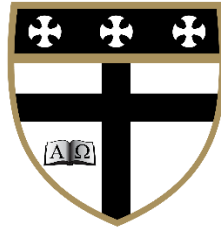


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A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

**“The Prophet Samuel and the Changing of the Levitical Priesthood:
A Prologue to the New Testament”¹**

by

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² Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022). www.roderickford.org.

Introduction

The Prophet Samuel—priest, prophet, and judge— is identified in Sir Isaac Newton’s masterpiece *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* as the primary architect of the Torah, the Books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and a portion the Books of Samuel.

“And Samuel,” wrote Newton, “was a sacred writer, 1 Sam. X. 25, acquainted with the history of Moses and the Judges, 1 Sam. XII. 8,9, 10, 11, 12, and had leisure in the reign of Saul, and sufficient authority to compose these books. He was a Prophet, and judged Israel all the days of his life, and was in the greatest esteem with the people; and the Law by which he was to judge the people was not to be published by less authority than his own, the Law-maker being not inferior to the judge. And the book of Jasher, which is quoted in the book of Joshua, Josh X.13, was in being at the death of Saul, 2 Sam. I. 18.”³

According to Augustine of Hippo, the Prophet Samuel typified, or prefigured, Jesus Christ, because Samuel’s ministry as High Priest represented the future changing of the Aaronic priesthood to the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ,⁴ to wit: “...Samuel typified... Christ Jesus the true Priest of the New Testament....”⁵

This New Testament Priesthood— also described as the theological doctrine of the “*priesthood of all believers*”— was rooted in the theology that the entire Christian church represented a “royal priesthood”⁶ and that Jesus Christ had made the common man “kings and priests of God and his Father.”⁷

³ Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (United States of America: Renaissance Classics, 2012), p. 4.

⁴ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 572-582.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 581.

⁶ 1 Peter 2:9.

⁷ Revelation 1:6.

Hence, this doctrine on the “priesthood of all believers” later became the cornerstone of Reformed theology,⁸ the Protestant Reformation,⁹ and, eventually, the foundation of political democracy in Puritan colonial New England and the new United States of America.

The judicial role of the Prophet Samuel also reinforced the idea that the role of the civil magistrate and the civil polity was a divine function.¹⁰

In addition, the Prophet Samuel’s attitude towards the surrounding pagan kings, together with his forewarning the children of Israel against establishing a monarchy, would later greatly influence the Reformed Christian attitude toward limiting the power of, or dismantling, the institution of worldly monarchs.

This paper, however, demonstrates how the priestly ministry and example of the Prophet Samuel typified the changing of the priesthood of the House of Eli (i.e., the established Aaronic priesthood) to the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ (i.e., the New Testament priesthood; the “priesthood of all believers”)— a significant change that would eventually influence much of the development of the Western Church and Western civilization.

⁸ Even the Roman Catholic Church concedes this very point. See, e.g., *Catholic Answers* <https://www.catholic.com/audio/ddp/the-priesthood-of-all-believers> (“The Church agrees that, by baptism, Christians have a share in Christ’s priesthood (CCC 1141, 1268, 1546; cf. 1174, 1322). This is commonly referred to as “**the common priesthood of all the faithful**” (CCC 1535). However, certain members of the faithful are ordained to a greater participation in Christ’s priesthood by the sacrament of holy orders. This is known as the ministerial priesthood (CCC 1547). Christ—the source of the common and ministerial priesthoods—is our high priest (CCC 1544).”)

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ See, e.g., Martin Luther, *Temporal Authority: To What Extent it should be Obeyed* (1523) (“Here you inquire further, whether constables, hangmen, jurists, lawyers, and others of similar function can also be Christians and in a state of salvation. Answer: If the governing authority and its sword are a divine service, as was proved above, then everything that is essential for the authority's bearing of the sword must also be divine service.”)

Chapter One:

“The Priesthood of Aaron, Brother of Moses”

In the Torah, Moses’ older brother Aaron was established as a priest—the High Priest—of ancient Israel. The primary function of this priesthood was to “bear the iniquity of the sanctuary”¹¹ on behalf of the children of Israel, through offering sacrifices to the LORD God in the tabernacle and, later, the Temple.

