EXEGESIS, REASON, AND LAW IN LUTHER'S AND TYNDALE'S IDEAS OF REFORMATION:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THEIR SERMON ON THE MOUNT COMMENTARIES

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ABSTRACT

The question of William Tyndale's relationship to Martin Luther has become in recent scholarship an important aspect of the larger problem of the spread of the Reformation. Historians have failed to resolve the question as to whether Tyndale's religious thought is dependent upon or independent from Luther's theology, or whether their respective ideas of reformation are similar or dissimilar.

In order to provide a solution, the present study compares and analyzes Luther's and Tyndale's conception of reformatio as expressed in their Sermon on the Mount commentaries. These are useful sources since they involve Tyndale's known use of Luther's work and represent each reformer's mature views of religious reform. The commentaries clearly reveal that both reformers dealt with three basic intellectual problems which illustrate their differing views concerning the need for moral and doctrinal reform. Luther and Tyndale had to solve the problems of applying appropriate methods of biblical exegesis, adopting a proper attitude toward the use of reason in man's secular and spiritual affairs, and developing an effective approach toward the role of law in society, religion, and morality.

A comparative analysis of the approaches of both reformers to these problems has demonstrated that while Luther tended to emphasize the need for doctrinal reform, Tyndale stressed the need for moral reform. However, their reform aims were not polarized by dogmatism and moralism. While
Tyndale retained the Christocentric and soteriological core of Luther's religious thought, he also imparted to it a legalistic tone by using the practical analogy of a divine covenant between God and His people. Consequently, Tyndale's idea of reformation was more theological than that of the Christian humanists led by Erasmus, and more moralistic than that of the Protestant reformers led by Luther.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION: THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM

Recent Reformation scholars have been directing their attention beyond the traditional political interpretation of the English Reformation as an act of state toward an understanding of the religious reformation in England. This has involved determining the extent to which the English Reformation was influenced by the spread of the Reformation from the Continent. One way frequently used to demonstrate the degree of association between the two movements has been to focus upon the relationship between Martin Luther and William Tyndale. However, historians disagree about the relative similarity or dissimilarity of the religious views of these reformers. Consequently, an important historical problem has developed: what is the nature of Tyndale's relationship to Luther? Or more specifically, what is the relationship between their respective ideas of reformation?

A number of interpretations have been advanced in an attempt to solve the dilemma. Thomas N. Tentler's recent article on the religious thought of Erasmus demonstrates that an important aspect of the problem is the nature of Erasmian humanism and its relationship to Lutheran Protestantism. Tentler believes a rigid distinction must be made between the moralistic concerns of the Renaissance and the dogmatic concerns of the Reformation. He explains Erasmus' view of the forgiveness of sins, and after attempting to relate it to Luther's view, remarks: "They are in no way comparable. Luther belongs to the world of dogmatics; his doctrine of penance is determined by his definitions of the cause of forgiveness and the nature of man. Erasmus belongs to the world of the moral philosopher; he has
no doctrine, only the desire to reform men." In effect, Tentler is maintaining that since the Christian humanist's idea of reformation was clearly moralistic, persuasive, and pragmatic, it was completely unrelated and different from the Protestant reformer's which was strictly doctrinal, dogmatic, authoritarian. This raises the question of whether Tentler's thesis is actually dogmatizing the problem by rigidly applying the labels of moralism and dogmatism to impose an artificial dichotomy between Erasmianism and Lutheranism.

Indeed, this appears to be the case since Tentler's rigid distinction between the Renaissance and the Reformation fails to account for a whole group of reformers—Melanchthon, Zwingli, Bucer, Oecolampadius, and Tyndale—all of whom were neither Renaissance moralists nor dogmatic reformers. Tyndale makes a particularly interesting subject for a study of this dilemma because his relationship to Luther continues to be an open question. Some think his biblical scholarship identifies him as a Christian humanist, while others believe his religious writings classify him as a Lutheran reformer. A review of Reformation historiography shows that both positions have been taken, but without establishing a conclusive answer to the problem.

While such nineteenth-century scholars as H. E. Jacobs and B. F. Westcott have shown the dependency of Tyndale on Luther for the source of his biblical scholarship, recent historians of the Reformation and theological scholars have advanced new explanations for the development of the reformatory concerns of Tyndale and the reformers in England. Ernest Gordon Rupp, in his Six Makers of English Religion,  

believes England in the sixteenth century possessed certain indigenous roots for religious reform, asserting it is regrettable that "the creative, religious ferment in the English Reformation has been sadly underestimated by modern historians." He therefore wants to focus on the making of the English Protestant tradition because he believes the Reformation created an important new way of religious life in England which was different from both medieval Catholicism and Continental Protestantism.

Rupp conceives of William Tyndale as an appropriate maker of English religion because he considers him the leading member of a group of English exiles who, in the 1520's, gave the English Reformation a special direction of its own. In assessing Tyndale's translation of the New Testament, which was introduced into England in 1526, he maintains that Tyndale's work was not merely an Anglicanization of Luther's Bible but was characterized by a degree of originality and independence with respect to Luther's influence. However, upon comparing Tyndale's view of religious reform with Luther's, Rupp asserts that there are hardly any points of disagreement at all. He categorically states: "Tyndale was a reformer: in all great matters save perhaps in the doctrine of the eucharistic presence he agreed with Martin Luther." This poses the question of whether Rupp is oversimplifying the problem by assuming such a strong continuity between the reform ideas of Tyndale and Luther.

The question raised by Rupp has been answered with a compromise solution by English historian Basil Hall. Hall admits that Tyndale did

3. Ibid., 20-21.
make a positive contribution of Lutheran theology to England but only in a limited way. Hall credits Tyndale with the dissemination of Lutheranism throughout England by translating the Bible into English, using, among other versions, Luther's German Bible and including prefaces and notes reflecting Luther's theology, notably the Prologue to Romans, which was almost a direct translation from Luther.4 However, Hall maintains that Tyndale was unwilling to adopt Luther's doctrines of justification by faith alone, and of Law and Gospel. Instead, Tyndale was attracted to Zwingli's principle of the covenant which made salvation contingent upon the Christian's obedience to the Law in the contract between God and His people. Consequently, Tyndale followed Zwingli and his successors at Zurich and affirmed the continuity between Law and Gospel, thus departing from Luther's dialectic which set them firmly in opposition. Hall then adduces that Tyndale contributed to English religion a new practical pietism grounded in a moral legalism that reached its ultimate manifestation in English Puritanism.5 However, Hall's interpretation tends to be inconsistent and paradoxical since it fails to explain the apparent contradiction between the Lutheranism of Tyndale's biblical scholarship and the anti-Lutheranism of his religious ideas.

This problem has been carefully considered by an American church historian, Leonard J. Trinterud, who, in a recent article in Church History, questions the validity of previous attempts to demonstrate Luther's religious influence upon the English Reformation in terms of the biblical translations of Tyndale. Trinterud asserts that a close study of Tyndale's

5. Ibid., 579.
works will reveal that his theological debt to Luther and the Lutheranism of his views have been exaggerated. He argues that while Tyndale made much use of Luther's name, fame, and works, he still did not accept the distinctive reform ideas of the German Reformer. Instead, Tyndale's greatest intellectual debt was first to the Christian humanism of Erasmus and then to the Continental Protestantism of the German-Swiss reformers of Zurich and Basel, principally Zwingli, Bucer, and Oeclampadius.

In particular, Trinterud maintains that Tyndale departed sharply from Luther by applying a formal covenantal interpretation to God's relationship with the regenerate man in Christ—a theological motif which he learned directly from the camp of the Zurich and Basel reformers. According to Trinterud, Tyndale's use of a covenantal scheme in the process of salvation clearly modified Luther's evangelical theology of justification by grace through faith alone since it insisted on man's new requirement to love God, the Law, and his neighbor in order to be saved. In effect, insists Trinterud, Tyndale made God's promises of grace, salvation, and eternal life contingent upon man's ability to love and fulfill the demands of the Law. Trinterud specifically states: "This promise and conditional-covenant motif, rooted in baptism, recurred again and again in Tyndale's volume. From Luther's standpoint, Tyndale did not learn much from his 'heavy dependence' on Luther's expositions of the Sermon on the Mount. Tyndale had learned more from Basel than from Wittenberg." However, Trinterud's solution fails to answer the questions as to how Tyndale advanced from his nominal "Lutheranism" to his sturdy


7. Ibid., 39.
Zwinglianism and as to whether he became merely a Zwinglian disciple or a distinctive English reformer.

The questions implied by Trinterud's interpretation have been treated by another American church historian, William A. Clebsch, who has conducted a study of the nature of Christian thought as expressed by a prominent group of English refugee reformers during the years, 1520-1535. In order to demonstrate his belief that there was an indigenous religious basis for the English Reformation, Clebsch focuses on William Tyndale because he should be recognized as "the chief spokesman of original English Protestantism!" According to Clebsch, Tyndale contributed to England's earliest Protestantism by helping to shape "a Christianity that combined justification by faith with thoroughgoing moralism—a combination which relied on Luther but also repudiated him, and one that has empowered the Puritan forces in English-speaking religion down to yesterday." He believes that Tyndale thus departed from the royal, hierarchical, and liturgical religion of the Church of England by emphasizing a biblical, covenantal, and moralistic Christianity which became the basis for English Puritanism.

In assessing the relationship of Tyndale's religious thought to Luther's, Clebsch claims that Tyndale embarked upon a "religious-intellectual pilgrimage" which began with Luther's theology and ended with the making of his own covenantal theology. He believes that, during the period 1524-1529, Tyndale initially was Luther's protégé and adopted his Christocentric and soteriological theology through his work on the New Testament. Then, during 1530-1531, Tyndale deviated from Luther by advocating a two-pronged justification of faith before God and works before men.

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9. Ibid., vii.
through his translation of the Pentateuch. By 1532, this had developed into a nomocentric theology based on the law as a model of life lived in faith, according to his study of I John. Finally, during 1532-1536, Tyndale's scholarship on the Sermon on the Mount and the New Testament produced a formalized contractual theology in which God was bound to reward man's obedience to the Law with salvation and to punish man's disobedience to the Law with damnation. Referring to Tyndale's use of the covenant in this last period, Clebsch declares: "This understanding of covenant as contract between God and man, binding eternally upon both, exhibits at once Tyndale's repudiation of Luther's theology and his discovery of a lodestar by which to set his own theological course."¹⁰

As a result, Clebsch has elevated Tyndale to the position of a relatively independent and creative English reformer, thus denying the importance of the influence of Luther's ideas on the development of England's humanist-reformers. However, this raises the problem of whether in reality there was no significant transfer, reception, and effect of Luther's ideas with respect to the course of the English Reformation and whether there was actually no enduring substantive relationship between the English Reformer of Antwerp and the German Reformer of Wittenberg.

In an attempt to solve this problem, Hans J. Hillerbrand has written a brief article demonstrating that the transmission of Protestant thought throughout Europe during the expansion of the German Reformation should be understood as a historical case study in the transfer of Luther's ideas. Hillerbrand constructs what he believes to be the "single-source theory"¹¹

¹⁰. Ibid., 183.

of Reformation origins: that the European Reformation of the sixteenth century was the result of the transfer and reception of Protestant ideas from a single source—the early religious writings of Martin Luther from Wittenberg, Germany. He refutes the so-called "parallel-source theory," clearly advocated by Trinterud and Clebsch, that the expansion of the Reformation was not due to a single man or set of ideas, such as Luther or Lutheranism, but was "the result of an autochthonous emergence of similar or possibly identical movements for ecclesiastical reform" in all the major areas of Western Europe. Accordingly, Hillerbrand emphasizes that Luther, the man and his ideas, is more important for an understanding of the European dimension of the Reformation than the alleged existence of a social and ecclesiastical malaise ripe for religious upheaval.

