

Native peoples. While the first edition of *French and Indian Captivity* said Williamson had spent three months in Indian captivity, by 1792 Williamson claimed he had spent forty years as “King of all the *Mohawk, Oneidoe, Onondangoe, Cayaga, Seneca, Tuscarora, Natiquoque, Conoy, Tuteloe, Chugnue, Delaware, Unanime, Minisink, Mehicon, Wappinger, and Cherokee Indians*” (263). Clearly, by the end of his life, Williamson’s persona had devolved into “self-deprecating burlesque” (262), and his audience, well acquainted with the familiar figure, was in on the joke.

Shannon’s book is very well written, frequently entertaining, and insightful in its analysis, thereby offering a valuable addition to the recent crop of microhistorical studies that examine the rapidly changing terrain of the expanding empire through the experiences of Eleazar Williams, John Ledyard, John Wompas, and other individuals. Not surprisingly, given the intricacies of Williamson’s deception, the book is also occasionally confusing and repetitive, particularly in the second part, when Shannon jumps back and forth between Williamson’s published accounts and actual events. A timeline would have helped the reader, particularly in the book’s second half, as would a chronological listing of Williamson’s known and suspected publications. Overall, however, the book is both a fascinating account of one extraordinary life and an informative examination of the lived experience, beneficial as well as costly, of the eighteenth-century British Empire.

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JONATHAN WILLIS. *The Reformation of the Decalogue: Religious Identity and the Ten Commandments in England, c. 1485–1625*. Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. 388. \$120 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2018.143

Jonathan Willis’s second monograph elucidates wonderfully the complex interrelations between ideas and culture in post-Reformation England. Taking his cue in part from John Bossy’s landmark 1988 essay on the emerging dominance by the sixteenth century of the Decalogue in the Christian West as the controlling system of practical ethics, Willis explores more fully the revolutionary role of Reformation theology in redefining the place of the commandments.

Willis has sensibly resisted the temptation to structure the book around the Ten Commandments (a strategy that would have been complicated by the different available numbering schemes), and has instead ordered his material in three parts, corresponding to three “offices” of the moral law: temporal or civil; “evangelical” or spiritual; and practical, or pastoral. This organizational scheme provides a natural framework for Willis’s consideration of the ways in which the Reformation wrought a profound change in the status of the Decalogue and allows for more focused discussion of particular commandments under the broader headings.

The use of distinctively Protestant categories for interpreting the function of the moral law does, however, raise a question about the extent to which the analysis is concerned with reformism across the confessions. For Bossy, the shift had its roots in Catholic thought, and the fact that the study has c. 1485 as its starting point might lead one to expect a more extensive discussion of late medieval doctrines and traditions than we are in fact given. At several points Counter-Reformation commentators such as Bonner and Bellarmine are drawn into conversation with Reformed writers, but these are sideways glances. Willis helpfully addresses this problem in his first chapter (48–56), explaining that although the Decalogue was not a

primary controversial theme in Reformation polemics, its use and status came to represent profound theological rifts across the confessions. In particular, the extraction of the Ten Commandments from complex traditional ethical and exegetical systems by Protestants meant that they were “forced to carry an awful lot of additional weight” (51).

One of the great rewards of this book is Willis’s penetrating assessment of the tensions created by Reformed teaching on the law, and the magnification of the Decalogue. As Willis illustrates carefully in part two, “The Evangelical Office of the Law,” in two balanced chapters, “Sin” and “Salvation,” the fine doctrinal distinction between the deathly, convicting force of the law as enshrined in the commandments of Moses, and its fulfilment by the Christian through grace, could be obscure and wrongly construed. We are, of course, familiar with the story Willis tells of the striving of English Calvinists in the second and third generation for assurance of conversion and signs of the regeneration of the will in accordance with the precepts contained in the Decalogue. However, he also draws our attention to the fault lines in Protestant thought: to the radical critiques of legalism on the one hand, and of antinomianism on the other. An implicit theme throughout is the tension between fulfilment of the moral law as external adherence to a behavioral code, and the “law of love” inscribed on the heart, summarized by Jesus in Matthew 22:35–40 and Mark 12:28–34 as the requirement to love God completely and to love one’s neighbor as oneself. The Reformed insistence on moral discipline, as Willis observes in his discussion of the godly in part three (“The Practical Office of the Law”), might seem to its critics to place undue weight on the former at the expense of the latter. But Willis is a more subtle commentator than most Reformation polemicists, and shows how neither the Catholic charge of antinomianism nor the Familist charge of legalism did full justice to Reformed pastoral theology in all its humanity and rigor.

Willis also offers us an original argument concerning the Reformation’s renumbering of the commandments: namely, that the conflation of the traditional ninth and tenth commandments on covetousness is a development just as significant for Protestant thought as the isolation of the commandment on idolatry, embedding as it does a “new anthropology of iniquity” (35). What Willis means by this is the redefinition of concupiscence, not merely as the universal disorder of the will in humanity, but as a defining, spiritual transgression of the law. The tenth commandment thus becomes the consummation and essence of the Decalogue, serving as “a final coup de grâce to the embattled human soul” (145).

Many readers will find the richly illustrated final chapter, “The ‘Ungodly,’” an engaging and insightful survey of the place of the Decalogue in the physical environment (both sacred and profane) after the Reformation. Willis offers striking evidence, for instance, of the association between the visual promotion of the Ten Commandments and that of royal supremacy: twin Elizabethan triptychs, a commandment board and the royal arms, at St. Mary’s church in Preston, Suffolk. Such examples reinforce and expand on his conclusions in Part I about the way in which English political theology after the Reformation exploited the injunctions to obedience in the Decalogue.

*The Reformation of the Decalogue* is, then, a valuable resource for students and scholars concerned with religion in early modern England. There are minor frustrations (for example, the heaping up of illustrative examples on a particular theme can, at times, lead to a lack of differentiation between writers of different periods or different persuasions), but Willis’s conclusions are compelling and multilayered, and they offer a fresh perspective on the vulnerabilities and complexities of post-Reformation thought.

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