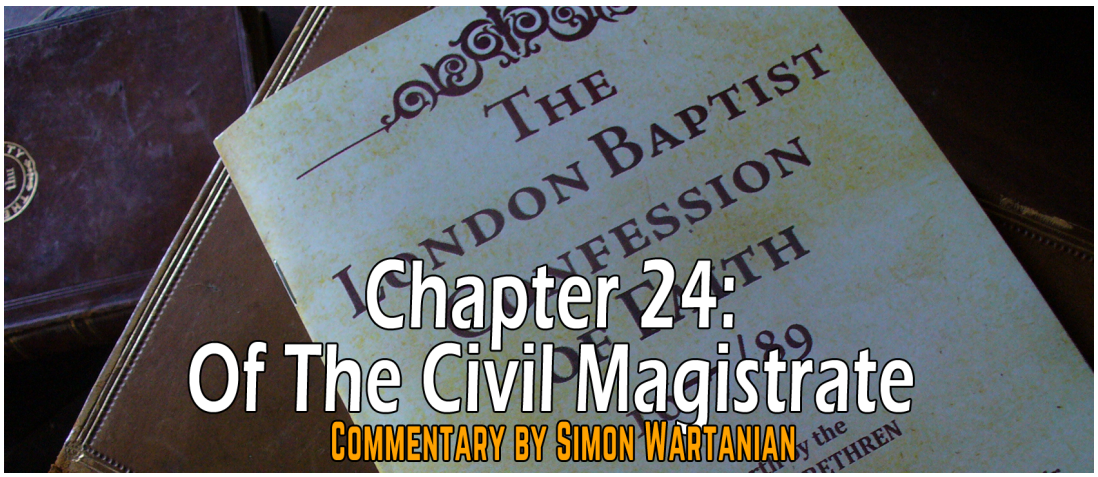
1689 Baptist Confession Chapter 24: Of the Civil Magistrate - Commentary

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Chapter 24: Of the Civil Magistrate

Politics is not my thing. But I do not doubt that is an important aspect of our lives on earth. I'm not versed in political theories and things. I usually keep a distance. This is a subject that I've not studied in any considerable length. But I agree with Dr. Samuel Waldron that the sovereignty of God extends itself over all things, including politics and His people should influence those in high positions. Also, "To restrict Christianity to the 'spiritual' realm is, ultimately, to destroy it."[1]

In this chapter, we will concern ourselves with the civil government as ordained by God, its purpose, and power. We will take a look at Romans 13 to see what it teaches about the civil government? Must we obey the government in all things? May Christians work in the government?

§1 God Hath Ordained Civil Magistrates To Be Under Him, Over The People

1. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath **ordained civil magistrates to be under him**, over the people, **1 for his own glory** and the **public good**; **2** and to this end hath **armed them with the power of the sword**, for defence and encouragement of them that do good, and for the punishment of evil doers. **3**
    1. Ps. 82:1; Luke 12:48; Rom. 13:1-6; 1 Peter 2:13-14[2]
    2. Gen. 6:11-13 with 9:5-6; Ps. 58:1-2; 72:14; 82:1-4; Prov. 21:15; 24:11-12; 29:14,26; 31:5; Ezek. 7:23; 45:9; Dan. 4:27; Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:3-4; 1 Tim. 2:2; 1 Peter 2:14
    3. Gen. 9:6; Prov. 16:14; 19:12; 20:2; 21:15; 28:17; Acts 25:11; Rom. 13:4; 1 Peter 2:14

God as **the supreme Lord and King of all the world** has **ordained civil magistrates** or the government **to be under Him** (Rom. 13:1-6). The government is subject to God and derives its authority to rule from God. The **civil magistrates** are **over the people**. They have authority **over the people** because they received that authority from God. This way of governing, God has chosen **for his own glory and the public good**. God's glory is the proper end of everything that He does so likewise in ordaining **civil magistrates**. What is the purpose of the **civil magistrates**? The civil magistrates are ordained and called **for defence and encouragement of them that do good** (1 Peter 2:14). A good government should defend those who are doing good and protect them. Furthermore, a good government should *encourage* the doing of good for the betterment of society and the glory of God. But **civil magistrates** are also **armed…with the power of the sword…for the punishment of evil doers** (Rom. 13:4; 1 Peter 2:14). A good government should defend itself and defend those who do good, in necessary, by using the God-given **power of the sword**.

