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Luther's Concept of the Two Kingdoms and the American Situation

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LUTHER'S CONCEPT OF THE TWO KINGDOMS

AND THE AMERICAN SITUATION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Luther research which has flowered in the past quarter of a century has come up with many contested conclusions, but none of them seem to have caused more polemical pens to move than the interpretation and application of Luther's concept of the two kingdoms. Frequently one finds that Luther's position is not receiving a thorough enough treatment, before the acceptance or rejection of his position is voiced. The vast amount of material on this subject which has arisen since the World Wars has been an attempt, in the main, to see the connection, if one exists, between these two international catastrophes and Luther.

Nearly all of Luther's works have something to say, at least implicitly, about the two kingdoms, for this teaching is one of the basic presuppositions of the whole of Luther's theology. In this paper only the main works and sermons on the subject have been used. In nearly every paper on Luther's theology it must be pointed out that Luther was no systematician, and it is impossible to fit all of his thinking into a nicely organised system. One might call him more of a prophet-type theologian, constantly speaking to the needs of the situations as they arose. Because of this one finds almost contradictory statements depending on the situation in which he spoke. One must therefore know the situation which he was addressing, so that an honest presentation of his thinking is made. In the teaching of the two kingdoms this is especially true, for Luther found himself in sort of a middle position between the Papists and the Enthusiasts. Although the specific events

behind some of the writings on the kingdoms are not specifically mentioned in the paper, they were kept in mind in the writing so that the presentation would not stress one period or another but attempt to give an overall picture of Luther's thinking.

Luther's concept of the two kingdoms should not be considered his teaching on Church and State relationships, as we know them, but rather the Christian's position as a member of the Church and a citizen of the state, and the tensions which this involves. Therefore the paper does not deal with the polity of the Church or its official connections with the state, for this involves problems beyond the scope of Luther's immediate concept of the kingdoms. The primary concern is how the Christian can serve God and his neighbor best within the framework of the two God-ordained kingdoms.

Neither is it the purpose of this paper to prove or disprove any man's theory of interpretation or application of Luther's teaching and to see how it has affected modern history, but rather it aims to look at Luther and see what he actually says. With this in mind we then look to twentieth-century America and see if we cannot derive some new insights into our membership in both kingdoms of God. It should be noted from the outset that this paper is not advocating a return to the complete policies set down by Luther, for one cannot apply Luther's medieval world view to a modern democratic system, but rather it points out the value of Luther's Scriptural interpretation and the basic truths which it contains for all ages and cultures.

This paper will look, first of all, at the historical situation and teaching of the medieval Church with which Luther was familiar and which aided him in his exegesis and influenced him in arriving at the

developed concept of the two kingdoms. Having examined the basis of his teaching, the paper focuses its attention on each of the kingdoms separately, showing their distinctive characteristics. With the distinctiveness of each of the kingdoms in mind, the paper, at the risk of repetition, looks at the relationships between the two, first showing how they must be kept separated, and secondly showing how they have similarities and complement one another. After viewing Luther's teaching, the paper looks to the present-day American situation and the position in which a member of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod finds himself.

CHAPTER II

THE BASIS OF LUTHER'S CONCEPT

The Medieval Background

Martin Luther claimed that not since the time of the apostles had anyone written so clearly on the worldly sword and authority as he had.[1] In so claiming he acknowledged that others had concerned themselves with this problem too. When one looks at the background of this concept, it becomes readily clear that this was a problem not only in Luther's time but that it reaches back into the history of the early Church. The most important work in the early Church on the subject of the Church and the relation of the Church's members to the world is St. Augustine's De Civitate Dei. This work is the foundation upon which many later formulations are based. In this work Augustine pictures two states—the world, on the one hand, and the people of God, on the other. He traced the kingdom of the world (civitas terrena) back to the time of Cain and saw that it was always trying to exert its influence upon the people of God. This he traced throughout the Old Testament up to the period in which he lived. In St. Augustine's thinking the civitas terrena is temporal, and he frequently equates it with the kingdom of Satan (civitas diaboli). The other state is the kingdom of God (civitas Dei). The civitas Dei is the Church, which

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[1] Martin Luther, "That Soldiers, too, can be Saved," Works of Martin Luther, edited by Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1931), V, 35. Hereafter cited as WML.

most scholars consider to be none other than the visible, organized Church in the theology of St. Augustine.[2]

Closely connected with St. Augustine's work is also the concept of the two swords. Taking their cue from St. Luke 22:28 ("Look, Lord, here are two swords"), a great number of theologians developed the concept of the two kingdoms. Notable among these were Pope Galasius I, Alcuin, and St. Bernhard of Clairvaux.[3] Although the interpretation varied from man to man, it developed into a more rigid system in the Church in the course of the centuries. It was maintained that the two powers complemented one another and were in a harmonious unity. The Church and the state were Brennpunkte with the emperor as the visible agency to which God had given the sword that evil might be held in check; while the Pope was the visible head of the Church, the spiritual vicar of God's flock on earth.[4] As the Papacy grew in power, it exerted greater influence over the state, until Innocent III in his first sermon after his election as Pope was able to say:

> As God, the creator of the universe, set two great lights in the firmament of heaven, the greater to rule the day and the latter to rule the night, so He set two great dignities in the firmament of the universal Church, ... The greater to rule

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[2] C. S. Meyer, "The Meaning of Augustine's 'De Civitate Dei' for our Day," Concordia Theological Monthly, XIV (January, 1944), 8-51.

[3] Franz Lau, "Luthers Lehre von den beiden Reichen," Luthertum, Eine Schriftenreihe, herausgegeben von Walther Zimmermann, Franz Lau, Herman Schlyter, Johannes Pfeiffer (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1953), p. 26.

[4] E. G. Schwiebert, "The Medieval Pattern in Luther's Views of the State," Church History, XII (June 1943), 6.

> the day, that is, souls, and the lesser to rule the night, that is, bodies. These dignities are the papal authority and the royal power. And just as the moon gets her light from the sun, and is inferior to the sun in quality, quantity, position and effect, so the royal power gets the splendor of its dignity from the papal authority.[5]

In a little more than a hundred years this strong emphasis found its way into the Bull Unam sanctum in these words:

> Truly he who denies that the temporal sword is in the power of Peter, misunderstands the words of the Lord, "Put up thy sword into the sheath." Both are therefore in the power of the Church, the spiritual and the material. . . . The one sword then, should be under the other, the temporal authority subject to the spiritual power. . . . If, therefore, the earthly power err, it shall be judged by the spiritual power. . . . But if the supreme power err, it can only be judged by God, not by man.[6]

Thus by the late Middle Ages there was a sort of Christian theocracy, by which the world was governed by the Church, which in turn was ruled by the Pope. The Papacy, following Innocent III and his predecessors, aimed at supremacy over the state.

Luther and the Church's View

Although Luther arrived at his teaching of the two kingdoms primarily from his study of the Scriptures (compare following section), he was also influenced by the existing teachings of the Church, especially those of St. Augustine.[7] In dealing with the situation in which

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[5] James Westfall Thompson and Edgar Nathaniel Johnson, An Introduction to Medieval Europe 300-1500 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1937), p. 645.

[6] Ibid., p. 958.

[7] Lau, op. cit., p. 27.

the Church was, he utterly rejected the authority of the Pope over the secular authorities, and the theories which stood behind such practices. However, when he came to St. Augustine the situation was a little different, and although he rejected many of the points which St. Augustine taught, he retained many other points of St. Augustine.

In making contrasts between Luther and St. Augustine, it must be kept in mind that the historical situation was completely changed. St. Augustine lived in a pagan situation, and this affected his view to some extent. For the basis of his teaching on the two kingdoms he also used a different Scriptural source, working with Revelation 13, while Luther worked primarily with Romans 13.[8] Ernst Kinder also sees that St. Augustine is more supralapsarian in his conception and arrives at it in a more general historical sense, while Luther is infralapsarian in his conception and arrives at his doctrine from his Christology.[9] There are, however, three main differences between Luther and St. Augustine. The first is that the prejudice against secular government is gone in Luther. One might say that the state was hallowed and did not receive its power from a theocratic system. In connection with the first point, the second point is that the state is seen as a bona ordinatio Dei. Lastly, the Church is no longer divided into two classes, those who confer graces and those who receive graces.[10] In this respect

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8 Ernst Kinder, "Gottesreich und Weltreich bei Augustin und bei Luther," Gedenkschrift fuer D. Werner Elert, Herausgegeben von Friedrich Huebner et al. (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1955), p. 42.

9 Ibid., p. 30.

10 Werner Elert, The Christian Ethos, translated by Carl J. Schindler (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957) p. 393.

Luther considered the spiritual kingdom a Hoererreich, while for St. Augustine it was a Scherreich. Although Luther differs from St. Augustine on these points, most scholars maintain that although Luther reworked St. Augustine's thought world concerning the two kingdoms, he received, in the last analysis, the general overview from St. Augustine.[11]

Luther and the Scriptures

Luther, as a professor of the Scriptures, realized from his constant working with the text that the teaching of the Church was in many areas not Biblical. The Christian within the Medieval Church was to live according to the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount.[12] However, the common people could not attain such perfection, and it was the monks who claimed to be able to live up to the twelve admonitions which the Sermon on the Mount prescribes. These twelve admonitions were summarized in the three-fold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience.[13] After working through the Sermon on the Mount, Luther could only come to this conclusion: "Out of this beautiful rose they (the monks of the Pope) have sucked and broadcast poison, covering up Christ with it."[14] Luther saw that at best the Papist teaching on the twelve admonitions of the Sermon on the Mount was inadequate, but he was then faced with

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[11] Lau, op. cit., p. 27.

