Ulrich Zwingli’s Theology of Church and State
as expressed in
The Sermon on Divine and Human Righteousness
Contrasted with Martin Luther’s treatise
Temporal Authority

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On October eleventh of 1531, an ill-prepared and heavily outnumbered ‘army’ from Zurich met five nearby Roman Catholic cantons in battle at Kappel, Switzerland. They fought over the immediate issue of an embargo imposed by Zurich and her allies, but the roots of conflict, like nearly all of the other important events in the sixteenth century, revolved around religion. In Switzerland, this meant the important question of whether cantons would remain loyal to the pope and the teachings of the Roman Church, or embrace the reformation sparked by Martin Luther in Saxony and embodied in Zurich in the person of Ulrich Zwingli. Indeed, Zwingli himself accompanied the army into battle, and at some point picked up the sword and fought as a common soldier. He died on the battlefield, and the victorious Catholic soldiers burned his body as a heretic.¹ More than likely the manner of Zwingli’s death inspired a statue at the Wasserkirche in Zurich, in which he is portrayed as having a Bible in one hand and a

sword in the other.\textsuperscript{2} The manner of Zwingli’s death ensured that his theology of the relationship between church and state would remain a fascinating field of study in the decades and centuries that followed. Should we understand from the statue and Zwingli’s death that he advocated a sort of ‘theocracy,’ where one man or one group wielded both spiritual and secular power? Or does the statue lead us into a much more complicated position?

Obviously the first place to look for answers is the published writings of Ulrich Zwingli. As with many of the other figures in the Reformation era (or in any era), the professed theology of Zwingli was both influenced by his political context and often diverged from how he acted within that context.\textsuperscript{3} Many have studied the development of the church-state relationship in Zurich,\textsuperscript{4} but this study, while not ignoring this contextual information, cannot explore that topic in depth. Instead, this study will investigate one of Zwingli’s most important works on the relationship between church and state, the *Sermon Concerning Divine and Human Righteousness*, preached and published in 1523. This document formed the theological foundation for Zwingli’s later writings and action in that particular arena, positing a distinction that would find its way into all of all his further thought. From it, the following thesis can be postulated: Ulrich Zwingli’s doctrine of church and state as expressed in the *Sermon Concerning Divine and Human Righteousness* declares that the officials of the church are concerned with divine righteousness, while the officials of the state are concerned with human righteousness, and both work in unison to create a Christian society. In essence, if this thesis is proved correct, then the statue at the Wasserkirche presents a false picture of Zwingli. Political and religious

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{stephens} W. P Stephens, *Zwingli: An Introduction to his Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 123.
\bibitem{ibid} Ibid., 126.
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authority does not rest in one person, but instead the magistrate and the priest\textsuperscript{5} work together to create God’s kingdom on earth.

The theology and practice of Ulrich Zwingli cannot be understood apart from his context, both political and religious. Theologically, scholars will always examine Zwingli in connection with Martin Luther. Zwingli may have embodied Luther’s reformation in Zurich, but only as one of the most important of many figures inspired by the reformer of Wittenberg, and one of the many who diverged from his theology to a greater or lesser extent. Most importantly for this study, Luther’s own treatise on church and state, \textit{Temporal Authority: to What Extent it Should be Obeyed}, was also published in 1523, and Watson hypothesizes that Zwingli may have been familiar with that treatise when he wrote his own.\textsuperscript{6} Comparing the two documents illustrates both the convergence and divergence between the two as they wrestled with these issues in the same year. Luther and Zwingli also differed in the political context that each found himself in, a difference that arguably accounts for the differences between their theology of church and state. Luther’s adult life began in the monastery, whereas Zwingli served as a fiercely patriotic parish priest and army chaplain. Luther served under a single prince and his successors, whereas Zwingli operated in a city state ruled by a council, which allowed him to play an active role in the affairs of that city.\textsuperscript{7}

The \textit{Sermon on Divine and Human Righteousness} was published as that council attempted to reform Zurich along the lines of Zwingli’s theology. Much like Luther, in the implementation of religious reform Zwingli ran up against a variety of radicals, those who wanted immediate and sweeping reform. When the council wanted to implement ‘biblical’

