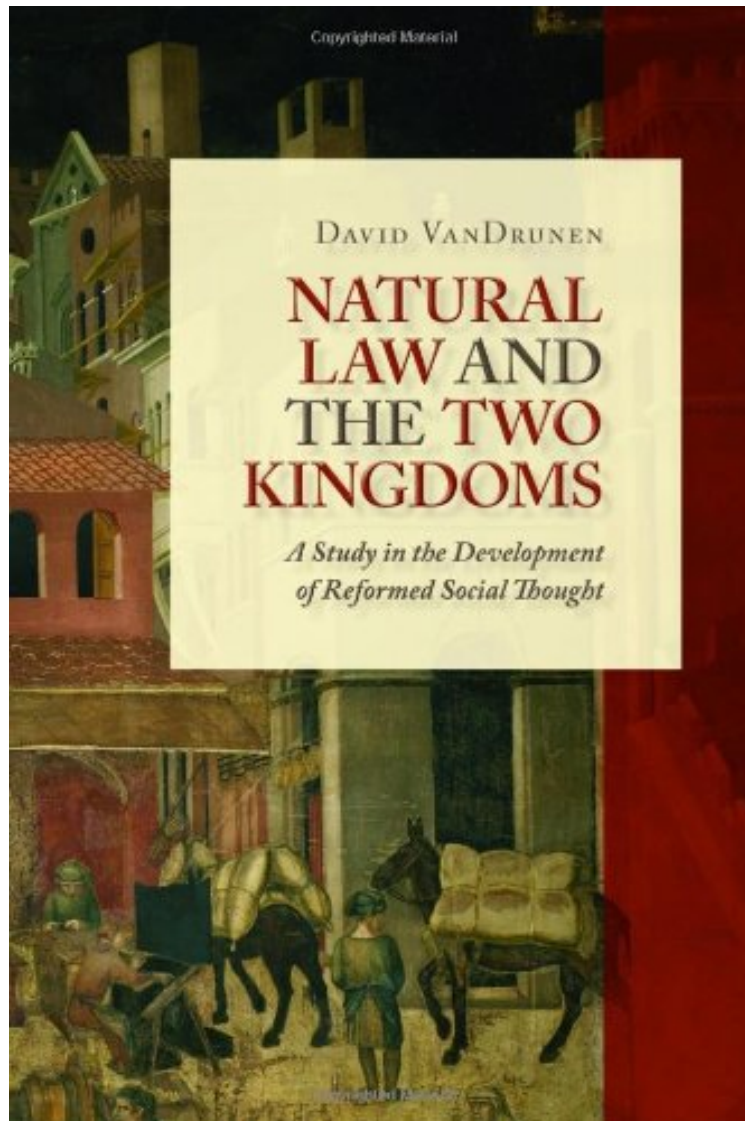


[Free read ebook] Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought (Emory University Studies in Law and Religion)

Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought (Emory University Studies in Law and Religion)

David VanDrunen

ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#1054374 in Books 2009-12-30Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.02 x 6.00l, 1.45 #File Name: 0802864430512 pages | File size: 17.Mb

David VanDrunen : Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought (Emory University Studies in Law and Religion) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of

10 of 13 people found the following review helpful. History of Two Kingdoms and Natural Law in Reformed Theology By J. Remington Bowling Summary: VanDrunen examines the idea of two kingdoms as it has existed in church history, especially in Reformed theology. Basically, VanDrunen demonstrates that the following ideas have been affirmed throughout Reformed thought (and prior: Augustine, Aquinas, Ockham, etc): There are two kingdoms, one redemptive ruled by Christ as redeemer, the other temporal ruled by "Christ" or God as creator, sustainer. Natural law is the standard for rule in the civil/temporal kingdom and Scripture is the rule in the redemptive kingdom. Christian activity in culture is predicated on common grace and the natural law. However, some of the prescriptions the Mosaic law (e.g. the Decalogue) are particular instantiations of natural law (it's not clear whether all prescriptions in the Bible would be viewed as instances of natural law). The church belongs to the redemptive kingdom and earthly governments to the civil kingdom. Yet almost universally, Reformed theologians have not applied this doctrine consistently. Each person has, in some way, mixed the two kingdoms. Thus, along the way, VanDrunen charges the persons with inconsistency. Some of these inconsistencies can be reconciled (e.g. by understanding the way in which some understood statecraft to be soulcraft); nevertheless, some inconsistencies remain (e.g. the influence of the Consistory upon the government in Geneva). Starting with Dooyeweerd (but germinating in some Kuiperian ideas), Reformed thought turned away from the two kingdoms doctrine to what VanDrunen classifies as "neo-Calvinism." Neo-Calvinism teaches only the redemptive kingdom and gives the cultural activities of Christians an "eschatological burden." Christian activity in the culture is predicated in the redemptive work of Christ. Thus, Christians are to transform culture. VanDrunen indicates that neo-Calvinism has become dominant in modern Reformed social thought, but recently there have been several defenders of the traditional understanding of two-kingdoms (with a more consistent application of course). Thoughts: It's hard for me to evaluate this book, not having much knowledge of the history which the book covers. If I take it for granted that VanDrunen has accurately represented the ideas of, for instance, Calvin, Turretin, Althusius, etc. then I would give the book four stars. But if VanDrunen has allowed his theological/political agenda to distort his understanding of these persons (as some have charged) then it certainly doesn't deserve a high rating. That VanDrunen charges virtually every thinker he examines with inconsistency strikes me as surprising to say the least. While I would have to agree with some of the inconsistencies that VanDrunen points out, I'm not sure that correcting these inconsistencies would require one to cast the temporal kingdom in quite so secular terms as VanDrunen and Darryl Hart might prefer. The thought occurs to me "Is it possible that VanDrunen sees so many inconsistencies simply because he is operating with a slightly different model of two kingdoms than the Reformers? And if so, does this make VanDrunen another neo-Calvinist?" ; I'm not sure, I'll have to do some more studying. This book should definitely be read by Reformed persons interested in politics.