With respect to Tyndale's relationship to Luther, Hillerbrand believes that Tyndale was one of a group of "indigenous colporteurs" (which included Olavus Petri in Sweden, Huldrych Zwingli in Switzerland, Patrick Hamilton in Scotland, Guillaume Farel in France) who became exposed to Luther's ideas and who then carried out the effectual transmission of Protestant thought through their own writings and reformatory activities. However, Hillerbrand credits Tyndale and the others with being more than communication intermediaries, since they proved to be successful native reformers "without whom the ecclesiastical transformation in the various countries would not have been possible." Tyndale and the indigenous reformers were youthful, humanist-oriented students, living apart from the academic and ecclesiastical "establishment," who had savored the new theology

12. Ibid., 266.
13. Ibid., 280.
first-hand in Germany. The actual dissemination of Protestant ideas by Tyndale and these men did not take the form of a rigid replication of Luther's thought but was an "amalgamation of basic notions of Luther and elements of their own theologies."\textsuperscript{14} However, Hillerbrand does not deem it necessary to consider the nature of Tyndale's religious thought in comparison with Luther's theology (other than to say it is anti-Catholic and somewhat Lutheran) since this is a special problem which goes beyond his main task of indicating the immediate effect of Luther's ideas abroad. Consequently, the problem still remains to analyze in depth Tyndale's theological relationship to Luther.

Since recent Reformation scholarship has not resolved satisfactory the problem of Tyndale's relationship to Luther, the need exists for a new and different approach to evaluate more closely the basis for a sound and reliable solution. Any new approach still must consider three basic solutions already suggested or implied by previous interpretations. Should Tyndale's relationship to Luther be understood as (1) a complete and exclusive dependence upon Luther, or (2) a clear and direct departure from the German Reformer, or (3) an intermediate association governed simultaneously by Tyndale's general reliance upon and subtle modification of Luther's theology? In order to determine which solution is historically applicable, several important questions must be asked. First, what particular views concerning the need for ecclesiastical and theological reform did Tyndale and Luther advance in the formulation of their mature religious thought? Second, how can these views be compared, contrasted, and generally evaluated? Third, to what extent are these views similar or dissimilar within the context of the reformers' respective ideas of reformation?

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 281.
These questions can be answered, producing the correct solution, once a systematic and analytical investigation can be made which will accurately explain Tyndale's and Luther's mature views on religious reform.

Luther's and Tyndale's Sermon on the Mount commentaries have been selected as sources which facilitate a comparative study of their respective ideas of reformation. Since both reformers share the distinction of writing biblical commentaries on the same New Testament book, several questions immediately arise regarding the historical value and critical utility of both sources. Does Tyndale's commentary reflect his association with Luther's work? Do these commentaries elaborate new and important points of view espoused by their authors? After careful consideration it can be reliably reported that these are useful sources since they involve Tyndale's known use of Luther's work and represent accurately each reformer's mature views of religious reform.

Luther's commentary was the product of a lengthy series of sermons he delivered at the city church in Wittenberg during the period from November 1530 to April 1532. The sermons were then compiled into a commentary which was published in October of 1532 for the first time by Joseph Klug in Wittenberg. Subsequent editions appeared in 1533 and 1534. Tyndale's commentary, on the other hand, was written in the early part of 1533, undoubtedly with the use of Luther's exposition. The earliest printed edition was made by John Grapheus in Antwerp during the latter part of 1533. It was subsequently reprinted several times with John Day's edition of 1573 being the final authoritative copy. The commentaries


were thus written and published within a very short time span and provide an interesting pair of parallel original sources.

A close reading of the Sermon on the Mount commentaries clearly indicates how a historical investigation should proceed. It soon becomes evident that each reformer elaborated his own particular aims for religious reform which are reflected in his resolution of three basic intellectual problems which confronted the task of reformation. First, Luther and Tyndale had to solve the problem of appropriate biblical exegesis since the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount had to be expounded for the contemporary circumstances of the Reformation. Second, they had to deal with the proper use of man's reason, not only with respect to biblical scholarship, but as it pertained to all of man's experiences in secular and spiritual affairs. Third, both reformers had to confront the problem of the correct role of law in society, religion, and morality. Analyzing the approaches which Luther and Tyndale took to treat these problems should produce new and improved insights into the relative positions of both toward the role of the Reformation.
CHAPTER II

A COMPARISON OF LUTHER'S AND TYNTALE'S BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

Since the relative approaches of Luther and Tyndale to the interpretation of Scripture reflect the underlying development of their conceptions of religious reform, biblical exegesis provides the initial means to analyze Tyndale's relationship to Luther. An examination of their exegetical approaches helps to clarify the similarities and differences in the form and content of their programs for reform. The reformers' expositions of Christ's Sermon on the Mount will, in particular, provide an excellent basis for comparing and contrasting their methods of biblical exegesis in terms of purpose, origins, application, and effects. Luther and Tyndale realized that since this biblical source represented Christ's explication of the true meaning of Christian living, it represented a valuable scriptural analogy for the advance of their reform programs which were based on the proper understanding and application of Christian doctrine.

Luther's Sermon on the Mount commentary, having originated from a whole series of sermons he had delivered during the absence of Johann Bugenhagen as pastor of the city church in Wittenberg, was written from the perspective of a Doctor of Theology and Professor of the Bible who was temporarily serving in the duly-sanctioned capacity of a preacher of God's Word. Luther can be seen as a strong defender of the newly established ecclesiastical administration in Saxony since he was concerned with denouncing ignorant pastors, radical reformers, and zealous praters who were attempting to usurp the office of the Christian ministry. He stressed that only those called by Christ and officially commissioned by civil
authority could be the true "salt of the earth" responsible for condemning evil actions, exhorting correct behavior, and consoling and comforting the consciences of the distressed. Since he realized that Wittenberg's sanction of Protestantism and acceptance of his German Bible facilitated the reading of Scripture, he believed his main task was to explicate the redemptive rather than the ethical importance of God's Word. He aimed not at expounding God's will, which was clearly expressed in His laws and commandments, but at showing how the efficacy of God's grace can be found in Scripture and then applied to the Christian's forgiveness of sins, justification, and redemption.

By comparison, Tyndale wrote his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, with the use of Luther's, as a refugee reformer in Antwerp, having left England in 1524 after being unable to secure support for translating the Bible into the vernacular. Tyndale, England's earliest reformer, had received a bachelor of arts degree from Oxford in 1512 and a master of arts in 1515. He approached his biblical exposition from the perspective of a non-state-sponsored churchman who was a private scholar and Christian exegete disassociated from the academic and ecclesiastical establishment. Tyndale can be seen as a conscious critic of the old-line Catholic ecclesiastical regime in England since he transformed Luther's references to Anabaptists, counterfeit saints, and schismatic spirits into denunciations of the "papists," monastics, and clerics of England. Tyndale was concerned with admonishing those ordained priests and prelates who were guilty of ignorance, immorality, and theological errors in

departing from the ways of Christ and the apostles, whose offices they now held.\(^2\) He realized that his role as a biblical expositor was seriously affected by the suppression of vernacular translations of the Bible by King Henry VIII. Since the Scriptures could not be freely read and learned by everyone on his own initiative, as was the case in Wittenberg, Tyndale chose to emphasize the ethical rather than the soteriological significance of God's Word. He stressed that the Bible was a guide to ethical living, revealing how God's people should obey His Law and Commandments, and he maintained that the right understanding of God's Law was the first and principal key to the meaning of Scripture.\(^3\)

Both Luther and Tyndale expounded upon the Sermon on the Mount for the immediate benefits it offered for their respective reform programs. Luther recognized that since Christ's main purpose in his sermon was to oppose the false teaching of the scribes and Pharisees and to illumine the true meaning of God's commandments, such a biblical source was readily conducive to meeting the needs of the Reformation presently at hand. Luther aimed his commentary at attacking his own opponents whom he firmly believed were deliberately misinterpreting, distorting, and twisting the Scriptures to suit their own deviant behavior. He asserted that the "papists", monastics, and schismatics were radically exaggerating Christ's Sermon on the Mount teachings. Luther observed that while the "papists" were trying to prohibit true and fine good works altogether, the new monks and schismatic spirits were attempting to institute false

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3. Ibid., 181.
good works and fictitious holiness. Luther then declared what was the
basic purpose of his commentary:

We have no intention of abolishing your Gospel or of
preaching any other way. All we want to do is to clean it
off and polish it, as a mirror that has been so darkened
and spotted by your filth that only the name 'Gospel' is
left, but nothing by which anyone can see.4

Luther implied that he wanted to use his biblical exegesis to demonstrate
the original spiritual meaning intended by Christ; in effect, his exegesis became Christological and evangelical.

Similarly, Tyndale realized that since Christ in his Sermon on
the Mount had restored the pure law of Moses which the Pharisees had
corrupted, his exposition would have the analogous purpose of restoring
the pure law of Christ which the 'papists' had perverted. He followed
Luther in indicting prelates for confusing and obliterating Christ's
teaching by converting the beatitudes into twelve evangelical counsels to
be followed by anyone who pleased if he wanted to attain a perfection
higher than that of other Christians. But Tyndale gave a different orienta-
tion to his exposition by announcing that his commentary contained "the
whole summ of the covenant made between God and us, upon which we be
baptised to keepe it."5 Tyndale's emphasis on the Law and on a covenental
relationship existing between God and His people indicated that he was
directing his exegesis toward uncovering a legalistic and moralistic motif
in Christ's teaching. Consequently, Luther's and Tyndale's exegeses
seem to have developed toward two quite different directions. Yet to
understand fully the substance and style in their exegetical approaches,
it is necessary to discover first how their methods of exegesis originated
and developed.

4. Sermon on the Mount Commentary, 70.

5. An Exposition Upon Mathew, 181.
Luther brought to bear upon the Sermon on the Mount an exegetical method which was a subtle blending of the medieval quadrigea and humanist exegesis together with his own evangelical experience. Luther's own distinctive Christocentric exegesis originated during the period 1512 to 1516 while he worked on his lectures on Psalms and Romans. Luther at first accepted the four-fold interpretation of the scholastics, being particularly interested in the tropological and allegorical senses to elucidate the spiritual rather than the literal meaning of the text. However, in his search to find Christ the Redeemer in Scripture, Luther pressed beyond the traditional quadrigea and completely transformed the literal sense into a new Christological interpretation. Luther became critical of the scholastic method of opposing the literal sense to the spiritual sense, and he found in the work of the French humanist-reformer Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples a new exegetical method to render the proper spiritual meaning of the Bible.

A German scholar, Fritz Hahn, has shown that Luther's Lectures on Psalms (1513-1515) clearly reflect the adoption and adaptation of Lefèvre's humanist exegesis. Luther learned from the Frenchman (also known by his Latin cognate, Faber Stapulensis) an exegetical principle which enabled him to avoid both an unspiritual, literal-historical exegesis and an ungrammatical, allegorical-spiritual one. Faber explained in his exposition on Psalms (Quincuplex Psalterium) made in 1509, that there were two literal meanings of the Bible: the historical-literal sense which was improper because it was produced by superficial human perception, and the prophetic-literal meaning which was properly the intended meaning inspired by the Holy Spirit. Luther modified the literal-prophetic meaning to make it reveal the righteousness of a gracious God, the
redemptory mission of Christ, and the combined spiritual significance for the believer in Christ. He thus developed a Christological exegesis in which he essentially united Faber's method with his own belief in justification by grace through faith alone in such a way that the literal-prophetic meaning of Scripture became intertwined with a tropological meaning.6

Luther's biblical exegesis was further influenced by various other manifestations of humanist philological scholarship. Luther was quick to make use of the philological techniques and linguistic and grammatical works produced by the leading humanists once he discovered the necessity of correcting the errors and deficiencies in medieval biblical scholarship. Having already used Lefèvre's glosses on the Psalms and Epistles, he then referred to Lorenzo Valla's Annotations on the New Testament, Erasmus' Novum Testamentum, and John Reuchlin's Hebrew grammar books. As Gerhard Ebeling has demonstrated, Luther thus adopted the humanists' philological-grammatical approach to scripture during the years 1516-1525 and combined it with his Christocentric exegesis so that, for Luther, the simple, clear, literal meaning of the text revealed the evangelical message of Christ, faith, and salvation for the efficacy of the Christian believer. Although Luther was deeply indebted to Erasmus for his philological insights, he differed from him in emphasizing the grammatical sense and redemptory meaning of Scripture far more strongly.7 This is not to say, as Wilhelm Schwarz maintains, that Erasmus' so-called philological approach to Scripture contrasted sharply with Luther's supposed inspirational view.8

Both scholars believed that proper biblical exegesis required faith in Christ and philological scholarship on the part of the exegete who must work inspired by the grace of God. In reality, Luther disagreed with Erasmus' penchant for interpreting Scripture allegorically where no allegorical sense was intended, and for focusing on the moral teachings of Christ at the expense of his divine mission of crucifixion, resurrection, and atonement for all sinners.

