

control in ordinary and extraordinary providences, and that those who ignore or attempt to violate them simply suffer the consequences connected with them.

In connection with the second meaning (prescriptive rules of human conduct) it would appear that, in the case of believers, God secures inward and outward conformity to His Law (defined as the will of God addressed to man's obedience in each dispensation) by the Holy Spirit's loving persuasion, rebuke, and exhortation through His Word, and by providential rewards and punishments (e.g., believers acting as ambassadors for Christ and beseeching other human beings to be reconciled to God; Paul admonishing Timothy to endure hardships; John exhorting fellow believers to love one another; God commanding His people to honor their parents, so that their days might be long in the Promised Land; Paul admonishing the Corinthian believers to make certain that they discern the Lord's body in the Supper so as not to bring judgment on themselves).

In the case of unbelievers, it would appear that God secures a degree of outward conformity to His Law by the Holy Spirit's quickening of man's awareness that he is a moral being with moral notions and actions for which he will ultimately be held responsible; by His restraint of the full expression of human depravity through the quickening of the conscience and through the enactment and enforcement of laws by human governments; and by His providential distribution of benevolent rewards and punishments, so as to move men away from sin and lead them to repentance, and to move them toward relatively good actions that are in external conformity to His Law.

Thus it would appear that in the case of His system of descriptive principles of operation, God enforces His laws by the exertion of sovereign power to maintain both the laws and their natural consequences. However, in the case of His prescriptive rules of human conduct, it would appear that God secures conformity to His laws by suasive force (i.e., by various influences intended to motivate human beings in the direction of obedience), and that men's responses to these influences inevitably involve consequences, even if those consequences are seen to consist merely in divine approval or lack of approval (the withholding of approval can itself be seen as a kind of punishment, especially when approval involves the bestowal of reward, and disapproval involves the penalty of loss of that reward).

In any case, it would appear that penalty is involved in the very concept of law. Without some sort of sanction or consequence, law loses much of its force and becomes merely advice or encouragement or exhortation.

If a king promulgates an edict stating that no one is permitted to hunt in crown lands, and a short time later one of his subjects kills a deer in a royal forest, and this crime is reported to the king but he states that no penalty will be assessed, how will his officers and people view this