7 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Keeping the Bible out of the Public Square By Dan Lawler Author David VanDrunen proposes that natural law, and not Scripture, provides the ground on which Christians should interact with the secular world in the areas of morals, ethics and public policy. According to the author, God ordained two separate kingdoms that are to be governed by two different sets of ordinances. The spiritual kingdom, which includes the church, is under Scripture while the civil kingdom, which includes the government and other secular institutions, is under natural law. To the extent that Christians participate in the civil kingdom, they must acknowledge natural law as the kingdom's ultimate authority. Scripture is not persuasive authority in the civil kingdom, says VanDrunen. But as a practical matter, neither is natural law and therein lies the rub. Following the end of Scholasticism and subsequent demise of Modernism, natural law lost its street cred. Once upon a time the secular man on the street, as well as the ivory tower philosopher, assumed the existence of an objective natural order inherent in the universe and human nature that man could discover through the exercise of right reason, if not good conscience. Then along came the skepticism of David Hume and the hyper-skepticism of postmodernism, and the concept of an objective, discoverable, universal natural law became as outdated as phlogiston and spontaneous generation. VanDrunen acknowledges the decline of natural law since its Scholastic heydays. He admits that "appeals to natural law actually made more sense in a pre-Enlightenment, pre-liberal Christendom context" and that "the present social context surely exacerbates the difficulty of constructing good natural law appeals." (Location 7134, 7141.) The theory limped into the Modernist era but then "the Enlightenment emphasis upon historical consciousness and the postmodern emphasis upon contextual relativity have generated much greater skepticism than in the pre-modern world toward appeals to a universal morality derived from human nature." (Loc. 7138.) Nowadays, natural law suffers both an ontological and epistemological crisis. Secular man doubts that natural law even exists (i.e., it has no ontological foundation), and even if it did exist, secular man doubts that there is any rational way of discovering it (i.e., it has no epistemological foundation). VanDrunen's only ontological defense of natural law is an appeal to Scripture: he knows natural law exists because the Bible tells him so. But that does not cut it in the civil kingdom because, according to VanDrunen himself, appeals to Scripture are neither authoritative nor persuasive there. VanDrunen's epistemological problem is even worse because, according to Calvin, Scripture teaches that fallen man's capacity to discern natural law lies in "a corrupted and shapeless ruin." (Loc. 1790.) So now VanDrunen has the double whammy of (1) an appeal to Scripture that the civil kingdom does not accept, and

(2) Scripture teaching that secular man's ability to discover natural law (assuming it exists) is corrupted. With nowhere to run, VanDrunen punts on a secular defense for natural law theory. He writes, "Natural law arguments have always been easier to dispute than to defend, and this promises to be a major task for future exponents..." (Loc. 7143.) But its not as if the Enlightenment began only yesterday. Natural law proponents have had hundreds of years to produce a secular defense of the theory and they've come up empty. VanDrunen provides no basis for expecting that future exponents of natural law will have any more success than their predecessors. Moral, ethical and policy decisions are being made here and now in the civil kingdom. Christians are not to participate in this process by citing the authority of Scripture, says VanDrunen, but instead must cite the authority of natural law which, in the minds of secular men, either does not exist or is not knowable. Consequently, Christians following VanDrunen's advice will have no credible arguments in the public square unless and until they come up with a colorable defense of natural law theory. Don't hold your breath. 0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Pastor W. thanks

Conventional wisdom holds that the theology and social ethics of the Reformed tradition stand at odds with concepts of natural law and the two kingdoms. This volume challenges that conventional wisdom through a study of Reformed social thought from the Reformation to the present.

John Bolt Calvin Theological Seminary The strength of this book is the overwhelming amount of historical evidence, judiciously analyzed and assessed, that positions the Reformed tradition clearly in the natural law, two kingdoms camp. This valuable contribution to our understanding of the Christian life cannot and should not be ignored or overlooked. The growing acceptance of the social gospel among evangelicals puts us in jeopardy of losing the gospel itself; the hostility to natural law and concomitant love affair with messianic ethics opens us up to tyranny. This is a much needed and indispensable ally in the battle for the life of the Christian community in North America.