By 1525, Luther's exegesis had matured to the point that he could formally outline his exegetical approach to Scripture for all Christian readers to learn and apply. In his Lectures on Deuteronomy, he declared that Christians should first and foremost seek out the literal sense because it alone represents the whole substance of faith and Christian theology. Once the literal sense is known, it can be connected to an allegorical meaning which should serve to strengthen, adorn, and enrich the doctrine of faith. He disapproved of the allegorical tradition of Origen and Jerome who employed allegories to prove doctrinal points and establish moral lessons. Luther believed allegories were the product of human guesswork and opinion and should not be relied upon for understanding Scripture. For Luther, allegories should not be the foundation of Scripture but should be built on the foundation of the literal sense, just as a house does not hold up the foundation but is itself held up by the foundation. Luther's Christocentric exegesis was thus based on the revelation of Christ in the literal-grammatical interpretation of Scripture together with its tropological application for the individual Christian in the form of an illuminating allegory. Consequently, by 1530, Luther was prepared

to apply his mature biblical exegesis to his Sermon on the Mount commentary.

By comparison, Tyndale's exegetical preparation both paralleled and differed from Luther's. Tyndale's exegesis was influenced by the work of the scholastics, Erasmus, Luther, possibly Bucer and Oecolampadius, together with his own personal inclinations. The decisive period for the formation of Tyndale's exegesis was from 1522 to 1530, during which time he translated into the vernacular Erasmus' *Enchiridion*, the New Testament, and the Pentateuch, and composed *The Obedience of a Christian Man*. Having been educated at Oxford, he was initially influenced by the medieval quadriga of the scholastics. He was introduced to the complicated process of attaining the spiritual sense of Scripture through an intricate progression from the literal to the allegorical, to the tropological, and then to the anagogical meaning. However, he soon became disillusioned with the scholastic method when he moved to Cambridge and imbibed the humanist learning of Erasmus. He then displayed his interest in humanism by translating Erasmus' *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* into English under the patronage of a prominent English nobleman. Tyndale was learning to dispense with the speculations of scholastic exegesis and appreciate the moral and spiritual meaning of Scripture as conveyed by the new humanist exegesis of Erasmus.

However, an all-important turning point occurred in 1524, when Tyndale traveled to the Continent and translated the New Testament into English under the combined influences of Erasmus and Martin Luther. As a translator, although Tyndale borrowed textually from both Erasmus' and Luther's New Testament editions, he was now more strongly influenced by...
Luther since he closely followed at times the Reformer's literary style and glosses. However, as Gervase E. Duffield points out, Tyndale did not slavishly imitate Luther but exercised his own scholarly independence and critical use of all available sources to fuse discriminately humanist and evangelical biblical insights. But by 1523, the publication of The Obedience of a Christian Man clearly reveals that his exegetical method was closely paralleling that of Luther's. Tyndale denounced both the allegorical method of Origen and the "chopological" tradition of the scholastics and came to appreciate the literal sense as the true meaning intended by the Holy Spirit. He asserted: "God is a Spirit, and all his words are spiritual. His literal sense is spiritual, and all his words are spiritual."

Like Luther, he believed allegories could not serve as theological proofs, but could only illustrate and illumine the doctrinal point in question. Tyndale also came to see the Christological significance of Scripture in which the literal sense was also prophetic and Messianic. He declared: "The scriptures spring out of God, and flow unto Christ, and were given to lead us to Christ. Thou must therefore go along by the scripture as by a line, until thou come at Christ, which is the way's end and resting-place."

With his translation of the Pentateuch in 1530, Tyndale seems to have refined his approach to biblical exposition further by pressing beyond Luther's Christocentric exegesis. Tyndale apparently became interested in the ethical significance of God's Word in disclosing the laws, commandments, and promises given by God for the obedience of all true believers.

12. Ibid., 353.
Christian believers. His exegesis thus tended to become legalistic and moralistic in tone, but whether this was due to the covenantal theology of the Swiss reformers is quite uncertain. Although Leonard J. Trinterud believes Tyndale consciously adopted the covenant motif of biblical history from Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and Bucer, possible through using their 1529 Zurich Bible, it is extremely doubtful whether this can be documented. 13 Tyndale definitely did not construct a full-scale, formalized covenantal schematization of biblical interpretation, but skillfully linked his stress on the correct understanding of God's law and covenant with the Christocentric exegesis he had been developing in harmony with Luther's. In his prologue to the Book of Genesis, he exhorted Christians to seek in Scripture the law and covenants established by God with man, but he believed such knowledge could only be found in the one simple, literal-grammatical sense of the Bible. Referring to biblical examples of how God purges those who submit themselves to walk in His ways, Tyndale asserted that "this learning and comfort shall thou evermore find in the plain text and literal sense . . . . etc." 14 As a result, by 1533, Tyndale's exegetical method was fully developed and ready to be applied to his exposition on the Sermon on the Mount.

Having surveyed the development and maturation of Luther's and Tyndale's exegesis, it is now possible to examine the efficacy of their exegetical methods for their Sermon on the Mount commentaries. This will entail going beyond the basic similarities and differences in both their approaches which have already been indicated. To fully understand and


appreciate the significance of their exegeses as applied to the Sermon on the Mount, the attempt must be made to analyze how each reformation used his exegetical insights to shape his conception of the distinctive style and content of Christ's sermon message. Their biblical expositions, in turn, can be seen to reflect the distinguishing characteristics of their religious reform programs.

For Luther, the Sermon on the Mount could be understood only according to its one simple, true, and original meaning, its literal-grammatical sense or the spiritual sense intended by the Holy Spirit. Since it was his strong conviction that the Bible was its own best interpreter (Scriptura sacra sui ipsius interpris), he asserted he was duly cleaning and polishing the Gospel, clearing away the false glosses and obscurities of the papists and schismatics. Challenging his opponents to point out any passages or articles of Scripture which he could be misinterpreting, Luther proclaimed that the true exposition of Scripture must be purely Christocentric: it must center on the chief part of Christian teaching and accept nothing else but "that God has sent and given Christ, His Son, and that only through Him does He forgive us all our sins, justify and save us." As a result, he believed the Bible conveyed one primary message which was centered in God's Word as an act of redemption. For Luther, the Word of God works to purify the heart and to "instruct the conscience about its relation to God, showing it His grace and mercy and the whole Christ." Although Luther maintained that Christ was primarily concerned with preaching grace and justification, he also believed Christ's purpose was to explain the revelatory value of

16. Ibid., 65.
God's Word, showing how divine laws and commandments should be understood and obeyed. Hence, Luther applied his Christological exegesis to interpret the Word of God as primarily redemptory or of doctrinal importance, and secondarily as revelatory, or of moral consequence.

Upon applying his Christological exegesis to Christ's mission as a preacher of the Sermon on the Mount, Luther conceived of Christ as a spiritual shepherd or pastor who was proclaiming the benefits conferred upon Christians and given to be their possessions for believing his divine message of redemption. In particular, the beatitudes offered the pleasant promises of comfort, mercy, and eternal life for those willing to submit to the humility and suffering made necessary for Christian living. Luther stressed that Christ was not a second Moses or his teachings in Matthew V-VII a code of laws and doctrine. He asserted: "He does not come like Moses or a teacher of the Law, with demands, threats, and terrors, but in a very friendly way, with enticements, allurements, and pleasant promises." 17 For Luther, Christ was not primarily a moral example for men to imitate through their moral obedience, but the divine exemplar in whom God had manifested his work of the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and redemption. It is not what deeds Christ did that believers must do, but what was done to Christ is what believers must learn to experience as being done to them as well. This was what Luther believed to be the spiritual meaning of Christ's teaching of the beatitudes. He observed that those who lead a Christian's way of life must necessarily be poor, troubled, miserable, needy, hungry, and persecuted, running the risk of losing their body, life, and property. Luther believed that for the sake

17. Ibid., 10.
of the Gospel there must be some suffering because "it reinforces the faithful and advances them to their promised comfort, joy, and bliss, and it punishes and damns the wicked despisers and enemies of the Gospel."18

When Luther applied his exegetical methods to Christ's explanation of divine laws and commandments, his exegesis assumed not a moralistic but a soteriological tone. He believed Christ was primarily concerned with teaching what pertained to the advantage, health, and salvation of souls and how Christians were to achieve eternal life. Luther's exegesis interpreted Christ's message to mean that He was referring solely to spiritual affairs and the spiritual realm, showing Christians how to live before God, above and beyond the external. Luther declared: "For here and in all His sermons He is not talking about the way a secular person should work and live, but about the way you should live uprightly before God as a Christian, as one who does not have to be bothered about the world, but who should direct his thoughts exclusively to another life."19 Luther's exposition tends to become anagogical when it focuses on the theological statement of Matthew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well." Luther's answer for reaching God's heavenly kingdom clearly reflects his Christological exegesis since he replied that the only way is believing in Christ and practicing the Gospel, to which faith clings. He believed this involves not a proliferation of good works but "being strengthened at heart through preaching, listening, reading, singing, meditating, and every other possible way."20

18. Ibid., 53.
19. Ibid., 171.
20. Ibid., 204.
When Luther's exegesis does assert a pragmatic tone, it still maintains its doctrinal emphasis on the redemptive significance of God's Word. Although he believes that Christ's message was not being preached for the sake of being heard but for the sake of action and its application to life, he reaffirms that a Christian's life is still dependent on promoting the glory of God and His exalted Son. Luther's exegesis becomes existential, not necessarily moralistic, when he asserts that to do God's will does not mean to run away into the desert or a monastery, but to live courageously in society, despising the world and its greed. However, obedience to God's will does not come from man's innate abilities, but comes down from heaven as God's free gift. Consequently, to be found in the service of God and to do His duty means that the Christian "should believe in Christ and be found in a calling that has a word of God, and do in it what He has commanded." 21

For the authority of his exegesis, Luther relied on the sanction of his office as a preacher of God's Word. He emphasized that his exposition was not produced by his own mind or conscience; instead, it stemmed from the spiritual meaning inspired by God. He declared: "The Word was not spun out of our own heads, nor did it grow out of any human heart. It fell from heaven and was manifested by the mouth of God." 22 In effect, he maintained he was objectifying the Word of God since his exegesis centered not on his own suppositions, but on the essence of Christianity—Christ's divine deed of the atonement. He asserted: "We are not teaching on the basis of our own brains, reason, or wisdom, or using this to

21. Ibid., 269.

22. Ibid., 205.
gain advantage, property, or reputation for ourselves before the world. We are preaching only God's Word and praising only His deeds." As a result, Luther's Christocentric exegesis served as a valuable instrument to reaffirm the evangelical, soteriological, and existential foundation of Christianity.