This priesthood was invested in Aaron and in his lineal descendants (i.e., his four sons Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar), and to their succeeding generations of *male* descendants.

The important fact that only male descendants were set aside and designated for the Hebrew priesthood is explained in the Torah, and in the Mosaic law, in the commemoration of Passover commemoration and the Passover sacrifice.

The Passover lamb (or goat) has to be “**without blemish, a male of the first year...**”¹² Likewise, the LORD God commanded Moses to “[s]anctify unto me all the firstborn.... That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast: *the males* shall be the LORD’s.... therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, *being males*; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem.”¹³

The office of the priesthood was thus a “sacrifice” of sorts, a setting aside, or a giving up of something valuable and important, to the LORD God. Under the Mosaic law, that sacrifice had to be a firstborn male child, either to be redeemed or offered up to the priesthood. Of such was the baby Samuel, a future prophet of Israel, when his mother Hannah presented him to the High Priest Eli.

¹¹ Numbers 18:1

¹² Exodus 12:5.

¹³ Exodus 13: 1, 12-15.

The Book of Numbers thus contains the investiture of Moses' brother Aaron and his sons with the "priesthood" of ancient Israel,¹⁴ and the ordination of his tribe, the Levites,¹⁵ as ministers before the tabernacle, to wit:

And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.... Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.¹⁶

The sons of Aaron included Nadab (firstborn), Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. Nadab and Abihu "died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father."¹⁷

This "priest's office" was invested in Aaron and his sons as "a perpetual statute";¹⁸ and "it shall be Aaron's and his sons' by a statute for ever from the children of Israel...."¹⁹

¹⁴ See, e.g., Exodus 29: 43-46, to wit:

And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory.

And I will sanctify the *tabernacle* of the congregation, and *the altar*: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in *the priest's office*.

And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God.

¹⁵ Numbers 3:6 ("Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him"); Numbers 18: 2, 6 ("And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness.... And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.")

¹⁶ Numbers 18: 1.

¹⁷ Exodus 32: 25-29; Numbers 1:47-51; and Numbers 3:4.

¹⁸ Exodus 29:9.

¹⁹ Exodus 29: 28.

Specifically, the specific families of the Levites, which performed service in the tabernacle, are mentioned in the Book of Numbers, and include the family (sons) of Levi, to wit: Kohath, Gershon, and Merari.²⁰

Neither the sons of Aaron (i.e., the priests) or the Levites (i.e., the ministers of the tabernacle or temple) received any inheritance (i.e., the Land of Canaan) but rather they received the tithes and offerings as compensation for their ecclesiastical service.²¹

The priesthood of ancient Israel was established by divine statute and commandment to be Aaron's lineal descendants (i.e., Aaron's sons, grandsons, great grandsons, etc.) *forever*.²²

²⁰Numbers 3:17 (“And these were the sons of Levi by their names; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari”); Numbers 4: 1-49.

²¹ Numbers 18:20 (“Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.”)

²² Exodus 29: 9 (“a perpetual statute”), 28 (“by a statute forever”). But note: Aaron's priesthood in its original form did not last, but rather it *mutated*. See, e.g., St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 583, stating “this very priesthood after the order of Aaron was appointed as the shadow of a future eternal priesthood; and therefore, when eternity is promised to it, it is not promised to the mere shadow and figure, but to what is shadowed forth and prefigured by it.”)

Chapter Two: “The Fall of the House of Eli”

In the book of First Samuel, there is an account given of a man named Elkanah and his two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Wife Peninnah “had children, but Hannah had no children.”²³ Although Elkanah greatly loved Hannah, this in and of itself was not adequate consolation of her grief.

And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.

And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.²⁴

Hannah prayed at the house of the LORD, before the High Priest Eli, who thought that her behavior was so strange that he mistook her for being intoxicated. But when Hannah assured her that she was not intoxicated, but that she had spoken to the Lord, “[t]hen Eli answered and said, Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.”²⁵

Then Elkanah knew Hannah, and she conceived and bore a man-child, and called his name Samuel.²⁶

After Samuel was weaned, Hannah brought and presented the boy to the High Priest Eli for service to God in the house of the Lord at Shiloh.

