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主后410年，罗马城被异教徒洗劫一空。在这场浩劫的余波中，伟大的教父，希波的主教奥古斯丁（Augustine），写下了著名的《上帝之城》一书。另外一位家喻户晓的教父耶柔米（Jerome）绝望地说道：「如今罗马城沦陷，教会将何去何从？」毫无疑问，作为一位爱国者，奥古斯丁也感同身受。然而，作为教会的牧者，他视那场浩劫是上帝所赐的良机：上帝把宣教的禾场带到了宣教士的面前。问题在于，当时基督教已经变成了公民宗教（civil religion），信仰脆弱不堪，在这样的帝国里，还剩下多少真正的「宣教士」呢？

不论今天的文明是否面对同样的机遇，我们依旧需要奥古斯丁在危难关头时的智慧。像所有其他伟大的著作一样，不同的学派对《上帝之城》有着不同解读。然而，不容置疑，这本书的确能够帮助我们建立起「两国论」的教义。

奥古斯丁认为，这世界上有两座城，一座是上帝之城，一座是人类之城。而这两座城的根基分别是两种爱：一种是上帝之爱，一种是人的自爱（love of self）。上帝之爱会生出真正的和睦，和彼此给予、彼此接纳的交融，而人的自爱生出来的则是争斗、战争和统治他人的欲望。

最后，奥古斯丁说，这两种爱，这两座城，最终极来说都是基于上帝在永恒里的预定（predestination）。虽然人类之城注定灭亡，但是上帝从它的废墟中创造了一座新城（教会），并且也用自己的普遍恩典留存着这座旧城，直等到终极的平安与公义最后伴随着基督再来。正是在这个普遍恩典的时代，上帝「降雨给义人，也给不义的人」，并且呼召我们效仿祂的仁慈（太五43-48）。所以基督徒有两种呼召：一种是在基督里至高的呼召，叫我们从属于基督的身体，另一种则是呼召我们在世界上作好的公民、父母、儿女、朋友、同事和邻舍。因为上帝依旧对祂的创造尽忠职守，所以这个属地的城里仍然存留一些平安与公义；因为上帝依旧忠于祂拣选的旨意，所以在历时历代都有教会，带来真正的平安与公义。祂先把罪人与基督联合，将来会有一天，当基督再来的时候，要把一切纷争从这个地上抹除。

因此，这两座城有各自不同的政体，有不同的治理方式，也有不同的治理目的。虽然人类之城里有一些成员已经成为上帝之城的成员，但是这座属地的人类之城始终都是巴比伦。就像先知但以理在巴比伦一样，信徒们也为这座人类之城祷告，在其中工作，为其谋福，甚至抵御它的仇敌。然而，他们从未忘记自己是寄居的客旅。巴比伦从来不是那个应许之地。

尽管教会可能会得益于属地国度的和平，但是上帝之国的扩展不是通过国家的强权压迫，而是通过福音的宣讲（《上帝之城》，19.26-27）。我们看到这两座城「在现今这个短暂的世界上，彼此交织在一起」（11.2）。我们为了维护并发展社会向非基督徒所做的善事的确是好的，但是本身并不是终极的善。除非基督在荣耀中再来，属地之城永远不会变成上帝之城。基督徒处理政治问题的时候，所想的不应是如何拯救这个世界，而是如何能够在这个世代服侍这个世界。

中世纪时，以色列国与上帝在西奈山所立的约常常被拿来类比基督教世界。教皇声称那些与「异教徒」（通常指穆斯林）征战的十字军士兵们如果战死就能直接进入天堂。国王们幻想自己是大卫王，率领耶和华的军队清洗圣地。基督教帝国，或者基督教国家这样的概念正是严重混淆了这两座城。也正是为了纠正这种错误，路德和加尔文引用奥古斯丁的「两个国度」来反对混淆基督的国与以色列的神治政体。