Likewise, in punishing the evildoers, the **power of the sword** may be used when it is necessary. God has given it to the government to be used justly.

Subject To God

There are two things which are first of all asserted: 1) God is the supreme Lord, and 2) civil governments are to be subject to Him. That God is the supreme Lord over all, we don't need to mention here. In **chapter 21:2**, we also read that "God alone is Lord of the conscience". The government cannot see into our hearts and consciences. But God can. He determines even what is good and evil in that private realm. But He also rules us in the public realm through the civil magistrates. As the Supreme Lord, God is the ruler over the government also. Not only that, but as the supreme Lord of the government, the government is called to submit itself to Him. The government should acknowledge that its power is derivative. We are to be subjected to them as given by God. But they should also acknowledge that they, like we also, are subject to God. Therefore, any government wishing the blessing of its people should subject itself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Any government that does not acknowledge Jesus Christ is in rebellion against God. This is the description of all, if not most, governments in our world. The civil government should acknowledge that they're a tool in the hand of God for the good of its citizens. God has put them in the positions that they are in. It is God Who ordained them according to their roles as a king, president, governor, and all the other roles. God humbles Nebuchadnezzar, who was the most powerful man in the world, telling him that he will remain in humiliation "till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will" (Dan. 4:25). Ultimately, "Heaven rules" all the world (Dan. 4:26) and the call to the civil magistrate is to acknowledge that and bow the knee to the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

The government should rule *under* the authority of God *over* the people. The civil government has a higher responsibility and position in the world. They are to reign over the people for the people's good. They are to protect them and provide for them. The government is to peace and righteousness. It does not take us any time to notice that this is not actually the world in which we live. This is a broken and rebellious world. The majority of the government in the world live in open rebellion to the design of God. Most governments in the western world promote homosexuality and abortion, among other things, which the Word of God condemns. The ideal picture is that of a government that submits to the Lordship of Christ and serves its people in righteousness and peace. The citizens, in turn, who, first of all, submit to the Lordship of Christ and consequently submit to their governments, too. But this sadly not the case. Sin has broken and tainted every human institution and it is impossible to escape, until the Consummation when we can say, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

Romans 13

The primary passage which the Confession draws on here and which is used in discussions concerning the place of the government is Romans 13:1-7. Therefore, it would be helpful for us if we take a look at that passage. I come to the passage and by no means do I intended to give it a long exegesis. I'm merely sharing my short thoughts about the passage and its implications. As I said, politics is not my favorite subject.

> Rom. 13:1-7 Let every person **be subject to the governing authorities**. For there is **no authority except from God**, and those that exist have been **instituted by God**. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For **rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad**. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4 for **he is God's servant for your good**. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for **he does not bear the sword in vain**. For he is the servant of God, **an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer**. 5 Therefore **one must be in subjection**, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for **the authorities are ministers of God**, attending to this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Government is Ordained by God (v. 1)

