

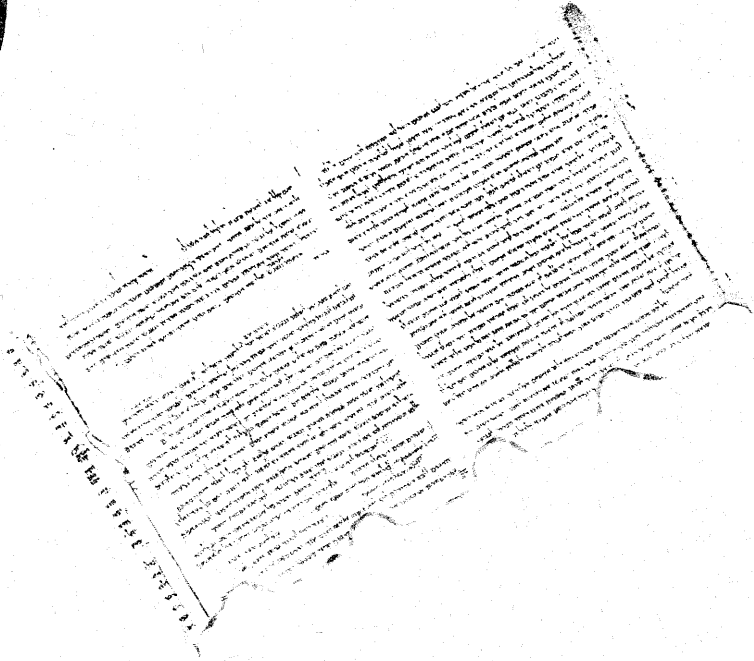


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1975 REFORMATION LECTURES

Bethany Lutheran College
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October 30 & 31, 1975

by

Bjarne W. Teigen

THE LUTHERAN DOCTRINE OF THE TWO KINGDOMS
AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL

Lecture I: The Two Kingdoms and
the Two Governments

1. The theme of this year's Reformation Lectures calls attention to the fact that we are almost in the middle of our country's Bicentennial observation. What with the barrage of publicity we have been receiving through all the media, today hardly a man alive needs to be told of the events of April 1775, plus the subsequent signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 and the eventual ratification of the Constitution, together with the Bill of Rights, in 1790.
2. All this has evoked some thought and consideration about the meaning of these events for us today, together with the consideration of our nation's future. A present-day evaluation of the founding of our country and its past history will reflect a gamut of opinions from A to Z. On the one hand there are those who without even an apparent critical footnote proclaim America the Beautiful and chant that her "alabaster cities

gleam Undimmed by human tears." American is beautiful for its heroes who loved their country more than self and mercy more than life.

3. Opinions representing the other side of the spectrum can perhaps be best summarized by simply calling to mind the curt statement that all our present problems stem from the fact that in October 1492, Columbus simply sailed too far. There has been, all will concede I think, a growing tide of pessimism laced with prophecies of gloom and doom.

4. But there are a couple of other anniversaries to which thoughtful people today will also give more than a passing thought and which, more than accidentally, are tied in with our theme: THE LUTHERAN DOCTRINE OF THE TWO KINGDOMS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL. It is the 450th anniversary of the Peasants' War. In 1525 there finally came to a head something that had been festering for a long time -- the uprising of the peasants over nearly all Germany and other parts of Europe. The plight of the peasant, who in many cases was practically a serf, and the greed of some of the noblemen were bound to ultimately clash. Martin Luther was most unwillingly catapulted into the middle of this fray when the peasants made a secular use of his proclamation of the freedom of the Christian from the bondage which the Gospel brings. In this fateful year of 1525 came three of Luther's writings which have much to do with our theme and are often misunderstood and misapplied. These writings were preceded by a couple which are most germane to our theme. They were followed by a few other pamphlets which he wrote three or four years later and which dealt with this topic. In actuality, in terms of bulk these writings do not loom large in Luther's total literary output. But they are significant in that they provide some links

for understanding how Luther and his fellow Reformers coped with the problems of man's efforts to govern himself in a world which God created and still upholds by the Word of His power but which has been infiltrated by the Devil.

5. Finally, a third date we should keep in mind is that it is the 30th anniversary of the end of that holocaust we call "World War II." On Tuesday, September 2, 1945, the Japanese formally surrendered on board the flagship Missouri in Tokyo Bay, thus bringing to an end a war of catastrophic proportions. The war ended with a Big Bang which revealed that the next World War would be even more catastrophic. I need hardly remind you that many people of international prominence have said that in reality Martin Luther is to be blamed for this war.

6. While all times are critical for the people who live in them, the Lord so arranges the history of the world that nearly every generation has good reason for thinking that it is living in a more critical period than previous generations. The believer has good grounds for assuming that the end is nigh. And as he remembers the Lord's promise, "Surely I come quickly," he prays, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). This fact fundamentally affects the believer's view of all world events.

7. But we must still live out our allotted time until our Lord actually does come to deliver us from all evil. Our purpose, then, in these lectures is to help us to live more soberly during this period of waiting by examining what our Lord has said about His Kingdom and the Kingdom of the World so that we better understand how to conduct ourselves as citizens of these two kingdoms.

8. As we shall examine later in more detail, our Lutheran Confessions speak of the "Two Kingdoms" or, more commonly, "the Two Powers" (potestates): the power of the Keys or the Gospel (potestas clavium) and the power of the Sword (potestas gladii) (Augsburg Confession, XXVIII).¹ When the Confessions, on two or three occasions, declare that "the writings of our theologians have profitably illumined this whole question of the distinction between Christ's Kingdom and a political kingdom (Ap. XVI, 2, 4, 13), they are referring chiefly to the writings of Luther of the preceding ten years. So one must make a study of what he wrote during those first turbulent years of the Reformation.

9. But first one must, as Luther did, look at some of the Scriptural evidence that has a bearing on our theme. One must then begin by looking at the New Testament use of the word "kingdom" (basileia).² And we must not pass this study over lightly, since it is altogether possible that in our general thinking we have missed one aspect of the meaning of this word. Prof. William Arndt is probably correct when he says, "In our Lutheran circles it has been quite customary to look upon the term 'Kingdom of God' as an equivalent for the word 'church'" (CTM, January 1950, p. 9). He then points out that today there has been going on a much discussed question as to whether "kingdom" means "realm" or "reign."

10. There can hardly be any question that this word as it was used both in secular Greek and in New Testament Greek means not only a kingdom, domain, or realm, but also that it is a word of action, carrying the meaning of rule or the governing power and dignity the king uses. Both meanings are present side by side in Revelation 17:12 and 17, "ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom" and

"agreeing to give the beast their power (basileia) to rule" (NIV). Here we see the word basileia used in close proximity to indicate the royal authority and the realm where the king exercises it. These two meanings merge into one another in the New Testament so that it might be more precise to say that here we have two aspects of a single concept or meaning with the context of the word enabling us to see which aspect receives the more emphasis. In Christ's Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:12, 15), where the KJV translates, "a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom," obviously it refers to his receiving royal dignity, power and authority to rule a realm. The other aspect of basileia as a realm or territory is clearly the main point in Matthew 4:8: "Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." One can see this because here the plural is used and there is an assumption of visibility.

11. It is now necessary to look at the modifiers of "kingdom" as used in the New Testament. Immediately the Bible reader is struck by the fact that he has often read the expression "the kingdom of God" or "the kingdom of heaven" or "the kingdom of Christ" or "the kingdom of the Father" or simply "the kingdom" without a modifier. He will find these expressions used considerably over a hundred times in the New Testament and there is no significant difference in the meaning of these terms, although there may be a special emphasis, where, for example, the kingdom of heaven emphasizes the transcendent character of Christ's kingdom. These terms designate the rule and the work of God in bringing sinners into a personal relationship with Him, so that He rules, guards, and protects them as His special chosen people. Christ's preaching and that of His apostles was that people should repent because

the Kingdom of God was at hand (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15). Men are to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33). Paul tells us that the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17). God's kingdom comes in power (Mark 9:1). It does not consist in the word of men, but in the power of God (1 Cor. 4:30). To preach the Gospel is to preach the Kingdom of God. This, of course, implies that one is to preach the whole of Christ's teaching and also that of His apostles (Matt. 28:18-20).

12. How does one enter this Kingdom, or, rather, How does one receive it? Here the fundamental point is that he receive it as a gift of God: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). Jesus promises the confessing Peter that He will give him the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:19). Christ appoints us to a kingdom (Luke 22:29). And Paul tells us that God has set us in the Kingdom of His Son (Col. 1:13), and that finally the Lord delivers His believers from all evil into His heavenly kingdom (2 Tim. 4:18).

13. Paul's last statement leads to a final observation about the Kingdom of God: The preaching of the Kingdom is, as the theologians say, "eschatological"; that is, it looks beyond this world into the world of everlasting glory. There is a final deliverance from the world of evil for every member of Christ's kingdom, because we have received a kingdom which cannot be moved (Heb. 12:28). The New Testament several times calls it the "Kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 3:2), which emphasizes that this kingdom is ultimately other-worldly. Now we all live in the shadow of eternity, but eventually the shadow becomes the reality (1 Cor. 13:12). Later in these lectures, when we consider Luther's proposals for Reformation

in the secular realm, we should remember that for Luther members of God's Kingdom are here on earth only as pilgrims and that their real citizenship is in heaven.

14. Luther's understanding of the "Kingdom of God" encompasses all these ideas. He recognizes that it is a realm, a holy nation, which has the kind of people who give Christ "their obedience gladly and willingly" (LW 13, 288, 289).³ But Luther, as a perceptive, Biblical scholar, is very much aware that the concept of basileia includes the royal rule and power of God. In the Second Petition ("Thy Kingdom Come"), Luther explains that God's Kingdom comes without our prayer, but we pray that "it may prevail among us and with us" (LC, III, 50). And in a sermon for St. Barbara's Day, on the text, Matt. 25:1-13 (The Parable of the Ten Virgins), Luther expands on what Scripture means by "the Kingdom of God," its power and its influence: "Since the words, kingdom of heaven, kingdom of God, kingdom of Christ, are often spoken about in the New Testament, it is imperative that a Christian know what it means, namely, that it is nothing else than the Word which proclaims the forgiveness of sins, and it is the Holy Gospel. Because in this kingdom there is pure grace and goodness, pure forgiveness and remission of sins, pure love and friendship."⁴

15. There is, however, also another kingdom that is far different from the one just described. It is the "kingdom of the world," or the secular kingdom. In this phrase "kingdom" carries the same connotation of being not only a territory ruled by one but it includes the idea of a mighty working and power. In the modifier, "of the world," we will recognize one of the most common words used in the New Testament several hundred times. Profitable as it might be for us to make a detailed word study of this word, it is obvious that the limits

of time and space will not permit that.⁵ But to understand the Lutheran doctrine of the Two Realms it is necessary to review some of the essential ways in which the New Testament uses the word. Basically, "world" (kosmos) refers to the totality of all created things: "God that made the world and all things therein (Acts 17:29; John 1:10).

16. Like everything that is created, the kosmos is finite; that is, it has a beginning and it will have an end (Matt. 24:21; 1 John 2:17). Its transitory nature is of its very essence. More specifically, the kosmos is the abode of man. The New Testament has in mind the inhabitants of this planet--the nations of this world (Luke 12:30). Then kosmos refers to mankind as a fallen creation, so that there is a deep gulf between God and the world, which is traced back to the sin of the first man: "As by one man sin entered into the kosmos, not to condemn it but that the kosmos through Him might be saved (John 3:19). Hence, God was in Christ reconciling the kosmos unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (2 Cor. 5:19). When one believes that Christ Jesus came into the kosmos to save sinners (1 Tim. 1:15), this faith is imputed to him for righteousness, and he is delivered from the power of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). And so, such a one has a new citizenship (Phil. 3:20). But he cannot as yet come out of the kosmos, in the sense that he is still part of the original creation. He is not to associate with evil men of the kosmos, but he can't escape them altogether; for then he must needs go out of the kosmos (1 Cor. 5:10). Since the kosmos, as viewed in opposition to the saints of God or His church, is the sum total of the unbelieving who are the enemies of God and His chosen people, the kosmos is a great obstacle to the Christian life. Friendship with the kosmos is hatred towards God, and hence the people of God are not to be conformed to

this kosmos (Rom. 12:2). Though the hatred of the kosmos will be turned against the followers of Christ (1 John 3:13), they should remember that the kosmos passes away, but he that does the will of the Father remains into eternity. This is the faith which has overcome the kosmos (1 John 2:17; 5:4).

17. And so there are two Kingdoms or two Realms, the spiritual and the secular, which exists simultaneously side by side in this world. This world was once good (Gen. 1:31). But, as we have seen, it is a fallen world because sin has entered human life. But man still remains God's creature, with the result that God has not only provided a direct rule over men in the incarnation of His Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel to work faith in men's hearts, but He also set up ordinances by which men's lives in this world, whether they are believers or unbelievers, are to be regulated and guided. These ordinances not only curb the sinful tendencies of men but are also conducive to their common welfare. Both kinds of men are subject to these ordinances.