Hannah would later bear several more children: “three sons and two daughters.”²⁷

²³ 1 Samuel 1:2.

²⁴ 1 Samuel 1:10-11.

²⁵ 1 Samuel 1: 17.

²⁶ 1 Samuel 1: 19-20.

²⁷ 1 Samuel 2: 21.

Meanwhile, the boy Samuel thus grew up in the house of the Lord and trained for the prophetic ministry (and the priesthood) under the High Priest Eli.

“And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.”²⁸

At the same time, the High Priest Eli grew old and weary, and his eyesight grew dim; and he failed to adequately supervise and discipline his two sons Hopni and Phinehas, who “lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”²⁹

As a consequence, an unnamed “man of God” came to Eli and rendered the following prophetic judgment against both him and his house, stating:

... Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?

And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?

Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, **I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever:** but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; **for them that honour me I will honour**, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

Behold, the days come, that **I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house**, that there shall not be an old man in thine house.

²⁸ 1 Samuel 3:20-21.

²⁹ 1 Samuel 2: 22.

And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever.

And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.

And this shall be a sign unto thee, **that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.**

And **I will raise me up a faithful priest**, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and **I will build him a sure house**; and **he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.**

And it shall come to pass, that **every one that is left in thine house** shall come and crouch **to him** for **a piece of silver and a morsel of bread**, and shall say, **Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.**³⁰

As discussed in the next chapter, this fall of the House of Eli has been interpreted by Augustine of Hippo as “a sign of the change of the priesthood from this man’s house, by which it is signified that the priesthood of Aaron’s house is to be changed.”³¹

³⁰ 1 Samuel 2: 27-36.

³¹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, pp. 580-581.

Chapter Three:

“The Prophetic Mutation of the Aaronic Priesthood”

According to Reformed theological interpretation, the fall of the House of Eli prophetically signified the future mutation or changing of the priesthood of Aaron’s house to the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ.³²

Augustine of Hippo has stated that the death of Eli’s sons Hophni and Phinehas “signified the death not of men, but of the priesthood itself of the sons of Aaron.”³³

Moreover, the unnamed prophet who came and spoke to Eli, and forewarned him of these events, had stated that “**I will raise me up a faithful priest.**”³⁴ And this faithful priest “**shall walk before mine anointed for ever.**”³⁵

According to Augustine, this “faithful priest” is not a person but rather prefigures the New Testament priesthood, which is the **church of Jesus Christ** or of “the house itself.”³⁶

The Prophet Samuel, says Augustine, prefigured this changing of the New Testament Priesthood for two reasons: first, although Samuel was a Levite, he was not a member of the House of Aaron; and, secondly, the investiture of Samuel as high priest in ancient Israel “shadowed forth” and constituted a “transaction” which was “the same change which should come pass through Christ Jesus.”³⁷

As foretold by the prophet who came to the High Priest Eli, after this future change in the priesthood would take place—i.e., the final change from the priesthood of Aaron to the future New Testament priesthood—the older Aaronic priesthood would then look to the New Testament priests and “**crouch to him for**

³² Ibid. See, also, Ibid, p. 583, stating “this very priesthood after the order of Aaron was appointed as the shadow of a future eternal priesthood; and therefore, when eternity is promised to it, it is not promised to the mere shadow and figure, but to what is shadowed forth and prefigured by it.”)

³³ Ibid., p. 581.

³⁴ 1 Samuel 2: 35.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 581. (“But what He says, ‘He shall walk before my Christ [i.e., anointed in KJV version],’ is to be understood entirely of **the house itself not the priest** who is Christ Himself, the Mediator and Savior. His house, therefore, shall walk before Him.”)