[12] Schwiebert, op. cit., p. 5.

[13] Lau, op. cit., p. 22.

[14] Martin Luther, "Sermon on the Mount," Luther's Works, The American Edition, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), XXI, 3. Hereafter cited as AE.

the problem of how Christ's words are to be understood. One of the most vexing problems for him was Christ saying: "But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also," (Matt. 5:39) and then during His Passion to ask when the officer struck Him: "Why do you strike me?" (John 18:23). This example from the life of Christ, along with a concern as to how the "difficult sayings" of the Sermon on the Mount would fit into the life of a Christian as he lived in a non-Christian world, urged him to search the Scriptures more thoroughly. Luther also noted in his Biblical studies that Adam and his descendents--Abraham, Samuel, Elijah, Moses, Joshua, the Children of Israel, Samson, David, and all the kings and princes of the Old Testament, Daniel, Ananias, Asarias, and Misael--used the sword in the Old Testament. He also saw that John the Baptist did not condemn warfare (Lk. 3:14), St. Peter preached to Cornelius (Acts 10:34ff.), the Ethopian captain was baptised (Acts 8:30ff.), and Sergius Paulus believed on Christ (Acts 13:12).[15] It was the examples of Christ and the Biblical saints, along with excerpts from Scripture, such as Romans 13:1,2; I Pet. 2:13,14; Gen. 9:6; Exodus 21:14 and 23-25; Matt. 22:21; Matt. 26:52, which brought Luther to the certain realization that there were two kingdoms which God had instituted for the protection of His creation.[16] In his study of the Scriptures, therefore, Luther saw that Rome, which had assigned temporal authority to the Pope, and the radical reformers, who sought to rule the secular realm with the law of God--the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount--were both wrong, for they were confusing the two kingdoms.

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[15] Luther, "Secular Authority," WAL, III, 242-4.

[16] Lau, op. cit., p. 24.

CHAPTER III

THE EARTHLY KINGDOM

Founded by God

When God created man, He gave him authority and dominion over the other creatures upon the earth, and thus God set up a kingdom at the very beginning of the world.[1] Luther saw that government was a creation and an ordinance of God. In the "Genesis Commentary" Luther deals in great detail with the formation of the earthly kingdom. He sees that the Church starts when God speaks to Adam. Domestic government was brought about by the creation of Eve. Civil government was the result of sin. Civil government was a necessary remedy for the corrupt nature. Properly it might be called the "Kingdom over Sin."[2] Luther therefore maintains:

> If therefore, men had not become evil by sin there would have been no need of civil government; but Adam would have lived with his posterity in the greatest joy, peace and safety, and would have done more by the motion of one of his fingers than can now be effected by all the magistrates, all the swords and all the gallows of a kingdom.[3]

Luther sees the two kingdoms taking very definite shape with the Cain and Abel incident. Abel is seen as the righteous one who is the

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[1] Werner Elert, Morphologie des Luthertums (Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sch e Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 435-6.

[2] Martin Luther, "Commentary on Genesis," The Precious and Sacred Writings of Martin Luther, edited by John Nicholas Lenker (Minneapolis: Lutherans in All Lands Co., 1904), I, 172. Hereafter cited as C on G.

[3] Loc. cit.

beginning of the church of the righteous, while Cain is the beginning of the church of enmity which was with the world. Luther takes this concept directly from St. Augustine and acknowledges it as coming from De Civitate Dei. The earthly kingdom was re-established and confirmed after the flood by God in His Covenant with Noah.[5] Luther in his exegesis of Romans 13:1-2 and I Peter 2:13-14 sees that these passages are direct references to the accounts in Genesis and in this manner maintains that the whole Bible attests that the founding of the earthly kingdoms is from God's will and order in the world.[6] With God standing behind it, the state is considered a wonderful, divine order and an excellent gift of God. Luther develops this point saying:

> All the offices of government, from the least to the highest are God's ordinance, as St. Paul teaches (Rom. 13:1); and King Jehoshaphat says to his officials (2 Chron. 19:6): "Consider, and judge rightly for the judgment is God's."[8]

Luther see that God, as Creator, is compelled, if He is going to preserve His own creatures, works, and ordinances, to institute and preserve government and to commit to it the sword and the laws. Thus

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[4] Ibid., p. 381.

[5] Martin Luther, "Secular Authority," Works of Martin Luther, edited by Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1931), III, 231. Hereafter cited as WML.

[6] Loc. cit.

[7] Arno Deutelmoser, Luther Staat und Glaube (Jena: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1937), p. 87.

[8] Martin Luther, "Psalm 82," Luther's Works, The American Edition, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), XIII, 14. Hereafter cited as AE.

God Himself has instituted all authority and upholds it. If He would no longer uphold it, it would certainly not be able to exist any longer. Thus with God instituting it and upholding it, it would certainly not be able to exist any longer. Thus with God instituting it and upholding it, it is truly a thing of God.[9]

Rulers in the Earthly Kingdom

In the earthly kingdom God does not rule directly, but rather through men. Natural man does not see that God is standing behind the earthly rulers, but the Christian believes this from the Scriptures.[10] The rulers do not have their power from the people, but from God; therefore the rulers are answerable to God, and not to the people. Every earthly power is in reality God's power, and he who exercies power exercises it from God.[11] Luther understands "gods" in Psalm 82:1 as referring to the earthly rulers and sees in this Psalm that he who resists the rulers resists God, for God has placed them as gods on earth.[12] This, however, is a two-way proposition, for not only are the people to see that their rulers are placed over them by God and that they are not to rebel against God's representatives, but the rulers are also to realize that God has given them their authority. The rulers owe their position to the Word, and they are thus subject to the Word of God. They are judged, rebuked, made, and corrected by it.[13]

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9 Ibid., p. 45.

10 Lau, op. cit., p. 42.

11 Deutelmoser, op. cit., p. 92.

12 Luther, "Selected Psalms," AE, XIII, 44.

13 Ibid., p. 43.

Luther at this point exhibits some of his realism by stating that from the beginning of the world a wise prince is a rare bird indeed, and a pious prince is more rare than a wise one.[14] Luther readily admitted that he was no authority on political science, but as a theologian he saw that it was his duty to point out to the prince what his duties were before God. A ruler must depend neither upon dead books nor upon living heads, but cling solely to God. He should pray without ceasing, asking for a right understanding wisely to rule his subjects.[15]

The princes are the agents through whom God operates. Luther, referring to Ezekiel 26:7 and 29:19, points out that Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, was God's agent in bringing destruction upon Tyre and Egypt.[16] The princes are in fact hangmen and beheaders of Christ. It is in this respect that Luther expounded his concept in a most radical manner in the following words:

> Darumb wo es kome, das ein Fuerst yn lande odder oberkeit sich weren und schuetzen mus und auffebeut ynn die herrfart, so gehe hyn yn namen Gotte, brenne, raube, wuerge was dier fur koempt unter den feinden, was du thuen kanst, das thue frisch mit guten gewissen und glauben, da mustu nicht schonen, sondern thun, wie kriegs art ist, nicht dencken, was du werest witwen und waysen machen, sondern ansehen, das Gott so ordenet das land odder voelck zu straffen, Wirstu aber drueber geschlagen, so las es Gott walten.[17]

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[14] Luther, "Secular Authority," WML, III, 258.

[15] Ibid., p. 264.

[16] Martin Luther, "Predigt in der Schlosskirche zu Weimar," (Weimar: H. Boehlau, 1843-), 10, III, 301. Hereafter cited as WA.

[17] Luther, "Predigten 1527, Ueber das 1. Buch Mose," WA, 24, 273.

Rulers must not look through their fingers to rule in fighting sin, but they should be like Samuel when he told Saul that he should go out and kill Amalek (I Sam. 15:3).[18] Luther summarizes the duties of a ruler under three points in his commentary on Psalm 82. The first duty is to advance God's Word and His preachers. The second is that he is to make and keep laws fro the poor. His final taks is to protect and rescue the miserable.[19]

Temporal

The earthly kingdom is ordained by God to help preserve the fallen world, and having this as its function, it will continue only until the last day, when imperial law will cease.[20] It, like good works and vocation, which are a part of the earthly kingdom, exists for the earth and one's neighbor, but does not exist for eternity and for God.[21] There is no progress on earth. Therefore the Psalmist (Psalm 82) prays for another government and kingdom in which God's name will be honored.[22] Even though this kingdom has God standing behind it, it remains a Rauchsreich, for it has nothing to do with Christ's new heaven and new earth. It lasts only a brief and tiny while, and then all must be surrendered to it. It cannot be used to extent ones physical existence

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[18] Luther, "Predigt in der Schlosskirche zu Weimar," WA, 10, III, 385.

[19] Luther, "Psalm 82," AE, XIII, 72.

[20] Ibid., p. 198.

[21] Gustaf Wingren, Luther on Vocation, translated by Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. 16.

[22] Luther, "Psalm 82," AE, XIII, 72.

by a single hour when the last hour comes. In this respect it is a "poor and miserable kingdom, indeed, a foul and stinking one."[23] The earthly kingdom is closely connected with history and ceases with the consummation; so the earthly kingdom, having served its purpose for God, will cease.