18. To clarify this somewhat, it is well to note that the expression "the kingdom of the world" may refer to that part of fallen mankind where Satan as a strong man guards his own house (Luke 11). But the term also refers to the secular kingdom as God's creation, which He has not yet forsaken but still preserves and rules through His Providence and through His ordinances instituted for the good of all mankind. These ordinances are the family, and government, and the different vocations that are in harmony with the will of God, indicated in general in the Ten Commandments. Satan, of course, works both in the kingdom of God to deceive, and in the secular world. But God overcomes him in the heavenly kingdom through the Gospel, and in the secular kingdom He puts limits

to his evil workings by His Providence, which shapes and preserves the world through the secular orders created for the purpose of curbing fallen mankind's evil inclinations towards sin.

19. To pull these things together then, the Christian finds himself in two realms of existence simultaneously. There is only one Christian individual, but he exists in both realms, the heavenly and the earthly. Scripture presents a fundamental dualism of an earthly and a heavenly kingdom. Luther, the deep Biblical student that he was, caught this Biblical aspect, just as he did the fundamental distinction between the Law and the Gospel. As F. Edward Cranz has shown, Luther did not arrive at this understanding immediately, but came to it through the 1520's when he had to struggle with the practical problems which the Reformation brought on. His mind then clarified itself, with the result that by 1530 he had completed the formulation also of this doctrine.⁶ In the last of his three books in connection with the Peasants' War, An Open Letter on the Harsh Book Against the Peasants (1525), in which Luther defends the views he had advanced in the two previous books that were occasioned by the Peasants' War (Admonition to Peace and Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants), he says: "There are two kingdoms, one the kingdom of God, and other the kingdom of the world. I have written this so often that I am surprised that there is anyone who does not know it or remember it. Anyone who knows how to distinguish rightly between these two kingdoms will certainly not be offended by my little book (i.e., Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes), and he will also properly understand the passages about mercy. God's Kingdom is a kingdom of grace and mercy, not of wrath and punishment. In it there is only forgiveness, consideration for one another, love, service, the doing of good, peace,

joy, etc. But the Kingdom of the World is a kingdom of wrath and severity. In it there is only punishment, repression, judgment, and condemnation to restrain the wicked and protect the good. For this reason it has the sword, and Scripture calls a prince or lord 'God's wrath' or 'God's rod' (Isaiah 14:56)." (LW 46, 69, 70).

20. The Lutheran Confessions, which enunciate these principles, speak also of authority and power (AC, XVI and XXVIII; Ap, XVI), and they insist that one must distinguish between the "Power of the Sword" (potestas gladii) and the "Power of the Keys" (potestas clavium) (AC, XXVIII, 1-18). These articles assert that of these powers. Both affect his entire life on earth. But he has to learn the difference between these two powers and in what sphere they may be legitimately used. Hence, Article XVI of the Apology makes these points: Christ's kingdom is spiritual, which He rules through His Word. But as long as we are here on this earth this distinction between the two kingdoms enables us to make outward use of all political ordinances of the nation in which we live, such as court decisions, punishments, wars, military service, etc. But the Gospel does not bring in any new laws, but we are to obey existing laws, even if they have been formulated by the heathen. But, of course, as the Augsburg Confession has already made clear, if a civil authority should command something that cannot be obeyed without sin, we must obey God rather than man. With these explanations of political affairs, good men may be involved in politics without wondering whether they are denying the Gospel.

21. Since I realize that this brief summary may raise many questions, both theoretical and practical, regarding the ways in which these two powers are kept separate and yet employed by the individual Christian, I shall go into more specific

detail in the next Lecture just as to what problems Luther faced, whether they are essentially different from those that confront us, and how he and his fellow Reformers (both clergy and laity) carried out their respective responsibilities.

Lecture II: How the Reformers Put Principles Into Action

22. As I attempt in this brief review to summarize Luther's conception of how the Christian is to differentiate between the two authorities and conduct himself as he carries on his dual existence in the two realms, I am aware that one must be careful not to draw sweeping conclusions from fragmentary quotations from Luther. President Edgar Carlson is certainly right when he says that "by exclusive use of carefully selected passages one can prove that Luther regarded secular rulers as instruments of the devil and the adversaries of his cause; and one can prove that he regarded them as instruments of God who can do no wrong."⁷ Prof. Gordon Rupp, one of the two great modern English Luther scholars, suggests that "there is much evidence that generations of Court chaplains expounded Luther's doctrine of Obrigkeit for the benefit of Protestant Princes and their subjects in a way which disastrously over-simplified Luther's profound and subtle teaching and with far-reaching practical results."⁸

23. One must also remember that Luther's voluminous writings over an extended period of time may contain some loose ends where he was not entirely consistent. Also, fallible human being that he was, too, he may not always have been so consistent with what he wrote in what he did and

in the advice that he may have given to secular rulers under a great variety of trying circumstances. Luther was usually living from one crisis to another, and he did not have very good examples from history and contemporary politics to follow. But a careful study of his position will show that Luther here, too, had found in the Scriptures definite principles to guide him and that these principles can be systematically presented, with the caution that they be not over-simplified. Luther's counsel on secular affairs---and he was forced to give a large amount of such counsel---may not always have been right or the best but they came from some definite premises.

24. During his public career, Luther was faced with certain problems and conditions with regard to government that were not of his own making but were rather an inheritance from the past. During the Medieval Ages there was the recognition that God had established two forces in this world of men, one which looked after the spiritual life was called the power of the Keys; the other which God had instituted to curb evil was called the power of the Sword. The two forces or powers were regarded as mutually complementary, but the spiritual sword, which was wielded by the external organized Roman Catholic Church, was regarded as supreme. Although not all rulers of state were ready to grant that such was the case, as you remember from church history, the Papal Hierarchy nevertheless had achieved tremendous power and could bring any secular authority to heel. The Reformers were quite aware of this situation since they were feeling this authority when the Papal edicts were supposed to be enforced by the Emperor and when the Pope reserved the right to crown the Emperor, etc. But they did not find this state of affairs to be in harmony with the revealed will of God. Luther says: "Once upon a time Popes, Bishops, Priests and Monks had such authority that, with their

letters of excommunication, they could force and drive kings and princes wherever they wished, without resistance or defense. In fact, kings and princes could not ruffle a hair of any Monk or priest no matter how insignificant the maggot was" (LW, 13, 42). While this situation might conceivably be a danger today, it certainly has diminished in comparison to that of Luther's time. But this fact sheds light on the words of the Augsburg Confession, that the power of the Keys should not "set up and depose kings, should not annul temporal laws or undermine obedience to government, should not make or prescribe to the temporal power laws concerning worldly matters" (AC, XXVIII, 13). The church is not the source of earthly authority.

25. At the same time Luther was faced with two other wrong tendencies, and they both came from the Anabaptist movements. One of these found its chief thrust in the preaching and work of Thomas M nzer, who insisted that the Gospel had freed all men from their stations in life, and that a radical reform was necessary to set up a kingdom of God here on earth; as a matter of fact, a rebellion was necessary. But Luther and the Reformers were not going to sacrifice the Gospel for their millennial dream and they rejected the idea that "the godly will take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being suppressed everywhere" (AC, XVII, 5). Aberrations similar to this one are not too far from us today, especially with the new theological emphasis on the Theology of Revolution, or, as it is sometimes called, the Theology of Liberation.

26. And then the Reformers were faced with a third movement, which held that if a person became a Christian he should withdraw completely from the world, so that he had no part in civil government, did not hold property nor share in any governmental duties whatever. Hence the Apology declares that it is "false to claim that Christian

perfection consists in not holding property" (Ap. XVI, 9). Some of the quietism found today, together with a notion that government is slightly evil and that basically underneath it it is an enemy to the Gospel and the Christian, may not be unrelated to what the Reformers ran into.

27. To remove all these misconceptions, Luther wrote many articles and books which are the background for the principles stated in the Lutheran Confessions. Perhaps the single most important one was written in 1523: Temporal Authority: To What Extent Should It Be Obeyed? (LW 45, 77-129). Bornkamm is undoubtedly right in claiming this to be the "mature presentation of his doctrine" on the distinction between the kingdoms.⁹

28. In 1520, when Luther wrote his Address to the Christian Nobility, he asserted that the spiritual authority is not exempt from the jurisdiction of the temporal authority: "I say therefore that since the temporal authority is ordained of God to punish the wicked and protect the good, it should be left free to perform its office in the whole body of Christendom without restriction and without respect to persons, whether it affects pope, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, or anyone else" (LW 44, 130). In his writings Luther constantly refers to Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-16; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; and Mark 12:17, as the basis for the truth that the temporal authority is ordained of God and independent of the spiritual powers.

29. But by 1522 Luther had already begun to wonder where the authority of Caesar ends since we are to give to Caesar only the things that belong to Caesar and we certainly are not to give to him the things that belong to God. The situation became more aggravated as some of the Princes began putting pressure on their subjects not to attend the University of Wittenberg, and it came

to a head when Duke George of the Duchy of Saxony demanded that all of the New Testament translations which Luther had done were to be delivered into the hands of the officials. After Luther had preached several sermons on these issues, he published them in this little treatise, Secular Authority. On the basis of Scripture he dealt with the basic issues of where does the government derive its power? What are its limits? What are its power functions?

30. Luther begins by asserting the divine origin of temporal authority, that it is clear from Scripture that it is God's will that the temporal sword be used for the punishment of the wicked and the protection of the upright (LW 45, 87). God's people, true believers in the Kingdom of God, to be sure, need no temporal law or sword because the law is laid down for the lawless (LW 45, 90). Nevertheless there is need for a different government "beyond the Christian estate and the Kingdom of God" because there are "few true believers and still fewer who live a Christian life." Hence it was necessary for God to ordain two governments and one must carefully distinguish between these two governments. Both must be permitted to remain, the one to produce righteousness and the other to bring about external peace and prevent evil deeds (LW 45, 92).

31. The Christian must make himself available for governmental services even to the extent of being "hangman," because this is very "beneficial for the whole world and your neighbor"; he, of course, would not be doing that for the purpose of avenging himself but for the good of the neighbor: "In what concerns you and yours, you govern yourself by the Gospel and suffer injustice towards yourself as a true Christian; in what concerns the person or property of others, you govern yourself according to love and tolerate no injustice

toward your neighbor. . The Gospel does not forbid this; in fact, in other places, it actually commands it." (LW 45, 95, 96). While it is true that there may be a certain freedom as to when the use of the sword is to be applied, "but where you see that your neighbor needs it, there love constrains you to do as a matter of necessity that which would otherwise be optional and not necessary for you either to do or to leave undone" (LW 45, 98).

32. How far does temporal authority extend? No farther, answers Luther, than to life and property and external affairs on earth. If it presumes to rule over the soul and prescribe laws in this area, it encroaches upon God's government: "We want to make this so clear that everyone will grasp it, and that our fine gentlemen, the princes and bishops, will see what fools they are when they seek to coerce the people with their laws and commandments into believing this or that" (LW 45, 105). Over what is on earth and belongs to the temporal earthly kingdom, man has authority from God (Genesis 1:26), but whatever belongs to heaven and the external kingdom is exclusively under the Lord of heaven. Peter clearly sets a limit to the temporal authority in Acts 5:29, because if we had to do everything that the temporal authority wanted, there would have been no point in Peter saying: "We must obey God rather than men." (LW 45, 111).

33. Luther then takes up a case in point. In 1522 the Duke of Bavaria had issued a mandate forbidding his subjects to read or discuss Luther's books. And, as I have already noted, Duke George of Saxony had proscribed Luther's New Testament translation, demanding that all the copies already out be turned over to the officials. Luther's advice is: "If your prince or temporal ruler commands you to side with the Pope, to believe thus and so, or to get rid of certain books, you should

say, 'It is not fitting that Lucifer (i.e., Satan) should sit at the side of God. Gracious Sir, I owe you obedience in body and property; command me within the limits of your authority on earth and I will obey. But if you command me to get rid of certain books, I will not obey; for then you are a tyrant and over-reach yourself, commanding where you have neither the right nor the authority.'" (LW 45, 112). He caps this section of the Treatise by telling the subjects of the kingdoms involved that "they should not turn in a single page, not even a letter, on pain of losing their salvation." While acknowledging that princes are governing in God's place, Luther does not by any means give them a blanket clean bill of health, as some moderns have thought about Luther, for he makes the realistic appraisal: "You must know that since the beginning of the world a wise prince is a mighty rare bird, and an upright prince even rarer. They are generally the biggest fools or the worst scoundrels on earth; therefore one must constantly expect the worst from them" (LW 45, 113). Here one is tempted to exclaim: "Shades of Watergate!"

34. Luther then concludes this section by recognizing that governments can by indirection shape beliefs and promulgate accepted dogmas. It was possible that someone might object that Luther was too drastic in such a sweeping proscription against obedience, arguing that the temporal power is not forcing men to believe; "it is simply seeing to it externally that no one deceives the people by false doctrine" (LW 45, 112). Luther answers that that is the function of the bishops to fight heresy, which can only be done by God's Word. He reasserts again the principle that one cannot be forced to believe anything: "Heresy is a spiritual matter which you cannot hack to pieces with iron, consume with fire, or drown in water. God's Word alone prevails here, as St. Paul says in 2 Cor. 10" (LW 45, 114). In the final section of this Treatise,

we should note that Luther gives some practical advice to princes as to how they should exercise their power.