The apostle first gives a command and then goes on to explain and give the basis for his command. Everyone should be under and be subjected to "the governing authorities" and "the higher powers" (KJV). The reason for this is simply the fact that every authority exists because God, Who is sovereign over all and blessed forever, has ordained that authority and government to be. God is the ultimate authority and therefore, obedience to civil authority is obedience to God. 'God often claims and asserts that "He" sets up one, and puts down another; Psa 75:7; Dan 2:21; Dan 4:17, Dan 4:25, Dan 4:34-35.'[3] But it is essential that we must make an important caveat here, lest we should claim that sinning is tolerated by God. For we learn a general and a simple principle from Acts 4:19-20; 5:28-29 that when a command of civil (or religious) authority

contradicts the Word of God, it is to be *disobeyed.* As John Knox noted long ago, "Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God." Disobedience to any government when it contradicts God's Word is obedience to God. Therefore, when the government commands us to take false (or unnecessary) oaths or to do things which the Lord has forbidden, disobedience to them is actually obedience to God. Just because God *institutes* all governments, whether good or evil, does not, in fact, mean that He *approves* of what they do. If Peter and John obeyed the command of the Sanhedrin, they would have been disobedient to God and the call that the Lord Christ gave them to proclaim His resurrection. Both good and evil governments are ordained by God. In fact, as observed by Calvin, "When God wants to judge a nation, He gives them wicked rulers." Do we need to cite proof-texts for this idea? Is not the history of Israel from the book of Judges and onward a clear demonstration of this truth?

Albert Barnes notes the following on the occasion of this passage:

> (3) many of the early Christians were composed of Jewish converts. Yet the Jews had long been under Roman oppression, and had borne the foreign yoke with great uneasiness. The whole pagan magistracy they regarded as founded in a system of idolatry; as opposed to God and his kingdom; and as abomination in his sight. With these feelings they had become Christians; and it was natural that their former sentiments should exert an influence on them after their conversion. How far they should submit, if at all, to heathen magistrates, was a question of deep interest; and there was danger that the "Jewish" converts might prove to be disorderly and rebellious citizens of the empire.
>
> (4) nor was the case much different with the "Gentile" converts. They would naturally look with abhorrence on the system of idolatry which they had just forsaken. They would regard all as opposed to God. They would denounce the "religion" of the pagans as abomination; and as that religion was interwoven with the civil institutions, there was danger also that they might denounce the government altogether, and be regarded as opposed to the laws of the land,

And he also added, 'It is quite probable, however, that the main danger was, that the early Christians would err in "refusing" submission, even when it was proper, rather than in undue conformity to idolatrous rites and ceremonies.'[3] Thus the Roman Christians were displaying an attitude of anarchy and not submitting *at all* to authorities. Therefore, the apostle writes this chapter to command them to obey and honor authority. Barnes also observes in what way these governments are ordained:

> This word "ordained" denotes the "ordering" or "arrangement" which subsists in a "military" company, or army. God sets them "in order," assigns them their location, changes and directs them as he pleases. This does not mean that he "originates" or causes the evil dispositions of rulers, but that he "directs" and "controls" their appointment. By this, we are not to infer:
>
> 1. That he approves their conduct; nor,
> 2. That what they do is always right; nor,
> 3. That it is our duty "always" to submit to them.[3]

Likewise, John Gill's observations are good and helpful:

> The order of magistracy is of God; it is of his ordination and appointment, and of his ordering, disposing, and fixing in its proper bounds and limits. The several forms of government are of human will and pleasure; but government itself is an order of God. There may be men in power who assume it of themselves, and are of themselves, and not of God; and others that abuse the power that is lodged in them; who, though they are by divine permission, yet not of God's approbation and good will.[4]

The civil government is an order ordained and installed by God. We are called to submit to them because they are installed by God.

Resistance to Government is resistance to God (v. 2)

Therefore, resistance to civil governments in things which God has not forbidden and are not contrary to His Word will bring the judgment of the state and of God upon the person. But this does not mean that God will punish in the same way which the civil government punishes. A few years after the composition of the Epistle to the Romans, the Rome Empire began to require its citizens to worship Caesar and declare "Caesar is Lord" instead of "Jesus is Lord." The civil government did, in fact, punish Christians, feeding them to lions and burning them at the stake. But, will God punish the disobedience of the faithful Christians because they disobeyed the civil government? Absolutely not. In fact, He will reward those who gave their lives for the sake of Christ! In this, we see an instance which brings the wrath of the government upon the person, while it brings the glory and acceptance of God upon the same. In these instances, the government is disobeying God and forsaking

its God-given function and is storing up wrath for it. We also noted the instance of the apostles Peter and John in Acts 4:19-20; 5:28-29. Had they obeyed their government, they would have been in disobedience to God.