Functions of the Earthly Kingdom

Since man is born with original sin, he has no true fear of God, and neither can he have true faith in Him. As such, man is like a wild beast if he is not held in check by the rule within the earthly kingdom. The earthly kingdom therefore stands in the service of right and love. Luther sees that without government there could be no peace, and that where the government is not held in honor, there can also be no peace.[24] The main duty, therefore, of the earthly kingdom is to maintain peace among the children of Adam. God has done this for man's own good, as St. Paul points out in Romans 13:4.[25] The duties of the earthly kingdom are concerned only with the horizontal, with the relationship of one man to his neighbor, or with groups and nations of other groups or nations.

The task of the earthly kingdom is to maintain peace, order, and proper relationships between men. Whenever maliciousness and viciousness arise, they are to be stamped out. This does not mean, however,

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23 Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," AE, XXI, 203.

24 Luther, "Psalm 101," AE, XIII, 164.

25 Luther, "Psalm 82," AE, XIII, 44.

that war is the only way out. Luther maintains that one must keep the peace as long as one possibly can. Peace is to be maintained even though it would cost all the money that would be spent on the war or won by the war.[26] The right to wage war is granted by God only when it is in the service of order, peace, and the subjection of evil.[27] When no alternative is left, war is to be waged, and the evildoer is to be punished. The taking up of weapons must be done only when it is absolutely necessary. The rulers in the earthly kingdom are duty bound and under obligation from God to protect the pious and to punish the evil. This is not something the rulers decide upon arbitrarily, but they are commanded by God to maintain law and order in the world. Luther saw this command very clearly in Exodus 21:14, "But if a man willfully attacks another to kill him treacherously, you shall take him from my altar, that he may die"; Exodus 21:24, "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot"; Gen. 9:6, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image"; and the words of Christ in Matt. 26:52, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword shall perish by the sword."[28] The secular sword is never to be regarded as a terror to good works, but rather a terror to the evil. This is how Luther interprets both St. Paul in Romans 13 and St. Peter.[29] God has placed this great obligation on

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[26] Ibid., p. 52.

[27] Lau, op. cit., p. 48.

[28] Luther, "Secular Authority," WAL, III, 232.

[29] Ibid., p. 236.

the emperor and the princes and has placed under them the citizenry, who are to see these men as God's Representatives. Because of the Peasants' Revolt in the South, Luther found it increasingly necessary to stress that rebellion was wrong.

In line with secular authority Luther also treats justitia civilis. This is an external righteousness which is to be sought in offices and works.[30] No man can be justified before God with justitia civilis, but Luther nevertheless regarded it as a real righteousness and saw that it was genuinely related to God's own righteousness in Christ, even though our human apprehension of this righteousness is imperfect and vitiated by sin.[31]

The earthly kingdom, being instituted and maintained by God, has another requirement for the princes, which is to see that God's honor is maintained. The authority is thus obliged to restrain and to fight open false teaching, improper worship and heretics. The authority can do this only in his own area—the people over whom they have authority. As his source of authority for this interrelation between the two kingdoms Luther uses Proverbs 19:5, "A false witness shall not go unpunished."[32] He also asserts that it is the duty of the princes to interfere because this is dealing with God's honor—just like the kings in the Old Testament—and their chief office is to further God's honor.[33]

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30 Luther, "Whether Soldiers, too, can be Saved," WML, V, 34.

31 Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God (London: Hodder and Staughton, 1953), p. 296.

32 Luther, "Dass weltliche Oberkeit den Wiedertaeufern," WA, 50, 13.

33 Loc. cit.

The idea of the Enthusiasts that the world should be governed by the Gospel must be rejected. Luther saw that this was impossible, for the world and the masses were and always would be un-Christian, even though they were all baptized and nominally were Christians. Before a plan such as the Enthusiasts were trying to introduce would be possible, Luther maintained that it would be necessary first to fill the world with real Christians.[34] Luther knew that even this was impossible, because the real Christian is still plagued with the old man.

Christians in the Earthly Kingdom

Everyone on earth is in the earthly kingdom by virtue of his birth, and Luther points out that Christians should remember that even before they were Christians, before they were in the spiritual kingdom, they were in the earthly kingdom.[35] Using the parable of the tares in the wheat,[36] he points out that this is how the Christian lives until the consummation, when the tares will be removed from the wheat and burned. This is not easy for the Christian, but the fact is that the Christian Church is surrounded by enemies, and Christ did not promise peace but a sword.[37] Luther maintained that there was no getting around the fact that a Christian had to be some sort of

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34 Luther, "Secular Authority," WAL, III, 237.

35 Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," AE, XXI, 109.

36 St. Matthew 13:24ff.

37 Luther, "Predigt in der Schlosskirche zu Weimar," WA, 10, III, 381.

secular person.[38] The Christian, therefore, must learn the difference between the two person which he must be simultaneously on earth. Man does not live in a vacuum, and he has to make use of secular and imperial things the same way that a non-Christian does.[39] The Christian must learn that it is only according to the outward life and the physical existence that he is dependent on the earthly kingdom. A Christian goes to war, acts as judge, or lawyer, not as a Christian, for these are things of the earthly kingdom. However, in doing these secular things he always keeps a Christian heart.[40]

Luther saw that everyone, regardless of station in life, was under the authority. He felt this so strongly that he insisted that if bishops, abbots, or even the Pope, should be offenders, it was still the sacred duty of the state to strike, and "let the chips fall where they may."[41] It is here where the Papists and the Sectarians are at fault, for they do not see the responsibility of government. The monks escape from the world, deserting their responsibility, and the Sectarians repudiate the laws.

Heathen in the Earthly Kingdom

The heathen are in only one kingdom, the earthly kingdom. How-

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38 Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," AE, XXI, 109.

39 Lau, op. cit., p. 56.

40 Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," AE, XXI, 113.

41 Rupp, op. cit., p. 295.

42 Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," AE, XXI, 140.

ever, this does not mean that God has not granted unto those who are only in His earthly kingdom some of His blessings. Luther observed that just as God grants the heathen sun and rain, so He has also instituted ordinances under them.[43] The earthly kingdom among the heathen has the same purpose as it does in the midst of Christians. The heathen, as the unrighteous, needed the law to instruct, constrain, compel, and demand that they do good.[44] Luther saw that God richly blessed the heathen, giving them gold, riches, authority, and kingdoms, as though they were spray or sand. He also gives them reason, wisdom, languages, and oratory, so that the Christians look plain and simple, and comparable to fools and beggers.[45] It was this that prompted him to say that there was no better temporal rule anywhere than among the Turks, who have only the Koran.[46] In seeing this good which the heathen, especially the Turks, have in obeying the authorities, Luther lashed out against the peasants in Swabia, telling them that they were not worthy to be called even heathen or Turks. They were much worse than this, for they were fighting against divine and natural law which the heathen keep.[47] Luther reminds them as well that even if they did keep the law they would be no better than the heathen and the Turks, for it takes more than obedience to the authorities to make a person a Christian.[48]

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[43] Rupp, op. cit., p. 293.

[44] Luther, "Secular Authority," WAL, III, 235.

[45] Rupp, op. cit., p. 293.

[46] Luther, "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility," WAL, II, 148.

[47] Luther, "An Admonition to Peace," WAL, IV, 228.

[48] Loc. cit.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPIRITUAL KINGDOM

Founded by Christ's Coming

Luther maintained that the Church was established before there was any domestic or civil government. For him the Church was established before the fall or the creation of Eve, for it was created when God spoke to Adam in the Garden.[1] After the fall into sin, the children of Adam were divided into two groups, one group belonging to the kingdom of God, and the other in the kingdom of the world. Those who belonged to the kingdom of God were the true believers in Christ and were subject to Him.[2] Those in the kingdom of God, however, had to look forward to the coming of Christ for the establishment of the kingdom. Genesis 3:15 was the basis upon which the kingdom was anticipated, and thus the kingdom of Christ was a kingdom of hope for Adam and Eve.[3] For the Children of Israel the spiritual kingdom and the earthly kingdom were combined in one.[4] This combined kingdom, under the direct reign of Christ, continued

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[1] Martin Luther, "Commentary on Genesis," The Writings of Martin Luther, edited by John N. Lenker (Minneapolis: Lutherans in All Lands Co., 1904) I, 172. Hereafter cited as C on G.

[2] Martin Luther, "Secular Authority," Works of Martin Luther, edited by Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1931), III, 234. Hereafter cited as WML.

[3] Luther, C on G, I, 303.

[4] Martin Luther, "Predigt in der Schlosskirche zu Weimar," D. Martin Luthers Werke (Weimar: H. Boehlau, 1843-), 10, III, 381. Herafter cited as WA.

from the time of Moses and his giving of the law until Christ became a man and took on the spiritual and dropped the worldly.[5] Luther, of course, qualifies this by adding that Christ is still Lord of this kingdom, but that it is now princes and emperor who rule directly, and Christ stands behind them.[6] By coming into the world Christ directly opposes Satan, and Christ's kingdom directly opposes the kingdom of Satan, and Christ takes His people out of this kingdom and brings them into His kingdom of light.[7] In the Large Catechism Luther summarizes it very nicely in these words:

> It is nothing else than what we learned in the creed, that God sent His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, into the world to redeem and deliver us from the power of the devil, and to bring us to himself, and to govern us as a King of righteousness, life, and salvation against sin, death, and an evil conscience, for which end He has also bestowed His Holy Spirit, who is to bring these things home to us by His holy Word, and to illumine and strengthen us in the faith by His power.[8]

The Direct Rule of Christ

In the earthly kingdom, Christ has delegated the powers of direct rule to men whom He has placed in authority. In the spiritual kingdom this is not the case, for here Christ rules directly. It is here that He is truly "Christ the King."[9] In the spiritual kingdom power is given to none other, and Christ, as true God, rules through Word and Sacrament.