\textsuperscript{5} Throughout this study both ‘magistrate’ and ‘priest’ will appear in the singular, as the representative members of each group.
\textsuperscript{6} Walton, \textit{Zwingli’s Theocracy}, 168.
\textsuperscript{7} Stephens, \textit{Zwingli, An Introduction to his Thought}, 125-126.
reforms, but only in a deliberate and careful way, Zwingli supported them. He was convinced that the magisterium had been converted to his cause and therefore presented the best opportunity for eventually completing the reform of the church.\textsuperscript{8} This cautious pace of reform irritated the radicals, who favored the creation of a separate church, fully reformed, after which the old church would simply wither away.\textsuperscript{9} The controversy came to a head over the issue of tithes. Many connected these government-imposed church taxes with the abuses of the medieval church, and resistance to the tithe caused considerable turmoil in the countryside. The radicals exploited this controversy to push for more immediate reform. In the opinion of many, doing away with the tithe would destroy the abuses supported by those funds.\textsuperscript{10} Zwingli needed to produce a statement not only to address the specific issue of the tithe, but also to put that issue within the framework of a theology of church and state, definitively answering the radicals. This statement needed to present his own positive view of government in order to protect the Gospel from the turmoil of radicalism.\textsuperscript{11}

As the title suggests, in this sermon Zwingli addresses the relationship between church and state by positing that there are two kinds of righteousness, divine and human. Properly understanding the relationship between the two is essential for the formation of a Christian community. Divine righteousness concerns itself with the inner life of man, while human righteousness focuses on man’s outward actions. Divine righteousness comes under the purview of the church and its priests, while he defines human righteousness as synonymous with ‘government.’\textsuperscript{12} Alluded to in these statements is the assertion by Zwingli that divine righteousness is far superior to human righteousness. This principle drives the entire document.

\textsuperscript{8} Walton, \textit{Zwingli’s Theocracy}, 155.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 156.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 157-158.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 296-297.
forward, although with consequences far different from the clerical domination of temporal affairs that one may expect.

The superiority of divine righteousness manifests itself first of all in its inward focus. It concerns itself with how God views a person. God looks to the heart, to the inward motivations of man, applying His standard which declares that every thought, as well as word and action, must be perfect. Human righteousness, on the other hand, simply concerns itself with how a person is viewed in the eyes of man. It has an external focus, judging on the basis of a man’s actions in this world.\(^{13}\) Zwingli illustrates this distinction by explicating the Ten Commandments. He takes them as the standard for what both divine and human righteousness demand. While several of the commandments seem on the surface to be dealing simply with human righteousness, there is a deeper and more important meaning that involves divine righteousness. For example, God commands that we should not kill. This is easily enforced by the administrators of human righteousness, for it concerns the outward act of a person, as to whether or not he takes another life.\(^{14}\) However, Jesus teaches that not only are we to refrain from killing, we should also avoid anger (Matthew 5:22). The magistrate cannot restrain internal anger, only the outward act. In addition, the ninth and tenth commandments, along with other instructions of Christ (“love your enemies as yourself,” “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” etc.) specifically prescribe internal standards.\(^{15}\) Simply following the outward standards of human righteousness is clearly not enough in the sight of God. This illustrates the principle that divine righteousness goes beyond what human righteousness demands, a principle founded on their different origins.

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\(^{14}\) Ibid., 15.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 9-10
In his treatise *Temporal Authority: To what Extent it should be Obeyed*, Martin Luther declared: “There are few true believers, and still fewer who live a Christian life, who do not resist evil and indeed themselves do no evil. For this reason God has provided for them a different government beyond the Christian estate and kingdom of God.”¹⁶ In a similar way, Zwingli saw human righteousness as inferior to divine righteousness because God established it as a consequence of the Fall. “It has been commanded merely on account of our broken nature, when God saw that our temptations and desires were unable to keep up with and follow His will.”¹⁷ If humanity had stayed perfect in the garden, fulfilling the standards of divine righteousness, God would have had no need to establish human righteousness. No one would murder if they did not first become angry. But now that sin has filled this world, the standards or law of human righteousness is necessary for peace. As discussed below, God has established the magistrate for the purpose of administering the law. It follows naturally from this that disobedience to the magistrate, who holds forth the standards of human righteousness, equals disobedience toward God.¹⁸

Human righteousness then restrains evil and protects the good, but without an understanding of divine righteousness it is deceptive. “Measured by human righteousness we are often found to be righteous, though we are truly knaves in God’s sight. But one who is found by human righteousness to be not only a knave in God’s sight but a known sinner is turned over to the one who judges transgressors, namely the magistrate or judge.”¹⁹ The magistrate therefore concerns himself with the outward deed, not the inward thought. If we obeyed the magistrate,

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¹⁷ Zwingli, *Selected Writings*, 18.
then we would be found righteous before men.\textsuperscript{20} But when measured by the higher standards of
divine righteousness, the only standards that truly matter eternally, we all are found wanting.