As compared to Luther's exegetical approach, Tyndale interpreted the Sermon on the Mount according to the same literal-spiritual sense as Luther, but his exegesis produced different consequences. Tyndale closely followed Luther not only in reaffirming the spiritual meaning of Christ's message, asserting that "Christ's words were spirit and life: that is to say, they ministered spirit and life, and entered into the heart, and grated on the conscience," but also in stressing the Christocentric nature of Scripture since he believed Christ to be "the door, the way, and the ground or foundation of all the scripture." However, since he was painfully aware of the fact that the Bible was "locked up," withheld from the laity, and therefore incapable of being sui ipsius interpres, Tyndale shaped his exegesis to elucidate Christ's sermon as the epitome of God's laws and promises. In aiming his exposition at restoring and explaining the law of Christ which, according to him, had been perverted by the scholastics and "papists," Tyndale molded the Sermon on the Mount into a practical guide of Christian ethics which revealed the proper moral life expected of all true Christians. Tyndale exhorted his readers to "read this exposition with a good heart, only to know the truth, for

23. Ibid., 50.


25. Ibid., 183.
the amending chiefly of thine own living, and then of other men's,"\(^{26}\) thus demonstrating his primary concern for the moralistic purpose of Christ's sermon. Since he also declared that Christians must not only have a true understanding of God's Law, but must come "to feel the power of Christ's death, and might of his resurrection, and the sweetness of the life to come."\(^{27}\) Tyndale believed that the redemptive and doctrinal meaning of Christ's message had an important underlying role to play.

When Tyndale applied his exegetical insights to the role of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, he conceived of Him as a "spiritual Isaac" who not only expounded again the meaning of God's Word and the kingdom of heaven, but removed the veils from Moses' Law and restored the Law to its correct understanding as "the first and principal key, to open the door of the Scripture."\(^{28}\) Consequently, Tyndale looked upon Christ not necessarily as a spiritual pastor and redeemer as Luther had, but as a divine expositor of God's Law or even as a second Moses, who would lead His people away from the bondage of the false glosses of the Pharisees and to the enlightenment of the true understanding of God's Law, promises, and grace. Tyndale maintained that although Moses initially promulgated God's Law, it was left to Christ to become the Moses of the New Testament who "giveth grace to do it, and to understand it aright; and writeth it with his holy Spirit in the tables of the hearts of men; and maketh it a true thing there, and no hypocrisy."\(^{29}\)

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 184.
\(^{27}\) Ibid., 186.
\(^{28}\) Ibid., 181.
\(^{29}\) Ibid., 182.
For Tyndale, Christ also became not particularly the divine exemplar recognized by Luther, but an august moral example for men to respect and emulate. He declared that Christians would receive moral encouragement if they "remembered the examples of the apostles, and of Christ himself; and that the disciple is no better than his master; and that Christ admitteth no disciple, which not only leaveth not all, but also taketh his cross too."\(^{30}\) As a consequence, Tyndale stressed the essential moralistic basis of all the beatitudes. They were first fulfilled by Christ and the apostles and now became the moral duty of all Christians to seek and attain if they would obtain the blessings and rewards promised by God. He believed that according to Christ's teaching of the beatitudes, all Christians were enjoined to perform the good works of being poor in spirit, mournful, meek, merciful, pure in heart, and peacemakers in order to inherit the blessings of the kingdom of heaven and eternal life. In effect, Tyndale's exegesis had become legalistic, but only in a qualified sense. He asserted, at the conclusion of his exposition of the beatitudes, that "though God, when he promiseth to bless our works, do bind us to work if we obtain the blessing or promise; yet must we beware of this pharisaiical pestilence, to think that our works did deserve the promises." Tyndale maintained the evangelical and Christocentric basis of his exegesis by reaffirming the graciousness of God: "The promise therefore cometh not of the deserving of the worker (as though God had need of aught that we could do), but of the pure mercy of God, to make us the more willing to do that is our duty."\(^{31}\)

\(^{30}\) Ibid., 206.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 209.
Although Tyndale's exegesis worked to interpret Christ's sermon message in moral and legal terms in which God's promises were dependent upon moral obedience, it did not necessarily reduce God to a formal negotiator of covenants which then became the essence of Scripture. The Word of God for Tyndale was not relegated to a formal contract between God and man, but it still contained both faith and Law in their right relationship. In comparing the content of Scripture of Christ's reference to "the salt of the earth," Tyndale understood the salt to be "the true understanding of the law, of faith, and of the intent of all works ..." When his exposition does refer to the role of a covenant in Scripture, he applies the term in an informal sense to the promises of God inherent in Christ's act of redemption. For example, he asserts:

... all the good promises which are made us throughout all the scripture, for Christ's sake, for his love, his passion or suffering, his blood-shedding or death, are all made us on our party, that we henceforth love the law of God, to walk therein, and to do it, and fashion our lives thereafter.

Tyndale further elucidates his exegetical approach to God's promises and covenant in his exposition of the beatitudes in which he maintains that a Christian is obligated to ethical living irrespective of any promises or covenant with God. He declared that "whatsoever God commandeth us to do, that is our duty to do, though there were no such promise made to us at all." Tyndale believed God actually dealt with Christians on the basis of His own essential righteousness, goodness, and mercy, and only superficially through agreements or covenants. As a consequence,

32. Ibid., 211.
33. Ibid., 184.
34. Ibid., 209.
Tyndale's literal-grammatical exegesis served to uncover and explain the ethical standards and moral duties necessitated by the true understanding of Christianity.

In sum, Luther's and Tyndale's exegesis, when applied to the Sermon on the Mount, came to share a common core—the Christocentric and literal-spiritual meaning of Scripture—and diverged in their ultimate consequences, with Luther's becoming soteriological and anagogical and with Tyndale's becoming moralistic and legalistic. The same exegetical method eventually produced different results because each reformer had his own individual religious outlook and general suppositions about the Reformation. Luther believed the availability of the Bible to the laity and the growth of doctrinal dispute and theological error called for the teaching of the meaning of grace, redemption, and salvation for the Christian man. Tyndale observed that the deprivation of the Scripture from the laity and the spread of religious doubt and moral laxity demonstrated the need to teach the importance of ethical standards, moral obedience, and human merit for the redeemed in Christ. In doing so, both reformers firmly believed they were basing their exposition on the Word of God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and not according to the whims of their own fallible judgment. Consequently, implicit in their exegetical approaches was an encounter with reason and its relationship to the divine. However, the problem of the use of reason does not remain confined to biblical exegesis but looms even larger in the context of religion, ethics, and worldly concerns. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a critical comparison of Luther's and Tyndale's use of reason in order to understand further the entire developing process of their conceptions of moral and doctrinal reform.
CHAPTER III

A COMPARISON OF LUTHER'S AND TYNDALE'S USE OF REASON

In accomplishing the task of applying effective methods of biblical interpretation to the Sermon on the Mount, Luther and Tyndale were necessarily faced with a second problem involving the proper use of reason in its relationship to human ability and divine will. Each reformer had to decide to what extent human reason and divine grace were efficacious for biblical scholarship in particular, and for the major tasks of religious reform in general. In order to resolve this problem, both reformers developed their own particular attitudes toward the role of reason as it extended from the field of biblical exposition to theology, morality, socio-economic reform, and temporal authority. In this way, Luther's and Tyndale's approachstoward the use of reason, already implied in their exegetical techniques, become another well-defined means with which to examine the formation of their respective ideas of reformation.

Luther and Tyndale fully involved themselves with the problem of the use of reason through their expositions of Christ's basic concern with distinguishing between the "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" standard of punishment for secular authority as propounded by Moses in Exodus 21:24, and the spiritual standards for Christian behavior based on forgiveness, patient forbearance, and humility. Luther and Tyndale liberal­ly interpreted Christ's purpose and, in the process, expanded Christ's meaning into a basic distinction between divine and human realms, stipulating the areas in which reason and faith could be properly employed.
Although both reformers took the same line of departure, they tended to project often varying attitudes toward the role of reason and will in human and spiritual affairs. Analyzing the differences and similarities of their approaches to the use of reason will further reveal the underlying character of their conceptions of religious reform.

When Luther expounded Christ's reaffirmation of the Christian standard of "turning the other cheek" in Matthew 5:38, he was addressing himself to the problem of the proper scope of reason set in the context of the subjective world of Christian values vis-a-vis the objective world of non-Christian outward circumstances. Charles Trinkaus has pointed out that Luther diverged from the behavioral norms of Catholicism and sought to show how man could use reason and free will to lead a non-religious life while still remaining a faithful Christian. Luther resolved the problem by carefully applying a two-realm theory setting up a dualism between spiritual and secular affairs. He maintained that God had ordained two spheres of activity for Christians to live in, the divine realm of the Kingdom of Christ and the secular realm of the Kingdom of the World. Under the Kingdom of Christ, God rules through his holy Word, so that Christians live a life of faith, hope, and charity according to the Ten Commandments and the beatitudes. Under the Kingdom of the World, God rules through the instruments of the family, society, government, economic order, and the church. In the temporal realm, life is regulated by social duties, political authority, and legal rights, while in the spiritual realm life is governed by forgiveness, comfort, and hope for eternal life.

Luther accused both the Roman Catholics and the radical reformers of confusing these two kingdoms and causing social strife in the world. He censured the "papists" for allowing the Pope's authority to trespass into the Kingdom of the World by exercising political power and promulgating extra-scriptural laws. He castigated the schismatics for usurping scriptural authority and using the Word of God, exemplified by either the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount, to rule the secular sphere. Luther insisted that both kingdoms be sharply differentiated: the one is spiritual, eternal, heavenly; the other is natural, temporal, earthly.²

Luther further explained his solution to the problem of the proper use of reason by maintaining that a sharp distinction must be made between a man's "person" and his "office." The term Christian "person" refers to man's spiritual relationship with God in which there is no discrimination between male or female, young or old, rich or poor, prince or peasant, cleric or layman. In God's sight, this relationship is governed not by human reason or righteousness, but by God's own grace and mercy as extended to mankind through the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ. However, in the secular realm, man must accept his "office" and occupy the divinely-ordained station in this world through which he is obliged to perform his assigned duties. In his secular office, a Christian is recognized as a husband or wife, father or mother, son or daughter, magistrate or subject, peasant or artisan, master or servant. A Christian fulfills his secular office not through faith in Christ, but by obeying the law of his territory or city and the demands of his calling. Luther expressed his resolution of the problem in this manner:

There is no getting around it, a Christian has to be a secular person of some sort. As regards to his own person, according to his life as a Christian, he is in subjection to no one but Christ, without any obligation either to the emperor or to any other man. But at least outwardly, according to his body and property, he is related by subjection and obligation to the emperor, inasmuch as he occupies some office or station in life or has a house and home, a wife and children; for all these are things that pertain to the emperor. Here he must necessarily do what he is told and what this outward life requires.  

By establishing a dichotomy between the divine and temporal realms and between person and office, Luther was able to show that the proper operation of divine grace and human reason makes man neither a religious ascetic nor a secular anarchist but permits him to satisfy simultaneously his private and public values. Referring specifically to Christ's preaching of the beatitudes, Luther asserted that having money, property, honor, and power belongs to the temporal realm and is therefore not sinful, nor is it forbidden. He emphasized he did not oppose Christians' having a good time, or eating and drinking well since this is permissible for the secular person apart from the Christian concept of spiritual poverty and spiritual mourning. Luther stated his position by declaring: "That person of mine which is called 'Christian' should not worry about money or save it, but should give its heart to God alone. But outwardly I may and I should use temporal goods for my body and for the needs of other people."  

Similarly, Christ's explication of the "eye for an eye" text of Matthew 5:38 meant for Luther that it was still a right and responsibility to seek legal redress, serve as a public official, and perform military service all within the context of one's secular office. Luther

affirmed that "when a Christian goes to war or when he sits on a judge's bench, punishing his neighbor, or when he registers an official complaint, he is not doing this as a Christian, but as a soldier or a judge or a lawyer. At the same time he keeps a Christian heart. He does not intend anyone any harm, and it grieves him that his neighbor must suffer grief."  