像奥古斯丁一样，路德强调区分「属天的事」与「属地的事」，在上帝面前的义与在人面前的义。一方面，改教家们反对罗马把基督的国与属地的国混淆，基督的国是藉着圣言的宣讲来扩展的。另一方面，他们也反对重洗派运动，他们简单地认为属地的城完全邪恶，不值得基督徒参与其中。

加尔文称这种混淆的基督教为「人造国度」（contrived empire），他反对这样的错误，认为信徒必须认识到我们现在「受双重的治理……（不能）把这两件完全不同的事不合理地混乱起来（虽然常常发生）。」就像身体和灵魂彼此不同，却并不彼此矛盾，「基督属灵的国度和政府司法权力也是完全不同的两件事……但是这种不同并不应该使我们认为属地的政权是污秽的，与基督徒并无瓜葛。」这两个国「不同」（distinct），但是「它们并不冲突」（at variance）（要义，4.20.1-2）

像奥古斯丁一样，加尔文在肯定自然秩序的同时，也认同自然秩序因为罪的存在无法产生最佳社会。在创造主上帝和祂在创造中所立的约中，全人类都继承了他们始祖所违背的文化使命（cultural mandate）。然而，文化使命不同与大使命（Great Commission），大使命属于恩典之约。普遍恩典的目的不是做出一个完美的自然界，而是抑制罪，并促进人类社会的各种美德与技艺，使文化可以履行自己重要的，但却有限的、暂时的、世俗的使命。与此同时，上帝继续施行救赎之工，来完成祂永恒之城的救赎目的。

一些极端人士坚称任何国家或团体必须按照圣经的律法来管理才是合法的。加尔文回应此类说法，他说：「这种法律的不同性，本来是为求最能遵守神的律法，凡讨厌它的，乃是怎样暴露他嫉视公益呢？因为有些人提出反对，说，将神给摩西的律法取消，而代以别的法律，这对摩西的律法，乃是一种侮辱，他们所提出的这种反对是毫无根据的」（要义4.20.16）。毕竟，「既然上帝的律法中那称为道德律的，无非是自然律和神在人心中所铭刻的良心，那么，我们所说的整个公道律，就都包含在其中了」（同上）。不信的人也能谨慎、公正地治理，就像保罗在当时的异教环境中所说的（罗十三1-7）。

当耶稣基督来到世上时，祂没有依犹太人的意思来恢复西奈的神治政体。祂没有揭竿起义，赶出罗马人，反而要求我们爱仇敌。靠着祂的灵，藉着圣道和圣礼，耶稣把新以色列聚集起来，既有犹太人，也有外邦人。藉此，祂开辟了恩典的国度，有一天将成为荣耀之国。在基督再来之前，麦子和稗子一起长。两位雷子要向那些拒绝福音的人当即执行审判，然而主却斥责了他们。信徒有规律的聚集起来，领受使徒们的教导，彼此相交，擘饼，祷告（徒二42）。藉着宣讲福音、执行洗礼和圣餐、祷告、纪律，教会作为上帝新造的社会，被安插到世俗世界上，作基督的见证，直等到那日子来到，基督将充满万有。

在今天美国的基督教里，我们可以看到一种「基督王国」的论调，有人把美国想象成一个基督教国家，接受上帝的差遣，要将自由带到世界各个角落。当然，基督徒的确有责任，不单要传讲属天的、永恒的、在福音里显明的自由，也要抵挡不义之举，表明属地的、暂时的自由。但是这两者不是一回事。当我们将其混为一谈时，我就认为上帝的国是由我们一手建立的，这样我们就把原本的恩典之国，变成了一个权力和名望的国。

我们也必须警惕另一种看似很属灵的重洗派的观点。著名的布道家慕迪（D.L. Moody）曾声称：「这个世界是一艘损毁的船。上帝给了我一艘救生艇，告诉我，『慕迪，尽你所能去拯救。』」在这种观点里，改善邻舍的生活水平是炊沙镂冰，徒劳无益，就像在沉船上扫地一样。持这种观点的基督徒几乎只在乎个人得救的问题（不论是自己的，还是别的人），对世俗工作的价值没有明确的认识。