The standards of human righteousness therefore cannot save us, for they have nothing to
do with the inner man. “Its inability to make men truly just is the ultimate proof of its
inadequacy.”\textsuperscript{21} With the ultimate failure of human righteousness, we are left in desperate need
of divine righteousness. Zwingli does not here lapse into any sort of legalism or works-
righteousness, but instead declares that divine righteousness is ultimately Christ’s righteousness
applied to us. We cannot attain the high standard of divine righteousness on our own effort, and
in fact we cannot be near God unless we are pure and undefiled.\textsuperscript{22} Therefore God sent His Son
to do what we could not, fulfilling God’s standard of divine righteousness through His perfect
life and sacrifice on the cross. In his explication of the Decalogue discussed above, Zwingli
carefully notes that Christ kept each and every one of them on our behalf.\textsuperscript{23} Christ’s
righteousness is now ours, but we do not on that account cease striving toward divine
righteousness, as will become clear below. However, even as you strive toward that goal, “you
will further recognize that your work is nothing and has no value before God and that everything
that God shows toward you happens not on account of your merit but because it is a free gift
from Him.”\textsuperscript{24} Zwingli here shows the influence of Luther’s thought, as he expresses classic
Reformation theology. Divine righteousness is ultimately superior for it is Christ’s own
righteousness, the righteousness that delivers us from sin, death, and hell.

In contradistinction to the statue at the Wasserkirche, the same man does not administrate
divine and human righteousness. Instead, God has established the clerical estate to administer

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\textsuperscript{20} Stephens, \textit{Zwingli: An Introduction to his Thought}, 134-135.  \\
\textsuperscript{21} Walton, \textit{Zwingli’s Theocracy}, 160.  \\
\textsuperscript{22} Zwingli, \textit{Selected Writings}, 6.  \\
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 9.  \\
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 8.  
\end{flushright}
the former, and the magistrates to administer the latter.\textsuperscript{25} Zwingli therefore has in mind the complete expulsion of the clergy from temporal affairs. They have no authority in the realm of human righteousness, but instead God calls them simply to proclaim the Word and act as servants. “Note well, O pope, that Christ does not want anyone to fight on his behalf.”\textsuperscript{26} Zwingli intended this reformation of the clerical estate to have a freeing effect, as the priests were delivered from the shackles of worldly entanglements for the purpose of devoting themselves to the proclamation of the Word. If they want to exercise temporal authority, then they should abandon their position as a priest or bishop. “If they desire to govern like the rulers of this world, they should not bear the name of messenger or bishop which means to be a guardian. On the other hand, if they wish to be proclaimers of the Gospel, messengers and shepherds of Christ, they should not rule.”\textsuperscript{27}

As for the magistrate, Zwingli draws from Romans 13 the assertion that the magistrate has authority to punish evil and reward the good. All people owe them obedience, as God has established their authority over human righteousness. Indeed, as implied above, even the clergy owe obedience to the magistrate. “It is a sin for you, pope, bishops, priests, monk and nun, not to obey the authority which bears the sword.”\textsuperscript{28} The obstinate refusal of priest, bishops, and popes to submit to temporal rulers in matters concerning human righteousness had no place in Zwingli’s thought. However, Zwingli does set limits to temporal authority, the same limits set on human righteousness. They cannot judge inwardly, and therefore have nothing to say in terms of the human heart and conscience, or the Word of God.\textsuperscript{29} In this area, Zwingli’s thought

