

Greg L. Bahnsen, "M. G. Kline on Theonomic Politics: An Evaluation of His Reply,"
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Introduction

Little observation is required for one to note that Christian ethics today is in a state of meandering confusion. It is all the more noteworthy that sociopolitical ethics in Western nations, especially with respect to matters of crime and punishment, is in a state of perplexing crisis. Does the unfailing word of God set forth any hope and guidance for resolving this confusion and crisis? My own conviction is that it does, and thus I wrote a book which argues for the normativity of the law of God in Christian ethics today (cf. II Tim. 3:15-17), maintaining that the Old Testament standing commandments have not been abrogated (cf. Matt. 5:17-19) even in matters of crime and punishment (cf. I Tim. 1:8-10; Heb. 2:2). Published in 1977, the book appeared as *Theonomy In Christian Ethics* (Nutley, N. J.: Craig Press).

Despite the historic Reformed roots for the sentiments expressed in *Theonomy*, its thesis was, I understood, unpopular in late twentieth-century thought. Indeed, even some Reformed writers today would disagree with it -- in particular, I was told, would Dr. Meridith G. Kline, who was a professor of Old Testament. Thus, I avidly studied the writings of Dr. Kline and profited from them in many ways. Dr. Kline is an interesting, thought-provoking, and very creative theological scholar. I admire and respect his talents, even when I cannot agree with his reasoning or exegesis. One area where his theological argumentation appears weak to me is found in his dismissal of God's law for community life-norms. Consequently, in the course of writing a book in defense of the contemporary authority of those norms, I included a relevant appendix on the contrary thought of Dr. Kline.

It was thus a tantalizing surprise, albeit abnormal in scholarly circles, to hear that the *Westminster Theological Journal* had asked Kline to be the reviewer for my book, much of which had been composed as a master's thesis at the seminary. Many a friend and foe of my thesis were eager to see what Kline would say in reply, expecting the decisive line of objection to be expressed here if anywhere. We were all kept in waiting and suspense for so long that some tried unsuccessfully to obtain copies in advance! *Theonomy* went through its second printing in the spring of 1979, and then finally, in August of 1979, Kline's review appeared (in vol. XLI, no. 1, for Fall, 1978). It was intended to be thorough enough as to appear in the form of a review article. However, apart from emotional pitch, the article has proven to be anticlimactical as a theological argument. My

purpose here will be to analyze and evaluate what Dr. Kline has written, thus hoping to advance and clarify the current debate for interested readers who wish to examine both sides of it in a serious and responsible fashion. (References to Kline's article hereafter will appear simply as numbers in parenthesis corresponding to pages in his article.)

In a real sense, Dr. Kline has not offered a "review" of my book, *Theonomy In Christian Ethics*, at all. The reader is not told the purpose and thrust of the book, not told how the book progresses, not told the main line(s) of argumentation, not told its theological significance, etc. The book has nine major sections, the first six of which (well over half) focus on the validity of the OT law for the NT Christian -- over against the claims of dispensationalism, antinomianism, secularism, etc. Not a word is given in reference to these opening six sections. Instead, Dr. Kline narrowly attends only to section VII of the book (with passing remarks concerning Appendix 2). And even then he does not "review" this one section of the treatise, but directly launches a frontal attack upon it.

Yet strangely enough, he still does not hit the issue head on. The book offers numerous arguments from Scripture in favor of theonomic politics and sets forth numerous problems to be resolved by those repudiating theonomic politics (so many, in fact, that John Frame's review in the *Presbyterian Journal* for August 31, 1977, called it "overkill"). However not one of these positive arguments and polemical challenges is answered or even considered by Kline -- indeed, even the specific critique of his own position is ignored. It is inadequate for Kline to overlook the case that has been made FOR theonomic politics if he wishes to attack the position and promote a contrary one.

When all is said and done, Kline offers only three arguments against theonomic politics: (1) the argument for discontinuity based on Israel's uniqueness as a redemptive type and as a holy nation, (2) the "name-of-the-Redeemer" argument, and (3) the argument that Deuteronomy 13 is an embarrassment to evangelism. The first is the main line taken against theonomic politics, but as it turns out this argument is built upon a conspicuous misrepresentation of my position, employs unscriptural inferences, and completely ignores the extensive rebuttal given to it already in the pages of *Theonomy*. The other two arguments are quickly dispatched as resting on ambiguity or misconception. (I return to these arguments below.)

Much of what Kline has written is also irrelevant to the theonomic thesis as I set it forth in my book. He admits as much in saying that his concern is not with this particular publication as such, but rather with "the Chalcedon school" and its "related" publications (172). Thus he takes time to criticize North's article on common grace (178, 188-189). However, it is simply a notorious fallacy to attack a person's position on the basis of what his friends may or may not have said! Moreover, a large portion of Kline's article attends

to the question of postmillennialism (178-186), which is thoroughly irrelevant to my case for theonomy in either private or public behavior (as I explain at some length in my reply to Aiken Taylor, "God's Law and Gospel Prosperity," distributed by the session of St. Paul Presbyterian Church, 5125 Robinson Rd., Jackson, MS 38204, esp. pp. 37-38). Amillennialists and premillennialists can be theonomists, and many are. The theonomic issue is not eschatological, and thus much of what Kline has said is not germane to the debate at hand. It amounts to a diversion.

Fallacies and Misrepresentations

Perhaps the unhappiest aspect of Kline's article is its ready use of the ugliest forms of fallacious reasoning: ridicule, sarcasm, character assassination, name-dropping, and caricature. Although his opening sentence speaks snidely of my "over-heated typewriter," a reader who notes the vehemence of Kline's article can readily decide for himself whose typewriter has become over-heated. Speaking of "the Chalcedon disturbance" (189) and its "wasted potential" (172) is likewise ridicule rather than reasoning.

When Kline says that according to my theory, the Lord's view of Israel's request for a king was mistaken and unjust (176), and that to accept theonomy one must read the Old Testament as a "historicized myth about Every nation" (178), he is setting up a ridiculous straw-man to beat down. A remark like, "God's response was not informed by the insights of the doctrine of theonomic politics" (176), is not analysis but simply sarcasm. To such statements no rebuttal is necessary because they cannot be taken seriously anyway.

Kline speaks unfairly of fellow Christians when he alleges that Chalcedon "crusaders agitate with cult-like fanaticism," being "censoriously disruptive of the Reformed community, ecclesiastic and academic" (172). There is no evidence of this -- while there IS evidence of such disruption from those who have wished to discomfit or suppress theonomists in churches and schools. But the relevant point is that none of this is germane to the truth or falsity of the thesis under consideration. Similarly, Kline's outlandish accusation that Chalcedon depreciates the Savior's love to the perishing world and the patient gathering of the elect out of the nations (186) because it is far more interested in capital punishment (187) is unbecoming. I genuinely take an interest in, support and promote, and participate in evangelism and missions; I rejoice in Scripture's promise of prosperity in this area (*Theonomy*, pp. 422ff.). To allege that I have a surpassing interest in capital punishment simply because I have written on the subject is absurd. One could as foolishly allege that Kline depreciates the deity of Christ since he has written on other subjects.

Another fallacious ploy utilized by Kline is name-dropping. He claims that *Theonomy* resumes the program of Rushdoony's *Institutes Of Biblical Law*, and that many of the criticisms of the latter made in John Frame's review of it apply equally to me (172). Makes it sound like Frame stands with him against theonomy! But a few errors have been made. First, the text of *Theonomy* was complete and in the printer's hands at least a year and a half before Rushdoony's *Institutes* appeared. Second, I read and almost completely agreed with Frame's review of Rushdoony before the *Westminster Theological Journal* printed it. Third, Frame also reviewed *Theonomy* -- very favorably. Fourth, Frame's ethics syllabus makes it clear that he does not stand with Kline against theonomy. But even if Frame's name could be employed against my thesis, it would be argumentatively irrelevant to the truth or falsity of the thesis. In a similarly fallacious way Kline attempts to enlist Van Til's reputation against theonomic politics -- on the slim ground that Gary North once criticized Van Til's generalization about common grace (189)! Names aside, as both Frame and Van Til would say, Scripture alone must remain our Reformed standard of truth. (Kline's weak suggestion that I try to drop Van Til's name in favor of my distinctive political ethic is a real mistake; one can compare my quote from Van Til on the epigraph page of *Theonomy* with page 37 to see how and where Van Til is employed -- quite before the issue of political ethics comes up. Note also page xvii for my admission of differences with my mentors.)