But notice also what is said in v. 2: “resists what God has appointed”. The apostle is speaking not only of those who resist the established government, but they who resist the *ordinance* and *establishment* of the government. They resist the idea of any government and basically want anarchy. They will incur the judgment of God because they are resisting that which God has ordained, namely, civil government.

Purpose of the Civil Magistrate (vv. 3-4)

The reason why we should not resist authorities is because they are to encourage the good and punish the evil. This is, at least, how it is supposed to be, but we all know better. Therefore, this point strengthens even more what we said concerning disobedience to evil governments is obedience to God. What shall we do when the government punishes those who will not offer incense and declare “Caesar is Lord”? The government did punish the Christians, but God welcomed them into glory. This means that the government is not fulfilling its God-given purpose and is in rebellion against God and will be judged in righteousness for their evil conduct. But, if we live under a “decent” government, there are still a lot of biblical laws which they uphold as a byproduct of Judeo-Christian values. Many civil governments uphold all kinds of laws that have their basis in God. Therefore, when one disobeys these things, they are disobeying God. But when one rejects, for example, homosexuality or polygamy, they are not rebelling against God, but merely against the government. They are standing against the government *for* God. They may incur the punishment of the government, but not that of God because He has spoken something else concerning that subject.

A government should encourage the good and punish the evil. In fact, this is how Peter summarizes the role of the governors as to “punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good” (2 Pet. 4:12).

The reason that civil governments (when not contradicting the Word) are to be obeyed is because they are God’s representatives. God exercises His rule through them. They are God’s *servants* and His tool to order and govern the world. The civil magistrate is a servant of God, carrying the approval or judgment of God upon its citizens. They are to act for the good of their citizens in accordance with God’s righteousness and law. Barnes notes on v. 4 that the civil government is “to protect you in your rights; to vindicate your name, person, or property; and to guard your liberty, and secure to you the results of your industry.”[3]

Good governments should reward “good conduct” (v. 3) and approve of people who walk in such a way and be a terror to evildoers. They are to be a terror to evildoers “for he does not bear the sword in vain” (v. 4). The sword is here a symbol of their power and authority to punish. But it also implies the authority to take life. The question of the death penalty is a strong emotional issue. I don’t pretend to have studied it that deeply. But I will claim that there is no biblical basis for Christians to object to the death penalty, for example, in cases of murder when the evidence against the murderer is undeniable. We must remember that the death penalty for murder predated Sinai and thus was not a part of the Mosaic civil law which has expired (Gen. 9:5-6). I know that the issue is very emotional, but as to the righteousness of the punishment, it is indeed righteous. How can I say any other if God has said that a murder ought to be executed? We see here the same principle. The New Testament does not abrogate the death penalty for the civil government, but as we have in the present passage, “he does not bear the sword in vain.” The Lord has put that sword in his hand in order that righteousness may be maintained and wrongdoing be punished. Calvin noted:

> This is the same as if it had been said, that he is an executioner of God’s wrath; and this he shows himself to be by having the sword, which the Lord has delivered into his hand. This is a remarkable passage for the purpose of proving the right of the sword; for if the Lord, by arming the magistrate, has also committed to him the use of the sword, whenever he visits the guilty with death, by executing God’s vengeance, he obeys his commands. Contend then do they with God who think it unlawful to shed the blood of wicked men. [5]

This bearing of the sword addresses both the issue of the death penalty and of war. As it is said in the next paragraph of the Confession, it is not directly sinful for civil governments to go to war. But it is sinful only when the war is not necessary and not for a just cause. Likewise, it is with the death penalty or other sorts of punishments. Some governments do, in fact, bear the sword in vain and use the sword for all kinds of violations and injustices not warranted by the Word of God. They will be judged by the Sword of God’s truth on the last day.