35. As you no doubt noticed in this section, in summarizing Luther, the words such as "government," "power," "authority," have been used and not very often the word "kingdom." This fact is of some importance and merits more than a mere footnote because it adds a dimension to our understanding of how Luther viewed the problem of a Christian's conduct in the two kingdoms. In Lecture I, I demonstrated that the New Testament lexical evidence clearly indicates that the word "kingdom" does not merely mean kingdom or domain but that it also carries with it the connotation of the exercise of power, rule, or government. We have tended to think only of "kingdom" as a realm and thus have tended to equate the "Kingdom of God" with the "church" and the "kingdom of the world" with the "state" so that we talk about the "separation of church and state," or "the wall of separation between church and state." In so doing, we may have missed an aspect which the Scriptures present and possibly we have caused for ourselves needless difficulties.

36. I believe that Luther, who so often shows his perceptive understanding of the Bible, caught this dimension, for he not only uses here the word "kingdom" (Reich) but also a word we usually translate as "government" (Regiment). In 1940 a Swedish scholar, Gustaf Törnvall, published the results of his research studies of Luther's Two Kingdoms, with the significant title: Andligt och världsligt regemente hos Luther. Subsequently, in 1947 the book was translated into German, and since that time this rather small book has had a profound effect on understanding Luther in this area. While scholars may disagree about certain aspects of Törnvall's findings, they are agreed

that Luther had a second dimension in mind when he spoke of the two kingdoms as evidenced by his constant use of Regiment. For example, Luther uses the term 95 times in his commentary on Psalm 101, which is really an essay addressed to the new Elector, John Frederick, on how to conduct his governmental responsibilities (LW 13, 146-224). The term Regiment is of central importance in understanding Luther's view of government, spiritual and secular. Prof. Alfred Von Rohr Sauer, who translated Luther's commentary into English, remarks, "that there seems to be no English word even approaching it in connotation," and hence he was forced to translate it in a variety of ways, such as, "charge," "administration," "kingdom," "authority," "exercise of government," etc. (LW 13, 147). Luther, commenting on Psalm 101:5, is translated as saying: "Thank God, it is now manifest enough to all the world how the two areas of authority need to be distinguished" (LW 13, 193; my emphasis). The term "two governments" points to the two ways in which God effects His will in the spiritual and the secular realms which are in the world. So, Luther, for example, in his Temporal Authority is speaking not only of what we would call "church" and "state," but at the same time of two sets of relationship within which the Christian lives. He has his existence in Christ and at the same time his existence in the secular.

37. The Lutheran Confessions catch this when they use the terms "Power of the Keys" and "Power of the Sword." Through the Power of the Keys the believer has come to know his Savior and through faith he has the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, and he lives in a new relation of love to God and his fellowmen. On the other hand, he still has a common life together with mankind in general where the law regulates everyone's external actions. Just as he must learn to divide and apply the Law and the Gospel

to himself, so the Christian must understand the difference between these two powers or governments and in what sphere they may be legitimately used.¹⁰

38. It remains for us to look at how Luther envisioned that these principles would be carried out in a practical way. Christians should be active in government and all the affairs of the secular, possess property, be married, buy and sell, etc. Marriage and property were instituted in Paradise and originally had nothing to do with the fall into sin. But now even after the fall, the will of God takes shape in the different vocations in the secular world. This concept of Luther and the Reformers is much broader than our concept of the "state." It is not conceived in terms of a political institution but rather of a general way of God's ruling the world.

39. Luther did not hesitate to give out a considerable amount of advice to the secular rulers. On several occasions he asserts that it is the preacher's duty to preach to and rebuke rulers. He does not presume to give advice to government officials on technical matters, such as how to levy taxes, because these are matters for "the lawyers" to work out since "it is not fitting that I, an evangelist, should make decisions in such matters" (LW 46, 39). Yet, as one who also preaches the law, he does feel justified in pointing to the faults of the government, suggesting festering areas of injustice that need improvement, as he did in his famous To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate (LW 44, 123-217). In the third part of this book, Luther makes specific suggestions as to how the temporal authorities could reform their political affairs. He suggests the abolition of begging by enacting a law to the effect that every city should look after

its own poor, "if only we had the courage and the intention to do so" (LW 44, 189). In general, his judgment is that "the secular law--God help us--has become a wilderness" (LW 44, 203). This statement, indeed, has a modern ring.

40. On one occasion Luther said: "It is not rebellious to let oneself be deposed, but it would be rebellious if one who preaches the Gospel did not chastize the vices of the authorities. For such is the behavior of a lazy and useless preacher."¹¹ In his commentary on Psalm 101, which deals with governmental conditions, Luther says: "Now, if a preacher in his official capacity says to kings and princes and to all the world, 'thank and fear God, and keep His commandments,' he is not meddling in the affairs of secular government. On the contrary, he is thereby serving and being obedient to the highest government" (LW 13, 195). It would appear to Luther that the church does exercise a wholesome moral influence on society, also through proclaiming the revealed Law. Luther did believe that when one served his country and rendered service to his neighbor, the commandment of love is applied not only to the Christian's private life but also to his public affairs. And this not least when the Law serves as an inhibitor of evil men's actions. It is a false idea of mercy to think that evil-doers should go unpunished, and it does not flow out of love to one's neighbor who needs protection against evil-doers. Luther usually demonstrates this truth with rather vivid, concrete examples: "Suppose I was to break into a man's house, rape his wife and daughters, break open his strong box, take his money, put a sword to his chest and say, 'If you will not put up with this, I shall run you through, for you are a godless wretch.'; then if a crowd gathered and were about to kill me, or if the judge ordered my head off, suppose I were to cry out, 'Hey, Christ

teaches you to be merciful and not to kill me,' what would people say?" (LW 46, 68). In this way Luther defends the position he took in the Peasants' War when he told the noblemen that they were obligated to rescue innocent people from the uncontrolled mobs of peasants who were running wild in robbing, plundering and murder. This is the context for his words quoted so often as the reason for the Hitler atrocities: "Let whoever can stab, smite, slay. If you die in doing it, good for you! A more blessed death can never be yours, for you die while obeying the divine Word and commandment in Romans 13, and in loving service to your neighbor, whom you are rescuing from the bonds of hell and of the devil" (LW 46, 54.55).

41. But one must not infer from this incident that Luther was a heel-clicking "law and order" man who thought that one must exact the last pound of flesh. In fact, when the Peasants' rebellion was finally set down, he was appalled at the cruel and vengeful behavior of some of the rulers. He did not "intend to strengthen the raging tyrants or to praise their raging" because "they are not seeking to punish and stop rebellion; rather, they are satisfying their furious self-will and cooling a rage, which they, perhaps, have long nursed, thinking that they now have an opportunity and excuse to do so" (LW 46, 82).

42. As a matter of fact, Luther calls for moderation in the application of the Law to individual cases. Justice and equity were his great concerns. He recognizes that in the secular world civil rule proceeds by demands, but in his Table Talk, observes 'thus and so it must be done,' the less well it works out." And we should not forget that just before the Peasants' War broke out, Luther urges that the authorities "try kindness first, for you do not know what God will do to

prevent the spark that will kindle all Germany and start a fire no one can extinguish; rulers are not appointed to exploit their subjects for their own profit and advantage but to be concerned about the welfare of their subjects" (LW 46, 23). And so, with regard to the enforcement of laws, Luther counseled against overly-strictness: "We must allow exceptions and not let the law take its strict course. In some cases the law ought to yield and justice take its place" (LW 46, 101).

43. Luther in his "Sermon on Keeping Children in School," calls for higher education so that men of common sense and moderation will be prepared for public office, and he asks who is capable of ruling effectively. He answers his rhetorical question: "Certainly not those who would rule with the fist, as many now think to do. For if men were to rule solely by the fist, the end result would surely be a bestial kind of existence; whoever could get the better of another would simply toss him into the discard pile. We have enough examples before our eyes to see what the fist can accomplish apart from wisdom or reason" (LW 46, 239).

44. Luther's advice to the princes in his Temporal Authority is that, "first, he must give consideration and attention to his subjects and really devote himself to it. This he does when he directs his every thought to making himself useful and beneficial to them; when instead of thinking 'the land and the people belong to me, I will do what best pleases me,' he thinks rather, 'I belong to the land and the people, I shall do what is useful and good for them.'" This will include that one must go by the proverb, "he cannot govern who cannot wink at faults" (LW 45, 120.124).

45. Luther holds that rulers must always keep in mind natural law which is roughly equivalent to the Golden Rule, "That I should do as I would

be done by." This will often lead to adjusting matters without law books, but it will lead to free decisions, "given however by love and natural law, with which all reason is filled." As an example of such excellent ruling, Luther tells a lurid story from the life of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy (1467-1477), a story that could well be a scenario for one of our modern horror sex films. But let Luther tell it in his own words: "This story is told of Duke Charles of Burgundy. A certain nobleman took an enemy prisoner. The prisoner's wife came to ransom her husband. The nobleman promised to give back the husband on condition that she would lie with him. The woman was virtuous, yet wished to set her husband free; so she goes and asks her husband whether she should do this thing in order to set him free. The husband wished to be set free and to save his life, so he gives his wife permission. After the nobleman had lain with the wife, he had the husband beheaded the next day and gave him to her as a corpse. She laid the whole case before Duke Charles. He summoned the nobleman and commanded him to marry the woman. When the wedding day was over, he had the nobleman beheaded, gave the woman possession of his property, and restored her to honor. Thus he punished the crime in a princely way." Luther ends this story and his book on Temporal Authority with these words: "No Pope, no jurist, no law book could have given him such a decision. It sprang from untrammelled reason, above the law in all the law books, and is so excellent that everyone must approve of it and find the justice of it written in his own heart. St. Augustine relates a similar story in The Lord's Sermon on the Mount. Therefore, we should keep written laws subject to reason, from which they originally welled forth as from the spring of justice. We should not make the spring dependent on its rivulets or make reason a captive of letters" (LW 45, 128.129).

46. This balanced use of law and justice is not found among many of the world's rulers. They are rare birds who have this sense of equity. In his "Sermon on Keeping Children in School," Luther says that it is a fine thing if "an emperor, prince, or lord, is by nature so wise and able that he can instinctively hit upon what is right, as could two men I knew, Duke Frederick of Saxony and Sir Fabian Von Felitzsch, to speak of men no longer living. Such rulers are pretty rare birds" (LW 46, 239).

47. While Luther recognizes that a ruler or judge, to be an effective one need not be a Christian (LW 45, 99.127), he nevertheless strongly urges that Christians participate in government, and he believes that their participation will be a blessing to the land. In a general way he says in Temporal Authority that it would be fine and fitting if all princes were good true Christians. For the sword and authority, as a particular service of God, belong more appropriately to Christians than to any other men on earth. "Therefore you should esteem the sword or governmental authority as highly as the estate of marriage or husbandry or any other calling which God has instituted" (LW 45, 100).

48. In a more specific context, Luther in his On War Against the Turk (1529), first makes it clear that he is not urging the Emperor that war against the Turk be made in the nature of a crusade, religiously motivated and led by the church, but rather it is to protect the Emperor's subjects who have been wrongfully attacked by the Turk. He then exclaims: "Would to God that they (i.e., the worldly rulers) were all Christians or that no one would be a prince unless he were a Christian! Things would be better than they are now and the Turk would not be so powerful" (LW 46, 166).

49. I am quite confident that Luther would have agreed with the judgment Cardinal Wolsey, Henry VIII's Prime Minister, invoked upon himself:

Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my King, He would not in my age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

(Henry VIII, 3, 1613)

50. With these general principles enunciated from Luther and the Lutheran Confessions, perhaps we can now in Lecture III examine their significance for us as we celebrate the Bicentennial.

Lecture III: Observing the Bicentennial

51. 1776! July 4: "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, . . . We, therefore, . . . solemnly publish and declare, That these United States are, and of right ought to be, Free and Independent States: That they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown." So, we have the Revolutionary War, or, to put it more unkindly but possibly more accurately, the War of Rebellion. From the storehouse of my short memory of what I have retained from attending pastoral conferences, I recollect torrents of words on the illegality and the sinfulness of events that brought our country into existence as an independent nation, accompanied with the judgment that Martin Luther would have had no part in it. I do not know if there is anyone among us who is inclined to accept Prime Minister Harold Wilson's generous invitation,

recently made to Vice President Rockefeller, to mark the Bicentennial in a significant way by applying for readmission to the British Commonwealth. But there are probably questions that come to mind, and I believe that they would be related to questions that have arisen with regard to Luther and the Peasants' War, 450 years ago, and World War II, thirty years ago.

52. First, let me say that I, no more than Luther, will want to speculate on whether human existence would have been better in some other possible world where our existence as colonies would be subject to her Royal Majesty, Elizabeth II. In other words, I cannot, nor do I want to, peer into the counsels of the Deus Absconditus. I do know that God's foreknowledge, two hundred years ago, extended alike over the good and evil on this continent and the European continent, but that this was not a cause of evil or sin. But I also know that God's ruling Providence did control evil and impose a duration on it (Ep. XI, 4). So, today we will have to recognize the status quo as it exists. But, the thought of past history should lead us to true repentance and a confident trust in the promises of the Gospel and a desire to serve our God and our fellowmen in true godliness.