Finally, Kline advances some significant misrepresentations of what my position actually is. These can easily mislead the reader and can make Kline's task easier than it actually should be. Of Course, criticism of positions that I do not really hold are futile. The most important misrepresentation is found in Kline's main argument against theonomic politics (viz., that according to me Israel and her government were not unique); it will be taken up in my discussion of that argument. Other false portrayals should be noted as well.

Contrary to Kline (172,174), I do not contend that the civil magistrate is to enforce all of the Mosaic laws (see *Theonomy*, pp. 381-382, 388, 399, 436, 493; N.B. "not every sin is a crime"). Nor do I say, as Kline alleges, that the ceremonial law is exempt from the Mosaic law's remaining normativity (175); I say that in a sense it has not been repealed but confirmed (see *Theonomy*, pp. 48-49, 81-82, 207, 209, 210, 212, 215, 492). Kline is also mistaken to claim that I "equate" the priestly-cultic sphere of Israel with "the church of the new covenant age" (176). Nothing like that will be found in my book for the simple reason that I do not think they can be strictly equated. Still an analogy holds (e.g., Heb. 13:15; I Cor. 9:13-14), and a contrast between religious cult and civil government can be seen in both Old Testament Israel and the modern world -- without equating the Old Testament priestly-cultic sphere with the New Testament church! Kline's suggestion as to the significance of my use of the expression "Older Testament" (viz., that it infers that the form of the kingdom has not changed from Old Testament to New Testament) is purely

speculative (181-182); by that expression I simply wanted to stress the unity of the one covenant of grace throughout Scripture. When Kline says that I am reluctant to accept the New Testament teaching that the typological pre-messianic form of the holy kingdom is now obsolete, wanting the state structure of the kingdom to be virtually the same in all ages (181-182), he is engaging in pure fabrication. I say nothing of the sort in my book. I am more than willing to call the older covenant "obsolete" (pp. 209, 213), completely "past" (p. 194), and not to be returned to (p. 134; cf. pp. 16, 189-194). And I have no jealousy whatsoever for the state-kingdom structure of the Old Testament. Kline also misrepresents, through obscurity in his rehearsal of it, my view of the church's relation to the kingdom in the New Testament (millennial) age (180). Related to this, when I speak of Christ's "moral rule" -- in contrast to the premillennialist's notion that Christ will be physically present and use military rule -- Kline alters this to a "general moral sway" in the hearts of the elect (180, 181), thereby putting an unnecessarily derogatory construction on my statement. Finally, Kline unsuccessfully attempts to portray me as unfair to himself, claiming that I speak of laws being validated through change -- even though I criticize him for speaking of revision which fulfills a law (173). But the comparison is ruined by misrepresentation. I do not speak of change in a law as validation; rather, I say that ceremonial laws once and for all kept by Christ are thereby fulfilled and made inoperative (not revised). Kline is criticized for slippery semantics precisely because he calls "revision" the fulfillment of a law.

The cumulative effect of these significant misrepresentations should not be minimized. Reading the article by Kline without these caricatures creates a different impression.

Scripture and Confession

Kline's most negative words against theonomic politics are found in his denunciation of it as unbiblical. I have not simply come to another interpretation of the scriptural text than he has! I have not merely made a mistake in applying the words of the Bible. Far worse. Only the most severe words of deprecation are felt suitable by Kline for my "aberration" (173). It would seem that he feels I have virtually wrested the Scriptures to my own destruction; he cannot exaggerate enough his accusation that the theonomic thesis is anti-biblical. He calls it "a delusive and grotesque perversion of the teaching of Scripture" (172) which has been rejected as "manifestly unbiblical" by virtually all students of Scripture (173). Its error, he continues, is no less extreme or serious than dispensationalism's (173) and "must be repudiated as a misreading of the bible on a massive scale (175). the "false theory of theonomic politics in effect sets itself in autonomous opposition to the voice of God in his word" (189). The "blatantly unbiblical results" which theonomic politics inevitably produces afford a "startling warning of the

utter falseness" of the thesis (188). If anyone should think Kline has unintentionally overstated his opinion these many times, he wants to make himself very clear to his reader: "What we are talking about here is not something illusively subtle or profound, but big and plain and simple" (175). In my "obfuscation of the lucid biblical picture" (1760, I miss what is "simple, obvious, all-important" and "clear" in the Bible(177). Kline charges that I manage to miss a "simple message ... written large across the pages of the Bible so that covenant children can read and readily understand it" (176). In his estimation, I can hardly be a child of the covenant. My "delusive and grotesque perversion" of the Bible must be evidence that I am either a dangerous heretic or someone virtually devoid of common intelligence.

But come now. Could things really be that extreme? Can Dr. Kline be taken at his word here? Is he perhaps continuing his already observed tendency to appeal to the "obvious" at crucial and critical junctures in his theological reasoning or argumentation (cf. Theonomy, p. 576)" Is this proof or pontification?

What the reader cannot afford to miss is this fact. Despite the harsh denunciation of theonomy as anti-biblical, Kline does not offer even one passage of Scripture that directly contradicts or refutes the theonomic thesis. For all of his intense and extensive condemnation, he has not given the slightest evidence from Scripture against the viewpoint of theonomic ethics! It hardly seems appropriate for him to make so much of the charge that theonomy is anti-biblical when he makes so little of Scripture in trying to refute it. We have maximal rhetoric with minimal evidence.

What is additionally noteworthy about Kline's adamant condemnation of the theonomic thesis is that he elsewhere freely acknowledges that it is the perspective of the Westminster Confession of Faith (173, 174). One might expect that he would have been a little more reserved in disagreeing with his Confessional standard. Certainly our creed is fallible. But one does not usually diverge from the standard with vehemence, calling its viewpoint "manifestly unbiblical" and "a delusive an grotesque perversion of the teaching of Scripture" -- as Kline calls the theonomic thesis. Great respect is *prima facie* expected in considering the Confession's teachings, and one departs from them cautiously. It surely should seem odd to Dr. Kline that if theonomic politics is as anti-biblical as he claims, it is embodied in the Confession of Faith! After all, the framers of our Confession are reputed for their precision and adherence to Scripture. Even when they are found to have erred, do we really want to say that the error is so gross that any covenant child should have detected it? The very fact that the Westminster Standards are theonomic in outlook should make one wary of Kline's extreme condemnation of the position. The presumption will be that the Confession is correct unless Dr. Kline can demonstrate otherwise -- from an exegesis of Scripture itself as the primary standard of truth. Kline calls for an

amendment to the (allegedly) faulty formulation of the Confession (189) rather than reconsidering the possibility that the theonomic thesis might have something biblical to say for it. However, the church should remember that the one calling for this Confessional revision has not set forth scriptural grounds for it, and that in the past this same author has been so bold as to argue that "the Old Testament is not the canon of the Christian church" (*Structure Of Biblical Authority*, p. 99). It is little wonder that he would not want the church to acknowledge the moral standards of Old Testament law in social ethics. The extend of emendation that would be required to rid the Westminster Standards consistently of theonomic thrust would be more than Dr. Kline realizes.