By applying man's reason to public morality, social responsibility, and secular authority, Luther could show how man could and should exercise his own rights and abilities while at the same time conforming to God's preordained plan for creation. As Ernest Rupp has pointed out, Luther saw that God manifested his power and sovereignty in all his creatures who served as his "veils" or "masks" to carry out the two kinds of rule—spiritual and secular. Luther demonstrated that the domain of reason functioned under the dominion of God in that "it is He alone that is ruling, punishing, and being glorified in the divine offices and stations, like those of father, mother, master, judge, prince, king, and emperor... Thus we acknowledge that He is supreme in all three of these areas, but that the others are His instruments, by which He acts to accomplish these things."  

Since the proper use of reason reflected the majesty of God, Luther endorsed the full use of reason within the context of the outward relationship between and among men in the secular realm. As Brian Gerrish's study of grace and reason in Luther's theology has shown, Luther firmly believed reason should have exclusive authority, independent from the Word of God,

5. Ibid., 113.
7. Sermon on the Mount Commentary, 148.
in all of man's worldly activities, be they political, economic, or social. Gerrish explains that, for Luther, grace and reason had separate teleological functions: grace, directed from God to man, was concerned with soteriology and the heavenly life, while man could and should exercise his God-given reason for knowledge of the earthly life. Luther emphasized this dialectical and teleological relationship in his **Sermon on the Mount Commentary** by asserting that "The Word of God is not here to teach a maid or a servant how to work in the household and to earn his bread, nor a burgomaster how to rule, nor a farmer how to plow or make hay. In brief, it neither gives nor shows temporal goods for the preservation of this life, for reason has already taught all this to everyone. But it is intended to teach how we are to come to that other life."  

Gerrish then observes that Luther attacked reason only when it abused its divinely appointed role, became arrogant, and trespassed into the domain of theology and soteriology. In his **Sermon on the Mount Commentary**, Luther called reason crazy and insane when it was used to help explain and establish extra-scriptural doctrines and beliefs. He sharply rebuked those who were relying on the authority of reason to subvert the power of God's grace and Christ's righteousness within the Christian religion. He asserted, "What is forbidden is that everyone may go ahead on the basis of his own ideas and make a doctrine and a spirit of his own, imagining he is to be Master Smart Allek, who is supposed to correct everybody and to criticize him . . . ."  

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blind goal in spiritual matters since "here you have to close up your reason altogether and follow only the Word of God, basing your ideas and opinions about life and works upon it . . . ."  

By following the Word of God, Luther meant that the doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone must reign supreme to the exclusion of reason in the spiritual life of Christians. For Luther, reason must be rejected as an instrument in the process of salvation because by its intrinsic nature it is unable to comprehend and accept the efficacy of the Gospel's message of free forgiveness of sins by grace alone. As B. A. Gerrish has so aptly observed, "The heart of Luther's assault on reason lies in his conviction that justification is 'anything but something rational, a logical conclusion that man could infer from the fact of the moral law'. Justification is wider alle Vernunft—against all reason, against even morality and conscience."  

However, Luther believed that reason was not unequivocally injurious to religion, but could become a valuable tool for theological scholarship if it were first illuminated by faith. For Luther, man's capacity for judgment, understanding, and rationality could be transformed into regenerate reason if it coalesced with the notion of faith and humbly accepted the spiritual meaning derived solely from the Word of God. As Gerrish has shown, Luther felt that reason purified by faith in Christ could then deal in thought and speech with the material presented to it by divine grace and the Word, thus becoming faith's cognitive and intellectual aspects.  

Luther demonstrates this in his exposition on the Sermon

12. Ibid., 260
on the Mount by referring to the fact that man is by nature rational and possesses the Scriptures in addition. Consequently, he remarks that man "has the whole Bible and his reason to help him" in understanding the matters of religion.  

In sum, Luther's attitude toward reason reflects three basic distinctions concerning its application. First, reason rightfully rules in the realm of secular affairs. Second, reason is abusive when it illegitimately encroaches upon the domain of spiritual matters. Third, reason is regenerated when it serves faith and accepts the premises of the Word of God. In assessing the character of Luther's attitude toward the role of reason both in spiritual and secular affairs, it is apparent that the limits of reason are carefully defined and closely circumscribed. In the realm of religion, the Christocentric meaning of God's word and the evangelical doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone must totally predominate, overwhelming any attempt by reason to make soteriology a matter of moralism or legalism. Reason can serve theology only as an intellectual tool that must first be regenerated through God's grace; it must promote the theocentric and evangelical nature of Christianity and not attempt to contrive artificially an egocentric and eudemonistic basis for salvation. Reason must not add or subtract from the exclusive rule of faith and the Word; it must reinforce and perpetuate the reign of both.

In the domain of temporal matters, Luther believed that reason had the power just to maintain the status quo and not to effect important changes and improvements. Although he did detect such social ills as greed, poverty, and unfair business practices, he did not stress the

15. Sermon on the Mount Commentary, 198.
necessity to use man's reason to reform the abuses of society. George Forell, in analyzing Luther's social ethic, asserts that Luther was remarkably reluctant in taking the lead in any thorough-going social reform. Luther's Sermon on the Mount Commentary indicates that although he was indignant over, according to him, the wretched and dismal plight of the world, he believed it could not be substantially changed. Luther exclaimed: "The World is one big whorehouse, completely submerged in greed. We, too, have to live in it, being tempted by these examples and allurements. Therefore we are in great danger and have to be very careful not to let the devil ride us." He went on to assert: "Well, then, we still have to let the world remain the world. Although it may be greedy and selfish for a long time, it must finally forsake everything and leave something for us. Or even if we have to endure poverty and suffering at its hands, still, like Isaac and Jacob among their brothers, we have received our fair portion."

However, Luther did advocate the necessity to mend and repair existing minor defects in the social and economic order. He believed that if any social ills had to be redressed, proper action should be taken by the Christian prince who he maintained was responsible for "the administration of the government, the maintenance and protection of justice and peace, and the punishment of the wicked." For Luther, secular authorities had an obligation to their subjects not to tolerate social evils since civil governments were ordained by God "to help and protect with the sword

18. Ibid., 185.
19. Ibid., 170.
that has been placed in their hands for that purpose..."\(^{20}\) As a result, Luther's somewhat negative and pessimistic view of the world is counter-balanced by his reliance on a positive but conservative social ethic which recognizes the need for the preservation of social justice.

Luther tended to develop a relatively conservative and passive social ethic because of his firm conviction that it was unbiblical to expect a significant change in society so late in the history of mankind. Luther's attitude seems to be based on his concern for Christian eschatology, his expectation of the rapidly approaching end of this world. Luther expresses this idea by remarking: "What is the world but a big, wide, and turbulent ocean of inexhaustible wickedness and villainy, all made to look beautiful and good? This is especially true now in this latter time, and it is a sign that the world cannot last much longer and is on its last legs."\(^{21}\) Due to his belief in the imminent end of the world, Luther felt that all Christians could do would be to remain in their stations, carry out their tasks correctly and faithfully, and direct their thoughts to the Kingdom of Heaven. This is why he stressed that Christ "is not talking about the way a secular person should work and live, but about the way you should live uprightly before God as a Christian, as one who does not have to be bothered about the world, but who should direct his thoughts exclusively to another life."\(^{22}\) Luther's eschatological and analogical view of Christianity, his concern to prepare men for the coming Kingdom of God that would consummate history on the day of judgment compelled him to adopt a rather limited and restrained outlook toward the power of reason to forge social and economic progress.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 171.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., 184.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 171.
As compared with Luther, Tyndale used his exposition of Matthew 5:38 to develop the same twin-realm theory for the application of man's reason, but he tends to carry his dialectic to different limits than did Luther. At the outset, Tyndale seemed to have grasped the basic meaning of Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms, since he asserted: "Ye must understand that there be two states or degrees in this world: the kingdom of heaven, which is the regiment of the gospel; and the kingdom of this world, which is the temporal regiment." Tyndale went on to follow Luther's distinction between the Christian as a spiritual person and as a secular person. As a spiritual person in the divine realm, a Christian must follow Christ in manifesting love, humility, meekness, and patience in all his dealings with his fellow man. As a secular person in the temporal realm, a Christian must fulfill the duties of his office according to the rules, regulations, and laws of society and the government. In this respect, Tyndale also believed that Christians should be spiritually poor and mournful under the Kingdom of Christ, while still being permitted to be cheerful and well-to-do under the Kingdom of the World.

In effect, Tyndale agreed with Luther that Christ was instructing his believers how to live a spiritual life in the divine realm while still participating actively and loyally in the temporal sphere. However, Tyndale departed from Luther in taking a more realistic, pragmatic, and empirical approach to the role of reason in religious and secular affairs. With respect to religion, Tyndale allowed reason a freer and more active role, thus tending to impart a legalistic and moralistic tone toward his reform program. He often applied empirical political knowledge to

23. *An Exposition Upon the V. VI. VII. Chapters of Matthew,* 238.
theology in order to make a practical analogy which he believed Christians could identify with and more readily understand. In one example, he asserted:

For ye see that the king pardoneth no murderer but on a condition, that he henceforth keep the law, and do no more so; and yet ye know well enough that he is saved by grace, favour, and pardon, ere the keeping of the law come: howbeit, if he break the law afterward, he falleth again unto the same danger of death.

Even so, none of us can be received to grace but upon a condition to keep the law, neither yet continue any longer in grace than that purpose lasteth. And if we break the law, we must sue for a new pardon. . . .

Consequently, Tyndale used the concept of political pardon in the secular sphere to illustrate a comparable agreement between God and the Christian believer, in which Christ's love, passion, and atonement would be efficacious for salvation, provided the repentent sinner's purpose was to love God and to obey his law.

In effect, Tyndale was applying reason to Christian soteriology in such a way as to append other criteria to faith alone as the means for salvation. Within the context of a covenant, he believed faith in Christ must be accompanied by love for God's Law and hope for eternal life to complete the process of salvation. For Tyndale, "to believe in Christ's blood for the remission of sin, and purchasing of all the good promises that help to the life to come; and to love the law; and to long for the life to come," is the only way of salvation that avails in the sight of God since it serves as the "title whereby we challenge our inheritance." Tyndale thus permitted reason to modify and rationalize both the doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone and the Word of God. Man's charity and hope, along with his faith, became an integral part of Christian soteriology, and the Word of God was now understood in terms of moral

24. Ibid., 185.

25. Ibid., 191.
obedience to God's law and commandments. Utilizing the tool of human reason, Tyndale had changed Luther's evangelical and anagogical theology into a moralistic and legalistic one. In doing so, he tended to make religion a more pragmatic and casuistic matter, less formalized and otherworldly, and more closely associated with the secular concerns of Christians. Reason was no longer just an intellectual and cognitive instrument to support intangible faith but a practical and educational tool to demonstrate to Christians the tangible, concrete, immediate relevance of religion in everyday life.

With respect to the role of reason in secular affairs, Tyndale emphasized that reason had the power to observe critical deficiencies in the social and economic order and to render needed reforms and improvements. As compared to Luther, he gave the clergy more responsibility to promote the welfare of both the rulers and the ruled within the temporal realm. He asserted, with reference to the spiritual order:

All the world can bear record what pain ye take, and how ye care, for the temporal commonwealth, that all degrees therein did and had their duty; and how ye put your lives in adventure to preach the truth, and to inform lords and princes, and to cry upon them to fear God and to be learned, and to minister their offices truly unto their subjects, and to be merciful, and an example of virtue unto them. And how help ye that youth were brought up in learning and virtue, and that the poor were provided for, of food and raiment, etc?26

Tyndale did not seem to let his attitude toward reason be limited by a reliance on Christian eschatology, but stressed the dynamic role of reason in forgoing social and economic progress in the here and now. He believed Christians should not only perform the duties of their offices but also adopt a broader concern towards reforming the world at large. He declared: "happy are they which not only do their duties to all men, but also study and help to the uttermost of their power, with word, deed, counsel, and

exhorting, that all other deal truly also, according to the degree that every man beareth in the world; and be as desirous to further good order and righteous dealing, as the hungry and thirsty be desirous to eat and drink."  