Subject to Authority for God’s Sake (v. 5)

Therefore, on the basis of vv. 1-4, we are to subject ourselves to the government for God’s sake, in order to avoid His wrath and “for the sake of conscience.” Obedience to the civil government, when they’re in agreement with the laws of the Almighty, is at the foremost, obedience to the Almighty. Hence, “for the sake of conscience.” Barnes notes:

> **For conscience' sake** - As a matter of conscience, or of "duty to God," because "he" has appointed it, and made it necessary and proper. A good citizen yields obedience because it is the will of God; and a Christian makes it a part of his religion to maintain and obey the just laws of the land; see Mat 22:21; compare Ecc 8:2, "I counsel them to keep the king's commandments, and "that in regard of the oath of God."[3]

Jamieson, Fausset, Brown note that this phrase means "out of conscientious reverence for God's authority."[6] God is the foremost authority and King Whom we should obey. Therefore Peter writes, "Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor" (1 Pet. 2:17). This is significant because of the fact that this Epistle was written to a group of Christians who were being persecuted by everyone around them including the emperor or king, Nero. John Gill notes on this passage:

> Caesar, the Roman emperor, though a wicked, persecuting Nero, and so any other king or governor; who, so far as he acts the part of a civil magistrate, preserves the peace, the property, and liberty of his subjects, is a terror to evil works, and an encourager of good ones, and rules according to the laws of God, and civil society, is deserving of great honour and esteem from men; and which is to be shown by speaking well of him; by a cheerful subjection to him; by an observance of the laws, and by payment of tribute, and doing everything to make him easy, and honourable in his government[4]

Even to these wicked kings, Christians are called to show honor for their position and obedience, when they are in accord with God. Peter also wrote, before this passage:

> 1 Pet. 2:13-14 **Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution**, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to **punish those who do evil** and to **praise those who do good**.

Peter and Paul are on the same page.

Give Government their Due (vv. 6-7)

Therefore, since civil magistrates are God's servants, they are worthy of honor and respect. As worthy of honor and as servants of God, we also give them taxes. As our Lord so amazingly answered the Pharisees, "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). That taxes and tributes to be paid to the government is a question that is definitely settled in this passage, but the question of *how much* taxes should be paid is wholly another.

Summary

The import of this passage is that the government should be seen as an institution of God, under His sovereign lordship. It is given for the good of people and to punish the evil. Christians should not promote anarchy but submit for God's sake to their civil authorities. But they do not have the liberty, because of the civil government, to disobey God.

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§2 It Is Lawful For Christians To Accept And Execute The Office Of A Magistrate

2. **It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate** when called there unto; **1** in the management whereof, as they ought especially to **maintain justice and peace,** according to the wholesome **laws of each kingdom** and commonwealth, so for that end they may lawfully now, under the New Testament **wage war upon just and necessary occasions.** **2**
    1. Exod. 22:8-9, 28-29; Daniel; Nehemiah; Prov. 14:35: 16:10, 12; 20:26, 28; 25:2; 28:15-16; 29:4, 14; 31:4-5; Rom. 13:2, 4, 6.
    2. Luke 3:14; Rom. 13:4.