It turns out that even Kline is uncomfortable with is deviation from the Confession, and he makes certain efforts to abate the significance of it. He first claims, quite erroneously, that the theonomic elements in the Confession "have been subjected to official revision" (173). But this is not at all true. The American revision pertained only to a subsection of the chapter on the civil magistrate, aiming to reinforce disestablishment and the rejection of Erastianism (see *Theonomy*, pp. 527-537, 541-543). There was no revision of the declaration about the law of God or its use in the catechisms (i.e., the strictly theonomic elements of the Confessional Standards). Thus we find that Kline goes on to suggest, half-heartedly, that perhaps by analogy the change of 23.3 in the Confession implicitly changes the meaning of 19.4 (174). But that is extremely unlikely. In the first place, the American Presbyterians were insistent on consistency and were precise regarding details; had they meant for 19.4 to be altered, they would have directly altered it and left nothing to imagination. Secondly, if the aim of the revisers was to expunge the theonomic thesis from the Confession, then they would hardly have overlooked the explicit chapter on the law of God when they came to revising the Confession! Kline's proposal that the revision was a "patchwork" job that left inner tensions (174) or ambiguities (1730 is challenged by the same two considerations which I have just offered, and it is undermined by the fact that an alleged "inner tension" is created only by bringing an anti-theonomic bias to the Confession in the first place. Assuming that the revision left the Confession committed to theonomic politics (consistent with the historical period for the Calvinists) but opposed to the establishment principle of religion (consistent with American church-state sentiments at the time), one can readily understand the revised Confession (explicated by the unrevised catechisms) without a feeling of any great inner tension.

What's Left

If we were to go back and strip away from Kline's article everything that has been observed to be irrelevant to his debate with my book, everything that is fallacious in reasoning, everything that misrepresents my position, everything that serves his extreme

denunciations of my position, and everything about the side issue of the Confession, very very little of his original article (perhaps less than a third) would be left for us to consider. By trimming away the needless excess, we can finally get down to the real substance of his disagreement with the position that civil magistrates should obey and enforce the objective revelation of God's law as it addresses matters pertaining to social morality. As mentioned in the Introduction above, Kline offers three arguments against his position, but answers none of the arguments from scripture in favor of it. Kline's three objections can now be analyzed.

The Key Argument: Israel as a Type and as Holy

The foremost argument put to use against theonomic politics is, in summary, that it contradicts the redemptive-restorative nature of the nation Israel (177). Kline argues that the biblical distinction between the kingdom of God -- that is, Israel's kingdom as a redemptive, theocratic prototype of Christ's redemptive kingdom -- and the kingdom of the world is such that the function of enforcing the Mosaic covenantal laws belonged only to Israel's king and not to all civil magistrates (177). Thus, the discontinuity between old and new covenants is not done justice (173). Closely allied with this alleged mistake in *Theonomy* is the failure, according to Kline, to take account of Israel's distinctive holiness as a kingdom set apart from others by a special redemptive covenant unto the Lord (177) -- a distinctive identity that belonged not only to the cultus of Israel but to the total social-political-cultic entity.

Here we find what Kline thinks is so very obvious to every covenant child, but which theonomists completely obscure and miss in reading the Bible. Israel was a unique nation, being a type of Christ's redemptive kingdom and being a holy nation set apart by God's electing love. Kline specifically says that theonomists deny that Israel is a type of the redemptive kingdom of Christ (175-176), do not perceive the typological nature of the Old Testament theocratic kingdom (181), say that Israel as a kingdom was just another civil government of the world (176), and deny Israel's distinctive holiness as a kingdom set apart by a special redemptive covenant unto the Lord (177). Indeed, theonomic politics "compels" a denial of the holy status given to Israel (178) and simply cannot acknowledge the typological-redemptive nature of Israel as a geo-political kingdom (1750).

I want to belabor the point so that there will be no misunderstanding. As incredible as it may seem, what Kline says is wrong with the theonomic thesis is that it denies that Israel was a redemptive type and a holy nation. Here is the "radical fault" (1750 and "major failing" (177) of the thesis. Let me use his own words verbatim; one should notice well

what Kline claims that I say or would say about these subjects:

One radical fault that undermines the whole Chalcedon position is the failure to recognize that the socio-geo-political sector of the Israelite kingdom of God was a part of the total system of Kingdom typology (175).

[Bahnsen] is evidently saying that Israel as a geo-political kingdom is not ... a type of the antitypical kingdom of Christ, the Redeemer-King (175).

Bahnsen says that Israel as a kingdom was just another civil government and Israel's king just another civil magistrate (176).

Bahnsen says that God's kingdom Israel was just another civil government (178).

According to Kline, since I deny that Israel was a redemptive type and holy nation, I actually "equate" ordinary civil institutions of the world with the Israelite theocratic kingdom (176, 178).

Reply:

This argument by Kline is a scholarly lapse which ought to have been reconsidered before publication. So much can be said in response that I will number the considerations I wish to urge upon the reader.

(1) Where in *Theonomy* do I deny that the Israelite kingdom was a redemptive type and holy nation? Where? This is just a large misrepresentation of my theological position. For all of Kline's relish in claiming that I deny the obvious truths that Israel was a redemptive type and holy nation, the reader will not find one sentence to that effect in all of *Theonomy*. And the reason why there is a dearth of evidence to support that portrayal of my perspective is that I just do not deny that Israel as a kingdom was a redemptive type of Christ's kingdom and was a holy nation by God's redeeming election. Kline has shot his largest theological cannon at a straw man. *Theonomy* nowhere asserts an equivalency between Israel's king and all other civil magistrates. It nowhere loses sight of the distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. Dr. Kline has not managed to give an accurate picture of his opponent's views.

Although I was not writing a book centering on the discontinuity between Israel and the nations or the subject of typology, my sentiments are still clearly mentioned in these areas. Numerous types and foreshadows are spoken of in *Theonomy* (e.g., pp. 42-43, 48-49, 141-142, 153, 185, 188, 207-211, 212,213, 214-215, 216, 226, 227, 229-230, 437,

438, 450, 465, 492) -- including the typology of the promised land (pp. 203, 510, 513) which figures largely in Kline's polemic. I speak of the gospel in the Old Testament (p. 187), say that the Old Testament referred to Christ (p. 195), that all of its covenants point to Christ (p. 499). The exodus and possession of the promised land are said to be a time in Israel's history "replete with redemptive typology of Christ and His saving economy" (p. 464). I refer to the "thorough-going pattern of foreshadowings of the New Testament reality to be found in the Old Testament" (p. 577), and I assert that the artistic and pedagogical designs of typology "inherent in the Scripture certainly must not be ignored" (p. 456)! According to *Theonomy*, one would learn that the relation between the Old covenant and the New is that of foreshadow and reality, anticipation and realization, expectation and fulfillment (pp. 188, 215, 227, 253).

In particular, I speak explicitly of the "Old Testament typological kingdom" with special reference to its political aspect (pp. 418-419), of the typological value of the positive commands (such as holy war, p. 581), Israel's rulers (p. 348), the king's actions (pp. 408-409), and the typological and pedagogical value of the Older Testament penal sanctions (p. 457). I say that the Old Testament system was a "model" (p. 419), that Christ is the reality of which the Old Testament kingdom was the type (p. 418). I clearly state, "With respect to typology it might be suggested that Israel as a nation is a type of the church of Christ. There is certainly scriptural warrant for that comparison" (p. 455). Dr. Kline only loses credibility by telling his readers that I deny the redemptive typology of Old Testament theocratic Israel, even its geo-political aspects.

It is just as incredible that I deny the holy status of Israel as a nation. I assert that the Old Covenant aimed to constitute Israel as a holy nation (p. 185). I speak of God's unique covenantal blessing and redemption of Israel (p. 339), of the unique deliverance of the elect people (p. 355), and a unique redemptive purpose with Israel (p. 356). The written revelation given to Israel is said to be a special blessing (p. 341). I indicate that Israel was to be a holy people (p. 356), and this "holiness" or "separateness" was stressed by the law (pp. 209, 213). Indeed, the national separation of Yahweh's bride, Israel, from the Gentiles is called the shadow of which the spiritual separation of Christ's bride, the church, is called the reality (pp. 209-210).

I nowhere "equate" Israel's king with those of ordinary civil governments. Nor do I overlook the differences between the Old and New Covenants. I speak of the "legitimate and noteworthy discontinuities between Older Testament Israel and a national government today" (p. 431). The special treatment given Israel and her kings is keynoted: while God was king over the nations, He was the covenant King in Israel (p. 330), and He intervened in Israel's history "in a special way" to indicate who should be king under Him (pp. 321, 406). Discontinuity between the kingdom of God as type and as reality is

mentioned (pp. 418-419), and as an example the methods of advancing the kingdom are said to be different with the coming of Christ's redemptive kingdom (pp. 418-419, 575). One will look in vain for any justification of Kline's false portrayal of my theonomic view of Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation.