53. We must acknowledge the facts of history, that kingdoms rise and fall, and thus allow for change in the course of human events. Luther, in his famous letter, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate" (1520), recognizes these facts of life when he analyzes the Pope's pretense that he took the Holy Roman Empire from the Greek Emperors and bestowed it upon the Germans: "There is no doubt that the true Roman Empire . . . has long since been overthrown and come to an end. . . This happened under the Goths but more particularly

when the Muslim Empire arose almost a thousand years ago. . . . It is a small thing for God to throw empires and principalities about. He is so gentle with them that once in awhile He gives a kingdom to a scoundrel and takes one from a good man, sometimes by the treachery of wicked, faithless men, and sometimes by inheritance." (LW 44, 207.208).

54. But rebellion was involved two hundred years ago, and certainly Romans 13: 1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-16 call for obedience to the constituted authorities. Our Lutheran Confessions declare that the Gospel "commands us to obey the existing laws, whether they were formulated by heathen or others, and in this obedience to practice love" (Ap. XVI, 3). Luther on several occasions was explicit about rebellion; for example, in his booklet, "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved": "I say that rulers are not to be opposed with violence and rebellions, as the Romans, Greeks, the Swiss, and the Danes have done; rather there are other ways of dealing with them" (LW 46, 108).. Luther here sets forth a dictum, but there is a slight modification even in these words. He is a conservative in his thinking and likes to make haste slowly. On one occasion he said, "Changing a government is one thing. Improving a government is another."¹² Luther recognized God's wisdom in instituting government because it restrains the evil proclivities of men which are always threatening to break out into violence--war. Rebellion leads to war, since there are very few bloodless coups. Luther's horror of war is well known, and we have all read his statement: "War is the greatest plague that can afflict humanity; it destroys religion, it destroys states, it destroys families. Any scourge is preferable to it."

55. What is rather anomalous in our day is that though we live in the shadow of a nuclear war, we are quite complacent about the horrors of

war, what with all our creature comforts and high standards of material living. Yes, we may say that we agree with General Sherman when he said that war was hell, but that word through sheer overuse and systematic demythologization has become so meaningless to us that it is more of a soporific than a statement of revulsion. Sherman was more concrete in a letter to his wife: "You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty and you cannot refine it. . . . I begin to regard death and mangling of a couple of thousand men as a small affair, as a kind of morning dash--and it may well be that we have become so hardened." This sounds almost like Luther who detested war, not only because of the inevitable bloodshed, hunger, and suffering that follows in its wake, but also because it tends to make men more morally calloused than in peacetime.

56. There is, however, as we have already noted in Lecture II, a point where a Christian at all costs must disobey his government, but it is not easy to define this exact point under every set of circumstances. But, as Luther says, we resist the government when it openly tries to compel us to do wrong against God or men (LW 44, 92).

57. To take, first, a theoretical case which borders close to the matter of rebellion, Luther says that it is only right that a prince, king, or lord should be deposed if he becomes insane, "for he is not to be considered a man if his reason is gone." But it must be added that Luther is also of the "opinion" that madmen and tyrants are not the same because in the former case "the light of reason has gone out" (LW 46, 105). But his remarks do raise some interesting questions, for example, as to whether a dictator is insane when he puts into effect a policy of mass genocide, as occurred some thirty years ago.

58. But there is a practical case from Luther's own life that we might take into consideration when we consider this general problem. Luther, in his Temporal Authority, says that to act as a Christian "a prince should not go to war against his overlord--king, emperor, or other liege lord" (LW 45, 124). He wrote this in 1523, but in January 1539 he was along in arriving at the grave decision to resist the Emperor.¹³ In a memorandum signed by Luther, Jonas, Bucer, and Malanchthon (in that order), they answer two questions:

1) Whether governments ought to defend their subjects against unjust power, against princes, and against the Emperor, especially in matters of religion. The answer is in the affirmative, on the basis of natural law. The Gospel confirms the Obrigkeit and with it also naturliche und gesetzte Rechte, as Paul also says, "The law is established for the unrighteous." As a father protects his family from violence, so should a prince, on the example of Constantine who overthrew the tyrant Licinius, protect his people from a murderous emperor who would compel them to blasphemy and idolatry. In such a case the bond between inferior and superior is dissolved jure naturae (by the law of nature). To the question:

2) Whether the defender ought to wait until his enemy actually attacks, the answer was, "No." If the ban has been pronounced against an ally, the defender has the right to anticipate the attack; "for the Gospel does not forbid, rather it confirms the office of government and natural law."

59. These were difficult times for the Smalcald League, which had been organized eight years earlier, and the document demonstrates that under certain conditions there could be orderly resistance to a higher power. As you know, however, the Smalcald Wars soon broke out, and militarily they were not too successful for the Protestant Princes.

60. However, all this is not to say that Luther and the Reformers would have agreed with the arguments that Jefferson formulated for the theory of the American Revolution. That problem will have to remain in the realm of the theoretical. But we have seen that Luther was not totally inflexible in his dealings with the government and that under certain circumstances one must use the power of the Sword against the higher powers and that there is not to be blind obedience. It is not the case, as it was with the Six Hundred who made the blind charge at Balaklava:

Not though the soldier knew
Someone had blundered;
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.

It is of further importance to note that Natural Law plays an important part in the thinking of the Reformers.

61. As one reads the Declaration of Independence, one is immediately struck by the religious tone and terminology found there. The appeal to authority is to the "Laws of Nature and Nature's God," and it is asserted that the Creator has endowed all men with certain unalienable Rights, and that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. When one inquires as to what was the religious background that was predominant among the Founding Fathers, the answer is quite simple: It was Deism, or French Enlightenment, or Rationalism. To be sure, there were Roman Catholics and Calvinists among these Founding Fathers, but they were in the minority as intellectual leaders.¹⁴ Prof. Robert N. Bellah of Harvard has recently shown that the religious beliefs and ceremonies which have been associated with our government since the 18th century are

based on the religion of the Enlightenment: "Few have realized that there exists alongside of and rather clearly differentiated from the churches an elaborate and well-institutionalized civil religion in America."¹⁵

62. The doctrine of Natural Law ("the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God") is a fundamental thesis of Deism, so that we can say that when our country was founded, its fundamental law was grounded in Natural Law. Briefly, the 18th century held that Natural Law implied a body of principles which rested upon a divinely implanted knowledge within human nature. Therefore right and wrong are everlastingly fixed by nature and are not determined by man's choice. There isn't time here to investigate the influences of the past (Plato, Scripture, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, Grotius, Locke, etc.) that came to bear on the doctrine as espoused by the Founding Fathers. But suffice it to say that this law was regarded as universal and that it was above the laws enacted by any government; rather governmental laws were based on Natural Law.

63. One of the burning questions that confronts the American citizen today is whether that conception is still viable or whether it must now be given up for something else after two hundred years. This leads to the question whether an American citizen (and, more particularly, one who is committed to the divine revelation in the Scripture) can insist that there are inviolable Laws of Nature which must be upheld by our government and that a citizen should employ his voting power and all other avenues of public redress open to him to have laws enacted that uphold such standards.

64. Possibly sophisticated Deists who had spun out at some length theories regarding Natural Law might have regarded Luther as rather naive in

his concepts of Natural Law, but Luther's position is not far from that of the Deistic conception that right and wrong are everlastingly fixed in nature. Paul Althaus correctly summarizes Luther's position when he says that "on the basis of Paul's statement in Romans 2:15 Luther asserts that man is naturally born with a knowledge of what he is to do and not to do. Luther calls this 'natural justice,' 'natural law,' or 'law of nature.' In the process of creation God wrote this law in the hearts of all men. Man therefore has the very best law-book in his heart and needs no other books in order to know what is right. Natural law is implanted in man; that is, in human reason."¹⁶ Luther recognizes this law to be universal: "I have been speaking of the common, divine and natural law which even the heathen, Turks and Jews have to keep if there is to be any peace or order in the world" (LW 46, 27). The Natural Law was summarized in the Golden Rule: "This also agrees with the Natural Law that Christ teaches us in Matthew 7, Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them" (LW 46, 110). Further, Luther assumes that everyone should be judged on the basis of Natural Law: "If neither party is a Christian, or if one of them is unwilling to be judged by the law of love, then you may have them call in some other judge and tell the obstinate one that they are acting contrary to God and natural law, even if they obtain strict judgment in terms of human law" (LW 45, 127). In this context, Luther had been discussing the matter of restitution: Whether one was a Christian or not, the law of love should prevail if the debtor is poor and the other party is not.

65. Luther regarded life as the highest earthly gift. In his sermons on the Catechism (1528) he says: "The greatest treasure your neighbor has on earth is his life and body. This God would have secured from all violence and assault and with this commandment He builds a wall around him

and says, 'You shall not kill.' . . . Therefore in these commandments are contained the six works of mercy. If he is hungry, feed him; if he is naked, clothe him; if he is in prison, visit him, etc. (Matt. 25:35-36). Otherwise you are guilty of his death. If you can avert his danger, do so; if not, you become guilty" (LW 51, 152; Cf. LC I, 185).

66. The Confessions likewise assume that the Law is written in the hearts of men: "For the Law of God is written on their hearts, just as the first man immediately after his creation received a law according to which he should conduct himself" (SD VI,5). When the Apology says that we are to obey existing laws of the civil estate, the assumption is that the laws of the civil estate are based on Natural Law, although they may not at all times embody all that is implied in Natural Law.

67. Today many in our country are wrestling with the problem of how they can preserve the life of their neighbor, the unborn infant. Should a Christian use public redress in whatever form it may be feasible to carry out his obligation? Luther specifically says that one should not hesitate to go to court to secure justice and protection for his neighbor, because here "we are talking about a Christian-in-relation; not about his being a Christian, but about this life and his obligation in it to some other person, whether under him or over him or even alongside him, like a lord or a lady, a wife or children or neighbors, whom he is obliged, if possible, to defend, guard and protect" (LW 21, 109).

68. The Reformers realized that not all those in governmental authority would be Christians, but on the basis of Scripture they simply took for granted that rulers would recognize Natural Law, which the Reformers defined as "a common judgment to which all men alike assent, and

therefore one which God has inscribed upon the soul of each man" (Melanchthon, 1521). The Reformers assumed this to be a universal truth and that every man will admit it from the innermost recesses of his own heart. It can't be proved from governmental laws, since the laws of government are grounded on this universal Natural Law. If a person wants to deny this universal truth, the consensus gentium will not convince him, because he is denying what he already knows by nature to be true. C. S. Lewis, in a book written nearly thirty years ago but which fortunately is again being discussed (The Abolition of Man)¹⁷ also brings out this point very clearly. By means of a wide variety of quotations from heathen sources, Lewis shows in an impressive way the universality of Natural Law of general and special beneficence, which includes duties to parents and elders, sexual justice, honesty, truthfulness, mercy and magnanimity. Yet Lewis says that he is "not trying to prove its validity by the argument from common consent. Its validity cannot be deduced. For those who do not perceive its rationality, even universal consent could not prove it."

69. As far as I can see, the Reformers could not visualize a society which would become predominantly naturalistic in its fundamental thinking, that is to say, a society which holds that there are no divine supernatural directives for all mankind, but that one's beliefs about right and wrong are simply conditioned responses picked up from one's environment and which, at the most, can only reflect one's personal feelings of approval or disapproval, but they need in no sense be binding on others. The Reformers could not in any way visualize a modern philosopher writing a chapter which is a critique of ethics and theology in which he says: "If now I generalize my previous statement and say, 'stealing money is wrong,' I produce a sentence which has no factual meaning--that is, expresses no

proposition which can be either true or false. It is as if I had written 'stealing money!!'--- where the shape and thickness of the exclamation marks show, by a suitable convention, that a special sort of moral disapproval is the feeling which is being expressed. It is clear that there is nothing said here which can be true or false. Another man may disagree with me about the wrongness of stealing, in the sense that he may not have the same feeling about stealing as I have, and he may quarrel with me on account of my moral sentiments. But he cannot, strictly speaking, contradict me, for in saying that a certain type of action is right or wrong I'm not making any factual statement, not even a statement about my own state of mind. I am merely expressing certain moral sentiments."¹⁸

70. The fact that our fundamental American philosophy has changed raises real questions, not only because it is contrary to the philosophy of our Founding Fathers, but because it confronts the Christian (and also the non-Christian) who has convictions about the universality and the applicability of Natural Law, as to how far he can go in using his influence to have laws enacted that do protect all human life. It appears to me that here is one of the greatest problems for us to wrestle with as we begin the third century of our existence as a nation.