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[5] Loc. cit.

[6] Lau, op. cit., p. 60.

[7] Luther, "Predigt am Mittwoch nach Elizabeth," WA, 45, 267.

[8] Luther, "Large Catechism," Book of Concord (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), III, 51.

[9] Luther, "Erste Predigt ueber Jeremain 23, 5-8," WA, 20, 558.

This does not make the kingdom of Christ an imaginative thing, for wherever the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are properly administered there is the kingdom of Christ, and there Christ is the King. In attempting to make this clearer in a sermon, Luther used the analogy of a hospital and a doctor. Christ is the head doctor of the hospital which is filled with sick, poor, and diseased men. Acting as the chief physican Christ comes to them with the Gospel, bringing them comfort and strength, so that they are healed.[10]

With the insight that Christ ruled directly with Word and Sacrament, Luther saw the grave error of the Papacy, and frequently contrasted the kingdom of Christ with the kingdom of the Pope. This great polemic arose from the fact that Luther felt that the Pope was replacing Christ. He frequently put the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of the Pope in the same category as opposed to Christ's kingdom. The Pope's regime and Christ's regime, to Luther, were enemies against one another as water and fire, devil and angels.[11]

Eternal

Lau believes that only if one sees the eschatological difference in the two kingdoms, will there be any proper understanding of Luther.[12] The kingdom of Christ is neither worldly nor temporal, though we know it in this world and in time. Rather it is spiritual. It does not

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[10] Luther, "Predigt an 22. Sonntag nach Trinitatis," WA, 15, 726.

[11] Luther, "Ain nutzliche Sermon D. Martini Luthers, geprediget an der hailigen drey Kuenig tag," WA, 7, 242.

[12] Lau, op. cit., p. 34.

consist in eating or drinking or in other outward things, but only in righteousness, peace, and trust in the hearts and minds of men.[13]

The kingdom of Christ continues after the consummation of the world. It is then that the tares will be removed from the wheat; it is then that the faithful of Christ will be gathered together and shall no longer be plagued by those not in the kingdom of Christ. The kingdom of Christ will restore to the people of Christ the blessedness which Adam enjoyed when the Church was first established. The people in the kingdom will no longer need forgiveness of their sins, for they will then be perfect, having been made perfect by the exalted Christ, their King.[14] In the magnificent explanation of the second article of the Apostles' Creed in the Small Catechism, Luther sees living in the kingdom of Christ as the climax of the redemptive works of Christ:

> in order that I may be His own, and live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.[15]

Christians in the Spiritual Kingdom

The spiritual kingdom may be rightfully equated with the Church. The concept of Church must be understood in the proper sense, for Luther does not equate it with any outward organized church body, but rather the Church as the sum total of the true believers in Christ. Where the Gospel and Sacraments are, there is the Church, for faith is engendered

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[13] Luther, "Predigt an 22. Sonntag nach Trinitatis," WA, 15, 724.

[14] Luther, "Large Catechism," Book of Concord, II, 57.

[15] Luther, "Small Catechism," ibid., II, 4.

by the Holy Spirit working through Word and Sacrament. In this respect the Church and the spiritual kingdom are identical. Those who belong to the kingdom of Christ are those who believe rightly in Christ and are under Christ.[16]

Entrance into the spiritual kingdom is gained by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism:

> the end of Baptism is this, namely, to save. . . . To be saved, we know, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil, and to enter into the kingdom of Christ, and to live with Him forever.[17]

Luther frequently said that in the two words: "Forgiveness of sin" the complete kingdom of Christ could be conceived. "It is nothing else than the forgiving and taking away of sin."[18] It was on this score that Luther had many harsh words against the Papacy, for he saw that through the perversion of the doctrine of the forgiveness of sin by the addition of good works the Papacy was established.[19]

The kingdom of Christ is not only an idea, but just as it has a concrete King, so also it has concrete members. Its members are the elect—the people of Christ. Elert points out with profound insight that in the Lutheran understanding the people in the spiritual kingdom are sinners, and Christ, as their King, is Rex peccatorum.[20] The Christians are not confined to any one place, and though they are not many, one

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[16] Elert, Morphologie des Lutherturns I, 437.

[17] Luther, "Large Catechism," Book of Concord, IV, 23.

[18] Luther, "Predigt am 22. Sonntag nach Trinitatis," WA, 15, 724.

[19] Luther, "Ain nutzliche Sermon Doctor Martini Luther, geprediget an der hailigen drey Kuenig tag," WA, 7, 242.

[20] Elert, op. cit., I, 436.

is able to find them everywhere, in spite of the fact that they live far apart, under both good and bad rulers.[21] The entire life of a Christian is in relation to God, just as the fruit is to the tree.[22]

Functions of the Spiritual Kingdom

The chief function of the spiritual kingdom is to grant unto men the eternal life which Christ through His suffering, death, and resurrection has made available to all people.[23] Luther summarizes it in these words:

> This king is true God, for in His kingdom He forgives sin and makes His people pious and saves them from death, devil, hell, and all misfortune, giving us eternal righteousness and eternal life, making God our Father, and giving us heaven. . . . No one else can do this, angels, saints, Mary the Mother of God, but God alone.[24]

The kingdom of Christ is a kingdom which one does not see or feel, but which alone is heard, and as such has the task of overcoming more than just enemies of flesh and blood. The devil and his kingdom, which might be considered a third kingdom against which both the earthly and spiritual kingdoms are striving, is constantly trying to corrupt the divinely ordained kingdoms. The earthly kingdom is contaminated by the devil through peasant revolts, fanatics, and monasteries, and the

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21 Luther, "On War Against the Turk," WAL, V, 89.

22 Harold Diem, Luthers Lehre von den zwei Reichen (Muenchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1938), 160.

23 Loc. cit.

24 Luther, "Erste Predigt ueber die Epistel Jeremian 23, 5-8," WA, 20, 558-9. Translation my own.

spiritual kingdom is defiled by the devil through popes and masses.[25] The kingdom of Satan is also the kingdom of darkness, and where this kingdom is, there is only darkness and no light, for there is no knowledge of God from His Word.[26] To beat down Satan and his kingdom of darkness, the spiritual kingdom also uses weapons, but those weapons are different from fighting and striving with the sword and in wars, which is the task of the earthly kingdom. The weapons used by the spiritual kingdom to bring people out of the kingdom of Satan and to keep them out of his kingdom are the Word and the Sacraments, for it is in their use that the Holy Spirit comes to people, instilling faith and building up that faith. Thus the faithful in the kingdom of Christ are able to sing.

> Tho' devils all the world should fill
> All eager to devour us,
> We tremble not, we fear no ill,
> They shall not overpow'r us.
> This world's prince may still
> Scowl fierce as he will,
> He can harm us none,
> He's judged; the deed is done;
> One little word can fell him.
>
> The Word they still shall let remain
> Nor any thanks have for it;
> He's by our side upon the plain
> With His good gifts and Spirit.
> And take they our life,
> Goods, fame, child, and wife,
> Let these all be gone,
> They yet have nothing won;
> The Kingdom ours remaineth.[27]

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[25] Wingren, op. cit., p. 85.

[26] Luther, "Predigt am Mittwoch nach Elizabeth," WA, 45, 267.

[27] Martin Luther, "A Mighty Fortress is our God," The Lutheran Hymnal (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 262, stanzas 3 and 4.

CHAPTER V

THE DIFFERENCES OF THE TWO KINGDOMS

Positions in the Kingdoms

Luther saw that just as the Law and the Gospel must be distinguished if the Church is to remain pure, so the spiritual and the earthly kingdoms must be distinguished. Just as the distinction of Law and Gospel is difficult, so Luther found that keeping the two kingdoms separate was very difficult. In his commentary on Psalm 101 he wrote:

> Constantly I must pound in and squeeze in and drive in and wedge in this difference between the two kingdoms, even though it is written and said so often that it becomes tedious.[1]

Frequently he asserted that the two kingdoms must be as widely separated from one another as heaven is from earth. Here again the Pope had erred, for he darkened the concepts of earthly and spiritual kingdoms and had interchanged them.[2]

The differences between the two kingdoms are seen first of all in the position which people hold in them. In the earthly kingdom there are different levels of person in office. Although everyone has been called into a vocation and thus has an office, the earthly kingdom has,

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[1] Martin Luther, "Psalm 101," Luther's Works, The American Edition, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956) XXI, 194. Hereafter cited as AE.

[2] Franz Lau, "Luthers Lehre von den beiden Reichen," Luthertum, herausgegeben von Walther Zimmerman, et al. (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1953), p. 42.

in Luther's thinking, four levels in the ruling of the masses. These four follow the medieval pattern and are labeled by Luther as Thronen, Herrschaffton, Fuerstenthume, and Oberkeit. In one of his sermons[3] he defines these levels in the kingdom. The Thronen represent the emperor and the overlords. The Herrschaffton are the seven Churfuersten within the Holy Roman Empire. The Fuerstenthume are the lesser knights and other similiar officers. The Oberkeit is composed of the officers and the minor officials throughout the domain. God disposes all these stations and offices so that they may operate downward, with the servant having no influence on the governing power of the state.[4] The state, moreover, is concerned with the goods, body, and life of the subject. Neither does God confer authority over against Himself. The office of a person has nothing to do with his salvation. Only as a Christian can a soldier be saved. In other words, one is not obedient to the authorities within the worldly kingdom because he hopes to have salvation by such obedience, but he does it because he sees the value and necessity of order.[5] Luther, therefore, maintains that the members within the earthly kingdom are to be obedient to those placed over them—even if these office-holders are Turks.[6]

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[3] Martin Luther, "Predigt am Mittwoch nach Elizabeth," D. Martin Luthers Werke (Weimar: H. Boehlau, 18[illegible]-), 45, 292. Hereafter cited as WA.