(2) Kline's second oversight in urging against theonomic politics these truths about Israel's status as a redemptive type and holy nation is that the kind of arguments constructed from such truths are already answered in *Theonomy*. Kline insists that I have overlooked the obvious, but it turns out that the tables are actually turned. Kline wants to argue against the theonomic responsibility of the civil magistrate on the basis of typology, categorizing Old Testament political laws with the ceremonial laws, and the intrusive uniqueness of the theocracy. However, each one of these argumentative moves has previously been refuted in *Theonomy*. The attempt to liken the civil law to the ceremonial law is answered on pages 449-454. The attempt to dissolve the magistrate's theonomic responsibility by typology is answered on pages 455-458. The attempt to undermine that theonomic responsibility on the basis of theocratic considerations (pp. 427-432), the redemptive uniqueness of Israel (pp. 338ff.), or considerations of intrusion (pp. 464-465, 580-584) are each answered. Kline is urging arguments which have already been refuted in my book. He not only misrepresents my position, he does not answer the rebuttal given to his own arguments against the position.

(3) It seems to me that a logical fallacy lies at the heart of Kline's attempted argument against theonomic politics and accounts for his inability to portray the position accurately. Kline wants to emphasize the discontinuities between Israel and the nations, Israel and the New Testament kingdom. Theonomic politics points out that there is a continuity to be found between Israel and the nations, Israel and the New Testament kingdom -- namely, a continuity of moral standards, private and public. It seems that Kline reasons in this fashion: since theonomic politics argues for a continuity, it must deny ALL discontinuity (hence Kline's portrayal of me saying that the theocratic king is equivalent to any other civil magistrate, etc.). Likewise: since redemptive typology and holy election set Israel apart from other kingdoms of the world, there should be no continuity found between Israel and the nations (hence Kline's rejection of the theonomic responsibility of the civil magistrate). These would be extremely hasty generalizations. The fact that two things have one or more things in common does not imply that they have all things in common, just as the presence of one or more differences between them does not imply that they are completely different. A combination of continuities and discontinuities can characterize the relationship between two things. Therefore, the fact that someone recognizes the common geometrical shape of the Bible and the phone book does not prove that he sees no difference in the contents of the books! In the same way, the fact that someone recognizes the common moral standard between Israel and the nations does not prove that

he denies any uniqueness to Israel (say, as a redemptive type and holy nation). Kline appears to have written his critique without due regard for the fallacy of sweeping or hasty generalization.

(4) Kline's argument is open to a rather obvious *reductio ad absurdum*. He has reasoned that the "socio-geo-political sector of the Israelite kingdom of God was a part of the total system of kingdom typology" (175) -- not just a portion of the kingdom was typological, such as temple or cultus, but the entire kingdom itself (176). Therefore, he reasons, the sociopolitical laws, being part of the "total system of kingdom typology," ought not to be followed today in the age of the Messiah's antitypical kingdom (177). One should now stop and remember that the laws given to Israel to regulate sexual relations, for instance, were also just as much a part of the kingdom established by God -- a "total system of kingdom typology" -- as the political or ceremonial laws mentioned by Kline. Following his proposed pattern of reasoning, we should conclude that the sexual laws of the Mosaic code are not to be honored in this day of Messiah's antitypical kingdom. Anyone who insists that bestiality is contrary to God's permanent and objective moral standards is -- on Kline's view -- *ipso facto* denying the status of Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation! But surely this is unacceptable. Being "a part of" (Kline's ambiguous words, 175) a kingdom which is typological-as-a-whole of the coming kingdom of Christ does not disqualify a commandment as a universal and abiding moral standard, or else Kline's argument proves far too much.

(5) It turns out, then, that both Kline and theonomists acknowledge the status of Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation. This observation does not separate them. What does Kline apparently feel that this unique status of Israel implies that her sociopolitical laws are not normative for other nations, past or present. The reader will notice that throughout Kline's review of my book, he does nothing more than appeal to this unique status of Israel as a datum. He nowhere completes the argument by showing how the premise of Israel's unique status implies that her sociopolitical laws are not binding on any other nation. Nor does he guard against *reductio* counter-arguments or explicate ambiguous metaphors such as "part of ... a total system of typology." Everything points to the conclusion that Kline feels the implication is so "obvious" as to need no further comment. Theonomists, on the other hand, do not think that the unique status of Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation implies that God has a double-standard of morality, one for Israel and one for others (regarding sex, economics, truth, life, politics, or what have you). That is, theonomists do not think that Israel's properly recognized unique status implies a discontinuity in moral standards between Israel and the nations, past or present. Who is correct, Kline or the theonomists? Does the status of Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation imply continuity or discontinuity as to moral standards? The only standard for answering this question is, not someone's personal opinion or a favorite

textbook in biblical theology, but the word of God alone. Scripture itself often delimits what the doctrinal implications of its teachings are. For instance, Scripture teaches that Christ was both God and man. If some theologian reasons that the deity of Christ implies that He could not hunger or die, then we need only point to the scriptural teachings about His hunger and death to disprove the alleged implication. Likewise, if Kline argues that the ("Obvious") implication of the biblical teaching about Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation is that the Mosaic sociopolitical laws are not normative outside of Old Testament Israel, then we need only test this implication by teaching of the Bible. Should the Bible teach that those laws were and are normative outside of Old Testament Israel, Kline's implication would be decisively disproved. Now it turns out that a good portion of Theonomy is given over to demonstrating that the Bible teaches the normativity of the Mosaic sociopolitical laws outside of Old Testament Israel. Kline renders not a single answer or explanation for all of the evidence which has been adduced against his proposed implication. The examples of Sodom, Nineveh, the expulsion of the Canaanites, David's intentions, Ezra's praise of Artaxerxes, Daniel's experience in Babylon, the prophetic rebukes of the nations, the wisdom literature, the "man of lawlessness," the testimony of Paul in court, Romans 13, etc., are all strong disproofs of Kline's implication. Thus, we must conclude that his argument is unbiblical as to its reasoning and implication. The status of Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation does not imply in biblical perspective or logic the discontinuity of moral standards between Israel and the nations, past or present. The Mosaic law (by which all men are condemned, says Romans 1-3) was a model for all nations to follow (Deut. 4:6,8).

(6) Kline's attempt to work through his argument against theonomic politics is crippled by its dependence on false portrayals of the theonomic position. He claims that I cannot acknowledge the typological-redemptive nature of Israel's sociopolitical laws and still hold that they are binding, for I hold that the typological-redemptive nature of the ceremonial laws implies that they are abrogated (175). However he misconstrues my position. I hold that the ceremonial laws are still normative (as explained earlier) but observed in Christ by the New Testament believer. Thus, the attempted display of inconsistency fails for obvious reasons. (Lest anyone think that Kline's point can be restated in a way that accurately portrays my position -- e.g., if the typological-redemptive nature of the ceremonial laws means they are inoperative but observed in Christ, why could not the typological-redemptive nature of the sociopolitical laws mean that they too are inoperative but observed in Christ? -- it should be recalled that the attempt to treat Old Testament civil laws in the same way as ceremonial laws has been answered in Theonomy, pp. 449-454).