71. Last spring we had Dr. Harold O. J. Brown on campus for a couple of days. He delivered one lecture (subsequently published)¹⁹: "What the Supreme Court Didn't Know--Ancient and Early Christian Views on Abortion," which certainly drives home the point I have been making with regard to the naturalistic assumptions that pervade our society, including the courts. Dr. Brown pointed out that it was obvious that the 1973 Supreme Court decision on abortion "represented a deliberate and

drastic break with the tradition of ethics in the Western World," that is, Judaism and Christianity. But the court did more when it discounted the pre-Christian Hippocratic Oath, on the assumption that it did not represent the universal agreement of the ancient world but only the "reformist thinking of the Pythagorean School." Dr. Brown then goes on to show that the Supreme Court's research was faulty, not only in that it depended on a secondary source but that it didn't even read its secondary source properly, with the result that its "appreciation of the moral standards of pagan antiquity is partial and defective." To be sure, there were exceptions in the ancient world where abortion was practiced. But this was due to the general moral decadence which had come over that particular society; nevertheless, many pagan codes of law considered causing a miscarriage a most serious crime.

72. God has given to man Natural Law, which is to be embodied in a nation's law. Because of the deep-seated wickedness of man and his hard heartedness, this law may be disregarded. But the Christian, recognizing this law as divinely given for the good of society, can rightfully work with others to have these standards restored to the nation's laws. At the present time it appears that this can be done only through some kind of a Human Life Amendment. A person cannot dismiss his responsibility over against his neighbor to protect him by saying that one can't make men good by passing laws of which they do not approve. Indeed not, but one can make them behave and one can protect and defend the helpless from the strong, all of which is in accord with God's will. One is not justified in reducing the laws of the government to the lowest common denominator so that there won't be so many law breakers or that the majority will always agree on the particular law. Even though there were no others who were convinced that unlimited

abortion is contrary to the Natural Law of the protection of life, we as secular persons are not to be denied a voice in the determination of public policy on abortion. One's views should not be disqualified simply because Natural Law, in this case, is made very explicit in the Scriptures. It is true that one will recognize that the hardness of heart found in many people may cause some difficulty in enforcing legislation so that certain transgressions may for a time go unpunished to avoid a great evil (e.g., such as a popular upheaval against those in authority). But it seems to me that this fact cannot be used to justify the lowest possible level of ethics for framing secular legislation. Indeed, as we observe the Bicentennial in a serious and meaningful way, we must recognize that one of our greatest problems facing us in our nation is how to cope with the prevailing philosophy of naturalism which holds that the natural world is the whole of reality, and that there is certainly no supernatural value, such as the Natural Law, written in the hearts of men.

73. Then there is the problem stemming from the temptation to say that Christendom ought to demand and work for social reform in the name of Christianity. Here I would suggest that there be made a careful distinction between the Two Kingdoms and the Two Powers. Definitions derived from the Scriptures are important. To the Reformers the church was the "assembly of saints and true believers" (AC VIII, 1). To the church was given the power of the Keys (potestas clavium), and that involves only the power to preach the Gospel, to remit and retain sins and to administer the sacraments (AC XXVIII, 5). This establishes the Kingdom of God, which is a kingdom of grace and mercy in which there is only forgiveness, consideration for one another, love, service, the doing of good, peace, joy, etc. (LW 46, 69).

Hence this kingdom and this power have nothing to do with the regulation and the amelioration of the world's affairs.

74. To be sure, the church in this world is never "pure church," but, as Luther has remarked, it shows itself in different "masks" (ecclesia larvalis), organizational forms, etc. As that it may carry out some functions in which the secular kingdom is also involved. For example, pastors carry out certain legal functions in connection with marriages that belong to the secular kingdom. In the area of education, the maintenance of orphanages and rest homes, schools and colleges, etc., the church is interested in preaching the Gospel; for the church, that is the primary effect. And yet there is also a secular effect involved here which, for the church, is secondary, such as the training of effective candidates for good citizenship and for the various vocations of this life. Here one or a group may be working in both kingdoms or wielding both powers--the spiritual and the secular, and it surely would not be wrong if these groups were reimbursed for the services rendered in the secular kingdom. The secular effect would be the primary interest of the state, while the spiritual effect would be the primary one for the church as wielding the power of the Keys. Further, as an external form, it may also go to court for various legitimate reasons.

75. But if the church in its outward form is committed to what it ought to be, a little flock or community of pure saints under one head, Christ, called together by the Holy Spirit and in which one still hears God's Word, then its purpose is not to reform the world. As the Kingdom of God it wields only the power of the Keys, that is its mission. And its viewpoint is eschatological; it has its existence in the Christ, the glorified Savior, and is awaiting His glorious

return when the members of the kingdom will be freed from all sin to eternally enjoy God Himself, world without end.

76. Another deduction some draw when they understand the Gospel has the power to change one's life and when they see the disordered state of the world, and particularly one's own country, is that we merely plead for the conversion of individuals by the preaching of the Gospel in the hope that someday we shall have enough of such persons to make a "Christian world" or "a Christian nation." But this is an over-simplification. The obligation to preach the Gospel to all nations is clearly set forth, and everyone who claims the name of Christ will take it seriously. Further, it is true that the Christian serves as a leaven in the world, and his love for his neighbor should serve to mitigate some of the evils in the world. But the fact remains that the days are evil and will be more so as time approaches the judgment day. This assumption that eventually by preaching the Gospel we shall get some kind of Christian world in the future, does not reckon seriously with the problem of the depravity of man, and it may lead to some kind of hope for a millennial period (pre -- or post) when the problems that plague us will be, if not eliminated, at least alleviated. But Scripture leaves no room for this.

77. These facts, however, namely the fact that the world is evil, that many resist the work of God in their hearts, and that the sole purpose of the power of the Keys is to proclaim the Gospel in every form -- these facts do not in any way excuse the individual Christian from showing his love to his neighbor in every way that is open to him. He lives not only in the Kingdom of God, wielding the power of the Keys, but he is also in the secular kingdom and he wields the power of the sword, both of which he will employ for

the benefit of his neighbor. Often, and not without reason, the charge is brought that especially orthodox Lutherans have escaped from the obligations of the Golden Rule by observing that the church's only obligation is to preach the Gospel. This is often fortified by the thought that since the world is very evil, one can't do much about it anyway except to pray for a speedy end.

78. The Lutheran Reformers take the position that no one is exempt from the obligation of loving one's neighbor as he loves his own self. This is perhaps most dramatically exemplified in Luther's Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount. Our Savior's Sermon on the Mount raises some real problems for Christ's followers, and, as Heinrich Bornkamm has said, it "always troubles Christianity anew."²⁰ The state of our nation on its 200th anniversary should lead us all into taking a good second look, and one that is in depth, at our Savior's Sermon on the Mount. As Bornkamm adds, the problem that confronts us is "the problem of the relationship between the reality of life and the radicality of the commands of Jesus. "One solution to this problem that has been offered is, as Luther says, that "Christ does not intend everything he teaches in the fifth chapter (i.e., Matthew) to be regarded by his Christians as a command for them to observe; but he gave much of it merely as advice to those who want to become perfect, to be kept by anyone who pleases" (LW 21, 3.4). This viewpoint, Luther immediately rejects out of hand. Other solutions that Luther rejects include the one that because of the freedom in Christ Christians "keep nothing at all of this teaching of Christ"; and he also rejects the viewpoint of those who "lean too far to the right when they teach miserable stuff like this: that it is wrong to own private property, to swear, to hold office as a ruler or a judge, to protect or defend oneself, to stay with wife and children.

Thus the devil blows and brews on both sides so that they do not recognize the difference between the secular and the divine realm, much less what should be the distinctive doctrine and action in each realm" (LW 21, 5).

79. The Christian applies Christ's words to himself in a most real way, remembering, as Luther says, that "Christ is addressing His sermon only to His Christians" (LW 21,107). He suffers evil upon himself, he seeks no revenge, and tolerates injustice, because this is the will of Christ. True, the demands of the Law and his own sin and inadequacies constantly drive him to the Gospel where he finds the righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5:20), the righteousness that avails before God, the righteousness by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22-26). But this faith which saves is still a living, busy, active thing. It does good works incessantly (LW 35, 370). Thus the Christian is simul justus et peccator (at one and the same time righteous and a sinner), and Christ's Sermon on the Mount helps him in this two-fold way that it has an accusatory function in driving him to seek forgiveness for a life fallen far short of the ideal in the Sermon on the Mount, and a guiding function in that it shows him how faith in action seeks to serve his neighbor.

80. But the fact that the true Christian will suffer great indignities against himself does not permit him to think that likewise his neighbor can well suffer the same, because the believer knows that he should do to men as he would that men should do to him (Luke 6:31). And so, as he carries out these responsibilities to his neighbor, he does not leave this world but lives also in the secular world and under secular rule. He is also a secular person as well as a Christian person:

"So he lives simultaneously as a Christian toward everyone, personally suffering all sorts of things in the world, and as a secular person, maintaining, using, and performing all the functions required by the law of his territory or city, by civil law and domestic law" (LW 21, 113).

81. Now, one serves his neighbor through his vocation; Paul says: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" (Cor. 7:20). Here is the arena where the Christian is to perform good works as a service of love to his neighbor. God gives these various offices for the preservation of the world, and the good of mankind, where the Christian can exercise his love to his neighbor. As a matter of fact, Luther holds that the entire doctrine of vocation has its origin in the Fourth Commandment (LC I, 125, 126, 141, 150, etc.).

82. With these general principles in mind, the Christian can make the decisions necessary as new circumstances come before him. The decisions may be difficult, but they can be made. Luther does take up some practical examples in his Commentary, which might have a bearing on our lives 450 years later, in another land, and under another government. A Christian does not go to court for himself (LW 21, 108) but he can be a secular official of any rank from lord to maid, because "there is no getting around it, a Christian has to be a secular person of some sort" (LW 21, 109). He is a "Christian-in-relation," and as such he must defend, guard and protect his neighbor at all costs: "Here it would be a mistake to teach, 'Turn the other cheek and throw your cloak away with your coat.' That would be ridiculous, like the case of the crazy saint who let the lice nibble at him and refused to kill any of them on account of this text, maintaining that he had to suffer and could not resist evil" (LW 21, 110).

83. On court and law proceedings, which always plague us, Luther clarifies the "difference between the two persons that a Christian must carry simultaneously on earth": "It is permissible for you to use orderly procedure in demanding and obtaining your right, but be careful not to have a vindictive heart" (LW 21, 111). With regard to Matt. 5:39 (Do not resist evil, etc.), Luther declares that "on behalf of others . . . he (i.e., the Christian) may and should seek vengeance, justice, and protection, and help, and do as much as he can to achieve it" (LW 45, 101). It is in these areas that the Christian is under obligation to do unto others as he would have them do to him. This would not bring about a millennial revolution, but it would go a long way to alleviate suffering, establish more equity, and bring blessings to our nation. God has blessed us with good rulers and thoughtful people, because as we look around us and over our nation's history, bloody and tarnished as certain chapters have been, we must acknowledge with Luther in his Explanation of the Fourth Commandment: "Somewhere on earth there must still be some godly people, or else God would not grant us so many blessings! If it depended on our merits, we would not have a penny in the house or a straw in the field" (LC I, 156).

84. There are blessings that we should gratefully acknowledge at the Bicentennial. There is a Constitution with its famed Bill of Rights that has stood up for nearly two hundred years. It does contain some majestic guarantees; our problem has been that we have not always lived up to them. Once there was no equity for slaves. Some of these provisions in our Constitution are couched in general terms so that we might say that today their interpretation is endangering our state, and we should be aware of this. There was to be no "cruel and unusual punishment," which two hundred years ago meant that one shouldn't

be hanged, drawn, and quartered in public. Today's interpretation of it has eliminated capital punishment. There was to be "freedom of speech," but whoever would have dreamt even twenty-five years ago that this would have opened up the sluice gates to a public torrent of obscenity and pornography that threatens our mutual life together as citizens.

85. The First Amendment also says that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." This statement has in these later years been receiving an interpretation which places nearly all the emphasis on the first clause, so that the Court tends to see "establishment" in every case where the state and a church group might have a common interest and concern. Often this can result in persons being deprived of their right to a free exercise of religion unless they conform pretty much to what Prof. Bellah calls America's "civil religion." It may have been better that, instead of the two compromise clauses that are somewhat ambiguous and were finally adopted by the First Congress, the Congress would have adopted the original wording which James Madison offered in the House of Representatives on June 8, 1789: "The civil rights of none shall be abridged on account of religious belief or worship, nor shall any national religion be established, nor shall the full and equal rights of conscience be in any manner, or in any pretext, infringed."²¹ Another pressing problem for us to consider in the Bicentennial is whether or not religious liberty has been endangered by recent Supreme Court decisions. Indeed, as we recognize our blessings we must remember that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and that this eternal vigilance, too, has to do with our neighbor also so that we protect him in his rights.

86. Men fill the offices of the government, and God has given us good gifts here, too, which we should acknowledge with gratitude. To avoid controversy, I shall name only a few, keeping the list small and somewhat distant in point of time: Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Madison, Lincoln. At the Bicentennial we shall be thankful to our Lord for them, especially since a little thought will convince us that not many in authority are blessed with a combination of integrity, equity, and justice and practical common sense. Luther could name only two that he knew in his lifetime (LW 46, 239). Further, Luther believes that the qualities of good rulers are also to be found in the practical works of pagan authors: "Therefore whoever wants to learn and become wise in secular government, let him read the heathen books and writings" (LW 13, 199). Luther suggests that one could do worse than follow the example of Hercules, who despite sins and vices (which are even found in the saints of God, like David!) is a fine, secular hero. Alexander the Great, his father Philip, and Augustus or Trajan are also "noble examples of worldly government" (LW 13, 200).