然而，我们不应该只局限于这两种观点。其实，我们同时属于这两个国。我们在教会中，在世界上都有呼召，需要用不同的方式来完成。我们不需要把文化「基督化」才能欣赏、融入它，因为上帝的普遍恩典给我们，也给那些非基督徒的邻舍。上帝呼召我们忠心等候基督再来，我们应当像亚伯拉罕一样「等候那座有根基的城，就是上帝所经营、所建造的」（来十一10）。

http://www.reformedbeginner.net/a-tale-of-two-kingdoms/

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There is no better time to refresh our memories about the “two kingdoms” doctrine than at election time in the United States, when American Protestantism often seems divided more by its political allegiances than its faith and practice.

In the aftershocks of the sacking of Rome by the pagans in 410 a.d., the great church father Augustine, bishop of Hippo, wrote his famous City of God. Jerome, another celebrated church father, had collapsed in despair: “What is to become of the church now that Rome has fallen?” No doubt as a patriot, Augustine felt the same wound, but as a Christian pastor he greeted the event as a providential opportunity: God had brought the mission field to the missionaries. The question was whether there were many “missionaries” left in an empire that had weakened the faith precisely to the extent that it had fused it with civil religion.

Whether we face a similar possibility in our own civilization, we certainly stand in need of the wisdom that Augustine brought to the crisis. Like all great books, his City of God is interpreted rather differently by various schools. However, it is indisputable that it helped to create what came to be called the doctrine of the two kingdoms.

According to Augustine, the distinction between the two cities — the city of God and the city of man — is grounded in the two loves: love of God and love of self. The former leads to genuine fellowship and a communion of mutual giving and receiving, while the latter engenders strife, war, and the desire to exercise domination over others.

Ultimately, Augustine says, these two loves and two cities are themselves grounded in God’s eternal predestination. Although the city of man is destined to perish, God is both creating a new city (the church) from its ruins and preserving the old city by His common grace until ultimate peace and justice arrive with Christ’s return. In this era of common grace, God “sends rain on the just and on the unjust” and calls us to imitate His clemency (Matt. 5:43–48). So Christians have two callings: the high calling in Christ to belong to His body and the calling to the world as citizens, parents, children, friends, coworkers, and neighbors. Because God is still faithful to His creation, there is the possibility of an earthly city with its relative peace and justice; because God is faithful to His electing purposes, there is a church in all times and places that brings true peace and justice. He does this first of all by uniting sinners to Christ, and then one day by eradicating all strife from the earth at Christ’s return.

Consequently, each city has its own polity, serving distinct ends through distinct means. Although some of its citizens are converted to citizenship in the city of God, the earthly city is always Babylon. Like Daniel, believers pray for the city, work in the city, contribute to the city’s general welfare, and even fight in its armies. However, they never forget that they are exiles and pilgrims. Babylon is never the promised land.

The kingdom of God advances through the proclamation of the Gospel, not through the properly coercive powers of the state, although the church may take advantage of the relative peace that is possible in the earthly city (City of God, 19.26–27). These two cities we find “interwoven, as it were, in this present transitory world, and mingled with one another” (11.2). The good things that we do with non-Christian citizens to preserve and enlarge society really are good, but they are not ultimate goods. The earthly city will never be transformed into the city of God this side of Christ’s return in glory. A Christian would then approach politics not with the question as to how the world can best be saved, but how it can best be served in this time between the times.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the national covenant that Israel made with God at Sinai was regularly invoked as an allegory for Christendom. Crusades against “the infidel” (often Muslims) were declared by popes with the promise of immediate entrance into paradise for martyrs. Kings fancied themselves as king David, leading the armies of the Lord in cleansing the Holy Land. The very idea of a Christian empire or a Christian nation was a serious confusion of these two cities. It was against this confusion of Christ’s kingdom with Israel’s theocracy that Luther and Calvin launched their retrieval of Augustine’s “two kingdoms.”