³⁷ Ibid., p. 579.

a piece of silver and a morsel of bread” and say, “Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.”³⁸

This “morsel of bread” and “piece of silver[or money]” has been interpreted by Augustine of Hippo to mean “the very kind of sacrifice of which the Priest Himself says, ‘The bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.’ The same is the sacrifice not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek: let him that readeth understand. Therefore this short and salutary humble confession, in which it is said, ‘Put me in a part of Thy priesthood, to eat bread,’ is itself the piece of money, for it is both brief, and it is the Word of God who dwells in the heart of one who believes.... ‘To eat bread,’ which is in the New Testament the sacrifice of the Christians.”³⁹

Finally, Augustine of Hippo concludes that even present-day Jews or non-Christians must “certainly confess” that “there is nowhere a priesthood and sacrifice after the order of Aaron, and everywhere men offer under Christ as the Priest, which Melchezidek showed when he blessed Abraham...”⁴⁰ and “indeed, no tabernacle, no temple, no altar, no sacrifice, and therefore no priest either, has remained to the Jews, to whom it was commanded in the law of God that he should be ordained of the seed of Aaron.”⁴¹

Hence, according to Augustine of Hippo, the unnamed prophet, who came to Eli and foretold of the fall of his “House of Eli,” was also prophetically speaking about Jesus Christ’s institution of the New Testament priesthood that would occur several centuries later.⁴²

³⁸ 1 Samuel 2: 36.

³⁹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 582.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p, 599.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 580. This is not meant to be anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish, but rather it certainly highlights the convergence between orthodox rabbinic Jewish theology and the New Testament because of the collapse of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. See, e.g., Jerod S. Auerbach, *Rabbis and Lawyers: The Journey From Torah to Constitution* (New Orleans, LA: Quid Pro Books, 2010)(stating that Judaism, and especially Reformed Judaism, found commonality and theological convergence with the Puritan theology of colonial New England).

⁴² Ibid., pp. 579-584.

Chapter Four: “The New Testament Priesthood”

Significantly, in *The City of God*, Augustine of Hippo describes a sort of priesthood that is arguably radically distinct and different from the Aaronic priesthood.

This is true even though the Aaronic priesthood is considered to be a foreshadowing of this New Testament priesthood.⁴³ That is to say, the New Testament priesthood is the natural fulfillment, reflection, and culmination of everything that the older Aaronic priesthood sought to represent and carry out. And so, to a very great degree, both priesthoods represent the same type of holiness and devotion to the LORD God.

Notably, the unnamed prophet who came to forewarn the High Priest Eli about the coming downfall of the House of Eli, stated that:

Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; **for them that honour me I will honour**, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.⁴⁴

This Scriptural passage seems to suggest the priesthood would pass from the House of Aaron and his lineal descendants to “**them that honour me,**” who may comprise of a multitude of unknown, indistinguishable, common men and women.

Similarly, the Apostle Peter described the Christian Church as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people... the people of God....”⁴⁵ And the Apostle John wrote that Jesus Christ had made the common men “kings and priests unto God and his Father....”⁴⁶ Thus, to be a Christian—

⁴³ Ibid, p. 583, stating “this very priesthood after the order of Aaron was appointed as the shadow of a future eternal priesthood; and therefore, when eternity is promised to it, it is not promised to the mere shadow and figure, but to what is shadowed forth and prefigured by it.”)

⁴⁴ 1 Samuel 2:30.

⁴⁵ 1 Peter 2: 9-10.

⁴⁶ Revelation 1:6.

even a common layman who professes Christ as his Savior, is to be a member of the New Testament priesthood.⁴⁷

Perhaps it is for this reason that Augustine of Hippo, in his magnum opus *The City of God*, does not acknowledge the same sort of priesthood that is controlled by the ordination ceremonies that are wrought by the human hands of priests and bishops within earth-bound ecclesiastical institutions. Instead, Augustine sees that the sources of priestly ordination are not really wrought by human hands at all, but rather by divine grace—in other words, “**them that honour me I will honour.**”⁴⁸

The plain evidence of this, according to Augustine, is the fact that many unholy men become priests and bishops, and many unordained commoners become holy men and holy women. “For we see that priests and Levites are now chosen, not from a certain family and blood, as was originally the rule in the priesthood according to the order of Aaron, but as befits the new testament, under which Christ is the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, in *consideration of the merit which is bestowed upon each man by divine grace*. And these priests are not to be judged by their *mere title*, which is often borne by unworthy men, but by that *holiness* which is not common to good men and bad.”⁴⁹