Furthermore, it is not at all clear what Kline means by saying that the sociopolitical laws of Israel had a "typological-redemptive" nature. That they had a typological value has

already been acknowledged, but that they were "redemptive" is uncertain. At one point he explains that Israel's political kingdom was part of a total system of kingdom typology looking ahead to the redemptive kingdom of Christ (175). In this sense his argument has already been refuted. At another point he suggests that Israel's civil laws were themselves "expressive of the restorative-redemptive principle" -- just as much as the cultic laws -- because the political aspect of Israel's life was part of the ceremonial-typological dimension of God's kingdom (175 & n. 4). Of course, this is an unacceptable and unbiblical proposal. The Old Testament ceremonial law was designed to propitiate the anger of God and reconcile Him to the sinner (e.g., the sacrifices), to facilitate the very presence of God in the congregation's midst (e.g., the temple), to present the people cleansed before God (e.g., circumcision, cleansing rites), and to symbolize the separateness of the redeemed from the world (e.g., dietary laws, prohibitions on kinds of mixing), etc. The civil laws of Israel served none of these essentially redemptive and restorative purposes. For instance, the execution of a rapist did not reconcile the sinner with God, make him ceremonially clean, serve the temple, or separate Jew from Gentile. In this second sense, then, Kline's claim that the civil laws were "redemptive" is just not true to the Bible; they do not foreshadow the saving work of the Messiah in any scriptural sense or suggestion. Thirdly, Kline explains his claim that the civil laws were "redemptive" by saying that Israel's political kingdom was a redemptive product (176). In this sense, his suggestion would be true but irrelevant to the kind of argument in which the suggestion is used against the theonomic thesis. The theonomist considers the ceremonial law redemptive or restorative because it brought salvation from the punishment due to sin -- not merely because it was included in the ways of a people who were the redemptive product of God (i.e., delivered from Egyptian bondage). Thus, no inconsistency can be shown along this line, as if the "redemptive-product" ceremonial laws are deemed inoperative today but the "redemptive-product" civil laws are deemed operative. Dr. Kline has equivocated on the sense in which the sociopolitical laws are said to have a "redemptive-typological" nature.

Kline's attempt to work through his argument about the holiness of Israel as a nation is undermined again by his false portrayal of the theonomic position. According to him, the biblical distinction between the holy and the common has been rendered pointless and meaningless (178). But why? Because theonomists, allege Kline, "equate" the ordinary civil institutions of the world with Israel's theocratic kingdom (178) and say that God's kingdom Israel was just another civil government (178). Yet Kline falsely infers that equation from Theonomy and does not take it from the position at all. He is criticizing a premise found in some other perspective than that of theonomic politics! And just because theonomists do not equate the king in Israel with any other civil ruler, Kline's sharp references to the request for a king in the days of Samuel and to the Davidic covenant are pointless (176). I agree with the suggestions of Edersheim, Hengstenberg, O.

T. Allis, F. F. Bruce, and others that the evil of the Israelite request for a king did not lie in the kingship PER SE, but the motivation and attitude of the people, and I have not trouble acknowledging the uniqueness of the Davidic covenant's king who was -- by positive commandment, not standing law -- to perform the typological act of building the house of God. Nothing here is contrary to theonomic politics.

(7) In conclusion, it must be clear by now that Theonomy never said or even implied what Kline attributes to it. I do not deny, but gladly affirm, the typological value of Israel's king and political laws, nor do I overlook the distinction between Israel as a holy nation and the other political entities as common nations. With my other Reformed brethren, I do not identify God's kingdom with a local, geopolitical institution today, and I would identify the King in this kingdom only with the ascended Christ. However, I would certainly disagree with Dr. Kline if he felt that these facts settle the ethical question of the theonomic responsibility of non-Israelite civil rulers. Not only were Israel's king and political laws unlike those of other nations (e.g., the kings and laws of the other nations did not, except with rare exception, typify the coming kingdom of Christ; Yahweh was enthroned in Israel but over the nations), they were also like those of other nations. There was discontinuity and continuity. It is the latter (continuity) that *Theonomy* takes up as a subject. Like all rulers and laws, Israel's kings and commandments addressed historical problems of government, performed common political functions, dealt with preconsummation issues of crime and punishment. God's law was not given exclusively as a foreshadow of consummation (remember, no explicit statement of Scripture speaks of the law in this way anyway); it also rendered impartial justice in pre-consummation situations. And common to all civil rulers is God's demand for justice in their proceedings. Indeed, all civil magistrates are to be "ministers of God" who punish "evildoers." Questions of typology and unique holiness aside, the ethical question of justice must be faced by all those who rule among men. Where can God's minister (be he Nero or David) find the standards of justice which will enable him to punish genuine evildoers? The notion that God has a double-standard of justice is not only ethical nonsense, it is reprehensible to everything the Bible tells us of His character and actions. Theonomy indicates that the justice of God -- even for civil, temporal affairs -- is revealed in His law, constantly communicated by general revelation and given written expression (progressively) in the Old Testament -- most pointedly in the Mosaic law. Christ did not intend to have the slightest stroke of that law altered (Matt. 5:17-19). Moses said that the nations should imitate the law given to Israel as a geopolitical unit (Deut. 4: 6,8), and God held the nations (e.g., Sodom, the expelled Canaanites, Artaxerxes) accountable to the objective and universal standard of His law. In this respect -- moral standards, even for sociopolitical affairs -- Israel was very much like every other civil institution on earth, and the very holiness of Israel's law made it a common standard of justice for the nations.

Dr. Kline must recognize upon reflection (as I am sure he does) that the holy/common distinction he wishes to use is qualified in Scripture (relative, a matter of degrees) -- not categorical (absolute, without degrees of comparison). Israel as a nation had a special holiness, to be sure, over against the reprobate nations. Yet the divine law revealed to Israel was holy as reflecting the very character of God (Lev. 20:7-8); as that character did not change from nation to nation or time to time, the holiness expressed in the Mosaic law was objectively normative for all nations at all times. If justice is to be established in the earth, then even the remotest nations will need God's law (Isa. 42:4); God did not view Israel's unique holiness as somehow disqualifying the nations from coming to Israel to hear the declaration of the law from Zion (Isa. 2:2-4). All the earth is to worship the Lord in holy array (Ps. 96:9), and the Lord reigns over the nations upon His holy throne (Ps. 47:8). The whole earth is in some sense holy unto the Lord, and it is a disgrace for any people to violate the standards of holiness and sin against God (Prov. 14:34). In the days of God's universal reign, the holy/common distinction will be least pronounced, for even the horses' bells and every ordinary kitchen pot will be "holy unto Yahweh" (Zech. 14:20-21). What we observe in Scripture, therefore, is that the unique typological value and holiness of Israel's kings and law did not cancel out the common standards of justice between Israel and the nations as expressed in the law. Contrary to Kline's pattern of ethical reasoning, elements of discontinuity did not wipe out all traces of moral continuity. As Paul says, both Jew and Gentile are found to be under the requirements of the law (Rom. 1:32; 2:12, 14-15, 17-23; 3:9, 19-20, 23).

An Equivocation: The Name-of-the-Redeemer Argument

In his hurry to dispatch the theonomic approach to the political ethics, Kline seizes upon an isolated and generalized statement in *Theonomy* which he treats as inconsistent with the theonomic outlook. I said that "the state does not operate in the name of the Redeemer," for the church is the agency of God's saving mercy (p. 426). Kline takes my expression, purports to agree with it, and then concludes that, accordingly, the state cannot enforce the first four commandments of the Decalogue, since they require proper worship of the God who identifies Himself in the preamble as the Redeemer (179). According to Kline, this alleged inconsistency in the theonomic outlook really destroys the whole position. To say that the state does not operate in the name of the Redeemer is to allow "a decisive difference" between Israelite kingship and the civil magistrate outside of Israel, and the "obvious implications" of this difference "will sooner or later" require the rejection of theonomic politics (180).

Kline moves a bit too hastily here to the argumentative kill. In the first place, his argument rests on a conspicuous equivocation on the expression "operate in the name of

the Redeemer." He takes my expression, forgets the sense which I have given it in context, substitutes his own sense for the expression, and then asserts that I am inconsistent in using the expression! At best we find here little more than a verbal dispute. When I said that the state does not operate in the name of the Redeemer, I was drawing a general distinction between an agency of mercy and an agency of justice (i.e., between the church and the state). By the phrase, I meant that the state and the church have different aims and different methods: the state does not promote the gospel, the church does not use the sword (see *Theonomy*, p. 426 again). By not "operating in the name of the Redeemer," the state does not enforce a profession of saving faith. That is what I meant. Now what Kline wishes to mean by the expression is that the state does not enforce any law revealed by God as the Redeemer. These are clearly different senses for the expression under consideration! Only by reading into the expression a conception which is contradictory to the theonomic thesis can Kline allege that the use of the expression ultimately disproves the very thesis I have been setting forth.

Now Kline may wish to argue that only his conception of the meaning of this expression is "the correct" one. But if that were true (forgetting the false theory of language the assertion entails), then he would simply show that I have incorrectly used an expression -- not that theonomic politics has been undermined!