[4] Arno Deutelmoser, Luther Staat und Glaube (Jena: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1937), p. 13.

[5] Gustaf Wingren, Luther on Vocation, translated by Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. 12.

[6] Ibid., p. 34.

In the spiritual kingdom there are no offices, even though a man holds an office in the earthly kingdom he is no greater than the lowest maid in the spiritual kingdom. Those in the spiritual kingdom stand before God on the ground only of God's own righteousness in Christ.[7] All Christians are to see that "vita Christiana is vita Christi, and vita Christi is exinanitio et humiliatio, and thus regnum Christi is exinanitio et humiliatio."[8] Thus in the spiritual kingdom there is an equality of all its members, for none in this kingdom is there by virtue of his own goodness. People in the spiritual kingdom are ruled directly by Christ because the Holy Spirit has worked faith in their hearts, and with Him there is no distinction of persons. On the basis of Romans 12:10 and I Peter 5:5 Luther maintained: "Among Christians there shall and can be no authority, but all are alike subject to one another."[9]

In keeping with this theory, Luther insisted that the ecclesiastical government of priests and bishops is not one of authority or power, but rather a service and an office, for the members of the clergy are neither higher nor better than other Christians.[10] He therefore reduces a priest to a mere officeholder.[11] Luther's teaching on the ministry is nicely summarized in these words:

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[7] Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God (London: Hodder and Staughton, 1953), p. 296.

[8] Lau, op. cit., p. 57.

[9] Martin Luther, "Secular Authority," Works of Martin Luther, edited by Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1931), V, 35. Hereafter cited as WML.

[10] Martin Luther, "Commentary on Genesis," The Precious and Sacred Writings of Martin Luther, edited by John N. Lenker (Minneapolis: Lutherans in All Lands Co., 1904), I, 172. Hereafter cited as C on G.

[11] Ibid., p. 262.

> A pastor is not lord over faith. A pastor is God's servant and tool, which God brought to His work. When I preach, baptize, absolve, administer the Sacrament, then God uses my mouth and my hand outwardly in His work that He would thereby accomplish something.[12]

The Word and the Sword

In the earthly kingdom the Emperor is the ruler, and he rules by means of the sword, which also could be called the Emperor's word. Luther defines his meaning of sword in this manner:

> Through sword however I understand all that which belongs to the earthly kingdom; such as earthly rights and laws, customs and habits, honors, stations, different offices, persons, and clothing etc.[13]

God Himself stands behind the ruler in the earthly kingdom. It is through this sword that He keeps order, peace, and security among sinful men.

The sword, however, has only a limited power, for it cannot do more than make the people obey by word and deed. It cannot constrain the heart, no matter how rigidly used and applied.[14] It is only the Word which affects the hearts of men. Thus it is the Word which rules the spiritual kingdom, thereby making this kingdom primarily a Hoerer-reich. Luther goes to great pains to show that this kingdom of Christ is truly absconditum, sub cruce tectum.[15] It is the ears which learn

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[12] Luther, "Predigt am Mittwoch nach Elisabeth," WA, 45, 310. Translation my own.

[13] Luther, "Der Prophet Sacharja ausgelegt," WA, 23, 514.

[14] Werner Elert, Morphologie des Lutherturns (Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 45.

[15] Luther, "Secular Authority," WML, III, 254.

of the spiritual kingdom from the mouths of the young children and those who have received forgiveness.[16] Primarily, of course, the kingdom of Christ is heard from the pastor in Word and Sacraments. The word of the preacher is the announcement of the forgiveness of sins, and this is the Word through which Christ rules. It is through the tongue of the pastor in the blessed Sacrament through which God sends forgiveness of sin, grace, salvation, and eternal life. In Holy Baptism one enters the kingdom of Christ, and this happens through water, Spirit, and word. Here again Luther holds that one does not see but alone hears the word which does such great things. And again in Absolution the priest lays his hand on the penitent's head and speaks from the command of Christ, our Lord, the forgiveness of sins. Again this is hearing the Word and seeing nothing.[17] This concept of the Word as a thing which is heard is reiterated by Luther in the Schmalcald Articles III; IV; V; VI; VII. Luther therefore concludes:

> The kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of faith which one does not see or feel but hears alone. The outer and earthly kingdom one is able to feel. Christ's kingdom cannot say: "I feel and grasp with my fingers the forgiveness of sin, life and salvation." But it is believed.[18]

Thus the two kingdoms are differentiated, and the differentiation must be maintained. One therefore cannot and must not drag the Word of Christ into the law books or into the secular government.[19] It has not

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16 Luther, "Predigt in Merseburg gehalten," WA, 51, 11.

17 Ibid., p. 12.

18 Ibid., p. 21.

19 Luther, "Secular Authority," WML, III, 241.

been given for this purpose, and this is the error of the Enthusiasts. Neither can the sword have any place among the Christians. One is not to bear arms against Christians who do not need the sword.[20]

The secular authorities, therefore, are to employ the sword and thus to carry out their God-ordained tasks of keeping peace and order, and the clergy, who are God's servants, are continually to busy themselves with the growth of the spiritual kingdom by the proclamation of the Word. Each has his God-given duty and is to perform it. Luther summarizes it in this manner:

> If I were emperor, king, or prince in a campaign against the Turks, I would exhort my bishops and priests to stay at home and mind the duties of their office, praying, fasting, saying mass, preaching, and caring for the poor, as not only Holy Scripture, but their own canon law teaches and requires.[21]

Membership

By the very nature of the two kingdoms there is a difference between them because of the membership that constitute them. The spiritual kingdom is entered by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The kingdom of Christ therefore has a restricted and exclusive membership. The earthly kingdom, however, embraces all people, for one is in the earthly kingdom by virtue of his birth. The earthly kingdom would not even need to have Christians in it, as with the Turks, for God grants wisdom unto the nonbeliever so that he is able to rule effectively and maintain peace.[22]

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[20] Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," AE, XXI, 90.

[21] Luther, "On War Against the Turk," WAL, V, 86.

[22] Lau, op. cit., p. 59.

Faith and Reason

The spiritual kingdom is a kingdom of faith. Its concern is for the souls of men. It is to produce piety.[23] The spiritual kingdom is to direct the people vertically toward God so that they may do what is right, so that they might be saved.[24] The spiritual kingdom deals with faith and has no place for works. Works offered to God upset God's order. They try to depose Christ from His throne, and the neighbor is neglected because the works were not done for the benefit of the neighbor, but they were done only with the purpose of impressing God.[25]

The earthly kingdom is a kingdom of reason.[26] It is no jurisdiction over the welfare of souls. It has power only over the physical and the temporal, thus making it subject to reason and subordinate to the spiritual kingdom.

It is frequently a debated question as to whether or not Luther sometimes considered the earthly kingdom the same as the kingdom of Satan. If one see this in Luther, he then has to say that Luther has two quite different views of the earthly kingdom, one being the "left hand of God," the other being the kingdom of Satan. This seems unlikely, and a more plausible view, which Luther enunciates occasionally, is an idea of the kingdom of Satan as a third kingdom, which is trying to upset

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23 Luther, "Secular Authority," WEL, III, 237.

24 Luther, "Psalm 101," AE, XIII, 197.

25 Wingren, op. cit., p. 13.

26 Luther, "Psalm 101," AE, XIII, 198.

both the earthly and the spiritual kingdoms. Whichever of the views is held, the fact remains that the earthly kingdom is inferior to the spiritual by virtue of its task and the means by which it carries out its task.

As a kingdom of reason it finds that it should only direct the people horizontally toward one another, seeing to it that body, property, honor, wife, child, house, home, and all manner of goods remain in peace and security and are blessed on earth.[27] The two kingdoms, therefore, are to be conscious of their tasks and obligations so that they are not confused, and, the purpose of both being thus frustrated, end in failure.

In these words Luther succinctly summarizes the whole differentiation which must be made between the two kingdoms:

> Worldly government has law which extends no farther than life and property and what is external upon earth. For over the soul God can and will let no one rule but Himself.[28]

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[27] Ibid., p. 197.

[28] Luther, "Secular Authority," WAL, III, 237.

CHAPTER VI

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE TWO KINGDOMS

Both Kingdoms Ruled by Divine Power

Both kingdoms are kingdoms of God, for although in the strict sense of the term, "kingdom of God" means the spiritual kingdom, it is also used for the "worldly kingdom" in the framework of its being an *ordinatio divina*.[1] God stands behind both kingdoms, and He is the one who ultimately is the ruler of all things within the kingdoms. And even though the two kingdoms are to be kept separated as far as heaven is from earth, there is a unity in them when viewed *coram Deo*. The picture of the spiritual kingdom as the right hand of God and the earthly kingdom as the left hand of God is commonly used by Luther in his sermons.[2] Therefore Luther can say what is almost contradictory to other utterances:

> For with respect to God and in service of his authority everything should be identical and mixed together, whether it be called spiritual or secular.[3]

Luther noted that it was a simple matter to see God's rule in the spiritual kingdom. In this kingdom, even though it is a *Heererreich*,

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[1] Franz Lau, "Luthers Lehre von den beiden Reichen," *Luthertum*, herausgegeben von Walther Zimmermann, *et al*. (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1953), p. 34.

[2] Martin Luther, "Predigten des Jahres 1532," *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: H. Boehlau, 1843-), 36, 385. Hereafter cited as *WA*.