Tyndale also took a more realistic and positive view than did Luther in acknowledging the political, economic, and social realities which Christians must deal with in this world. He recognized that Christians were vitally concerned with such problems as political tyranny, public taxation, and financial transactions, and he advised them explicitly how to deal with them. With reference to the problem of unjust kings, Tyndale remarked:

The authority of the king is the authority of God; and all the subjects, compared to the king, are but subjects still, though the king be never so evil; as a thousand sons gathered together are but sons still, and the commandment, 'Obey your fathers,' goeth over all as well as ever one. Even so goeth the commandment over all the subjects: obey your prince and the higher power, and he that resisteth him, resisteth God, and getteth him damnation.  

Referring to the problem of paying taxes, he declared:


Moreover concerning thy goods, thou must remember how that thou art a person in the temporal regiment; and the king, as he is over thy body, even so is he lord of thy goods, and of him thou holdest them, not for thyself only, but for to maintain thy wife, children, and servants, and to maintain the king, the realm, and the country, and town or city where thou dwellest.  

Finally, Tyndale was more conscious than Luther of the changing economic order, of the rise of mercantile capitalism, and the need to have Christians adapt themselves accordingly. While Luther tended to dismiss

27. Ibid., 200.  
28. Ibid., 243.  
29. Ibid., 244.
most monetary practices involving profit and interest as manifestations of avarice, Tyndale took a more objective and practical view towards the problem of capitalist methods and Christian values. With respect to the new practice of loans and interest, Tyndale asserted:

Concerning merchandise and chapmen, the less borrowing were among them, the better should the commonwealth be: if it were possible, I would it were, ware for ware; or money for ware; or part money and part ware. But if it will not be, but that a man, to get his living with, must needs lend, and call for it again, to find his household, and to pay his debts; then in the lending be first single and harmless as a dove, and then as wise as a serpent; and take heed to whom thou lendest. 30

Consequently, Tyndale as compared to Luther, was more concerned with the need to use human reason to promote socio-economic reform, social responsibility to the commonwealth, and political loyalty to the duly-constituted sovereign. Although Luther was aware of social and economic problems, he believed that man should be more concerned with the spiritual life and achieving salvation than with the secular life and achieving economic and social success.

In essence, Luther and Tyndale developed differing attitudes toward the proper role of reason, attitudes which tended to reflect not only the character of their reform programs, but also their historical circumstances. Luther's attitude demonstrates his reliance on reason as an intellective tool to serve faith and God's Word in the realm of theology, as well as his reluctance to use reason as a necessary means for social and economic progress in the secular realm. Luther's attitude was shaped by his primary concern for the declaration of his evangelical and eschatological theology and by his familiarity with the rural and agrarian world of Saxony. Tyndale's attitude, on the other hand, reflects his use

30. Ibid., 247.
of reason as an empirical tool to support a moralistic and legalistic concept of reform, as well as an important means to implement necessary social and economic reforms. Tyndale's attitude was based on his concern for the enunciation of his moralistic and practical theology and on his observations of an urban and capitalist society in Antwerp.

As has been shown, Luther and Tyndale developed their own individual attitudes toward reason through a consideration of reason's various roles in spiritual and secular affairs. The problem of reason leads to another important intellectual problem—that of law and ethics—when reason must be reconciled with law, legalism, and morality. Luther and Tyndale were vitally involved with the proper interpretation and use of law, both civil and divine, because it was a major theme of Christ's sermon message, and because it was a contemporary point of dispute during the spread of the Reformation. An examination of both reformers' confrontation with the problem of law will illustrate further the differing aspects of their views of religious reform.
The approaches of Luther and Tyndale to the problem of law reflect the differences in their concepts of reform when law must be correctly related to religion, soteriology, morality, and government. Both reformers realized that law lent itself to various connotations with respect to its characteristics, purposes, and effects for Christians leading both spiritual and secular lives, and they made it their major task to clarify and resolve this problem. In doing so, they had to establish the right relationship of law to man's ethical abilities, divine grace, good works, and human merit. An analysis of how the reformers developed their own particular attitudes toward the role of law in shaping civil and spiritual righteousness and how their attitudes came to reflect the value of law for moral and doctrinal reform will demonstrate more clearly the nature of Tyndale's relationship to Luther.

Luther first confronted the problem of law with Christ's three-fold proclamation in Matthew 5:17-20 that He has come not to abolish the Law but to fulfil it, that not an iota will pass from the Law until all is accomplished, and that only they who practice and teach God's commandments shall enter the kingdom of heaven. Luther showed that Christ was interpreting the Ten Commandments in terms of his Sermon on the Mount message, not vice versa, and implied that Christ was revealing the third and final stage of the law of God. For Luther, the first stage is the Natural law or man's innate awareness that he ought to worship the supreme power of the universe on a quid pro quo basis and that he ought to do to
others as he would have others do to him. The second stage is the Mosaic Law, the Decalogue, with the first table stating man’s duty to God and the second his duty to his neighbor. Here Moses does not actually promulgate the Law but define it in writing, since the Law already given by nature had been obscured by sin. The third stage represents Christ’s reinterpretation of Moses’ Ten Commandments to form the Gospel commandment of love toward God and one’s neighbor. Here Christ reveals the true inward meaning of the Law through his teaching and example. Consequently, Luther used Christ’s teaching on the Law to refer indirectly to the three kinds of law—Natural, Mosaic, and Gospel.

Luther went on to demonstrate to what extent God’s Law plays a role in the Christian religion and its soteriology. He believed that Christ’s teaching of the Law showed that it had the divine or spiritual purpose of revealing the enormity of man’s sin, his inability to reform himself, and his ensuing condemnation and damnation. He asserted: "We cannot be justified or saved through the teaching of the Law, which only brings us to the knowledge of ourselves, the knowledge that by our own ability we cannot properly fulfill an iota of it."¹ Luther emphasized that the spiritual use of the Law must not be confused with its civil or political use by which sin is restrained and law and order maintained through statutory legislation and secular authority. He declared that those Christians who served in governmental positions had the duty to administer the imperial or territorial law which "gives you both the power and the might to protect and to punish within the limits of your authority and commission, not as a Christian but as an imperial subject."² Finally, Luther

¹ Sermon on the Mount Commentary, 72.
² Ibid., 110.
seems to invoke a third use of the Law—its penal or disciplinary use. He believed that Christians already justified by God's grace still had to submit to the Law which then served to chastise that part of man's flesh still bearing remnants of sin fighting against the Holy Spirit. He explained that the Law was still applicable to Christians since it was an eternal witness whose burden continually oppressed man's iniquitous outward body. Luther therefore did not condone any form of antinomianism for redeemed Christians since he maintained that they were subject to the administration of civil law and to the enforcement of God's Law for the sinful flesh of their bodies.

Luther thus developed a negative attitude toward God's Law since its spiritual, civil, and penal uses were sanctions directed against man's behavior—sanctions to reveal, restrain, and purge sin. Man's relationship to the Law reflected the unrighteous and dishonorable state of man in the world contrasted by the sovereignty and justice of God's rule. Man could establish a positive relationship to the Law only through receiving the benefit of Christ's divine act of fulfilling the Law with his incarnation, passion, and atonement. Luther explained that a Christian's righteousness depends upon the direct imputation of Christ's righteousness "when He gives His grace and Spirit to enable us to do and keep the Law's demands." It is only by spiritually fulfilling the Law that a Christian can actually satisfy the Law's requirements. Luther declared:

> Once we have become Christians through Baptism and faith, we do as much as we can. Still we can never take our stand before God on this basis, but we must always creep to Christ. He has fulfilled [sic] it all purely and perfectly, and He gives

3. Ibid., 239.

4. Ibid., 69.
Himself to us, together with His fulfillment. Through Him we can take our stand before God, and the Law cannot incriminate or condemn us. So it is true that all must be accomplished and fulfilled even to the smallest dot, but only through this one Man.  

Moreover, Luther carefully distinguished the spiritual fulfillment of the Law from the mere moral observance of it. He recognized that in theory man could claim he was morally obeying the Law in which his behavior would conform to the letter of the Law, regardless of the true intent of his heart and his lack of faith. Luther accused both the Pharisees of Christ's day and the 'papists' of his own time of exemplifying a moral hypocrisy toward the law:

Look at this beautiful Pharisaic holiness! It can purify itself and stay pious as long as it does not kill with its own hand, though its heart may be crammed full of anger, hate, and envy, of hidden and evil schemes of murder, and though its tongue may be loaded with curses and blasphemies. That is the kind of holiness our papists have. They have become past masters at this business. To keep their holiness from being condemned and themselves from being bound by Christ's Word, they have generously helped Him by deducing twelve counsels from His Word. These Christ did not command as necessary, but left them up to the free choice of each individual, to observe them as good advice if he wants to merit something more special than other people.  

Luther reaffirmed the full ethical demands of the Law, stressing that Christ was not relaxing the limits of the Law by denouncing Pharisaic holiness, but was appealing for the proper and complete accomplishment of everything required by the Law. Luther declared: "He does not intend to bring other doctrine, as though the former one were no longer in force. He intends, rather, to preach it, to emphasize it, to show its real kernel and meaning, and to teach them what the Law is and what it requires..."  

5. Ibid., 72-73.  
6. Ibid., 74.  
7. Ibid., 70.
Luther firmly believed that the Law necessarily required its fulfillment in the issuance of good works performed by Christians justified by grace through faith in Christ and his meritorious righteousness. He emphasized that justification by faith did not exempt Christians from the obligation of ethical behavior through doing good works. Works were the fruits that freely flowed from faith so that the relationship of faith to works of the Law was one of cause to effect. Works were of two kinds, corresponding to the first and second tables of the Ten Commandments. Works performed according to the first three Commandments were works of praise to God and included prayer, almsgiving, and fasting. These did not redound to the holiness of the believer but demonstrated the "real revelation and praise of God and at the same time the real sacrifice and worship. These are the works that should be first and foremost." Works performed according to the last seven Commandments were works of love toward one's neighbor and included outward deeds of charity, honesty, and kindness as part of a Christian's daily social life.

In appealing for the performance of both kinds of good works, Luther believed a Christian could achieve moral righteousness in his outward relations with his fellow man. Indeed, as Brian A. Gerrish points out, Luther was willing to assert that in his social relations, a Christian should seek to be morally justified by a combination of works of love on one hand, and, on the other hand, by a humility willing to ask for forgiveness of transgressions. In his exposition of the Lord's Prayer,

8. Ibid., 65-66.

Luther maintained that Christ "had the special purpose of making mutual love a Christian obligation, and the continual forgiveness of the neighbor the primary and foremost duty of Christians, second only to faith and the reception of forgiveness. As we live in faith toward Him, therefore, so also we should live in love toward our neighbor."\(^\text{10}\)

In certain respects, Luther tended to advocate a kind of twin justification of faith before God and works before men by declaring:

\[\ldots\] we should confirm our possession of faith and the forgiveness of sin by showing our works, making the tree manifest by means of its fruit and making it evident that this is a sound tree and not a bad one. Where there is a genuine faith, there good works will certainly follow, too. In this way a man is pious and upright, both inwardly and outwardly, both before God and before men. For this follows as the fruit by which I assure myself and others that I have a genuine faith; this is the only way I can know or see this.\(^\text{11}\)

However, he stipulated that the outward righteousness of good works must be distinguished from the inward righteousness of faith "in such a way that the inward has precedence as the stem and root from which the good works must grow as fruit."\(^\text{12}\) Luther stressed that the outward moral righteousness a Christian exhibits by virtuous deeds is a sure sign that he possesses the divine forgiveness of sins in the sight of God. On the other hand, if this is not shown in a Christian's social relations with his neighbor, it is a certain indication that he does not have God's forgiveness of sin and is still an unbeliever. As a result, true Christians must participate in a two-fold righteousness and forgiveness of sin: one internal in the heart, clinging only to the Word of God and faith in

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10. Sermon on the Mount Commentary, 149.
11. Ibid., 149-150.
12. Ibid., 150.
Christ, and one external, demonstrating ethical ability and assuring the presence of faith and the Word.