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\item \textsuperscript{25} Stephens, \textit{Zwingli: An Introduction to his Thought}, 123.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Zwingli, \textit{Selected Writings}, 29.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 23.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 30.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 24-25.
\end{itemize}
corresponds with Luther.\textsuperscript{30} To human eyes, this reordering of the relationship between the priest and the magistrate indicates the triumph of the state over against the church, but Zwingli did not see things in this way. Instead, the priest could now freely administer the higher and eternal righteousness without distraction, while the magistrate could deal with the lesser righteousness. Zwingli envisioned a reciprocal relationship between magistrate and priest. Each needed the other, for if one failed at his task the other, and especially the community as a whole, suffered.\textsuperscript{31}

It follows that these two offices work together in order to achieve the goal of a Christian society. The priest has the task of proclaiming divine righteousness to all, including the magistrate. This preaching has a two-fold purpose. First of all, he exhorts both magistrate and people to go beyond the poor standards of human righteousness and strive toward divine righteousness. Through his proclamation, he demonstrates to both rulers and subjects how ultimately inadequate their standards of human righteousness really are. In order to establish a truly Christian community, they cannot remain satisfied with that lesser righteousness.\textsuperscript{32} The priest here performs a vital task, as the duty of government is to order the life of the community according to God’s will and command. Government is not autonomous from God.\textsuperscript{33} Secondly, it provides a check against the magistrate. While the clergy cannot take up the sword or wield temporal authority, they do have the responsibility to speak against the magistrate when he transgresses the Word of God. Zwingli posits this as the only area where clergy and Christians are not obligated to obey the magistrate.\textsuperscript{34} In his \textit{Exposition of the Articles} (1523), Zwingli expands this line of thought to posit a theory of resistance to government, even stating that unfaithful rulers “may be deposed with God.” This line of thought opposes him to Luther’s

\textsuperscript{30} Luther, \textit{Temporal Authority}, 105.
\textsuperscript{31} Stephens, \textit{Zwingli: An Introduction to his Thought}, 136.
\textsuperscript{32} Walton, \textit{Zwingli’s Theocracy}, 161.
\textsuperscript{34} Zwingli, \textit{Selected Writings}, 25.
declaration in the 1525 document *Admonition to Peace* that the Christian must suffer all things.\textsuperscript{35} However, in the *Sermon on Divine and Human Righteousness*, Zwingli does not push resistance this far, simply speaking of the responsibility of the priest to preach against the transgressions of the magistrate and even indicating that an evil magistrate is punishment by God for the sin of the people.\textsuperscript{36}

The magistrate plays two roles in the creation of a Christian society. First of all, he makes the preaching of the Gospel possible by keeping the peace and protecting its proclamation. Here lies the primary and most important duty of a Christian magistrate. “Thus, if you superiors want to be Christians, you will have to permit us to preach the clear word of God and allow it to take effect thereafter.”\textsuperscript{37} This statement provides an answer to the radicals’ desire for immediate reform. A proper Christian magistracy does not coerce people to belief with force, but instead allows the Gospel to be preached and do its work upon the community.\textsuperscript{38} Secondly, the magistrate reforms society by holding people to the standards of human righteousness. In this role Zwingli calls magistrates teachers.\textsuperscript{39} However, the magistrate cannot be satisfied with human righteousness, but he should instead be moved by the clergy’s preaching of divine righteousness to strive for that higher standard. Therefore, they seek to learn the standards of good and evil from the Word of God proclaimed by the priest. “No teaching serves a government and magistrate better than the teaching of Christ… Not only does it teach external piety but it leads superiors and subjects alike to an internal piety and to greater perfection than is

\textsuperscript{36} Zwingli, *Selected Writings*, 24.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 33.
\textsuperscript{38} Walton, *Zwingli’s Theocracy*, 165.
\textsuperscript{39} Zwingli, *Selected Writings*, 15.
required by human righteousness.”^40 Zwingli in this document stops short of believing that divine righteousness can be established by the state, but he does firmly believe that “knowledge of it would affect the conduct of the citizenry and would cause the government to better its administration of justice.”^41 When the magistrate understands both kinds of righteousness, an improvement in the life and conduct of society comes as a result.