The office of a magistrate is not so worldly that Christians should not take ut. But it is, in fact, **lawful for Christians to accept and execute** that office when they are **called there unto**. The Anabaptists, for example, which our forefather were often accused to be, denied the office of a magistrate to a Christian. As we noted in the introduction of the **previous**

chapter on oaths and vows, so also here, the sixth article of the **Schleitheim Confession of Faith** says:

> Finally it will be observed that it is not appropriate for a Christian to serve as a magistrate because of these points: The government magistracy is according to the flesh, but the Christians' is according to the Spirit; their houses and dwelling remain in this world, but the Christians' are in heaven; their citizenship is in this world, but the Christians' citizenship is in heaven; the weapons of their conflict and war are carnal and against the flesh only, but the Christians' weapons are spiritual, against the fortification of the devil. The worldlings are armed with steel and iron, but the Christians are armed with the armor of God, with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation and the Word of God. In brief, as is the mind of Christ toward us, so shall the mind of the members of the body of Christ be through Him in all things, that there may be no schism in the body through which it would be destroyed. For every kingdom divided against itself will be destroyed. Now since Christ is as it is written of Him, His members must also be the same, that His body may remain complete and united to its own advancement and upbuilding.

The Confession was not denying the truths here pointed out by the Anabaptists. But it is saying that this is not inconsistent with a true Christian who takes up **the office of a magistrate when called there unto**. What should the Christian magistrate do? It is interesting that he is not said to enforce Christianity in general or Particular Baptist theology in particular. He is said to **maintain just and peace according to the wholesome laws of each kingdom and commonwealth**. He is to govern according to the laws of the land and not make a theocracy of the land in which he is allowed to be a magistrate. As we noted in **chapter 19:4**, Christians are called to submit to the laws of the land in which they live and not reimplement the Israelite theocracy of the Old Testament. The Christian magistrate is not to enforce the laws of God in his government as it was in the times of the Old Testament. But it is without a doubt that a Christian magistrate has a Christian worldview and therefore, **justice and peace** mean more to him than an unbelieving magistrate. His views of **justice and peace** will be and should be influenced by the biblical worldview. But principally, he is to enforce and maintain the **wholesome laws of each kingdom and commonwealth**. This is obviously different than what other Reformed writers had in mind. For many of them, the government had the duty to maintain the Christian religion and not only the Christian religion in general but Protestant Christianity in particular. But the Baptists did not follow with that as they did not see the New Covenant and the regulations under the New Covenant to be just like those in the times of the Old Covenant with the Mosaic laws. The Mosaic judicial laws were no longer applicable. The only application had to do with their "general equity" (see **chapter 19:4**). Furthermore, they were being persecuted by those very people who wanted a particular branch of Christianity to be defended by the state, although they were as much Reformed and Christian as they were. Hence the publication of this Confession of Faith to show that we have more things in common than different.

Lastly, there will be times of **war**, but this has to be **upon just and necessary occasions** and it is specifically said to be **under the New Testament**. In other words, not every instance of war in the Old Testament is justifiable now under the New Covenant. But at the same time, this does not mean that no war is justifiable under the New Covenant.

Christians are not to reject involvement in civil matters but are to accept them. It is not sinful, contra the Anabaptists, to work in the government. Christians in the government are to seek justice and peace. They are not to turn the civil government into a theocracy, but they are to influence it and maintain justice and peace. Their rule is to be according to the laws of the land, yet one cannot disconnect their own convictions of the Law of God. One cannot be neutral at work and Christian at home. When Christians work in the government, they should try to bring their Christian convictions with them to work. They cannot believe one thing on Sunday and promote contrary things on the other days of the week. There is a fine difference between being influenced by the biblical worldview and trying to reimplement the civil law of Israel again. I'm sure many of us know politicians in our countries who are devoutly Christian and try to bring their Christian influence in the land we live.