Consequently, as Philip S. Watson has shown, Luther departed from Catholicism's idea of the moral righteousness of works before men leading to the spiritual righteousness of faith before God. For Luther, works-righteousness was valid only before one's fellow men and not before God. Since he believed Christianity to be theocentric and not egocentric, God's justice could not be one of legalism and retribution, but one of grace, forgiveness, and free redemption. He rejected Catholicism's use of the Law as an ethical and religious principle contributing to salvation since it made the relation of religion to ethics one of end to means. Luther held that man's blessedness before God and his ethical life were both separate ends in themselves and could never be treated as a means to any other end whatsoever. In his Sermon on the Mount Commentary, Luther declared: "None of these things is true: first, that any man can merit grace by his own works, much less that a man is mortal sin can do so; secondly, even if, as their lie says, a man were in grace through works, that such works done in grace should be precious enough to be worthy of the kingdom of heaven." Luther reaffirmed that Christians were already saved by the single theological principle of justification by God's gift of grace before any ethical principle could take effect:

As we have seen, Christ is saying nothing in this sermon about how we become Christians, but only about the works and fruit that no one can do unless he already is a Christian and in a state of grace. This is evident from the words that they have

14. 289.
to endure poverty, suffering, and persecution simply because they are Christians and have the kingdom of heaven.\textsuperscript{15}

Luther's religious and ethical principles for Christian living have subsequently been interpreted by George W. Forell as that of "faith active in love." Forell maintains that, for Luther, faith in Christ generated a spontaneous overflowing love of God that a Christian necessarily transmitted to his fellow man through social interaction. Forell asserted that "in faith man receives God's love and passes it on to his neighbor. The Christian as a child of God is used by God to mediate the divine love to other men. It is to the needy neighbor that God wants man to show His love."\textsuperscript{16} However, Luther in his exposition on the Sermon on the Mount does not tend to stress the necessity for a Christian to automatically love God upon being justified by faith in Christ. He believed that the true Christian life of spiritual poverty, mourning, and suffering did not necessarily foster a love for God. In his exposition of Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters," Luther explained:

He does not simply say here: "He will love the one [God]"; but to show what love does and accomplishes, He uses the word "be devoted." Anyone who intends to love God and His Word will not have an easy time of it. It will often hit him between the eyes, and the love will often become the kind that the devil sours and embitters for him. Hence we need the ability to hold tight and to be devoted to the Word of God.\textsuperscript{17}

As a result, Luther held that man's love for his neighbor sprang more directly from his faith in Christ rather than from his love of God which was sometimes rendered inefficacious due to resistance from the enemies of the world. He stressed that "as we live in faith toward Him, therefore, so also we should live in love toward our neighbor."

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 291.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Faith Active in Love (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1954), 100.
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Sermon on the Mount Commentary, 191.
\end{itemize}
In the final analysis, Luther interpreted a Christian's religious and ethical relationship to God, the Law, and neighbor in terms of the Golden Rule given by Christ in Matthew 7:12. Accordingly, God's Law was perfectly summarized by the injunction that man ought to do unto others as he would have others do unto him. Luther explained that Christ meant by this statement that "When the time comes to preach about the good life and about the works which we should perform in our relations with our neighbor, you will find nothing in all the Law and the Prophets except what this saying teaches." By following the Golden Rule, Christians served as moral examples to all the world since "the only example He sets up is ourselves, and He makes this as intimate as possible by applying it to our heart, our body and life, and all our members." In effect, God's Law, as expressed by the Golden Rule, became, for Luther, a personally internalized standard of moral behavior necessarily acquired by all Christians through faith in Christ. He declared:

The book is laid into your own bosom, and it is so clear that you do not need glasses to understand Moses and the Law. Thus you are your own Bible, your own teacher, your own theologian, and your own preacher. The way He directs you, you only need one look at them to find out how the book pervades all your works and words and thoughts, your heart and body and soul.

The Law was thus spiritualized to become the ethical consequence of faith.

In this respect, Leonard J. Trinterud tended to oversimplify his explanation of Luther's attempt to integrate the Law into his evangelical theology. Trinterud maintained that Luther had insisted that the redeemed man would love God and his neighbor enough so that the Law could be, in

18. Ibid., 240.
19. Ibid., 236.
20. Ibid., 236-237.
effect, superseded or transcended. However, Luther developed a particular attitude toward the Law which must be understood in terms of the broader religious and secular implications of his evangelical and soteriological theology. Since he believed a Christian was both a secular and a spiritual person and that he was simultaneously sinful and righteous, he both upheld and abrogated the Law correspondingly. Once a Christian's heart was inwardly justified by faith in Christ, his spiritual person was exempt from both the spiritual and civil uses of the Law because the Holy Spirit was now his expert guide. Yet the Law was still efficacious for mortifying the believer's sinful flesh and for establishing a norm of moral behavior which, when fulfilled, would verify his inward spiritual righteousness from God. Moreover, as a secular person, a Christian would still be responsible for obeying man's civil law which was a reflection of God's will. For Luther, the Law was not really transcended or superceded because this would make the redeemed Christian an antinomian. Instead, the Law was spiritualized and internalized within the heart and mind of the Christian believer, guiding him to the ethical good that always accompanies faith.

As compared with Luther, Tyndale began his approach to the problem of the use of law by conceiving of law in the same terms as Luther, but he went on to develop his own particular attitude toward law. Tyndale's exposition of Christ's reaffirmation of the Law in Matthew 5:17-20, closely followed Luther's in that he believed Christ was further revealing God's Law which had already been expressed by Moses in the Ten Commandments.

and by natural law. Tyndale held that "God's law is pure and single, 'Love thy neighbor,' whether he be good or bad," and that this formed the basis for Christ's New Testament Gospel, Moses' Decalogue, natural law, and man's temporal laws. Having essentially agreed with Luther's tripartite division of law, Tyndale then concurred with respect to its spiritual, civil, and penal uses and maintained that the Law had an important spiritual role to play in the Christian religion. He asserted:

The law maketh no man to love the law, or less to do or commit sin; but gendereth more lust, and increaseth sin. For I cannot but hate the law, inasmuch as I find no power to do it; and it nevertheless condemneth me, because I do it not. The law setteth not at one with God, but causeth wrath.

He thus defined the use of the law to demonstrate man's unrighteousness and his ensuing condemnation in clearly Lutheran terms. He then assigned law a civil use, as Luther had done, when he declared: "for the law was ordained of God, to maintain thee in thy right, and to forbid that wrong should be done thee." And he believed law had a disciplinary purpose when he stated that "our diligence in working [performing works of the Law] keepeth us from sinning again, and minisheth the sin that remaineth in the flesh, and maketh us pure and less apt and disposed to sin . . . ."

However, Tyndale went on to establish a more positive relationship between man and the Law than Luther had done. Tyndale became more concerned with stressing the redeemed man's ability and necessity to spiritually fulfill God's Law and morally obey the temporal laws. He agreed with Luther that man's spiritual fulfillment of the Law was dependent

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22. An Exposition Upon the V. VI. VII. Chapters of Mathew, 219.
23. Ibid., 182.
24. Ibid., 242.
25. Ibid., 254.
upon faith in Christ but he emphasized faith's power to give man the new ability to love the Law and to love to fulfill it. In response to Christ's exclamation that he had come not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it, Tyndale declared: "For though the law were given by Moses, yet grace and verity, that is to say, the true understanding and power to love it, and of love to fulfill it, cometh and ever came through faith in me [Christ]."26 Consequently, once Christians were justified by faith in Christ, then of a very thankfulness for the mercy received, [they] love the law in her own likeness, and submit themselves to learn it and to profit therein, and to do tomorrow that they cannot do today."27

Moreover, Tyndale tended to relate civil law and moral obedience closely with God's Law and spiritual fulfillment. He remarked that the temporal laws were based on Christ's law of love and that disobedience would result in the alienation of man from God, as had occurred to the Hebrews of the Old Testament for disobeying Moses' law:

Even so if we cast off us the yoke of our temporal laws, which are the laws of God, and drawn out of the ten commandments and law natural, and out of "Love thy neighbour as thyself," God shall cast us off and let us slip, to follow our own wit.28

He reiterated that both the benefits and the penalties of the Law of Moses pertained to the laws of the English commonwealth in his own day. Tyndale's approach contrasted sharply with that of Luther who always kept these two kinds of law and their observance separate and distinct in his thought and teaching.

With his emphasis on the Christian's duty to fulfill, obey, and love God's Law, Tyndale tended to give the Law a new and different meaning from

26. Ibid., 216-217.
27. Ibid., 189.
28. Ibid., 231.
that conceived by Luther. He came to conceive of God's Law as an objective standard for moral behavior which existed side by side with faith in Christ as a necessary criterion for a Christian's state of righteousness. As William A. Clebsch has pointed out, Tyndale assigned the Law a new use as "the model of life lived in faith." In his exposition of the beatitude "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for righteousness' sake," Tyndale demonstrated that the faith in Christ must be complemented by the Law of God to produce true Christian righteousness. He asserted that Christians are persecuted for righteousness' sake only

If the faith of Christ and law of God (in which two all righteousness is contained,) be written in thine heart; that is, if thou believe in Christ to be justified from sin, or for remission of sin, and consentest in thine heart to the law, that it is good, holy, and just, and thy duty to do it, and submittest thyself so to do; and thereupon goest forth, and testifieth that faith and law of righteousness openly unto the world, in word and deed.

As a result, the Law, for Tyndale, came to coexist with faith as an autonomous component of Christian righteousness.

Tyndale further developed his attitude toward the relationship of law and faith by maintaining that a Christian was obligated to live according to God's Law as a condition for having received God's grace and eternal life. In other words, Tyndale envisioned a kind of contractual or covenantal relationship being established between the Christian believer and God. He asserted:

... all the good promises which are made us throughout all the scripture, for Christ's sake, for his love, his passion or suffering, his blood-shedding or death, are all made us on this condition and covenant on our party,


30. *An Exposition Uppon the V. VI. VII. chapters of Mathew*, 205-206.
that we henceforth love the law of God, to walk therein, and to do it, and fashion our lives thereafter . . . .

He then went on to use Matthew 6:14-15 as the key passage on which he could base his concept of a divine covenant:

This is God's covenant with us, and a confirmation of the petition above rehearsed in the Pater-noster: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive our trespassers." If thou wilt enter into the covenant of thy Lord God, and forgive thy brother; then whatsoever thou hast committed against God, if thou repent and ask him forgiveness, thou art sure that thou art so absolved by these words that none in heaven nor earth can bind thee . . . .

Tyndale admonished his Christians to "care day by day and hour by hour earnestly to keep the covenant of the Lord thy God, and to do thy part unto the uttermost of thy power."

In this respect, both Leonard J. Trinterud and William A. Clebsch have insisted that Tyndale used the law of God to construct a formal and explicit contractual theology based on the legality of God's strictly covenantal relationship with Christians. According to the terms of the contract God was bound on his part to bestow blessings upon the righteous, while the faithful were bound on their part to be righteous. However, this appears to be an erroneous interpretation because Tyndale does not seem to have fully developed a rigorous, thorough-going legal contract, between God and the believer, but instead imploys the contract only as a motif or practical analogy to convey more effectively the meaning

31. Ibid., 184.
32. Ibid., 265.
33. Ibid., 286.
of Christ's sermon message to the English laity. Tyndale's reference to a covenant is more nearly a useful illustration from secular life than a serious elaboration of a substantive theological principle. Tyndale recognized that a contract could never be really consummated because the believer would never be able to satisfy his commitment to be righteous, and God would have the right to damn Him for his shortcoming. He asserted:

Now, then, when we cannot do our duty by a thousand parts, though there were no such promises, and that the thing commanded is no less our duty though no such promises were; it is easy to perceive that the reward promised cometh of the goodness, mercy, and truth of the promiser, to make us the gladder to do our duty, and not of the deserving of the receiver. When we have done all we can, we ought to say in our heart, that it was our duty and that we ought to do a thousand times more; and that God (if he had not promised us mercy, of his goodness in Christ,) he might yet of right damn us for that we have left undone.  