87. We certainly have reason to pray fervently, as we do every Sunday in our General Prayer: "Let Thy protecting hand be over our nation and country, and over all who travel by land, air, or water. Prosper what is good among us, and bring to naught every evil counsel and purpose. Protect and bless Thy servants, the President of the United States, the Governor of this Commonwealth, our judges and magistrates, and all others in authority. Fit them for their high calling by the gift of the Spirit of Thy wisdom and fear, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty."

88. I would like to close with a word from Martin Luther, as he comments on Psalm 90:17: "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and

establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it." "Moses prays, 'In the wake of this Thy work we come with our work, after we have been justified and now live as saints in obedience to Thy word, and this work is pleasing and acceptable to Thee. But this work, too, is the result of Thy grace and of that work which Thou didst first perform. Therefore may the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us. May we please Him, since we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son.' . . . Moses repeats the second part of this verse. This part reads: 'The work of our hands, establish thou it,' He does this perhaps because he wants to show the difference between the spiritual and the temporal kingdom. In view of this difference, we must also make a difference between our works. There are some works which we perform in the church, there are others which we perform in the home and which have to do with economic or political life. In the church we do what has reference to the soul and spiritual life, in the home and in economic and political life we do what has reference to physical life. . . . In the former of the repeated petitions, Moses wishes to stress that work by which God governs us but in which we, too, are active through teaching, consoling, confuting, judging, baptizing, participating in and administering holy communion. These are works by which the churches are governed and the people are guided in matters spiritual . . . In his repetition of the petition, 'Establish Thou the work of our hands,' Moses is thinking, so I conclude, of the work which has to do with political and domestic affairs. He is praying that God might grant universal peace and that there be no chaos in the world, even as Paul exhorts us to pray for 'kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life' (1 Tim. 2:2). . . . So we see Moses praying in this Psalm for things essential to this life.

He prays first of all for remission of sins and eternal life. Yet we are not to be idle in this life but must, to our dying day, establish the soul through the Word of God and, under peaceful conditions, provide also for the needs of the body; hence Moses prays that piety might be rightly taught and peace be preserved. When we have all this, our hope for eternal life is certain. . . . This is not only a petition but also a promise; we have shown this elsewhere regarding prayers prescribed by the Holy Spirit in the sacred Scriptures. . . . May God and our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, grant this. Amen." (LW 13, 139-141).

END NOTES

1. Unless otherwise noted, references to the Lutheran Confessions will be from the Book of Concord, tr, & ed., Theodore G. Tappert, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959.
2. For a detailed study of the use of this word, see Karl Ludwin Schmidt's article in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, I, 504-593; and Prof. Wm. Arndt's essay, "The New Testament Teaching on the Kingdom of God," CTM, Jan. 1950, 8-29.
3. Unless otherwise noted, quotations from Luther will be from the new American edition of Luther's Works, 55 volumes, CPH & Fortress Press.
4. My translation of a Norwegian translation from the original German, Dr. Martin Luther's Fuldstaendelige Kirke -- Postille i Tro Oversaettelse, Kristiania (Oslo), 1898, "Evangelien paa Helgenfester," p. 15.
5. See Hermann Sasse's article on Kosmos in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, III, 868-95.
6. F. Edward Cranz, An Essay on the Development of Luther's Thought on Justice, Law and Society, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959, p. 142 and Passim.
7. Carlson, Edgar M., "Luther's Conception of Government," Church History, XV (1946), p. 257.

8. Rupp, Gordon, The Righteousness of God -- Luther Studies, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1953, p. 8.
9. See Bornkamm, Heinrich, Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms in the Context of His Theology, tr. by Karl H. Hertz, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966.
10. I have expanded on some of the practical aspects of this doctrine in my article, "Some Thoughts on Governmental Aid to Educational Institutions Which Are Church-Related," The Lutheran Synod Quarterly, Winter-Spring 1975 (XV, 2.3), pp. 50-68.
11. Quoted by Rupp, The Righteousness of God, p. 304; found in WA 31, i, 196.
12. Rupp, p. 304.
13. The source for this information is in E. L. Enders, Luther's Briefwechsel, XII, 78f. Since I do not have access to this document, I am following Prof. John T. McNeill's summary of it in his "Natural Law in the Thought of Luther." Church History X (1941), pp. 211-227 (see pp. 226.227).
14. There is a wealth of literature on this aspect of our American Heritage. A standard book (now in paperback) is G. Adolf Koch's Religion of the American Enlightenment, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968. Princeton University Press has a prestigious "Religion in American Life," series; see especially Vol. 2, Religious Perspectives in American Culture, Editors, James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison, (1961), carries several interesting essays, e.g., "Religion

and Law in America," Wilber G. Katz and "Religion and Education in America," Will Herberg. Dr. Robert N. Bellah, Professor of Sociology at Harvard University, published a most penetrating article, "Civil Religion in America" (Daedalus, Winter, 1967, p. 1). This essay, together with others, has been reprinted in American Civil Religion, edited by Russell E. Richey and Donald D. Jones, New York: Harper & Row, 1974. Recently, Prof. John Warwick Montgomery characterized the essay as a "classic" (Christianity Today, Aug. 8, 1975, p. 37). A very specialized study by three law professors, Chester Jamies Antieau, Arthur T. Downey, Edward C. Roberts, is their, Freedom from Federal Establishment: Formation and Early History of the First Amendment Religion Clauses, Milwaukee, Bruce Publishing Co., 1964. Chapters 5, 6, 7, give documented history of the proposals from the State for the First Amendment, the meaning of the Religion Clauses in the First Amendment according to the Senators and Representatives in Congress, and what the people thought they were ratifying when they voted on the First Amendment.

15. See note #14 for bibliographical details.
16. Paul Althaus, The Ethics of Martin Luther, translated by Robert C. Schultz, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972. A related topic which we cannot go into here is the relation of law to the New Testament. Prof. Paul Peters has dealt with this in his essay, "Luther on the Form and Scope of the Mosaic Law." Quartalschrift -- Theological Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1948), pp. 98-113.
17. C. S. Lewis, The Abolition of Man, New York: Macmillan, 1947, p. 50.

18. Alfred Jules Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1952, p. 107.
19. Harold O. J. Brown, "What the Supreme Court Didn't Know," The Human Life Review, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 1975), pp. 5-21.
20. Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther's Doctrine of the Kingdoms in the Context of His Theology, tr. Karl H. Hertz, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966, p. 13.
21. Freedom from Federal Establishment, p. 123. See note #14 for bibliographical details.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
--LUTHER'S WRITINGS ON THE TWO KINGDOMS

References in this list are made only to Luther's Works, CPH and Fortress Press, 55 volumes.

There are, of course, many other references to the topic in Luther's expository works, his sermons, and Table Talk. It is my hope that the Reformation theme for 1975, the Lectures, and this bibliography, will stimulate others to make an independent study of this doctrine.

- LW 13, 42-72 Commentary on Psalm 82 (1530). An essay on how the Christian prince is to conduct himself in the light of "the distinction between the temporal and spiritual estate" (p. 42). See esp. pp. 44-51.
- LW 13, 75-141 Commentary on Psalm 90 (1534-35 lectures; pub. in 1541). See esp. pp. 137-141.
- LW 13, 146-224 Commentary on Psalm 101 (1534). "This psalm is one of those which praise and thank God for the secular authorities" (p. 146). See esp. p. 147, and 193-201.
- LW 21, 1-294 Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount (1528-1532). See esp. pp. 105-118.
- LW 21, 297-358 Commentary on the Magnificat (1521). See esp. pp. 343-345; and the Epilog, pp. 356-358.

- LW, Volumes
45-47 The Christian in Society. These four volumes carry translations of Luther's chief works on ethical, social and political thought. Underlying these writings is Luther's distinction between the two governments, or the two authorities.
- LW 44, 21-114 Treatise on Good Works (1520). See esp. pp. 90-97.
- LW 44, 123-217 To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate (1520). See esp. pp. 207-229, on improving the temporal conditions among the German nations.
- LW 45, 53-74 A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to All Christians to Guard Against Insurrection and Rebellion (1522).
- LW 45, 81-129 Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should be Obeyed (1523). The most important systematic presentation of Luther's views on the Two Kingdoms.
- LW 45, 347-378 To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools (1524). In this treatise Luther holds that education is necessary for the spiritual growth of the youth and it is also essential if they are to become useful citizens. See esp. pp. 355-367 on the values of education for both kingdoms.

LW 46, 8-43

Admonition to Peace: A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants of Swabia (1525). Luther urges the princes to try conciliation, reform their own extravagant ways of living, and be moderate in what they ask of the peasants. To the Peasants Luther admits that many of their demands are just, but they are wrong in invoking the Gospel as justifying their demands and actions. Neither side has acted in a Christian way and they ought to try arbitration.

LW 46, 49-55

Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants (1525). In this famous tract Luther charges that the peasants have violated their oaths of loyalty and are therefore subject to temporal punishment; they have robbed, plundered, and murdered, and committed crimes in the name of Christ, thereby blaspheming God. Hence the government must use its office to subdue them by force in order to protect the innocent.

LW 46, 63-85

An Open Letter to the Harsh Book Against the Peasants (1525). In this last pamphlet resulting from the Peasants' War, Luther defends what he has written in the two previous tracts, that the peasants should not have rebelled, that force was necessary to subdue them, but that there was no excuse for the rulers to become "furious, raving, senseless tyrants, who even after the battle cannot get

their fill of blood." (p. 84).
See esp. pp. 69-70 on the two
kinds of kingdoms.

LW 46, 93-137 Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be
Saved (1526). See Esp. pp. 130-
131 on participating in a war one
is convinced is wrong.

LW 46, 161-205 On War Against the Turks (1529).

LW 46, 213-258 A Sermon on Keeping Children in
School (1530). See esp. pp. 237-
239 on the two kinds of government;
and pp. 256-257 on the Duty of the
Temporal Authority to compel its
subjects to keep their children in
school.

LW 51, 259-287 Sermon on the Sum of the Christian
Life, 1 Tim. 1:5-7 (1532). In
this sermon Luther beautifully
summarizes how we live in the
Heavenly Kingdom and in the Earthly
Kingdom. To the Heavenly Kingdom
belong grace, righteousness and
faith. In the Earthly Kingdom we
face our neighbor who needs our
love: "You must have the love
that flows and issues from a pure
heart and a good conscience and
sincere faith" (p. 266).

REACTORS' REMARKS

Reactor: E. C. Fredrich

At the outset a word of commendation is extended to the program committee for their topic selection. Apart from its suitability for Reformation lectures in the bicentennial year, the theme, "The Lutheran Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms and Its Significance for the American Bicentennial," looms large on our ecclesiastical horizons in its own right these days. In this time of big government the Lutheran Church in our land is marching steadily to a huge and all but final federation or merger. Church-state problems will multiply and intensify, also and perhaps especially for smaller church bodies no matter how fervently they wish they "had in the wilderness a lodging place of way-faring men." In view of the practical and pecuniary problems involved, this matter of church-state relations may well claim more grassroots attention in the years ahead than any other concern confronting us.

A word of commendation is also in place at the outset for the lecturer who so ably carried out his stated purpose of helping "us to live more soberly during this period of waiting by examining what our Lord has said about His Kingdom and the Kingdom of the world so that we better understand how to conduct ourselves as citizens of these two kingdoms." All three sections have strong points worthy of comment but the second is especially useful with its description of "How the Reformers Put Principles into Action."

Section One, "The Two Kingdoms and the Two Governments," as the title promises, lays stress on the frequently overlooked main element in the

definition of the New Testament concept of kingdom, the "reign" aspect that points to the exercise of royal authority rather than to the place or the people ruled. Many of the problems and much of the confusion associated with the doctrine of the two kingdoms, as Prof. Teigen states, can be traced to an overstress of the spacial connotations of the term. A futile and frustrating attempt is made to draw a strict line of demarcation between two overlapping entities, while the all-important matter of keeping functions and means where they belong gets neglected.

The essayist has very properly emphasized Luther's clear grasp of the main thrust in the term "kingdom" (14). One addition might be made in connection with the Arndt quotation (9): "In our Lutheran circles it has been quite customary to look upon the term 'Kingdom of God' as an equivalent for the word 'church.'" Back in 1918 John Schaller wrote for the Wauwatosa Theologische Quartalschrift an article on "Das Reich Gottes" in which he does not put the two meanings of "realm" and "reign" on an equal footing but emphatically stresses the overriding importance of the "reign" aspect, in contrast to the very secondary and derived "realm" aspect. A whole generation of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary students was referred to that writing whenever they had difficulties with the Second Petition or related material. Schaller's forty-page article appears in the April and July issues of the 1918 or fifteenth volume of the periodical.