Significantly, Augustine repeats this perspective of the true Christian priesthood in his general description of what he called the real or the true bishoprick or episcopacy. In *The City of God*, Augustine defines the office of a bishop as any form or type of position in which a person exercises authority over others—in which case, he has the duty to exercise moral and ethical leadership, which is the essence of the duties and functions of a bishop. “It is to this the apostle refers when he says, ‘He that desireth the episcopate desireth a good work.’ He wished to show that *the episcopate is the title of a work*, not of an honour,” Augustine explained. “It is a Greek word, and signifies that he who governs superintends or takes care of those whom he governs.... So that he who loves to govern rather than to do good is no bishop.”⁵⁰ (And Martin Luther (1483 –

⁴⁷ Even the Roman Catholic Church concedes this very point. See, e.g., *Catholic Answers* <https://www.catholic.com/audio/ddp/the-priesthood-of-all-believers> (“The Church agrees that, by baptism, Christians have a share in Christ’s priesthood (CCC 1141, 1268, 1546; cf. 1174, 1322). This is commonly referred to as “the common priesthood of all the faithful” (CCC 1535). However, certain members of the faithful are ordained to a greater participation in Christ’s priesthood by the sacrament of holy orders. This is known as the ministerial priesthood (CCC 1547). Christ—the source of the common and ministerial priesthoods—is our high priest (CCC 1544).”)

⁴⁸ 1 Samuel 2: 30.

⁴⁹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 746.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 698.

1546), who was himself an Augustinian theologian, adopted the same viewpoint in his polemical essay “Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate,” whereby he concluded that baptized temporal (i.e., government) authorities were really and truly priests and bishops.)⁵¹

Furthermore, Augustine also insists that there is a “priesthood of all believers.” To this point, Augustine writes, “I desire to be a member, no matter what, or how small, of Thy priesthood,” wrote Augustine, “By the priesthood he here means *the people itself*, of which He is the Priest who is the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. This people the Apostle Peter calls “a holy people, a royal priesthood.”⁵²

Therefore, the New Testament priesthood consists of every true Christian, regardless of whether they be laymen or ordained clergymen— with no theological distinction between clergy and layman⁵³— this is also known as the theological doctrine of the “*priesthood of all believers*.”

⁵¹ Martin Luther, “Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate” [unpublished essay of Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology, 1520], stating, “**the temporal authorities are baptized with the same baptism and have the same faith and Gospel as we, we must grant that they are priests and bishops, and count their office one which has a proper and a useful place in the Christian community.**”

⁵² St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 582.

⁵³ And the Apostle John wrote that Jesus Christ had made the common men “kings and priests unto God and his Father....”

Chapter Five:

“The Protestant Reformation and the New Secular Priesthood”

The ministry of the Prophet Samuel has had a great impact upon the founding of American democracy. The last judge of ancient Israel was the prophet Samuel, to wit:

And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gil-gal, and Mispheh, and judged Israel in all those places...⁵⁴

And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel...⁵⁵

For it was during this period, when no human person was made king in ancient Israel, that the LORD God himself was the acknowledged “King” over the ancient Israelites. Indeed, when the children of Israel requested the prophet Samuel to anoint a human king to reign over them, this request was interpreted as a rejection of, and rebellion against, the sovereign reign of the LORD God. 1 Samuel 8:4-7 thus states:

Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel... and said unto him, Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now *make us a king to judge us like all the nations.*

And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

At the tail end of the Protestant Reformation, during the 18th century, when the American Revolutionary War (1775 – 1783) was being wrought, the 17th-century ideas of the English Puritans and of the Whigs availed themselves of this, and similar Scripture, to make the case that the British monarchy—and especially as it existed under the House of Stuart and King George III-- was not the ideal form of Christian polity. But what God had originally intended was a system of federated judges who applied a “fundamental law” or a Higher Law (e.g., God himself). And the Puritans of colonial New England certainly tried to apply that

⁵⁴ 1 Samuel 7:15-16.

⁵⁵ 1 Samuel 8:1.

same template to their colonies in British North America.⁵⁶ The “covenant” theology of the Puritans thus served as the foundational basis of their written compacts (e.g., the Mayflower Compact of 1620) and their written colonial constitutions (e.g., Fundamental Orders of Connecticut of 1639).