Notice further that Kline's approach to this matter again proves far too much. If commands which are revealed by God as Redeemer are not to be valid or enforced outside of theocratic Israel (and possibly the church), then none of the ten commandments would be authoritative outside of Israel (and the church) -- which is clearly unbiblical.

Further, the reader should note that Kline's idea that commands revealed by God as Redeemer are inapplicable outside of Israel (and the church) rests on a faulty understanding of distinctions. (Philosophers for ages have discoursed on the kinds and importance of distinctions -- for instance, distinctions of reason, of reality, of modality, etc.) A father is distinct from a husband, even though they be the same person; the morning star is distinct from the evening star, but they are not different planets! The Creator is distinct from the Redeemer, but these titles or functions pertain to the same divine being. To assume that the justice of the Creator could be different from the justice of the Redeemer is something Dr. Kline should have to argue at some length, for thereby he appears to destroy the unity and simplicity of the one, living and true God.

Alleged Inconsistency: Deuteronomy Thirteen and Evangelism

Kline's third and final argument against theonomic politics is that it creates "a

contradiction within God's preceptive will" (188). How does it do so? Well, theonomic politics claims that the sociopolitical law of God is normative today, and that would mean enforcing Deuteronomy 13, which requires execution for those who engage in a false religion -- which would in effect destroy the church's mission field (187). Thus, claims Kline, God's commission to the magistrate would stand in "unmanageable tension" with His commission to the church (186). In short, Deuteronomy 13 is inconsistent with evangelism.

This is the poorest of Kline's arguments, it seems to me. *Theonomy* already shows that capital punishment is not genuinely incompatible with evangelistic concern (pp. 447-449), and Kline acknowledges that the treatment of this subject is successful (187)! Thus, the argument has already been answered, by Kline's own admission. The only issue to resolve now is the question of what kinds of crimes require capital punishment, and according to Theonomy, only God's law can decide.

However, Kline claims that the inconsistency he has tried to pin on theonomic politics "does not reduce to the general question" of whether support for capital punishment is consistent with evangelism (187). But why doesn't it? Kline does not say. He gives no explanation for this *prima facie* error on his part. The general question of the compatibility of capital punishment with evangelism is precisely the background to the particular question of the compatibility of capital punishment for rape (or murder, or kidnapping, or public idolatry, or any other particular illustration) with evangelistic concern. Deuteronomy 13 raises in a particular instance the general question. That seems obvious. But Kline denies it. Why? Unhappily for his readers, he never explains his counter-intuitive reasoning for us. We are never told why Deuteronomy 13 is a completely different kind of instance -- why IT is inconsistent with evangelism, but (say) Exodus 21 or Genesis 9 are not.

Perhaps it is because Kline feels that execution for idolatrous subversion (Deuteronomy 13) is -- unlike execution for rape or murder -- execution for precisely the reason that the church should evangelize: namely, unbelief (thus showing that the criminals involved need evangelizing) or that Deuteronomy 13 actually calls for execution for the alleged crime of unbelief itself (thus destroying the church's mission field just because it is a mission field). In either case, he would be making quite a mistake in his thinking. Rape and murder are just as surely indicators of unbelief as is the crime described in Deuteronomy 13; consequently, if Kline feels it is inconsistent to support both evangelism and execution for the crimes of Deuteronomy 13, then he should likewise feel it is inconsistent in the cases of rape and murder. Deuteronomy 13 would thus not be a special case, as Kline has portrayed it.

Therefore, we are left with the hypothesis that Kline feels that Deuteronomy 13 requires execution precisely for unbelief itself -- unlike the other biblical requirements of execution for rape, murder, etc. This might account for his contention that Deuteronomy 13 is, unlike other cases, contradictory to evangelism -- that the state's commission would be in a head-on collision with the church's commission. However, if Kline's assumption is that Deuteronomy 13 requires execution for unbelief itself, then his argument is simply built upon a false premise. This portion of the law of God prescribes a penalty for solicitation and seduction to idolatry (Driver, I.C.C., p 150) which, under the circumstances, amounted to treason, revolt, or rebellion (Kline, *Treaty Of The Great King*, pp. 84-86) and thus applied to "urban revolutionaries" whose subversive treason undermined the constitution of the state (Craigie, N.I.C.O.T., pp. 222, 226); the law has analogies with prohibitions of sedition in other Near Eastern treaties, such as that from Esarhaddon. Matthew Henry correctly observes that such a law allowed for the preservation, but not the propagation, of true worship. Calvin makes the important observation that not until a positive religion is established in the society and received by public consent would such a law come into play (*Harmony* II, p. 75); in a well-constituted polity, profane men who subvert its religion and break forth into rebellion are not to be tolerated (pp. 77, 78). Rushdoony explicitly points out that such a law would not apply to a missionary situation (*Institutes Of Biblical Law* p. 39). The relevant point here, though, is that the law does not -- contrary to the supposed assumption in Kline's argument -- execute men simply on the grounds of unbelief itself. Rushdoony openly declares, "It should be noted that Deuteronomy 13:5-18 does not call for the death penalty for unbelief or for heresy." It turns out, then, that Kline is incorrect to think that Deuteronomy 13 requires the civil magistrate to destroy the church's mission field just because it is a mission field of unbelief. Accordingly, Kline is wrong to portray it as in "unmanageable tension" with evangelism.

The weakness and fundamental error of Kline's argument can be seen in another way. Essentially, he argues that the sociopolitical law of God cannot be deemed valid today since its validity would create a contradiction within God's preceptive will, being inconsistent with evangelism. Upon reflection, it will dawn on the reader that this argument presupposes the absence of evangelism in the Old Testament period, for Deuteronomy 13 -- which cannot be squared with evangelism today according to Kline -- would have created a contradiction within God's prescriptive will for evangelism during the period of its undisputed validity. However, it should be obvious to any student of the Old Testament that the Israelites needed to be called to faith and repentance (e.g., Deut. 30:8; Josh. 24:15; Lev. 5:5; 16:29-31; Deut 10:16; Ezek. 18:30-31) and needed to witness to their children (e.g., Deut. 6:7, 20-25). Proselytism was an Old Testament reality (e.g., Ex. 12:48). Indeed, a salient mark of the Old Covenant was that in it one needed to call upon his neighbors and family to "know Jehovah" (Jer. 31:34). If the Old Covenant

period was devoid of evangelism, what are we to make of the conversions of Rahab, Ittai (David's loyalist), or the northern sojourners at Hezekiah's great Passover feast (II Chron. 30:25)? What should we make of David's felt obligation to witness among the nations (Ps. 18:49), his prayer that salvation would be known among all the nations (Ps. 67), or his confidence that all the ends of the earth would be converted (Ps. 22:27)? How can we understand the missionary thrust of the prophets (e.g., Isa. 2:2-4; 19:25; 40:5, 9; 42:6; 45:22; 49:6; 56:7; 66:19; Zech. 8:23; cf. Ps. 68:31; 85:92)? If evangelism was absent in the Old Testament period, how do we account for the ministries of Elijah to the Sidonian widow, the servant girl to Naaman's wife, Jonah in Nineveh, or John the Baptist at the Jordan? It is simply incredible to hold that evangelism was not present in the Old Testament period or part of God's prescriptive will during that time. But if that is so, then according to Kline's reasoning, Deuteronomy 13 created a contradiction within God's prescriptive will -- an "unmanageable tension." To be consistent with his argument against theonomic politics, then, Kline would have to reject the validity of Deuteronomy 13 during the Old Covenant era as well as today -- which we all admit reduces the argument to absurdity. If Deuteronomy 13 was consistent with evangelism in the Old Testament, it certainly can be deemed consistent with evangelism in the New Testament, and that is how a theonomist sees it.

Conclusion

Dr. Kline has given a critical reply -- not a review -- to *Theonomy* as it touches on sociopolitical ethics. Very little of his reply is actually germane to the debate between us on this score. Dr. Kline has omitted to answer any of the positive biblical and theological arguments set forth in *Theonomy* and has failed to produce any biblical passages or arguments contrary to theonomic politics -- all the while admitting that the Confessional presumption is in favor of that position.