Treating "How the Reformers Put Principles into Action" in the second section, the lecturer wisely cautions against overstressing one isolated comment or one unfortunate inconsistency on the subject in Luther's "voluminous writings over an extended period of time" (23). Prof. Teigen has practiced well what he preaches about seeing and

presenting Luther steadily and whole on this issue. He has furnished us a good overview of Luther's approach, both in what he rejected and corrected and in what he advocated and effected. Of particular value is the discussion of terms Luther used and the insight they supply into his deep grasp of the Bible truths involved (35-36).

In the paragraph which deals with Luther's advice to secular rulers contained in To the Christian Nobility (39), is found a wording open to the charge of oversimplification and overstress. Is Luther in the third part of To the Christian Nobility actually making, as is stated, "specific suggestions as to how the temporal authorities could reform their political affairs?"

Should there not be more recognition given to the epithet supplied for the nobility in the title? Was Luther as a preacher of the Gospel instructing the government or was he preaching the law in its third use to Christian rulers and thus fostering their sanctification in their difficult station that offers so many threats to a life of sanctification? As Gospel preachers we preach the law as a guide to Christians for their sanctification; to the unregenerate we present the law as a mirror, but not in the interest of outward reform. If a curb function and outward reform result, that is a by-product of the Gospel preacher's service.

Another factor should be mentioned. Luther himself introduces that third part of To the Christian Nobility with its 26 or 27 points by asserting that "this dreadful state of affairs" should be cared for "by the temporal authority or by a general council" (LW 44, 156). The affairs under consideration are not strictly political since they involve benefices, pilgrimages, festivals, begging related to the church, and other matters that fall well within the

ecclesiastical realm. In fact, when Luther finally gets to the last of the 26 or 27 points, he himself introduces it: "Enough has now been said about the failings of the clergy... We shall now devote a section to the failings of the temporal estate" (LW 44, 212). Incidentally, the final Luther reference in 39, (LW 44, 205), is not to be found there.

The third section, "Observing the Bicentennial," with its concern for practical applications of the Bible truths and the Reformers' guidelines to our own complicated situations allows for and invites much more comment and controversy. In general, this reactor is somewhat less pessimistic in his approach to the Bicentennial than the lecturer.

Several reactions to the discussion of our Constitution (84-85) are presented first. It may be well to sound the warning that "provisions in our Constitution are couched in general terms so that we might say that today their interpretation is endangering our state," but it should also be remembered that the genius of Morris for clarity of expression, and also for unclarity when necessary, has given us an adaptable document under which such delicate matters as minority rights, judicial review, and coequal interlocking branches can be maintained in a state of workable tension. Also, our pornography problems result, not so much from vagueness in the terminology "freedom of speech," as from an inability to define in a legally workable fashion the term "obscenity."

The dual religion clause in the First Amendment comes under fire in the third lecture also. Again, a broad wording has served well in anticipating and charting developments as yet unknown when the formulation was conceived. That wording has also been carried smoothly into the area of state governments by Amendment XIV as interpreted since the 1920's. To say that "in these later years" (85) the establishment clause is being so

overplayed that the prohibition section is being overruled is to ignore such a significant recent interpretation as the extension of the conscientious objector's rights to the atheistic non-joiner and lone wolf. One might even argue that there have been so few "prohibition" rulings lately because Amendment I has so successfully secured us as full a religious freedom as can be attained here below. The time seems actually to have come when an attempt at a removal of the prohibition against the Mormon practice of polygamy could successfully be attempted.

If the U. S. Supreme Court has been rejecting establishment endeavors right and left, it is because so many establishment devices are being attempted from the right, if not from the left. It should also be recognized that the Court has been consistently applying in the rulings its own very sensible triple guidelines announced on June 28, 1971 in *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, *Earley v. DiCenso*, and *Robinson v. DiCenso* (The Pennsylvania and Rhode Island cases). The guidelines are: 1. the statute in question must have a secular legislative purpose; 2. its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion (Allen in 1968); 3. the statute must not foster "an excessive government entanglement with religion" (Walz in 1970).

While this discussion of the Constitution and its Amendments is not the most important issue before us, it has been permitted to stretch out at length for two specific reasons. First, this is a demonstration that in this subject it is possible for fellow believers to differ rather widely without serious threat to their fellowship. Secondly, a warning is sounded that we be careful to see both sides of the case when we include in our ecclesiastical statements comments on constitutional and political issues. Prof. Teigen actually has been too careful in several instances.

In connection with resistance to a higher power, he mentions but does not treat in depth the Smalcald League circumstances (59). In a similar fashion it is hinted that the Revolutionary War was rebellion but little in the way of an answer is supplied for this significant and relevant question of the day. Here especially, guidance is needed so that the Bicentennial in our churches and schools is not turned into a complete repudiation, without consideration for the difficulty of identifying the actual power under varying circumstances.

What we are especially interested in, however, is the matter of applying the teaching of the two kingdoms in our sanctified lives. Each of us should feel included in this comment (77): "Often, and not without reason, the charge is brought that especially orthodox Lutherans have escaped from the obligations of the Golden Rule by observing that the church's only obligation is to preach the Gospel." We will want to cherish another reminder (40): "Luther did believe that when one served his country and rendered service to his neighbor, the commandment of love is applied not only to the Christian's private life but also to his public affairs." All of us will agree with that statement of goal.

There may be some question about means. The essayist raises the basic question of the day when he asks (63) whether an American believer can insist that "there are inviolable Laws of Nature which must be upheld by our government and that a citizen should employ his voting power and all other avenues of public redress open to him to have laws enacted that uphold such standards."

The essayist seems to assume a total abandonment by the American government and society of absolutes in the moral field. It is true, much of the evidence points in that direction. In two

of our far-out states, however, in California and New York, there are political figures such as young Governor Brown and Senator Buckley who run up big vote totals despite their firm and unmistakable commitment to moral absolutes. Even if it were granted that anti-formalism in morality holds absolute sway, the question would still be whether that in itself would radically change the shape of Christian citizenship.

As citizens we will by vote and voice urge our opinion on such matters as crime and punishment, divorce and abortion, but we will not as a church lobby or coerce the government to take reasonable and the useful step, even the step that accords with the conscience and the natural knowledge of many. We can't and shouldn't want to do much more than that, even if Natural Law has been disowned. We haven't thereby been freed from the old guidelines and restraints. Paul defines government as "powers that be," not as powers that hold to Natural Law. Men may disavow Natural Law but, like it or not, the implanted natural knowledge of God, conscience, and the inscribed law will still have an effect.

For his part the essayist so emphasizes Natural Law and the present lack of it that the impression is left that new forms of citizenship and sanctification are the need of the hour. He urges on us the Apology's "assumption that the laws of the civil estate are based on Natural Law" (66). Of the Reformers he says, "On the basis of Scripture they simply took for granted that rulers would recognize Natural Law" (68). There follows a definition of Natural Law supplied by a Melancthon quotation, inadequately located as "1521." Then the point is made (70): "The fact that our fundamental American philosophy has changed raises real questions, not only because it is contrary to the Founding Fathers, but because it confronts the Christian (and also

the non-Christian) who has convictions about the universality and the applicability of Natural Law, as to how far he can go in using his influence to have laws enacted that do protect human life."

We can agree that much, if not all, Reformation writing on the subject assumes a governmental commitment to Natural Law and that little, if anything, of such a commitment exists today. One would, however, still ask what new factors are operative in the matter of Christian citizenship and sanctification. The Christian citizen may work hard for a right-to-life amendment, but it is conceivable that he might be disinclined to travel the amendment route. He might suffer, on the grounds of expediency, abortion-on-demand in a day when public opinion is set on having such abortions one way or the other. The danger is there that we in our concern might center on one practice of citizenship and erroneously insist that all others share our convictions, thus endangering Christian liberty.

The days may be evil but we can still celebrate the Bicentennial to the glory of our God. We can celebrate it in obedience to His will, trusting that He is still exercising control and carrying out His purposes. We can celebrate it by continuing to practice the citizenship the Scriptures enjoin. We can celebrate it rejoicing in evidences of such citizenship that we see in the lives of other believers and in our own lives, counting them not as secular and secondary effects, but as integral and inevitable elements in our life of faith and salvation. We can celebrate the Bicentennial with fervent prayers to the throne of grace on behalf of this good land of ours that He has given and maintains. We can celebrate it by utilizing its freedoms to bring the Gospel to more lost souls and seeing them thereby transformed into heirs of the heavenly

kingdom and at the same time into that most valuable of national resources, Christian citizens of America. They may be few but they are the few for whose sake God holds up His judgments and grants an entrance into a third century.

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Reactor: Dr. David Scaer

Is It Lutheran to Celebrate the American Revolution?

The Reformation Lecture Series topic here at Bethany College, Mankato, Minnesota, is in a way revolutionary in itself. It would seem that the theme of Professor Teigen's lectures THE LUTHERAN DOCTRINE OF THE TWO KINGDOMS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL would have already appeared in one form or another as the central thought for seminars, essays, and books within American Lutheranism. But it has not. What would seem an obvious theme for most Lutheran Churches on this point has been neglected. My own reaction is that it might prove to be too embarrassing for some Lutherans to find out what Luther really had to say about political rebellion. Especially I am referring to many prominent Lutheran theologians who have adopted the political oriented 'theology of hope' or the more radical 'theology of revolution.' This type of theology rarely claims any dependence on Luther and rightly so.

Professor Teigen begins his last lecture, "Observing the Bicentennial," by recalling pastoral conferences where "torrents of words on the illegality and the sinfulness of events that brought our country into existence as an independent nation,

accompanied with the judgment that Martin Luther would have had no part in it." In fact, the suggestion is made that the Revolutionary War would better be called the War of Rebellion. My memory is probably not as retentive as Professor Teigen's and obviously not as long, but I can remember many sermons on Reformation Day celebrations in which Luther was credited with a kind of ultimate responsibility for the founding of American Republic. I suppose the best way to put it is that the American experiment is a vague kind of secularization of Luther's doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers. To offer a kind of historical reconstruction, Luther's thought of everyone as a priest was combined with Calvin's holy city of Geneva idea. This unholy and illicit marriage, at least according to a Lutheran understanding, gives birth to the American nation where everyone exercises his secular priesthood by voting. Not to be facetious, but the secular priesthood admitted women in the early part of this century, eighteen to twenty-year-olds a few years ago, and if it goes any further we will have infants voting within a short time.

The point that I am making is that Lutherans - and I mean those of us who think of ourselves as preserving the strict heritage of Luther - have enjoyed the best of two possible historical words. On one hand we have been critical of the American Revolutionary War as a rebellious act, as Professor Teigen recalls, and on the other hand we have managed to take credit for the American Nation as a natural outgrowth of Luther's principle of the universal priesthood without seeing the apparent contradiction. At the same time we have supported Luther's position in decrying the rebellious peasants of the 1520's. If we see the American Revolution as a natural outgrowth of Luther's thought and Peasant Wars as an unnatural outgrowth, we are obviously involved in a contradiction. I think

that we can make the preliminary judgment that Lutheranism in America has through unconscious osmosis adopted the Calvinistic engendered promised land concept of the American nation which is still a major tenet of the secular civil religion.

I am going to let stand this contradiction that some Lutherans criticize the acts of the American Colonists as rebellious and that others sometimes take credit for at least some of the philosophical thought that brought this nation into existence. I want to speak more specifically to the historical and political question of whether the Americans were rebels or true Englishmen. Was it the War of Rebellion or the War of Independence? The latter thesis will be defended. In no way am I casting my lot with Peter Muhlenberg who cast aside his preacher's gown in Virginia for a colonel's uniform right in the middle of a church service. A person who puts aside pastoral responsibility should not be held up as an example as the 1975 October Lutheran Brotherhood calendar does. However, I am suggesting that the actions of American patriots were those not of rebels spurred on by the radical thoughts of the Enlightenment, but actions of men loyal to the English understanding of law.

Whenever we try to determine if the principles of one age are applicable to another, we will inevitably get ourselves in difficulty because rarely is there really a one-for-one equation. Here, of course, is a potential seedbed of false doctrine or legalism. Do we really know for sure what a Paul, a Peter, or a Luther would do in a given situation today? Some have used changing historical situations as camouflage to introduce new doctrine, as for example the case of women pastors in Lutheran churches today. We are told that the cultural situation between the first and the twentieth centuries is so vast that Paul's words are no longer really valid today. So those with a revolutionary mind set

within Lutheranism could say that Paul's admonitions of obeying the emperor are also no longer valid, or they are simply ignored. At face value it would appear that the American conflict was caused by an immoral revolt of colonies against the lawful authority of the mother country. But is this really a proper perspective of that situation? There is no doubting that the emperor or higher authorities are to be obeyed. But in 1776 who was the 'emperor'? Who were the higher governing authorities to which colonial Christians had to be subject? It is this question, however, which is the key to any Lutheran celebration of the American Bicentennial, or Rebellion, which must be answered. This is a question which Professor Teigen does not probe in his lecture. It is assumed that it was George III. It is this assumption I would like to probe. In fact, one gets the definite impression that if some of us were alive in that period we would have sided with the British Loyalists. As I also am an Anglophile and also brought up in Luther thought, I would have probably seen the matter that way too.