Moreover, in Reformed theology, the fall of the House of Eli, and the changing of the priesthood from the House of Eli to Samuel, who served a priest in Israel, signified also the future change in the priesthood from the House of Aaron to the New Testament priesthood—a *priesthood of all believers*.

Since the days of the first Apostles and even since Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.), the Lutherans and the Calvinists have greatly refined this theological definition of the “priesthood of all believers,” so that modern democracies around the world owe much or all their existence to constitutional, legal, and ecclesiastical foundations laid by the Protestant reformers.

In Protestant Reformer Martin Luther’s (1483 – 1536) general philosophy on the “priesthood of all believers,” even the secular civil authorities, such as magistrates, governors, lawyers, and judges—were really and truly “priests” and “bishops” and that the civil functions fell within the rightful domain of the Christian community.⁵⁷

Significantly, Luther himself challenged the might and power of the Roman Catholic Church’s restrictive definitions of “priesthood.” Luther rebutted the Catholic definitions of priesthood through arguing that the Romanists had fraudulently created two distinct classes of Christians: *the laity* (i.e., the Temporal Estate) and *the clergy* (i.e., the Spiritual Estate).⁵⁸

⁵⁶ See, e.g., William Goodell, *The Democracy of Christianity*, supra, p. 484 (“[T]he people of Great Britain are indebted to the Puritans. What is wanting, both in England and America, to the completeness and the security of human freedom, is an undeviating fidelity to those principles of Christian democracy which the Puritans in some measure restored.... If the people desire larger measures of liberty, they have only to become more democratic, more Christian.”) And see Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Politics*, supra, p. 244 (“It was the belief of the Puritan that was the motive power of the American Revolution. It was the stern conviction of the Puritan that not King George, but God, was the rightful sovereign in America... and it was the conviction of the Puritan that sustained the people of the country through the long years of the Revolutionary War.”)

⁵⁷ Martin Luther, “Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate” [unpublished essay of Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology, 1520], stating, “**the temporal authorities are baptized with the same baptism and have the same faith and Gospel as we, we must grant that they are priests and bishops, and count their office one which has a proper and a useful place in the Christian community.**”

⁵⁸ *Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate*

Luther argued that these Romanists then elevated the clergy far above the laity, making the clergy exempt from secular, temporal laws, even when they commit crimes (i.e., the criminal clergy exemption).

Conversely, Luther argued that “all Christians” are members of the “Spiritual estate.”⁵⁹ The only difference between the clergy and the laity was their status as “office-holders.”

Luther argued, for instance that a bishop who is deposed is no longer a clergyman, but a layman; and that a carpenter or a book-maker who answers a calling to the ministry, is no longer a layman but a clergyman.

There is no “spiritual” estate and no “temporal” estate, said Luther, because there is only one body of Christ. Within this body of Christ, said Luther, Christians played different roles, but just as Richard Hooker’s *Law of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Luther believed the “church” and the “state” were but two sides of the same coin. Those persons who held the temporal or the governmental power were vested with sacred and divine ordination, and were just as much “priests” and “bishops” as were the so-called ordained clergymen within the established, organize churches.

Luther went on to thus explain:

It is pure invention that pope, bishops, priests and monks are to be called the ‘spiritual estate’; princes, lords, artisans, and farmers the ‘temporal estate.’ That is indeed a fine bit of lying and hypocrisy.

Yet no one should be frightened by it; and for this reason -- viz., that all Christians are truly of the ‘spiritual estate,’ and there is among them no difference at all but that of office, as Paul says in I Corinthians 12:12, We are all one body, yet every member has its own work, where by it serves every other, all because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all alike Christians; for baptism, Gospel and faith alone make us ‘spiritual’ and a Christian people. But that a pope or a bishop anoints, confers tonsures; ordains, consecrates, or prescribes dress unlike that of the laity, this may make

[unpublished essay of Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology, 1520].

⁵⁹ Ibid.

hypocrites and graven images, but it never makes a Christian or 'spiritual' man.