[3] Martin Luther, "Psalm 101," *Luther's Works, The American Edition*, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), XIII, 195. Hereafter cited as *AE*.

Luther maintained there were visible means by which God's rule could be seen in distinction from the earthly kingdom. He says:

> In God's regiment there are two kingdoms; the visible and the invisible. The visible is the kingdom of Christ, which in His churches and Christendom He reigns through His Word of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit, in sermons, baptisms, absolutions, and the administration of the Sacrament. In this kingdom the Son of God became man, born in Bethlehem, lay in the crib and on his mother's lap, personally preached, did signs and wonders in Galilee and Judea, hanged on the cross, died and arose from the dead, and lastly sent apostles into all the world to preach in His name, produce repentance, and forgive sin.[4]

The relationship of the spiritual kingdom to God is direct, and thus men are more conscious of God's rule and understand that God is visibly at work in this kingdom.

In the earthly kingdom Christ rules in a hidden manner, as He does in the natural law. Man does not usually comprehend the fact that God stands behind the events in the earthly kingdom, and therefore Luther could call this relationship invisible, although the earthly kingdom itself can be seen. Luther says:

> Where God rules the world through his heavenly and hidden will and wrath the kingdom of God is invisible. As it happens when two with one another are at war, and one is killed while the other remains living. No one knows to what time sadness, pestilence, war, shedding of blood, the coming of the Turks or other things will occur. God alone knows this. . . . Christ also rules in this hidden and unrevealed kingdom.[5]

The rulers in the earthly kingdom therefore are God's representatives governing for Him. They are God's jailors and hangmen, and His divine

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[4] Luther, "Predigt am Mittowch nach Elizabeth," WA, 45, 280.

[5] Loc. cit.

wrath to punish the wicked and preserve outward peace.[6] Therefore when a prince wins a war, he has won it because God has beaten down the other. Luther saw that this was also true in the victories of the Turks.[7] In answering the question as to whether soldiers can also be saved, Luther explains:

> For the hand that wields this sword and slays with it is then no more man's hand, but God's, and it is not man, but God who hangs, tortures, beheads, slays and fights. All these are His works and His judgments.[8]

This unity which the kingdoms have with one another, because their ruler and king is none other than Christ the King is nicely summarized in these words of Luther:

> Christ our Redeemer is according to His divinity Lord over emperors, kings, princes, and lords, over angels, and devils, and in summary over all which is great, high, small, and low in heaven and earth. He is not only the head of the congregation and the Christian Church, as He later said, but He also reigns over emperors and kings and over the entire earthly kingdom on earth. He has all things in His hand—power, angels, devils, and men.[9]

Law and Gospel

Just as Luther considered the proper distinction between Law and Gospel basic to all theological consideration, so he found it essential to make a similar distinction between the two kingdoms. These two

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6 Martin Luther, "Secular Authority," Works of Martin Luther, edited by Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1931), III, 258. Hereafter cited as WML.

7 Arno Deutelmoser, Luther Staat und Glaube (Jena: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1937), p. 92.

8 Luther, "Whether Soldiers, too, can be Saved," WML, V, 36.

9 Luther, "Predigt am Mittwoch nach Elizabeth," WA, 45, 291.

belong closely together, and the connection between the two should not be disregarded.[10] Wingren believes that what Luther means by the earthly kingdom and the spiritual kingdom is not clear apart from Luther's view of Law and Gospel.[11] We cannot, of course, go into any detail on Luther's concept of Law and Gospel in this paper, but in connection with the two kingdoms we shall point out the main relationships between the two concepts.

Although one cannot make the Gospel comparable to the kingdom of God, and the Law comparable to the kingdom of the world, it must be seen that the connection of Law and the earthly kingdom is very close, and the relationship between the Gospel and the kingdom of God is not to be overlooked.[12] Luther maintained that the Law was given for the sake of the unrighteous, as St. Paul wrote to Timothy, in I Timothy 1:9.[13] However, without the sword the law is useless, and without the sword the evil would increase, inspite of the law. Therefore Luther maintained that the law and the sword were bound together with one another.[14] The law only promotes civil righteousness which is revelant in courts and before men as an adequate righteousness. This righteousness, however, remains earthly, and is concerned only with earthly affairs, and the doing of good works.[15]

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[10] Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," AE, XXI, 105.

[11] Gustaf Wingren, Luther on Vocation, translated by Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. 11.

[12] Lau, op. cit., p. 45.

[13] Luther, "Secular Authority," WML, III, 235.

[14] Luther, "Deuteronomium Mosi cum annotationibus," WA, 14, 665.

[15] Wingren, op. cit., p. 15.

All who are not Christians are under the law, for they belong to the kingdom of the world.[16] Thus the law with its power from the sword maintains order in the world. Luther says:

> If it were not so, seeing that the whole world is evil and that among thousands there is scarcely one true Christian, men would devour one another, and no one could preserve wife and child, support himself and serve God; and thus the world would be reduced to chaos.[17]

Here Luther is speaking of the usus politicus.

It is also the duty of the Church to preach the law, so that the people come to a recognition of their sin, and, knowing their shame, seek grace in Christ.[18] Until the consummation, therefore, the Church must preach the law as usus elenchticus so that the Gospel might be preached to them for their conversion. Neither is the tertius usus to be discarded for the old man within the Christian continually attempts to drive him into sin. The law therefore is necessary because of sin, and as such is not an integral part of the spiritual kingdom which concerns itself with righteousness and the forgiving of sins. In speaking of the spiritual kingdom and the law, Luther was able to say: "he who has the law must remain outside."[19]

In Luther the spiritual kingdom is identified with the Gospel.[20] No one can recognise God through the law, but alone through the Spirit and the word of the Gospel. It is through the Gospel that one receives

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[16] Luther, "Secular Authority," WAL, III, 235.

[17] Loc. cit.

[18] Luther, "Predigt am Mittwoch nach Elizabeth," WA, 45, 273.

[19] Luther, "Predigt am 19. Sonntag nach Trinitatis," WA, 15, 698.

[20] Werner Elert, Morphologie des Luthertums (Munchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 45.

peace, trust, and comfort of heart, and comes into the kingdom of God. This the law cannot do.[21] Righteousness which people have in the spiritual kingdom does not arise from keeping the law, but it comes down from heaven through Christ. The kingdom of Christ is ruled not by the law, but by the Gospel.[22] The spiritual kingdom and the Gospel do not concern themselves with the trivialities of the earthly kingdom. They have their minds set on the things of God. Luther therefore says:

> The Gospel does not trouble itself with such matters. It teaches the right relation of the heart to God. . . . He (Christ) is telling them (the disciples) to live and to behave before God and in the world with their heart dependent upon God and uninterested in things like secular rule or government, power, punishment, anger or revenge.[23]

By distinguishing the kingdom of the law from the kingdom of the Gospel Luther would not here infer that the Christian should separate himself from the world. This was the error of the monks. He means, however, that the Gospel should not be made to take the place of the law, as the Enthusiasts were attempting to put in effect. The Christ is to serve the State, so that others might be helped. For himself the Christian is uninterested in the earthly kingdom, but for the sake of his neighbor he cannot be.

> In what concerns you and yours, you govern yourself by the Gospel and suffer injustice for yourself as a true Christian; in what concerns others and belongs to them, you govern yourself according to love and suffer no injustice for your neighbor's sake; this the Gospel does not forbid, but rather commands in another place.[24]

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21 Luther, "Predigt an 22. Sonntag nach Trinitatis," WA, 15, 725.

22 Wingren, op. cit., p. 13.

23 Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," AE, XXI, 108.

24 Luther, "Secular Authority," WE, III, 242.

The Earthly Kingdom's Service to the Spiritual Kingdom

The two kingdoms complement one another and uphold one another so that they can carry out their tasks most efficiently. The earthly kingdom serves the spiritual kingdom in making possible the preaching of the Gospel, for the earthly kingdom prevents chaos, and in so doing makes possible the preaching of the Gospel, for the Gospel cannot be preached in chaos.[25] One might say that the earthly kingdom serves eternal life by maintaining peace in the world. Without the earthly kingdom there would be no room to teach God's word and to rear children in the fear of God and His discipline (Eph. 6:4).[26] Neither would the children of God be given the opportunity to practice their salvation in their vacious vocations.[27] The evil would trample the good. The Christians would be as sheep among wolves and would be prevented from practicing their Christianity and carrying out their duties to their Creator. The earthly kingdom also has to protect the true Christians from the attacks of the false Christians, for there are many wicked people who use the name Christian and abuse the freedom of the Gospel, saying that they are subject neither to the law nor the sword.

The Spiritual Kingdom's Service to the Earthly Kingdom

Luther believed that next to the office of the ministry the administration of worldly authority was the highest service of God and

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25 Lau, op. cit., p. 54.