With this theological framework firmly in place, Zwingli could now address the issue that led him to write this sermon in the first place, the tithe. For both contemporary and modern readers, this provides an opportunity to see his theology in action, applied to a very specific situation. Zwingli begins by placing the issue of tithes squarely into the realm of human righteousness. Citizens owe obedience to their magistrates, and therefore they should pay the tithe required by them. He considers any who refuse to pay the tithe a thief and robber. This does not mean that the magistracy burdens the people, but instead they should seek to curb abuses.^42 But to those who connect the government’s enforcement of the tithe with the teachings of the sacrifice of the Mass and obedience to the papacy, Zwingli replies that they are thereby mixing the two kinds of righteousness. The magistrate has no authority over the Word of God or the Christian conscience, for those fall under the purview of divine righteousness. The council has authority over the tithe, for it concerns temporal good and therefore human righteousness. If the magistrate overstepped his bounds and attempted to restrict the teaching of God’s Word against such abuses, then the preachers would vehemently oppose him. In that case they must obey God rather than men.^43

^40 Ibid., 26.
^41 Walton, *Zwingli’s Theocracy*, 163.
All of the above implies an optimistic view of the magistrate. Such confidence is understandable, considering his historical circumstances. The council had accepted the necessity of his reforms, and while they moved cautiously, Zwingli had every reason to believe that they would complete the task. The clergy failed in its responsibility to reform the church, and therefore the magistracy needed to step in. Zwingli’s optimism in 1523 mirrors that of Luther in 1520, when he wrote the *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*. In that document he appealed to the German nobility much as Zwingli did to Zurich’s town council. Both of them despaired of the church’s ability to reform itself, and therefore entreated the magistrates to take up the task. But by the time Luther penned *On Temporal Authority*, his tone has changed dramatically. “You must know that since the beginning of the world a wise prince is a mighty rare bird, and an upright prince even rarer... One must constantly expect the worst from them and look for little good, especially in divine matters which concern the salvation of souls.”\(^4^4\) In the ever-changing atmosphere of Reformation-era politics, Luther would place his trust in the nobility to protect the Gospel (especially during the Peasant’s War of 1525), but he never regained the optimism of 1520. Walton in a sympathetic way argues that Zwingli did not place his trust so much in the magistracy as such, but in the Word of God and its effect on the magistracy. This led him to identify the church with the structure of the community, linking the two together much more tightly than Luther or Calvin.\(^4^5\)

This study has noted both the similarities and differences between Luther and Zwingli’s theology of church and state. In many significant ways, Luther and Zwingli’s thought dovetailed, such as the origin of government and the limits of its authority. In general, Luther’s distinction between the two kingdoms roughly corresponds with Zwingli’s teaching on divine

\(^{4^4}\) Luther, *Temporal Authority*, 113.
\(^{4^5}\) Walton, *Zwingli’s Theocracy*, 226.
and human righteousness. Modern people severely misinterpret Luther’s teaching if they
describe it as “the separation of church and state,” but it is safe to say that Zwingli’s conception
of a unified civic community where magistrate and priest work together to build a Christian
community does not characterize the goal of the two kingdoms doctrine in 1523. Instead, in
Temporal Authority, Luther simply conceives of a society where princes do not attempt to rule
the soul and bishops do not attempt to rule the body.\footnote{Luther, Temporal Authority, 109.}
This more subtle divergence stems from a
fundamental difference in their conception of the kingdom of God. In a May 1528 letter to
Ambrosius Blarer, Zwingli makes explicit what is implicit in the Sermon on Divine and Human
Righteousness. He takes exception to Luther’s declaration that “the kingdom of God is not from
without.”\footnote{G. R. Potter, Church and State, 1528. A letter from Zwingli to Abrosius Blarer (4 May 1528): translated with a
Throughout this letter he develops the argument that the apostles made judgments on
‘external things,’ and even claims that the ‘presbyters’ at the council in Acts 15 were senators
and councilors, i.e. magistrates.\footnote{Ibid., 114.}
This idea forms an important basis for the magistrate to alter
the external forms of religious observance, as well as support for the identification of God’s
kingdom with the government or civic community. Luther, on the other hand, sharply
distinguishes in Temporal Authority between God’s kingdom and the kingdom of the world, even
though both are established by God. God’s kingdom has authority over the soul, while the
kingdom of the world orders external affairs. Therefore, for Luther God’s kingdom is clearly
internal, consisting of faith and the forgiveness of sins.\footnote{Luther, Temporal Authority, 88, 105.}