Through baptism all of us are consecrated to the priesthood, as St. Peter says in I Peter 2:9, 'Ye are a royal priesthood, a priestly kingdom,' and the book of Revelation says, Rev. 5:10 'Thou hast made us by Thy blood to be priests and kings.' For if we had no higher consecration than pope or bishop gives, the consecration by pope or bishop would never make a priest, nor might anyone either say mass or preach a sermon or give absolution. Therefore when the bishop consecrates it is the same thing as if he, in the place and stead of the whole congregation, all of whom have like power, were to take one out of their number and charge him to use this power for the others; just as though ten brothers, all king's sons and equal heirs, were to choose one of themselves to rule the inheritance for them all, - they would all be kings and equal in power, though one of them would be charged with the duty of ruling. To make it still clearer. **If a little group of pious Christian laymen were taken captive and set down in a wilderness, and had among them no priest consecrated by a bishop, and if there in the wilderness they were to agree in choosing one of themselves, married or unmarried, and were to charge him with the office of baptizing, saying mass, absolving and preaching, such a man would be as truly a priest as though all bishops and popes had consecrated him.** That is why in cases of necessity any one can baptize and give absolution, which would be impossible unless we were all priests. This great grace and power of baptism and of the Christian Estate they have well-nigh destroyed and caused us to forget through the canon law. It was in the manner aforesaid that Christians in olden days chose from their number bishops and priests, who were afterwards confirmed by other bishops, without all the show which now obtains. It was thus that Sts. Augustine, Ambrose and Cyprian became bishops. **Since, then, the temporal authorities are baptized with the same baptism and have the same faith and Gospel as we, we must grant that they are priests and bishops, and count their office one which has a proper and a useful place in the Christian community.** For whoever comes out the water of baptism can boast that he is already consecrated priest, bishop and pope, though it is not seemly that every one should exercise the office....

On this account the Christian temporal power should exercise its office without let or hindrance, regardless whether it be pope, bishop or priest whom it affects; whoever is guilty, let him suffer. All that the canon law has said to the contrary is sheer invention of Roman presumption. For Thus saith St. Paul to all Christians: Roman 13:1, 4 "Let every soul (I take that to mean the pope's soul also) be subject unto the higher powers; for they bear not the sword in vain, but are the ministers of God for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." St. Peter also says: 1 Peter 2:13, 15 "Submit yourselves unto every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, for so is the will of God" He has also prophesied that such men shall come as will despise the temporal authorities; and this has come to pass through the canon law. So then, I think this first paper-wall is overthrown, since **the temporal power has become a member of the body of Christendom**, and is of **the 'spiritual estate,'** though its work is of **a temporal nature**. Therefore its work should extend freely and without hindrance to all the members of the whole body; it should punish and use force whenever guilt deserves or necessity demands, without regard to pope, bishops and priests, -let them hail threats and bans as much as they will.⁶⁰

In John Calvin's (1509- 1564) general philosophy on the "priesthood of all believers," as well as in Luther's, even the secular vocational callings of the common man—i.e. agriculture, the building trades, medicine, teaching, etc.—constituted noble service, and thereby constituted a divine calling and duty from God.⁶¹

Both Calvin and John Knox (1514 - 1572) instituted structural changes to both civil and ecclesiastical polities—namely the republican and Presbyterian systems of governance—in Geneva and Scotland that forever instituted and implemented Luther's radical arguments regarding the "priesthood of all believers."

Thus, when Lutheranism and Calvinism were conjoined together, especially in the theology of the Baptist sect⁶² which highly regarded both Luther and Calvin,

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York, N.Y.: Vigeo Press Reprint, 2017), pp. 51-61, 65-89.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 100- 108.

the modern-day Western nation state was born, beginning perhaps during the early 1600s in Puritan New England in colonial British North America.⁶³

In colonial British North America, the Puritans and the Presbyterians brought both Calvinism and Knox's Scottish Presbyterianism to the colonies, where revolutionary Lutheran-Calvinistic theological and political ideals were implemented and, later, adopted in their colonial charters which eventually laid the constitutional foundation of the United States of America.⁶⁴

⁶³ See, e.g., William Goodell, *The Democracy of Christianity*, supra, p. 484 (“[T]he people of Great Britain are indebted to the Puritans. What is wanting, both in England and America, to the completeness and the security of human freedom, is an undeviating fidelity to those principles of Christian democracy which the Puritans in some measure restored.... If the people desire larger measures of liberty, they have only to become more democratic, more Christian.”) And see Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Politics*, supra, p. 244 (“It was the belief of the Puritan that was the motive power of the American Revolution. It was the stern conviction of the Puritan that not King George, but God, was the rightful sovereign in America... and it was the conviction of the Puritan that sustained the people of the country through the long years of the Revolutionary War.”)