26 Luther, "Psalm 82," AE, XIII, 45.

27 Harold Dion, Luthers Lehre von den zwei Reichen (Muenchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1938), p. 109.

the most useful office on earth.[28] In spite of this high commendation of government he also saw it as a "beggar's fur and a pimpled child with the pox and measles."[29] It was thus because of the impious men who ran it, therefore it was necessary for the pious men to keep it functioning. The spiritual kingdom must come to the aid of the earthly kingdom. That the citizenry be kept in line Luther says:

> First we pray for worldly authority, for this is the most necessary in the world, that one has a strong worldly government. The world cannot be ruled by the Gospel for the Word is so small and narrow that only a few accept it while thousands do not. The whores and evil people must have a worldly sword for the Holy Spirit has only a small crowd.[30]

Those within the spiritual kingdom must also pray for the emperor so that he would be granted much grace by God to rule wisely and thus maintain peace. Neither should one doubt that the prayers of the faithful help to keep the peace, for prayer is a great power, but God is still greater and hears the prayers of His people.[31] When a war does come, the Christian is more active than ever in his prayer life. Luther in his "On War Against the Turk" magnificently expresses his concept of war and its outcome:

> Since the Turk is the rod of the wrath of the Lord our God and the servant of the raging devil, the first thing to be done is to smite the devil, and take the rod out of God's hand. . . . If the Turk's god, the devil, is not first beaten, there is reason to fear that the Turk will not be so easy to beat. . . . Now the devil is a spirit, who cannot be beaten with armor, guns, horses, and men,

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28 Deutelmoser, op. cit., p. 89.

29 Luther, "Psalm 101," AE, XIII, 207.

30 Luther, "Predigt ueber I Tim. 1:18," WA, 17, I, 149.

31 Ibid., p. 150.

and God's wrath cannot be allayed by them. . . . Christian weapons and power must do it.[32]

The Christian's weapons and power mentioned by Luther are repentance and prayer. Every pastor is to exhort the people most diligently to repent of their numberless sins and ingraditude, and to pray that God would not destroy them as He did the people in the Flood and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.[33] Luther also advises how this praying ought to be done:

> It might, indeed, be of some use to have the people, especially the young people, sing the Litany at mass or vespers or in the church after the sermon, provided that everyone, at home, by himself, constantly raised to Christ at least a sigh of the heart for grace to lead a better life and for help against the Turk. I am not speaking of much long praying, but of frequent brief sighs, in one or two words, such as "O help us, dear God the Father; have mercy on us, dear Lord Jesus Christ!" or the like.[34]

The kingdoms, therefore, with their individual tasks complement one another, and help one another to exist. Luther sums it up in this manner:

> The one to produce piety, the other to bring about external peace and prevent evil deeds; neither is sufficient in the world without the other. For no one can become pious before God by means of the secular government, without Christ's spiritual rule. . . . Where, on the other hand, the spiritual government rules alone over the land and people, there evil is given free reign and the door is opened for every king of knavery; for the natural world cannot receive or comprehend spiritual things.[35]

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[32] Luther, "On War Against the Turk," WAL, V, 89.

[33] Ibid., p. 90.

[34] Ibid., p. 91.

[35] Luther, "Secular Authority," WAL, III, 237.

Sin

Both kingdoms deal with sin. However they deal with it in a different manner. The earthly kingdom handles it by constraining and preventing it. This is the one and special object of the civil government. Since it is set in opposition to sin Luther was able to say that God want the government to be like a symbol of true salvation, a pantomine or mask of the spiritual kingdom.[36] It is in this respect that the earthly kingdom exhibits noble, lofty, and princely virtues. The devil is active in the earthly kingdom, just as he and his kingdom are active in the spiritual kingdom, trying to turn order into chaos.[37] However, in the earthly kingdom Satan himself is not attacked, as in the spiritual kingdom, but rather the instruments which Satan uses are attacked. Thus the earthly kingdom beats down the Turks and the peasants for Satan uses them to upset the order in the world. This earthly kingdom is actually a bloody office, for love is not practiced, but the sword is used to subdue the powers of sin.[38] The earthly kingdom therefore keeps men from becoming beasts which would eat one another.[39] Luther pictures the earthly kingdom dealing with sin in these graphic words:

> It keeps a man's body, so that not anyone may slay it; it keeps a man's wife, so that not everyone may seize and defile her; it keeps a man's child, his daughter or son, so that not everyone may carry them away and steal them; it keeps a man's house so that not everyone may break in and commit outrage there; it keeps a

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36 Luther, "Psalm 82," AE, XIII, 91.

37 Luther, "Secular Authority," WAL, III, 237.

38 Lau, op. cit., p. 29.

39 Luther, "Predigt in der Schlosskirche zu Weimar," WA, 10, III, 381.

man's fields and cattle and all his goods, so that not everyone may attack and steal and rob and damage them.[40]

The spiritual kingdom deals with sin differently from the earthly kingdom, for instead of subduing sin, it forgives sin. As in the earthly kingdom, Satan, the great and powerful lord, emperor, and prince of the world, along with his powerful lords and potentates, is trying to upset the spiritual kingdom and make God's people his people.[41] Satan produces all sorts of error, superstition, and false teaching in the spiritual kingdom, causing darkness, blindness, hardened hearts, lies, and unbelief in people.[42] Opposite to this kingdom of Satan, this kingdom of darkness, is the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of light. By His victory over sin, death, and Satan Christ grants unto the people enchained by Satan freedom through the Gospel. Christ, the exalted One, reigns through His Spirit and vanquishes sin and says: "Arise brother, be comforted, have no anxiety."[43] Christ has overcome the world and Satan, and now He "makes sinners, saints, and dead men live, and damned men saved, and the devil's children God's children."[44] Thus Christ takes men out of the kingdom of Satan and incorporates them into His kingdom. Christ continues to reign and to rule in their hearts so that Satan does not come upon them, find their weaknesses, and pull them out of the kingdom of light into the kingdom which is his, the kingdom of darkness.

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[40] Luther, "On War Against the Turk," WML, V, 159.

[41] Luther, "Predigt am Mittwoch nach Elisabeth," WA, 45, 267.

[42] Loc. cit.

[43] Luther, "Erste Predigt ueber die Epistel Jeremian 23: 5-8," WA, 20, 560.

[44] Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," WML, IV, 159.

The Christian and the Two Masters

As was mentioned before, a Christian cannot avoid being a secular person of some sort. He lives in both kingdoms, and as a member of both his is bound to serve both. This serving of two masters is not an impossiblity, as the serving of God and mammon is (Matt. 6:24), for the two masters are not at odds with one another, but are working together. The Christian, however, realises that Romans 13:1 must be seen in the light of the words of St. Peter and the apostles to the council of the high priest: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).[45] The earthly kingdom cannot infringe upon the faith of a man. Every man is responsible for his own faith, and he must see to it that he believes rightly.[46]

The Christian, however, realizes that he must subject himself to the powers of the authority above him. The Christian does not seek his own glory, for this is greed, as is money, and can only damn him. He seeks instead to give honor and glory to God alone by his obedience to the authorities.[47] In glorifying God the Christian seeks to serve, not himself, but others, as Luther says:

> The whole spirit of his life impels him to do even that which he need not do, but which is profitable and necessary for his neighbor.[48]

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[45] Luther, "Secular Authority," WAL, III, 257.

[46] Ibid., p. 253.

[47] Luther, "On War Against the Turk," WAL, V, 70.

[48] Luther, "Secular Authority," WAL, III, 239.

Thus the Christian does not go to court nor use the sword against another Christian, for this is in antithesis to the love which Christians have for their fellowmen. The example here for the Christian is Christ Himself who did not use the sword, and the warning is David, who was not permitted to build the Temple because he had borne the sword.[49] Luther sees that the failure of a Christian to show love to his neighbor is in antithesis to love and against the direct command of Christ to serve the neighbor.[50]

The Christian always remains in service to his neighbor and obedient to the authority. When the authority becomes dictatorial and makes the life of the Christian unpleasant, he is not to rebel and attempt to overthrow the government. In writing to the Swabian peasants, Luther declares:

> It is the Christian law . . . to give up life and property and let who takes it take it; we have enough in our Lord, who will not leave us, as He has promised, suffering, suffering; cross, cross! -This and nothing else, is the Christian law.[51]

The Christian, therefore, must remain obedient and realize that "a wicked tyrant is more tolerable than a bad war."[52] For Luther this was self-evident from experience and common sense. The problem, however, then arises as to what a Christian should do when the tyrant will no longer tolerate the Gospel. Luther's rather impractical answer was

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49 Ibid., p. 238.

50 Luther, "Predigt in der Schlosskirche zu Weimar," WA, 10, III, 382.

51 Luther, "An Admonition to Peace," WML, IV, 231.

52 Luther, "Whether Soldiers, too can be Saved," WML, V, 47.

that the Christians should flee to another princedom where the Gospel is preached. Luther came to this conclusion from the words of Christ in St. Matt. 10:23: "If they persecute you in one city flee into another."[53] This, of course, was spoken to the disciples as they were sent out to do missionary work, and thus the application of this passage to farmers and laborers is not too fitting. Luther does concede, however, that if a ruler becomes mad he should be disposed of, for the light of reason has gone out of him, and he does not even know that he is doing wrong.[54]

Office and Person

In serving both God and the authority of the secular government, A Christian must not be only passive, but he is to take an active part in the running of the state. To understand how a Christian is able to be a servant of the state, one must know the differentiation Luther makes between "person" and "office." Person to Luther is what a man is coram Deo.[55] Therefore, by himself a Christian does not swear or exercise any anger. It is to the person, with no thoughts of office, to whom Christ speaks when He tells Christians what they should do for one another.[56] As an incumbent of an office, however, the position is different, for here not the man but the occupation is considered, the work and not the door.[57] Here it is not the person, but God working

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53 Ibid., p. 44.

54 Loc. cit.

55 Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God (London: Hodder and Staughton, 1953), p. 290.

56 Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," AE, XXI, 316.
57 Luther, "Whether Soldiers, too, can be Saved," MIL, V, 34.

through him who hangs, tortures, beheads, strangles, and does battle.[58] Here oaths are demanded and anger is practiced. A Christian is always in office, no matter what his station in life might be. Offices are instituted in the world so that through them the orderly use of creation is carried on. Therefore a person who is a father is in office.

