

## Two Kingdoms

### (THE BIBLICAL TESTIMONY)

Two kingdoms aren't the same as Zoroastrian dualism. The latter denotes two powers equal in strength with the result that the conflict is eternal, people being equally subject to both powers.

In Scripture [1] evil is actual (neither imaginary nor mythological)

[2] evil is a power greater than humankind but less than God

[3] evil surges over the world now, damaging everything it touches

[4] evil has been defeated but not yet destroyed (dispelled)

[5] we are not subject to God and evil in equal measure

[6] Xns are called to discern evil, resist it, succour its victims

[7] Xns do this knowing we cannot lose in the struggle: we anticipated the manifestation of a victory already achieved

[8] herein Xns remind the world of the *real* (as contrasted with the merely *actual*)

p132. NB the symbol of turbulent water as chaos in S. At some point in Israel's history chaos (visible) is identified as the work of Satan (invisible). Satan is both subtle and malignant.

NB: creation begins in a garden; the city (Babel) is our monument to our God-defiance; Babylon denotes evil; Jerusalem ("city of salvation") abuses the prophets and slays the Messiah; creation is corrected and fulfilled in a *new* Jerusalem that can only be "let down": we don't build it.

The church pertains to both the "kingdom of this present evil age" and the kingdom of God".

[1] by God's grace *alone* the church is **the** holy nation

[2] yet institutionally the church is no different from any other (fallen) institution

[3] 1 and 2 aren't balanced equally: the church's identity is given by the former

p133. NB the heightened contrast between the two kingdoms at the close of the OT and the commencement of the NT.

In all of this we must avoid both dualism and gnosticism. NB the extent to which the church has frequently lapsed into gnosticism.

The creation always belongs to Christ: he is its ground and goal, he has reclaimed it and redeemed it.

The evil one is always a usurper, yet for that no less terrifying.

### (DEVELOPMENT IN CATHOLIC THOUGHT)

**Augustine** *City of God*. NB [1] the church is not the city of God [2] in different eras it has been easier to make this confusion.

NB where the city is rooted in ancient Greece and in Augustine. NB Augustine's difficulty.

**Aquinas** Here the contrast isn't between good and evil but between nature and grace. NB the precise relationship between *fallen* reason (& the creation as a whole) and grace: fulfillment presupposes correction. {Recall last term's discussion of the differences between RC and Ref'n understandings of the Fall. In RC thought fallen hk retains (i) some freedom to turn to God (ii) morality regarded as the vestibule to the kingdom of God.} Aqu. tends to identify kingdom and ch.

NB for Aqu. [1] the state is governed by natural law

[2] since natural law is God-ordained, it is higher than positive law

[3] natural law always judges positive law

[4] politics is subordinate to ethics.

[Shepherd: [a] pluralism won't work if it entails pluralism w.r.t. the public good

[b] we are going to have to recover an understanding of natural law if we want to live together

[c] point 4 above is almost wholly lost today amidst our collective character-disorder.]

In Aqu. evil doesn't have the same force as in other thinkers. Yet when he says the church is both a mystical community and a structure of power, he tends to lend theol'l legitimacy to the church's right to coerce. (Aqu. was a Dominican. A Dominican created the Inquisition.)

p137. NB Aqu and the place of evil in a hierarchy of being. Then how evil is evil for Aqu.? (To what extent does metaphysics (philosophy) ever come to grips with radical evil?)

**Eckhart** -- a mystic, neo-Platonic to the extent that the real opposition is between nature and spirit (never in S.) NB the mystic's characteristic view of the body and materiality as the source of evil (never in S.)

(REFORMATION AND POST-REFORMATION PERSPECTIVES)

Luther: a most vivid awareness of hk as caught "between God and the devil." (Oberman)

L believed that Satan is at work in both church and state, yet state is not kdom of devil; yet the state ought not to be confused with the church.

God has ordained both state and church, but for different reasons: the church, for the prosecution of the gospel, and the state for the preservation of bodily existence and material wellbeing.

All Xns have a twofold calling: as citizen and as Xn. NB how these relate to each other.

Calvin: again, church and state are distinct but not divorced.

On balance, C appears to view the state more positively than L, who saw it almost exclusively as restraining evil.

The most positive regard for the state appears, in the Calvinist tradition, in Abraham Kuyper.

Anabaptists (Radicals): the state is God's instrument to restrain unbelievers only. Therefore Xns disavow all involvement with the state.

(MODERN DISCUSSION)

Enlightenment: hk is "one family" soon to be made "happy" through reason.

Enlightenment convictions: (a) reason will yield the good life, (b) ignorance underlies the "evil" of the world, (c) natural law *should* be followed and *can* be. Lost in this outlook were hk's happiness at evil and the banality of evil.

*Note the place of Kant as typical Enlightenment philosopher.*

Liberal theol. adopted Enl't's naïve optimism; Lib. theol. thrived in the following era, reducing theol. to morals + culture. "Sin" largely disappeared, and the church's task was to transform the social order.

World War I ended this optimism in Europe (but not in North America.)

p.144 Bl speaks of Tillich, Niebuhr and Barth as a mixture of Ref. and Enl't thinking that (a) denies evil the status it has in S, (b) denies that anyone can finally be lost: human reasonableness will see no one defying God conclusively.

p.146 Neo-Catholic thought on evil and the kingdom of God is evolutionistic and unbiblical.

Eastern Orthodox thought is a surer guide here (the Eastern church has suffered!). Jacques Ellul consistently makes the most penetrating analysis

(A THEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL)

[1] there are no dichotomies in the universe *except* that between God and the evil one

[2] this dichotomy must never be undervalued

[3] terrible as it is, it is not final: on the Day what God has defeated he will destroy

[4] the 2 kingdoms are not the same as church and world: evil appears in both church and world.

neither are the 2 kingdoms the same as church and state: God rules both.

the purpose of the church is the prosecution of the gospel of redemption.

the purpose of the state is to restrain evil, secure justice, and promote the public good.

the state therefore has a claim on the Xn *except* when the state becomes idolatrous.

[5] the kingdom of God is a present *reality*; it is not yet fully *manifest*.

[6] the church is both a witness to the kingdom and a product of the kingdom

[7] Xns are called to give visibility to the kingdom of God

[8] Xns must remember that the kingdom of God is *never* at risk, regardless of what happens in the church.