Getting down to the heart of the matter, Dr. Kline offers three polemics against theonomic politics. His argument from Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation misrepresents me as overlooking these truths, fails to consider rebuttals in my book against arguments which attempt to build on these truths, and commits the logical fallacy of hasty generalization. I have observed that, if anything, his argument proves too much, employs an unbiblical pattern of theological implication, and cannot be worked out without caricaturing the perspective of theonomic politics. Even given the biblical uniqueness of Israel as a kingdom, what she held in common with the nations was the objective, universal, and permanent standard of God's justice, revealed in his holy law.

Dr. Kline's argument from my statement that the state does not operate in the name of the

Redeemer simply rests upon an equivocation and is thus fallacious. This argument was also seen to prove too much if anything. Finally, Dr. Kline's argument that theonomic politics -- by following Deuteronomy 13 -- is inconsistent with evangelism is unexplained. Apparently it rests upon faulty reasoning about other capital crimes and evangelism, or it depends on a mistaken understanding of what the law punishes according to this passage. Moreover, the argument proves too much again, implying that evangelism would need to be absent from the Old Testament will of God.

Consequently Dr. Kline has not offered a valid or cogent argument against theonomic politics, nor has he defended non-theonomic politics against the many biblical arguments which have been set forth in my book. The expected decisive line of objection has failed to materialize.

Addendum: Kline's Critique of Postmillennialism

Although Kline's polemic against postmillennialism is not logically or theologically relevant to this debate with me over sociopolitical ethics, some readers may be interested nonetheless in a brief response to this aspect of his article as well.

1. According to Kline, the postmillennialist does not really have a millennial fulfillment for the visible kingdom of God prophesied in the Old Testament (179-181). Why not? In short, Kline claims that this prophesied kingdom is a geopolitical institution operating in the name of the Redeemer, the visible church is not geopolitical, Christ's moral influence is not institutional, and a merger of the nations with the church is contrary to their separation as taught in the New Testament. Hence nothing is left to fulfill the prophecies.

Let it first be observed that Kline may be misconceiving the visibility of the millennial kingdom's prosperity which I stress. This visibility is set over against amillennial notions of such a spiritual (inward or intermediate state) and diminutive a(permanent remnant) "reign" that it could virtually be ignored or unacknowledged by the world and never have a widespread influence in the affairs of ordinary life. The enemies of Christ will be aware that they have been put under His feet as a footstool (Ps. 110:1-2; Acts 2:33-36; Heb. 10:12-13; I Cor. 15:24-26), and the number of the redeemed will be noteworthy (Ps. 22:27; Isa. 9:7; 11:9; Matt. 13:31-32; Rom. 11:11-15, 25-26).

Next, Kline may be reading into the Old Testament prophecies the very features which he accuses postmillennialists of omitting. In particular, he imposes an institutional conception on the kingdom, and he erroneously reads the geopolitical feature of the kingdom literalistically.

In the end, however, the question remains whether the postmillennialist has any fulfillment for the kingdom prophecies of the Old Testament. Obviously my answer is that he does. As Kline quotes me, this fulfillment is found in "Christ's established kingdom on earth" (180). This kingdom is the active, supernatural, redemptive, and sovereign authority and reign of God in Christ which delivers men from eternal destruction, breaks the power of evil, brings covenantal blessing, and extends the dominion of the Lord throughout their lives, and which operates to overcome everything which is hostile to the divine rule. The kingdom is the dominion of Christ, the exercise of His sovereign authority (Matt. 6:33; 12:28; 28:18; Rev. 12:10). Its domain or realm includes the present world (Matt. 13:24-30, 38, 41), and its ultimate territory -- after the destruction of Satan, the resurrection of the saints, and the separation of wheat and tares or sheep and goats -- will be the new heavens and earth wherein righteousness dwells (Matt. 13:43; 25:34; cf. II Pet. 3:12-13). The kingdom was established at the coming of Jesus Christ (Matt. 12:28; Luke 17:21) with power to bless and punish (Mark 9:1); it was appointed by the Father unto Christ (Luke 22:29). Its consummation is yet future (Matt. 6:10; Gal. 5:21; II Pet. 1:11), when after His victory Christ will deliver the kingdom up to the Father again (I Cor. 15:24-28). At present the established but unconsummated kingdom is growing (Matt. 13:31-33) as men receive it in humility (Mark 10:15) and bring forth its fruit (Matt. 21:43). Although the "kingdom" is not synonymous with the "church" (e.g., Acts 8:12; 19:8; 28:23), the kingdom does create and work through the church (Matt. 16:18-19) for its advantage (Eph. 1:20-23). Thus the kingdom, entered through new birth (John 3:3,5) by the redeemed already (Col. 1:13), is essentially and positively speaking righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17) and can be identified with believers in whom the Lord rules (Rev. 1:6; 5:9). However, the presence of the kingdom prior to the consummation does not mean the elimination or absence of unbelievers who resist the word and authority of Christ (Matt. 13:36-43). Because of them and their spiritual leader, Satan, the entering of the kingdom can entail suffering for the saints (Acts 14:22; II Thess. 1:5), who deem the kingdom worth any price (Matt. 13:44-46). As indicated already, the kingdom is presently growing -- in numbers and influence; the King is drawing men to Himself and extending His dominion through them. The kingdom will become quite large and transform all things (Matt. 28:18-20). When men enter the kingdom they are delivered from the power of darkness (Col. 1:13), work for the kingdom (Col. 4:11), and produce the fruit appropriate to Christ's dominion (Matt. 13:23; 21:43). They have the dominion of Christ come to expression in all aspects of their lives and behavior; the kingdom is entered for righteous living (Matt. 5:19-20), with the result that God's will comes to be done on earth (Matt. 6:10). Accordingly, our faith overcomes the evil influence of the world (I John 5:4-5), the saints exercise authority over the nations (Eph. 2:5-6, with Heb. 1:3; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6), Satan's house is progressively spoiled (Matt. 12:29), and Christ subdues all of His enemies (I Cor. 15:25).

The preceding brief rehearsal of the postmillennial concept of the kingdom can, I believe, accommodate the prosperity prophesied by the Old Testament -- both its spiritual and cultural dimensions. (The reader will want to note well at just this point that the postmillennialist, while applying many prophecies of prosperity to the preconsummation kingdom on earth, does not deny for a moment that some Old Testament prophecies pertain to the consummation of all things.) Kline's criticism that the postmillennialist has no genuine fulfillment for the Old Testament prophecies is thus found to be completely baseless and futile. Ironically, it is just because amillennialism cannot accommodate the prosperity of the Old Testament expectation -- the vast number of converts and their righteous influence in all areas of life, from ecclesiastical (Mal. 1:11) to sociopolitical (Isa. 42:4), or the visibility of Messiah's victorious dominion (Ps. 72) -- that Kline's amillennialism has no millennial fulfillment of the prophesied kingdom in the Old Testament, needing to project its realization -- despite inappropriate features such as national divisions, warfare, oppression, injustice, and death -- into the eternal state. Kline's criticism is unwittingly self-destructive.