A Christian, therefore, may carry on all sorts of secular business—not as a Christian but as a secular person—while his heart remains pure in his Christianity, as Christ demands.[59] It is natural, of course, that a Christian would avoid those stations which are sinful, but he should see that he is under obligation to serve the sword by whatever means he can.[60] It is not wrong for a Christian to be a judge, soldier, or hangman, for in this office he is serving God, and honoring Him. Luther puts it in these words:

> Therefore we should cherish the sword or the government. . . . As a man can serve God in the state of matrimony, in husbandry, or at a trade, for the benefit of his fellowmen, and must serve him if necessity demand; just so he can also serve God in the State and should serve Him there if the necessities of his neighbor demand it; for the State is God's servant and workman to punish the evil and protect the good.[61]

War

The question then arises as to what the Christian is to do in the case of a war. Here Luther makes the distinction between the just and

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58 Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," AE, XXI, 113.

59 Wingren, op. cit., p. 7.

60 Luther, "Secular Authority," WAL, III, 241.

61 Ibid., p. 245.

the unjust war. All wars are wrong and a thing of the devil, but if in a war it is necessary to help someone, the Christian is to come to his aid, seeking vengeance, justice, and protection.[62] Luther counsels the Christian:

> And in such a war it is a Christian act and an act of love confidently to kill, rob, and pillage the enemy, and to do everything that can injure him until one has conquered him according to the methods of war.[63]

Luther saw from the many examples in the Bible that it was not wrong for the Christian to wage war, if it were done for the benefit of the neighbor, for only if the world were truly Christian would princes, kings, lords, and swords be unnecessary, for the Holy Spirit would be in their hearts instructing them and causing them to wrong no one, to love everyone, willing and cheerful to suffer injustice and even death.[64]

An unjust war, however, is a different matter. Luther insisted that a person in the military who is led into an unjust was is <u>not</u> to go to battle, even though it means a loss of prestige for him.[65] He also made it clear that he who starts a war is wrong, and it is just that he who first draws the sword shall be defeated.[66] And a Christian not only does not start war and unrest, but does everything in his power to give help and counsel to the side of peace wherever he can.

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[62] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 247.

[63] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 270.

[64] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 234.

[65] Luther, "Whether Soldiers, too, can be Saved," <u>WAL</u>, V, 68.

[66] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 56.

This he does even if the war has been a just war.[67] Luther's whole attitude on war might be summarized in these his words:

> Wars of desire are of the devil; God give him no good fortune! The wars of necessity are human misfortune; God help in them![68]

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[67] Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," AE, XXI, 40.

[68] Luther, "Whether Soldiers, too can be Saved," WAL, V, 59.

CHAPTER VII

THE TWO KINGDOMS IN THE UNITED STATES

The Government

The classic statement of the government of the United States concerning spiritual matters is in the first article of the amendments to the Constitution. It reads as follows:

> Freedom of religion, speech, of the press, and the right to petition. Congress shall make no law representing an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievences.

The Christian in the United States is in no manner restricted from expressing and proclaiming the Gospel. However, the first article of the Constitution has been interpreted in many ways. Generally it is held to mean that there is to be a complete separation of Church and State. This interpretation has been seen in the strong opposition to the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican, and most recently in the omission of the question on religion in the national census.[1] Very few would disagree with the idea that there is to be a complete separation of the Church and the State, but the degree of this separation has always been a problem with the United States. This is ultimately where the problem in this country rests. However, since this paper does not deal with the position of the official Church in the relation to the

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[1] "1960 Census to Omit Question on Religion," The Lutheran Witness (January 14, 1958), p. 19.

official Government, but rather of the individual Christian to the secular authority, it shall suffice to say that the position of the government of the United States is in no way contradictory to Luther's concept of the earthly kingdom and its functions.

The Two Kingdoms and the Missouri Synod

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in its "Brief Statement"[2] affirms that "both Church and State are ordinances of God, yet they must not be commingled." However, here and in the other official papers of the Missouri Synod there is no denial that Luther's view on this matter is the "true Scriptural conception of the relation between Church and State."[3] The Missouri Synod is very consistent in following Luther's concept of the separation of the two kingdoms, but it is always aware that "if completely separated there would be reason to fear that there would be a weakening of them both."[4] The Missouri Synod also realizes that much of the concern of Church and State is "recent and makeshift in development" and as such must be view with caution and accepted only after thorough study.[5]

The position of the Missouri Synod is summarized in these words of Dr. Theodore Graebner:

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2 [Franz Pieper], "A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Ev. Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States," Doctrinal Declaration (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House), p. 54.

3 Theo Hoyer, "Church and State," The Abiding Word, edited by Theodore Laetsch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), II, 583.

4 Ernest B. Koenker, "The Two Realms and the 'Separation of Church and State' in American Society," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXVII (January 1956), 9.

5 Ibid., p. 8.

> The principle of separation of Church and State as laid down in Scripture is violated: a. When the State uses its powers—the laws, officers of the law, courts of law, fines, imprisonments, and other penalties—to compel adherence to certain doctrine, a certain form of worship, or observance of certain ceremonies, or to forbid these; b. when the Church uses its spiritual power to compel adherence of its members to a certain form of government, or absolves them from obedience to a certain state or ruler, or causes the State to use its political or police powers to compel members of the Church to perform their religious duties, or make use of its power of members or influence to bring about civil legislation that will compel citizens to conform to the conceptions of right and wrong held by the Church.[6]

The Missouri Synod also realizes that the Christian vocation requires that a man be a responsible participant in affairs of state, for he too can constructively aid his neighbor.[7] This is perhaps not stressed as much as it might be, however, Dr. Graebner, in the above-mentioned article, drives this point home in these words:

> As American Christians we have a dual character. The Christian judge may sentence to the penitentiary on Monday morning a man whom he had voted to absolve from his sins on Sunday at a congregational meeting. And he may grant a divorce, as a judge, to a couple on the grounds that are not warranted in Scripture and vote for the excommunication of the same guilty party (or parties) at the next meeting of the congregation. In this there is perfect consistency. The State deals with crimes, not with sins; the Church deals with sins alone. The teaching of our Church on this point is beautiful in its simplicity.[8]

Thus the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has carried out the principles of Luther's concept of the two kingdoms as closely as is possible in a democratic society.

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[6] [Theodore] G[raebner], "Church and State," The Lutheran Witness LV (February 25, 1936), 50.

[7] Koenker, op. cit., p. 12.

[8] Graebner, op. cit., p. 50.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In studying the Scriptures Martin Luther found it difficult to understand just how a Christian was to conduct himself in the world. The Sermon on the Mount did not seem to coincide with the actions of many of the Biblical saints. He wondered how one could live up to the admonitions of the Sermon on the Mount and still carry out the words of St. Paul in Romans 13. Even the acitivity of Christ did not seem to coincide with what He had told His disciples.

The Church did not help Luther. He was certain that it was in error. However, the more he worked with the Scriptures, the more he came to realize that the key to the solving of the riddle was the fact that the Christian was subject to two different realms--a realm which included everyone and a realm which consisted only of Christians. Luther saw that with the two different kingdoms the whole Biblical message to man fits into place, and a view of the two kingdoms was necessary to understand properly the Biblical message.

The kingdom of which all people are members is the earthly kingdom. The earthly kingdom is temporal. It was founded by God after man fell into sin. Its purpose is to keep the gross outbursts of sin in check, so that men do not become wild beasts and devour one another. It promotes peace and upholds order. The spiritual kingdom, on the other hand, is composed only of Christians. It is in this kingdom that Christ has not delegated His authority to others, but He rules directly over His faithful people. This kingdom cannot be seen, but it is, instead, a kingdom of

faith, a kingdom where sins are forgiven and eternal life is obtained.

These two kingdoms are as different as heaven and earth and must be distinguished from one another carefully, so that the errors of the Papists and the Enthusiasts are avoided. The spiritual kingdom, as a kingdom of faith, does not concern itself with offices and positions of honor, while the earthly kingdom must have authorities and rulers. The spiritual kingdom uses only the Word, while the earthly kingdom has the sword for its power. The spiritual kingdom is a kingdom of grace and forgiveness and deals with the matters of the soul, while the earthly kingdom is a kingdom of reason and cannot overstep its bounds in dealing with more than the outward maintenance of order and peace.

The two kingdoms are not, however, to be seen in opposition to one another, for they, too, are unified and complement one another. They both have been founded by God, and He stands behind both of them upholding them. They serve one another; the spiritual kingdom protecting the earthly by the Gospel, and the earthly kingdom making possible the preaching of the Gospel by maintaining peace and preventing chaos. Both kingdoms deal with sin, although in different manners. The spiritual kingdom offers forgiveness of sins, while the earthly kingdom subdues sin. The two kingdoms also have a point of contact in that both have Christians as members.

The Christian must realize that he is in both kingdoms, and not only is he obedient to the words of St. Paul in Romans 13, but he must also bear in mind the words of St. Peter in Acts 5. The Christian is not to rebel against the authorities, nor is he to fight in an unjust war. He must not, however, neglect to serve his fellowman in the earthly

kingdom by serving in official capacities or in any other manner, as long as he can do it without sinning.

In looking at the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod we have seen that it has maintained the fundamental concepts of Luther's teaching on the two kingdoms. The Missouri Synod, however, is always faced with the task of re-examining its position to see that it is maintaining the proper Scriptural approach for its members as they live in the world. It should look at this insight of Luther's as a magnificent gift, and strive to make it more meaningful to its people so that God might be glorified the more.

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