Examples of believers involved in *pagan* governments are Daniel and his three friends, Nehemiah who later became governor of Judea, but before this, he was a cupbearer to Cyrus the king of Persia. It was his request to the king which initiated the return of the exiles to Judea and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. These wise people influenced their *pagan* governments with the principles of God's Word and God blessed their endeavors. How much more should Christians now to be an influence in their governments and the world. We should concern ourselves not only with heavenly things but earthly things also. We are in the world, but not of it. But as we live in the world we are to be light and slight unto it. We are not to be so heavenly-minded that we forget that we are living on a cursed earth. We should preach the gospel to everyone and take up any office we are called unto to make a change in the world. Christian magistrates are to be known for their Christian hospitality. How often do we read in the Old Testament of those who (should) take care of the widow, the orphan, and the fatherless (e.g., Ps. 82:3-4)? Christian magistrates should be known for their acts toward these people. They are to be known as those who rule "in the fear of God" (2 Sam. 23:3).

§3 In All Lawful Things Commanded By Them, Ought To Be Yielded By Us In The Lord

3. Civil magistrates being set up by God for the ends aforesaid; subjection, **1** in all lawful things **2** commanded by them, **ought to be yielded by us in the Lord,** not only for wrath, but for conscience sake; and **we ought to make supplications and prayers** for kings and all that are in authority, that **under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life,** in all godliness and honesty. **3**
    1. Prov. 16:14-15; 19:12; 20:2; 24:21-22; 25:15; 28:2; Rom. 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14
    2. Dan. 1:8; 3:4-6, 16-18; 6:5-10, 22; Matt. 22:21; Acts 4:19-20; 5:29
    3. Jer. 29:7; 1 Tim. 2:1-4

Whatever **lawful things commanded by** the **civil magistrates**, we ought to obey **in the Lord** (1 Peter 2:13-14; Rom. 13:5). We are to be in **subjection** to the **civil magistrates** but only in **all lawful things commanded by them**. When they command us things to do which are against the law of God, *disobedience* to them is *obedience* to God. The classic example of this is Acts 5:27-32 where the apostles said that "We must obey God rather than men" (v. 29). We are to obey the civil magistrates in all things lawful not **only for wrath** (fear of punishment) but **for conscience' sake** (Rom. 13:5, see above) because we desire to obey God and submit to Him above all.

Then the Confession moves to remind us of our duty to pray for those whom God has put above us. We **ought to make supplications and prayers** for **all that are in authority** so that **we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty**. It is our duty as the people of God to pray for the salvation of those whom God has placed over us so that they may be saved with the result being that we may live in quietness and peace. This is what Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 2:1-6.

We've already discussed that, on the basis of Romans 13, obedience to the civil government when in agreement with God's laws is obedience to God. Therefore, when we obey them in these things, we are obeying God and thus, we have an obligation to obey them. As Christians, we ought to pray for our governments that they may more and more conform to the will of God, which will result in blessings upon the nation that has the LORD as their God (Ps. 33:12). We ought to pray for wisdom for them and above all, that they may come to know the King of kings and Lord of lords and thus rule justly in subjection to Him. From Jeremiah 29:7, we get a general principle that we are to seek the good of the countries where we live. We should pray to God that He would be merciful to bless our nations with repentance and faith in Christ, knowing that this will result in prosperity and peace. For if the countries in which we live are prosperous then we will also be prosperous. If they are in affliction, we will also be in affliction. As God said to Jeremiah, "in its [Babylon's] welfare you will find your welfare." There can be no true peace among men if there is no peace between God and men. Therefore, it is necessary, first of all, to have peace with God and then to bring *the peace of God in the gospel* to everyone and everywhere.

Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

(1 Peter 2:17)

Footnotes

1. ^ *Sam E. Waldron. A Modern Exposition Of The 1689 Baptist Confession Of Faith. (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2013). p. 353.*
2. ^ *Many Scriptural references have been supplied by Samuel Waldron's Modern Exposition of 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith which was apparently supplied by the Westminster Confession of Faith 1646.*
3. a, b, c, d, e *Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
4. a, b *John Gill. Exposition of the Entire Bible. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
5. ^ *John Calvin. Commentaries. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
6. ^ *Jamieson, Fausset, Brown. Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (Full). Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In lock.*