Like Augustine, Luther emphasized the distinction between “things heavenly” and “things earthly,” righteousness before God and righteousness before fellow humans. On one hand, the Reformers were rejecting Rome’s confusion of Christ’s kingdom, which is extended by the proclamation of the Word, and earthly kingdoms. On the other hand, they were also opposing the Anabaptist movement, which regarded the earthly city as simply evil and unworthy of Christian involvement.

Opposing what he called the “contrived empire” of Christendom, Calvin says that we must recognize that we are “under a two-fold government…so that we do not (as commonly happens) unwisely mingle these two, which have a completely different nature.” Just as the body and spirit are distinct without being intrinsically opposed, “Christ’s spiritual kingdom and the civil jurisdiction are things completely distinct. …Yet this distinction does not lead us to consider the whole nature of government a thing polluted, which has nothing to do with Christian men.” These two kingdoms are “distinct,” yet “they are not at variance” (Institutes of the Christian Religion, 4.20.1–2).

Like Augustine, Calvin simultaneously affirms the natural order and its inability to generate an ultimate society because of sin. Bound to God as Creator in the covenant of creation, all human beings are heirs to a cultural mandate that they have transgressed. However, the cultural mandate is distinct from the Great Commission that belongs to the covenant of grace. The goal of common grace is not to perfect nature, but to restrain sin and animate civic virtues and arts, so that culture may fulfill its own important but limited, temporal, and secular ends, while God simultaneously pursues the redemptive aims of His everlasting city.

Responding to the radical reformers’ insistence that a commonwealth is only legitimate if it is ordered by biblical law, Calvin declares, “How malicious and hateful toward public welfare would a man be who is offended by such diversity, which is perfectly adapted to maintain the observance of God’s law! For the statement of some, that the law of God given through Moses is dishonored when it is abrogated and new laws preferred to it, is utterly vain” (Institutes, 4.20.8, 14). After all, Calvin says, “It is a fact that the law of God which we call the moral law is nothing else than a testimony of natural law and of that conscience which God has engraved on the minds of men” (Institutes, 4.20.8, 14). Even unbelievers can rule justly and prudently, as Paul indicates even under the more pagan circumstances of his day (Rom. 13:1–7).

When Jesus Christ arrived, He did not revive the Sinai theocracy as His contemporaries had hoped. Instead of driving out the Romans, He commanded love for our enemies. Gathering the new Israel — Jew and Gentile — around Himself, by His Spirit, through Word and sacrament, Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of grace that will be manifested one day as a kingdom of glory. In this time between His two comings the wheat grows together with the weeds, the sons of thunder are rebuked for calling down judgment here and now on those who reject their message, and the faithful gather regularly for the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, the breaking of the bread, and the prayers (Acts 2:42). Through its administration of Gospel preaching, baptism, the Supper, prayer, and discipline, the church is God’s new society inserted into the heart of the secular city as a witness to Christ and the age to come when He will be all in all.

In our Christian circles in the United States today, we can discern a “Christendom” view, where some imagine America to be a Christian nation invested with a divine commission to bring freedom to the ends of the earth. Of course, Christians have an obligation both to proclaim the heavenly and everlasting freedom of the Gospel and the earthly and temporal freedom from injustice. But they are different. When we confuse them, we take the kingdom into our own hands, transforming it from a kingdom of grace into a kingdom of glory and power.

We also recognize an opposite view, more characteristic of the Anabaptist perspective, as evangelist D. L. Moody asserted: “I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, ‘Moody, save all you can.’” In this view, improving the lot of our neighbors in the world is like polishing the brass on a sinking ship. Christians are often encouraged to focus almost exclusively on personal salvation (their own as well as that of others), unsure of the value of their secular vocations.

But we need not choose between these two kingdoms. Citizens of both, we carry out our vocations in the church and the world in distinct ways through distinct means. We need not “Christianize” culture in order to appreciate it and participate in it with the gifts that God has given us as well as our non-Christian neighbors. Though called to be faithful in our callings until Christ returns, with Abraham, we are “looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Heb 11:10, hcsb).

https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/tale-two-kingdoms