2. The same kind of self-destructive criticism is found in Kline's accusation that postmillennialism employs a wooden literalism which is unappreciative of prophetic idiom conditioned and limited by its typological model (181-182). This is an odd charge to make in light of the way in which postmillennialists, past and present, have insisted on interpreting Old Testament prophecy according to New Testament guidelines (e.g., the promised land was typological of a spiritual kingdom -- Gal. 3:16; Eph. 1:14; Heb. 11:8-10, 13-16; I Pet. 1:4-5) and on taking account of metaphorical language in the Old Testament prophets (e.g., Isa. 11:6-9 does not have a zoological referent; cf. Isa. 2:2-4; 9:6-7). Even Kline cannot take seriously the charge that postmillennialists are literalists; he recognizes non-literalistic interpretation in their writings. Consequently he revises his criticism. Having begun with the false premise of literalism in postmillennialism, Kline takes non-literalistic interpretation in postmillennialism as evidence on inconsistent literalism (182)! This kind of misrepresentation, projection, and then attack is futile polemics. Moreover, Kline's one example of this alleged "inconsistent literalism" is somewhat startling. When I cite Micah 4:2, taking the reference to Jerusalem ("Jehovah's mountain" and "house") non-literally for the kingdom of God to come, but taking "many nations" literally as the Gentile peoples, Kline charges me with hermeneutical inconsistency (182). As surprising as this may be, Kline says everything in the verse must be taken non-literally if anything is. Even "the nations" must be viewed as symbolic (one's strained imagination must query, "symbolic of what?"). However, this is completely unfaithful to common biblical patterns of interpretation. Often enough in Scripture someone, taken with denotative literalism, is said to do something or have something done to him, described figuratively or symbolically. In Jeremiah 51:63-64, for instance, "Babylon" is quite literally the political empire, but the sinking to the bottom of the

Euphrates River like a stone is only symbolic of its downfall. This is NOT inconsistent hermeneutics. In Isaiah 9:1-2 "Zebulun" and "Naphtali" are literal, while the shining "light" is figurative; if this is inconsistent hermeneutics, then Matthew was guilty of it (Matt. 4:12-16). In Zechariah 13:7 the subject is figurative ("the sheep"), and the predicated action is literal ("shall be scattered"), as we see in Matthew 26:31; this can hardly be deemed inconsistent literalism. Similarly, in Amos 9:11-12 the "nations" (Gentiles) are literal, even though the rebuilt "tabernacle of David" is figurative, as Acts 15:14-18 makes clear. What Kline calls inconsistent literalism in my interpretation of Micah 4:2 thus turns out to be a common biblical pattern of interpretation. One is still left wondering what alternative interpretation for "nations" Kline is suggesting.

In bringing his criticism, Kline falls into misrepresenting me again. He says that I take "nations" in the sense of civil governments as such in Micah 4:2, and he intimates that I embarrassingly omit the obviously figurative references to "the mountain of the Lord" (182). This is misleading. I cite Micah 4:2 to demonstrate the anticipated rule of God's law outside of Israel -- that is, among the Gentile nations (*Theonomy*, pp. 428-429); the application to the civil magistrates of the Gentiles is taken from other passages altogether. The omission of the words referring to the mountain of Jehovah was simply for the sake of brevity; the similar words of Isaiah are readily quoted elsewhere without any felt need for censoring (see *Theonomy*, pp. 192-193). Kline is again merely knocking down a straw man.

The most damaging observation to be made about Kline's criticism of postmillennialism for "wooden literalism," however, is that in the end he is actually the literalist! It turns out that he -- not the postmillennialist -- insists on suppressing prophetic idiom taken from the then-operative typological model of the Old Testament, for he teaches that the "institutional framework" of the Old Testament prophecies and their "geopolitical" feature must be taken literally, rather than expunged through figurative interpretation. Consequently, says Kline, these kingdom prophecies -- interpreted literally as to their institutional and geopolitical characteristics -- necessarily apply to the eternal state after the consummation (182-183, cf. 180, 185). Ironically then, it is evident that all the while that Kline is accusing postmillennialism of literalism, he is actually the literalist. His criticism has again turned out to be self-destructive.

3. Misrepresentations which belittle my position, make it a straw man, and assail my Christian character are so replete that, as the reader examines Dr. Kline's polemic against my postmillennial position, I would have him fully aware that I wholeheartedly reject the following positions and attitudes attributed to me by Dr. Kline (some mentioned already above): that the Old Testament Israelite king is equivalent to civil magistrates elsewhere (179); that the church on earth is to be identified with the kingdom prophesied in the Old

Testament (180); that the kingdom is merely the general moral sway in the hearts of the elect (181); that I do not perceive the typological nature of the Old Testament kingdom (181); that I de-emphasize and devalue the consummation victory and glory (185; cf. Theonomy p. 486); that I demean evangelism and the saving of individual sinners, grumble at it without social and political impact, and have a deprecatory attitude toward the church's outreach with the Savior's love to a perishing world (185,186); that I make the Holy Spirit's building of the worldwide church of Christ for two thousand years tantamount to surrendering the world to the devil (186); and that I expect only a fleeting and superficial conversion of the nations at the very end of history (186). The use of obvious caricature only suggests that one's own position is so weak as to call for this form of rebuttal.

4. Finally, Kline's main theological objection to postmillennialism is that it entails a premature eclipse of the order of "common grace" (183) and thereby attributes unfaithfulness to God (184). Of course, this mention of "common grace" is theological shorthand, a generalization for certain dogmas entertained by Kline. If postmillennialism contradicts Kline's notion of common grace, this will only be fatal for postmillennialism -- and a genuine contradiction to the divine faithfulness -- if Kline's notion of common grace is taught in the inspired Scripture. Kline never shows us that it is. It is dubious that he could show such a thing, given the internal contradictions with his notion of common grace and given the apparently unbiblical implications of his notion. However, until he attempts to refute postmillennialism from the passages of Scripture which he takes to buttress his notion of common grace, we will not be able to say for sure. And until he attempts this kind of refutation, biblically minded postmillennialists need not feel any pressure to alter their position.

Kline's notion of common grace deserves at least short inspection. Essential to the order of common grace, according to him, is the institution of the common state which -- "unlike the nation Israel" -- has a mixed citizenry of holy and non-holy (183). This is hard to believe. Israel's citizenry was without admixture of non-holy elements? God's faithfulness in preserving an order of common grace means He must see to it that a non-holy citizenry exists somewhere? Kline also says that common grace means that a people's experience of temporal prosperity and adversity is not proportioned to their obedience to God -- as it was in Israel -- but is unpredictably determined by an inscrutable divine sovereignty (184). Israel did not enjoy common grace (cf. Gen. 8:21-22)? Israel always deserved exactly what she experienced in blessing and always fully experienced the cursing that she deserved? Non-Israelite people or societies cannot generally predict that things will go better for them in this life if they obey the voice of God rather than spurning it? (cf. Ps. 34; Prov. 14:34; Matt. 6:33; e.g., Lev. 18:24-27; Deut. 8:19-20; Ps. 2:10-12; Jonah 3; Hab. 2:12; Rom. 1:18-32; etc.). Since temporal suffering is meted out to

the disobedient in the church (e.g., I Cor. 11:28-34), thereby intruding the principles of the final judgment into preconsummation history, are believers deprived of "common" grace by enjoying God's special grace? Is this grace at all? One begins to reel under the confusions and inconsistencies in the syndrome of dogmas which go under Kline's title of "common grace."

It is not clear at all why Kline thinks that the widespread acceptance of the gospel around the world and the progressive sanctification of men and their societies would "deprive" unbelievers of God's "principle of commonness in the bestowing of temporal benefits" (184). This seems to be based on my passing comments (taken from Scripture) that kings and nations perish for resisting the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which Kline takes to be equivalent to an enforced submission of the world nations to Christ's government (183). Kline wants to know how these nations perish if not by holy war on the part of converted nations, the church taking up the sword, or direct divine plague; he suggests that Deuteronomy 13 must play a role here (187). In the first place, submission to Christ's kingdom is not physically enforced at all according to biblical postmillennialism (cf. II Cor. 10:4); the sword is not part of the church's armor (cf. *Theonomy*, pp. 414-421). Holy war was only by direct and positive divine instruction, thus being precluded today (cf. *Theonomy*, pp. 525-526, 581, 583). Immediate judgment from heaven is not taught as a postmillennial expectation, and the error of applying Deuteronomy 13 to the perishing of unconverted nations has been discussed previously. My passing reference to Isaiah 60:12 -- the slim reed on which Kline leans his extended polemic -- was intended to convey the truth that nations which indulge in lawlessness and adhere to the darkness of rebellion against the truth of God have no sure defense (Ps. 127:10, are ensnared by death (Prov. 13:13-14), and will perish in the way (Ps. 12; Prov. 29:18), either through their own internal corruption (e.g., Rom. 1:18-32) or God's historical judgments to overthrow their power (e.g., Rev. 13-18). I do not think that such suffering for disobedience is contrary to any biblical conception of common grace.

Therefore, Kline's "insuperable theological objection" to postmillennialism turns out to be without cogency or force. Not only is his conception of "common grace" internally confused and unconfirmed by God's word, it is not even clear why he thinks that postmillennialism is irreconcilable with it. Overall, his attack has misfired.