This basic distinction between Luther and Zwingli’s ideas of the kingdom of God led to
another important difference. As noted above, Zwingli’s theological thought was formed around
the optimistic notion that magistrate and priest could work together to establish a Christian community. Not only did Luther lose the same general optimism that he expressed in the *Address to the Christian Nobility*, but he also had little confidence in any idea of creating a truly ‘Christian state.’ “But take heed and first fill the world with real Christians before you attempt to rule it in a Christian and evangelical manner. This you will never accomplish; for the world and the masses are and always will be un-Christian, even if they are all baptized and Christian in name.” As if he speaks directly to Zwingli’s viewpoint, Luther continues, “Therefore, it is out of the question that there should be a common Christian government over the whole world, or indeed over a single country or any considerable body of people, for the wicked always outnumber the good.” One could argue that here Luther simply reiterates Zwingli’s point about the necessity of human government due to sin. The context, in which Luther describes the absurdity of a human government governed simply the Gospel, bears this out. However, this illustrates that Zwingli does not seem to have the same understanding of the depth of human sin as Luther did. In a later document, Zwingli makes more explicit his confidence in the cooperation of the magistrate and the priest: “When the Gospel is preached and all, including the magistrate, heed it, the Christian man is nothing else than the faithful and good citizen; and the Christian city is nothing other than the Christian Church.” This clearly indicates a drastic divergence between Luther and Zwingli on this question, as well as a certain amount of development in Zwingli’s own thought. This statement follows logically from the *Sermon on Divine and Human Righteousness*, though in that document he does not go so far as to identify the Christian city with the Christian church.

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50 Ibid., 91.
Therefore, Zwingli posited a basically positive view of the magistrate toward improving society. This is indicated first of all by the title that Zwingli gave to the magistrate: “teacher.”\textsuperscript{52} As noted above, not only does the magistrate restrain evil, but he also, with the help of the priest, set himself toward the task of improving the society placed under his care. “Guided by the Gospel, the magistrates would be able to bring even the external practices of their Christian commonwealth into a closer, though never complete, harmony with the standards of divine righteousness.”\textsuperscript{53} No doubt for Luther the prince had an important role to play as one who kept the peace and protected those who proclaim the Gospel. He does this as a Christian whom God has entrusted with temporal authority. However, Luther did not think that society could markedly improve, and therefore in Temporal Authority assigned the magistrate with the primarily negative task of simply keeping order and not ruling souls with the sword.\textsuperscript{54}

Ulrich Zwingli did not take up the sword and lay down his life on Kappel’s battlefield in accordance with his expressed theology in the Sermon on Divine and Human Righteousness. According to that document, the clerical estate has no place in the temporal defense of the Gospel, only in the preaching thereof. He states himself, in a remarkable section that is chillingly prophetic: “He [the Pope and his hordes] neither does nor should bear the sword… But that [Peter] draws a sword and fights with it indicates to me that he shall also die by the sword—God grant it when God wills it.”\textsuperscript{55} Although his motivation for these actions is an important question, the answer must be found elsewhere. Indeed, the statue at the Wasserkirche may have more in common with Zwingli’s actions than his expressed theology (at least in the document under study). The preacher and reformer of Zurich died with the sword in hand,

\textsuperscript{52} Zwingli, Selected Writings, 15.
\textsuperscript{53} Walton, Zwingli’s Theocracy, 169
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 168-169.
\textsuperscript{55} Zwingli, Selected Writings, 28-29.
although his theology clearly stated that the same person does not bear both the sword and the proclamation of the Word, or to put it another way, one person does not administrate both divine and human righteousness. Instead, the administrators of each, the priest and the magistrate, work together to create a Christian society, striving for the ideal of a community shaped by the standards of divine righteousness. In that way he envisioned a ‘theocracy’ of sorts: “Zwingli’s understanding of the state was theocratic, in the sense that the whole life of the community is under the rule of God and that the minister and magistrate are to seek to establish that rule.”56 That such a society failed to materialize, either in Zurich or at any other time in history, would not have surprised Luther in 1523. The Wittenberg reformer understood that human sinfulness created a messy world, one in which government was hard pressed simply to restrain evil and allow for the Gospel’s proclamation. The kingdom of God is internal, created by the work of the Holy Spirit, and only brought to visible manifestation on that Day when the King returns.