⁶⁴ See, e.g., William Goodell, *The Democracy of Christianity* (New York, N.Y.: Cady & Burgess, 1852), p. 484, stating:

[T]he democracy of Christianity is signally illustrated in the history of the Puritans, and in the effects of their labors, in America.... [T]he people of Great Britain are indebted to the Puritans. What is wanting, both in England and America, to the completeness and the security of human freedom, is an undeviating fidelity to those principles of Christian democracy which the Puritans in some measure restored.

And, in the same text, on pp. 376-377, Rev. Goodell writes:

These Puritan and Common Law expositions of Paul, in Romans XIII, are among the most revolutionary maxims we have in modern times, and, as a matter of historical fact, they have wrought two tremendous revolutions already, one in England and one in America, whether they are to be regarded as sound expositions or otherwise. An echo of these expositions we have in our Declaration of Independence. Bracton, in his exposition of Romans XIII, had said:

‘He is called a king for ruling righteously, and not because he reigns. Wherefore he is a king when he governs with justice, but a tyrant when he oppresses the people committed to his charge.’

In nearly the same language our Declaration of Independence abjures the authority of the British monarch:

‘A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.’

These words of Jefferson seem but a paraphrase or application of Bracton's, and Bracton's are but his own inference from his own exposition of Paul.

CONCLUSION

In Reformed theology, the ministry of the Prophet Samuel is monumental in part because it typified the changing of the Aaronic priesthood to that eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ.

The Aaronic priesthood was very restrictive, because it was limited to the House of Aaron.

The New Testament priesthood, however, was opened to “them that honour me” (i.e., all those persons who honor the LORD God).⁶⁵

This implied and eventually instituted a “priesthood of all believers,” which the Protestant Reformers—such as Martin Luther (1483- 1546) and John Calvin (1509 – 1564) implemented in their proposed changes to civil and ecclesiastical institutions throughout Europe.

Significantly, Martin Luther’s “Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate,” concluded that all baptized temporal (i.e., secular civil government) authorities were really and truly priests and bishops)⁶⁶—a viewpoint that was not radically different from that of Augustine’s.⁶⁷

In colonial New England, the Puritans, who held to the doctrine on the “priesthood of all believers” and looked to the ancient Hebrew polity as an example and for inspiration,⁶⁸ implemented these same and similar other ideals

⁶⁵ 1 Samuel 2: 30.

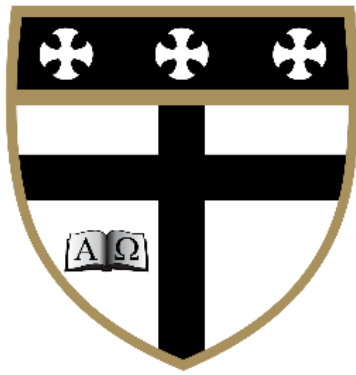
⁶⁶ Martin Luther, “Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate” [unpublished essay of Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology, 1520], stating, “**the temporal authorities are baptized with the same baptism and have the same faith and Gospel as we, we must grant that they are priests and bishops, and count their office one which has a proper and a useful place in the Christian community.**” For this reason, American lawyers and judges—especially those who are Christians and taken the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper—are vicegerents of the God of Nature who is mentioned in the American Declaration of Independence (1776)—“Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness” being their general mandate in equity. Indeed, when they take the “Oath of Attorney” or the “Oath of Judge” (i.e., “So Help Me God”), they become, by Solemn Oath, ministers of God. See Romans 13: 4,6.

⁶⁷ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 698.

⁶⁸ See, e.g., “The Ancient Hebrew Polity,” *The Presbyterian Quarterly* 12.2 (April 1898): 153-169.

when adopting their laws and colonial charters, and thereby laid the constitutional foundations of the United States of America.

THE END



Appendix A

The Levitical Priesthood

Ex 6:16-20
1 Chron 6:1-30