But by developing a slightly different point of view I would like to support the thesis that the American War of Independence was in accord with Lutheran principles -- not in the sense of a secularization of Luther's principles of the universal priesthood, but in the sense that the English understanding of higher ruling authorities was different in the eighteenth century than was the German understanding in the sixteenth or for that matter the Petrine or Pauline understanding in the first century.

It must be pointed out that the question of the legitimate authority is an area of controversy in which Lutherans have differed even within the fellowship of the Synodical Conference. At the time of Civil War, C.F.W. Walther tended to side with the South. Perhaps the best explanation of this was that

he viewed the United States as he viewed Germany, a loose confederation of states in which the real power rested with the states and not with confederation or union. Professor Teigen pointed out that Luther recognized the principle of siding with the princes against the emperor. Others saw the Federal Union as the ultimate civil power. I think that it is wrong to criticize either opinion as wrong. State governors could be seen as comparable to the German provincial princes including Luther's protecting electors. Up to the Civil War, the question was constitutionally unanswered whether or not a state could leave the Union. Morally, logically, or constitutionally I personally see no reason why, before 1861, a state could not take action to forsake the Union. The formation of the nation could hardly be compared to insolubility of matrimony. If the people of West Virginia could leave Virginia, why could not the confederacy opt for independence as did the American colonists almost a century before. No one doubts this --that the Civil War provided an answer to the question of federal insolubility with an argument of a superior industrial and military force.

But the point is this: that Walther wanted to honor the higher forces, that is, the emperor for him was the person of the state governor and not the President of the United States. Luther saw a greater allegiance to the Elector of Saxony than he did to the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. In the cases cited there were differences among Lutherans over who fit the role of the "emperor" to whom allegiance was due, but there was no squabble that allegiance was due to the "emperor." Neither Luther nor Walther nor, for that matter, the American colonists, take matters into their own hands and become street rebels.

I think that it is an historical injustice to compare the American Revolution to the Peasant Wars in the 1520's or the French Revolution in the latter

part of the eighteenth century or the Marxist Communist revolutionary wars of this century. Rebellions are already realities in China and Viet Nam and a possibility in Portugal and Angola. All of these revolutions were revolutions against authority per se. The proletariat of people replaces rulers. In German Democratic Republic it is taught that the seeds of Marxist revolution in Germany were already planted in the Peasant Wars of the 1520's. I agree with this Marxist observation.

Professor Teigen points out that Deism was a prevalent thought which found expression in the founding documents of the nation, but I do not think that the War for American Independence should be seen as a twin with French Revolution. The French Revolution was spawned by the radical leaders of the French Enlightenment. Without belittling such French influence in the establishment of our country, I think it would be better to see historical English thought as being more determinative in formation of the American nation. Our forefathers were acting like Englishmen in establishing our nation and not like the radicals of the French Revolution or Deists. Superficially, I would like to observe that in America you did not have the great upheavals as you did in France or in the Soviet Union. Colonial governments were a continuation of what previously existed, not a new invention of rebels. When the colonials disposed of the royal governors they did so because their charters had been violated. I would hasten to add that this is not to discount the use of Enlightenment language in the charter documents.

I would like to make the political observation that the imposition of taxes on the colonies by the parliament in London seems to have been a totally financially fair thing to do. The taxes were going for the support of the British soldiers to protect the colonists as the frontier was expanding beyond the original boundaries of the thirteen colonies.

One could also make a pretty good case that the war was started for economic reasons. Simply put, it would pay for the colonists to be independent.

But it does not serve our purposes to discuss the economic situation or economic causes of the American War of Independence. Our purpose is to discuss whether colonial Lutherans were acting as rebels in participating in the overthrow of the lawful authority of George III. I propose that they were not rebels, but that they were acting in accord with certain principles well established in Anglo-Saxon tradition. In fact, the Colonists were not rebels but loyalists. We cannot recount here the entirety of the history of Anglo-Saxon law, but not even French Norman descendants of William the Conqueror were absolute monarchs. The Magna Carta of 1215 forced the Norman king to recognize certain rights which belonged to the Anglo-Saxon nobility. Three centuries later Henry VIII, who had all the traits of a despotic man, was careful to give at least an air of superficial legality to his acts. When he wanted a divorce, he shopped around for a Pope or a bishop, or a theologian who would grant it. He asked for the opinion of the university. He did not perform the act himself. When he wanted a beheading, he went looking for a jury. Henry gave his acts the appearance of legality. Arbitrariness on the part of English rulers was not appropriate. His daughter, Elizabeth I, had many of these "fine" qualities. The failure of the Stuarts as rulers in England could have been that they took too seriously the concept of the divine right of kings and did not realize that in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the ultimate monarch in the land was not the ruling king or queen but the law. The seventeenth century, the century before the American War of Independence, was the scene for the clash between the king and the law in England and the kings lost and the law won. Charles I believed too seriously in the divine right of kings and lost his head.

Charles II was saved probably from disposal by natural death and his brother, James II, was shipped off the throne by the Glorious Revolution in 1688. The accession of William of Orange to the English throne was a formal recognition of the principle that even the King was subject to law. This is called the constitutional monarchy. Several decades before 1776 the Stuart pretender, Prince Charles Stuart, grandson of James I, asserted his divine right to the British throne and brought defeat to himself and absolutism. No one here is going to argue that seventeenth century Englishmen were modern democrats, but we are arguing that the people, at least some of the people, had rights which the king had to respect.

The accession of the House of Hanover or Brunswick to the British Throne to succeed the Stuarts has never been regarded as a bright spot in the history of British Royalty, even though the present Prince of Wales is said to have defended his royal ancestor, George III. For a number of reasons it has been asserted that the first three Hanoverians, George I, II, III, being more German than English, were not really well equipped to serve as English kings. There was the language barrier and some of them spent more time in Germany than they did in London. This absentee rule assured, ironically, the further growth of parliamentary rule in Great Britain; however, the roots of parliamentary rule was not dependent on this factor. George III took a more active interest in the actual rule of his country than did his two immediate predecessors, but he did not always do it in the traditional sense of English kings. The English concept of monarchy was hardly identical with the European. British parliaments had an authority not quite matched in Germany.

The battle cry of the American colonists was "No taxation without representation." This simply

was saying that those who are governed should have something to say of how they are to be governed. We are in no way asserting that this is a divinely given law imprinted in the hearts of all men, as the Declaration of Independence states of similar thoughts, but we are saying that is a principle logically derived from one tradition, logically derived from English law. Historically speaking, there was no way at that time that the American colonists could have been represented in parliament, because the boundaries of parliamentary representation had been fixed centuries before. There was no policy for reapportionment. Even some larger industrial areas right in England, as Manchester, had no representation, but some deserted areas were represented. Under a system of fixed parliamentary boundaries, there was no possible way for American representation in the British parliament. The Parliamentary Reform Act, partially motivated by the American War of Independence, led to a correction of that inequity in Great Britain. The not so distant "one man one vote" decision of the Supreme Court might possibly be seen as a natural outgrowth of equal representation in the Anglo-Saxon system.

There are two theories for the birth of democracy. One is that it is the result of the frontier experience of the colonists and the other is that it is the result of the English system. I am opting for the latter even though the absence of a hereditary nobility in the colonies was hardly detrimental to democracy. For example, Jamestown, the first successful English colony, demonstrated the ineffectiveness of having a nobility. A certain part of the colonies was called 'New England.' The first colonists did not want to renounce their English heritage, but they wanted to perfect it. They came to the shores of this country with a heritage according to which at least some men did have certain rights which the king could not take away.

They were coming from England at a time when the parliament was deposing two kings and when the parliament had chosen at least three kings. In this sense the parliament and not the king was the real English monarch. From the very near beginning the colonists were permitted parliamentary rule in the colonies beginning with the House of Burgesses in Virginia. New England had its town meetings. The establishment of legislatures was not in any sense rebellious acts but the natural outgrowth of English history and sanctioned by the Mother Country. Each colony, though different and unique, became a 'little England' with something resembling its own parliament. The Declaration of Independence was basically the act of thirteen separate and individual political entities which were only reaffirming rights which had been given them, each under different circumstances. If the parliament could dispose of Charles I and James II and choose Charles II, William and Mary, or George I, then a parliament of Englishmen meeting in Philadelphia would naturally see themselves possessing the same right. I believe that we can only possibly call the American War for Independence a rebellion if we assert the king was the true monarch. But in English law, the law is the real monarch and the law recognizes the rights of people and of the parliament. The American War of Independence was hardly a novum in world history, but only the culmination of a century of British history, and a predecessor of other events in Anglo-history.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines parliament as the ruling king or queen together with both houses. If this definition stands, the king or queen loses his or her right to rule or govern when the relationship between king and the parliament is severed. This relationship was severed several times in the previous century. In the opinion of some of the American Colonists, this relationship between them and the king was severed.

We are not here to debate whether there was sufficient reason to sever the relationship and to dispose of George III, but where the king does keep his rightful place he forfeits his office. Such was the considered opinion of the Continental Congress in 1776. As Professor Teigen pointed out, Luther saw that a similar bond of allegiance between emperor and prince could be broken.

The American experience does not belong to rebellions associated with French and Russian revolutions, but with the growth of the British parliamentary system and of the commonwealth system of the British Empire. The Canadians, the New Zealanders, and the Australians all followed in the American tradition but with much less trauma. The only difference is that in these instances the Mother Country recognized the inherent rights of her English children before the child was forced to run away from home. But as in the case of first-born children in a family who must plough their way with a great deal of difficulty, so the American experience was marked with those kind of heartaches. The American War of Independence had all the marks of civil war, both sides were fighting in some sense for the same cause, an English one. The British for George I, the English king, and Americans for English law. From a totalitarian concept of monarchy, the British had moral rectitude. From a viewpoint of British parliamentary tradition, the Americans were in the right.

Professor Teigen makes reference to the invitation of Prime Minister Harold MacMillan to rejoin the British Commonwealth. The fact of the matter is that the Americans perhaps may have never left it. Americans are not like Frenchmen or Italians or Germans or Scandinavians, we are like our British cousins. We share the same heritage of culture and common law. When immigrants from non-British countries before 1776 arrived on our

shores, they became subject to the British concept of monarchy which is the rule of law. Germans, Swedes, Dutch, and Irish really became Englishmen by coming to America. The ties between the United States and the United Kingdom are so close that they have involved us in two great wars where the daughter came to the aid of the mother country. These are ties stronger than empire or commonwealth. It is no coincidence that the present royal couple will visit our shores to commemorate the Bicentennial, for it is as much an American holiday as it is a victory for British law.

I would like to make reference to the recent and tragic Watergate experience to further demonstrate the thesis that disposal of the supreme human ruler in a government is not an act of rebellion. Could a Christian or even a conservative Lutheran participate in the removal of a president from office in this country? The answer must be that there are circumstances in our system under which this can be done, is done, and must be done. The president is admitted into office upon his willing oath to uphold the constitution. In the case of the immediate past president there were serious doubts whether he did, and impeachment proceedings were begun and the presidential resignation is considered tantamount to their successful conclusion of such proceedings. The Watergate episode is parallel to the founding of our nation. In most cases it was the considered judgment of some that the ruler had overstepped the boundaries to which he had voluntarily subscribed. There have been differences of opinion whether the ruler had indeed committed the alleged offenses, but there is no doubt that if he does, he is held accountable.

In one of Shakespeare's plays there is the episode of the proposed marriage between a noble person and a Swiss commoner, an illegal union

across social castes. The play ends happily when someone points out that the Swiss person is of the highest order in Switzerland, because all citizens are equal. I think that this is apt illustration for the American-British situation. In our system, the people, the individuals always remain the last court of appeals. The disposal of George III is only a demonstration of this principle.

TEACHERS IN THE CHURCH ARE NOT TO FORGET --

1) Scripture nowhere gives any man the license to deviate from God's Word in any point. Matt. 28:20. 2) Every departure from the Word of God is expressly called an offense. Rom. 16:17. 3) Everyone who rejects the testimony of Scripture concerning one doctrine actually invalidates the Christian principle of cognition. John 10:35. 4) Every error in doctrine has the tendency to infect other doctrines with its virus. Gal. 5:9.

--F. Pieper, CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS, I, 89ff.

The preacher is not an inventor, not an innovator, not an experimenter. He is a trustee. He must be humble enough to receive, loyal enough to guard, sensitive enough to share.

-- Paul S. Rees

* * * *

J. H. JOWETT:

I have the conviction that no sermon is ready for preaching, not ready for writing out, until we can express its theme in a short, pregnant sentence as clear as crystal. I find the getting of that sentence is the hardest, the most exacting, and the most fruitful labour in my study. To compel oneself to fashion that sentence, to dismiss every word that is vague, ragged, ambiguous, to think oneself through to a form of words which defines the theme with scrupulous exactness -- this is surely one of the most vital and essential factors in the making of a sermon. And I do not think that any sermon ought to be preached, or even written, until that sentence has emerged, clear and lucid as a cloudless moon. Do not confuse obscurity with profundity, and do not imagine that lucidity is necessarily shallow. Let the preacher bind himself to the pursuit of clear conceptions, and let him aid his pursuit by demanding that every sermon he preaches shall express its theme and purpose in a sentence as lucid as his power can demand. ---
Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching.

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