Consequently, man's salvation was still dependent upon the justifying faith of Christ and not upon man's obligation to love and obey the Law.

However, Tyndale does seem to have used the concept of a covenant to place greater emphasis on man's need to be as morally righteous as possible. In his exposition of Matthew 6:34, he clearly revealed his deep concern for morality in religion when he maintained that a Christian's life should center on his care to perform the works of God's Law. He went on to describe carefully how faith in Christ should and must lead to outward moral righteousness. He believed faith delivered man from the fear of everlasting death and certified the conscience of the divine forgiveness of sin. Faith then generated the love of God and of the Law and of one's neighbor, all of which formed the inward righteousness of the heart.

36. *An Exposition Uppon the V. VI. VII. Chapters of Mathew*, 253.
Then out of man's spiritual righteousness sprang good works which constituted his external moral righteousness. Man's deeds were an outward testimony and sure certification of his internal spiritual righteousness. Consequently, a Christian was obligated to do good works as a certain expression of his faith in Christ, gratitude to God, love of the Law, and duty to his neighbor. 37

Tyndale's emphasis on an intimate relationship between faith and works has occasioned Clebsch to assert that Tyndale now taught a twin justification, by faith toward God and by works before men. Clebsch believes Tyndale held that with outward deeds a Christian could and must satisfy the Law of God in the eyes of men, including himself, and that satisfaction proved the man was indeed justified by God. 38 However, a close examination of Tyndale's commentary will show that he believed man could never produce enough good works to be fully justified; that even if he could, his works would not procure his salvation, and that faith was required to fulfill both man's spiritual and moral righteousness. He believed man could in no way merit his salvation by good works, that faith directly received the justifying grace of God, even though good works and love for one's neighbor must be annexed to faith. In the conclusion to his commentary, Tyndale outlined his attitude toward the relation of faith, love, law, and works in this manner:

Faith, or confidence in Christ's blood, without help, and before the works of the law, bringeth all manner of remission of sins, and satisfaction. Faith is mother of love; faith accompanieth love in all her works, to fulfill as

37. Ibid., 266.

much as there lacketh, in our doing the law, of that perfect love which Christ had to his Father and us, in his fulfilling of the law for us.\textsuperscript{39}

As a result, Tyndale upheld justification by grace through faith in Christ, while at the same time introducing moral obedience to the Law of God into the process of Christian soteriology.

Tyndale, as compared with Luther, developed a contrasting attitude toward the role of the Law in the Christian religion by using it in such a way as to impart a strongly moralistic and legalistic overtone to his theology without compromising the basic role of the primacy of faith for Christian salvation. Although Tyndale emphasized a new and more pervasive role of the Law within the context of Christian righteousness, he did not come to develop a nomocentric theology in contradistinction to Luther's Christocentric theology. That is, Tyndale did not construct a theology based on salvation through moral obedience to God's Law in contrast to Luther's theology of justification by grace through faith in Christ.

Tyndale differed from the German Reformer in expanding the meaning of a Christian's spiritual righteousness to include the love of God, the love of God's Law, and the love for one's neighbor, in addition to faith in Christ. Yet he agreed with Luther that good works could not contribute to a Christian's spiritual righteousness but must be confined to his outward moral righteousness before men. Tyndale strengthened the power and scope of the Law by elevating it into an auxiliary role with faith for the basis of proper Christian living. In the conclusion to his commentary, he asserted: "Now, when we be reconciled, then is love and

\textsuperscript{39} An Exposition Uppon the V. VI. VII. Chapters of Mathew, 302-303.
faith together our righteousness, our keeping the law, our continuing, our proceeding forward in the grace which we stand in, and our bringing to the everlasting saving and everlasting life."\textsuperscript{40} Consequently, while Luther tended to spiritualize and internalize the Law so that it became subsumed under faith within the heart of a Christian, Tyndale tended to externalize and objectify the Law so that it became a demonstrable norm of moral behavior interdependent with faith.

\textsuperscript{40. Ibid., 303.}
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: THE GENERAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LUTHER'S AND TYNDALE'S IDEAS OF REFORMATION

A consideration of Luther's and Tyndale's approaches to the problems of biblical exegesis, reason, and Law has shown that the reformers were vitally concerned with developing effective and appropriate programs for religious reform to meet the needs of lay Christians in their respective homelands. The two reformers came to conceive of ecclesiastical reform as involving both moral and doctrinal change, and they stressed the specific kind of reform which they believed was most conducive to their particular purpose. While Luther tended to emphasize the need for doctrinal reform, Tyndale stressed the need for moral reform. However, Tyndale's relationship to Luther cannot be reduced to the distinction between dogmatism and moralism. Tyndale's view of religious reform was certainly more theological than that of the Renaissance moralists and more moralistic than that of the Protestant reformers led by Luther. Yet this is only a generalization and simplification of their relative positions on reform which must now be evaluated in greater depth. A clear and specific determination of Tyndale's relationship to Luther will help produce an understanding of the value of the Sermon on the Mount Commentaries as compared to their other major writings, a clarification of the association of the English and Continental Reformations, as well as a resolution of the Luther-Tyndale problem in recent Reformation historiography.
Luther's approach to reform was clearly based on his soteriological and eschatological conception of the Christian religion. His treatment of the problems of exegesis, reason, and law served to create an idea of reformation which centered on man's immediate spiritual relationship to God in terms of his justification and salvation. For Luther, religious reform, like his soteriology, could succeed not by man's vain attempt to perform righteous deeds, but by the preaching and hearing of God's Word. Luther was thus rejecting any kind of egocentric religion based on man's effort to please God; instead, he was showing that Christianity was truly a theocentric religion in which God initiates His relationship with man by choosing him to have and hear His Word. Luther believed it was necessary to preach God's Word for the primary purpose of doctrinal reform and secondarily for moral reform. He expressed this attitude toward reform by declaring: "Of course, it is appropriate that in Christendom both should be preached, yet each in keeping with its nature and value. First and highest is the proclamation about faith and Christ, then comes the emphasis upon works." He maintained that once the doctrinal foundation had been laid for religious reform, then its moral consequences would have to be fulfilled in proper Christian living. He emphasized that "the doctrine is a good and precious thing, but it is not being preached for the sake of being heard, but for the sake of action and its application to life." In comparison with Luther's approach to religious reform, Tyndale's conception of reformatio was based less on soteriology and eschatology than on morality and law. His treatment of the problem of exegesis, reason,

2. Ibid., 281.
and law served to create an idea of reformation which was implicitly centered on God's spiritual relationship to man, but which stressed man's immediate moral relationship to God and his neighbor in terms of his righteousness, ethics, and salvation. For Tyndale, religious reform, like Christian morality, must be enacted not by man's natural attempt to produce moral righteousness, but by the preaching of the Law and of faith through God's Word. Since he believed that Christianity was fundamentally a theocentric and not an egocentric religion, he recognized that God, not man, must initiate the God-to-man spiritual relationship by choosing him to hear and understand His Word. Although Tyndale believed the preaching of the Word should emphasize most strongly moral reform, he also felt that doctrinal reform was still necessary and important. He demonstrated this attitude toward reform by remarking:

The office of an apostle and true preacher is to salt, not only the corrupt manners and conversation of earthly people, but also the rotten heart within, and all that springeth out thereof; their natural reason, their will, their understanding and wisdom; yea, and their faith and belief, and all that they have imagined without God's word concerning righteousness, justifying, satisfaction and serving of God.\(^3\)

Luther and Tyndale formed their views for religious reform according to their own particular observations and assumptions concerning the conditions prerequisite for a reformation. Luther's commentary reveals his conception that the misinterpretation of Scripture and doctrinal deviation committed by the "papists" and "schismatics" were the fundamental impairments of the Christian religion on the Continent. He therefore believed it was his main purpose to correct theological error and expound the spiritual meaning of the Christian kerygma, stressing the righteousness

\(^3\) An Exposition Uppon the V. VI. VII. Chapters of Mathew, 209.
of Christ as the basis for salvation. He maintained that his evangelical soteriology was itself the true, practical way for reform since its foundation was Christ's redemption and its purpose eternal life. On the other hand, Tyndale's commentary demonstrates his recognition that man's ignorance of the Scriptures and deviant moral behavior was having the severest affect and unfortunate consequences for English religion and society. Consequently, he realized it was his primary task to denounce moral iniquity and to appeal for moral reform based on the correct understanding and application of God's grace, love, and law. He believed that by using the practical analogy of a covenantal relationship between God and man he could make morality the object of religion and thereby more effectively implement a movement for religious reform.

In clearly revealing how Luther and Tyndale came to conceive of the role and purpose of religious reform, the Sermon on the Mount commentaries tend to be more useful and representative sources for an understanding of both reformers' ideas of reformation than their other major writings of the same general period. Luther's only other important commentary during 1530-1535 was his Lectures on Galations, but it does not correspond to any of Tyndale's writings. Moreover, while this work vividly expressed Luther's soteriological and Christocentric theology, it did not have occasion to show his strong concern for moral reform. As Gerrish has observed: "The Commentary on Galations is probably the fullest of the works in which Luther puts forward his understanding of the Pauline vocabulary of salvation: 'faith', 'works', 'justification', and so on."4 Although Gerrish is correct in using Luther's Galations commentary as an

appropriate source for the Reformer's approaches toward reason and law, these problems are not confronted within the context of Luther's idea of both a theological and moral reformation. On the other hand, since the Sermon on the Mount deals with both Christian ethics and salvation, it provides Luther the necessary contents for developing views on both moral and doctrinal reform.

With respect to Tyndale's writings during the years, 1530-1535, four main theological works were published which can be considered as generally disclosing the development of his religious thought. The prologue to the Pentateuch, written in 1530 with the aid of Luther's 1523 Old Testament translation, shows Tyndale's high regard for the Law as a guide to proper Christian living, but does not demonstrate Tyndale's concept of covenantal morality based on faith in Christ, love for God and His Law, and hope of eternal life. The Prophet Jonas, written in 1531, probably with the use of Luther's German Old Testament, again displays Tyndale's emphasis on obedience to the Law as a necessary requirement for Christian righteousness, but fails to elaborate Tyndale's idea of moral and doctrinal reform. In the same year appeared A Pathway to the Holy Scriptures which was a new version of Tyndale's 1525 prologue to the New Testament but which did not correspond to any single work by Luther. In this work, Tyndale stressed that the Christian life consisted in adhering to a moral system based on the Law in both the Old and New Testaments as a sufficient guide to all ethical decisions. However, Tyndale did not address himself to the larger question of the need for ecclesiastical and theological reform. The last major work of the period, Exposition of the First Epistle of St. John, was published in 1531 and might possibly be related to a similar work by
Luther. However, this commentary shows Tyndale’s elevation of the Law to the key that unlocked the entire meaning of Scripture and provided the basis for a divine contract between God and man. It represents Tyndale’s strong inclination toward biblical legalism and theological moralism, but it does not elaborate upon his idea of moral and doctrinal reform. As a result, a comparison of Luther’s and Tyndale’s Sermon on the Mount commentaries with their other major writings of the period 1530-1535, indicates that while the latter works provide interesting examples of the developing process of both reformers’ religious views, no other pair of sources provide a sound basis for a comparative study of their mature ideas of reformation.

In effect, the commentaries on the Sermon on the Mount play an important role as representative historical documents of the Reformation era because they demonstrate how Luther and Tyndale conceived of the idea of reformation. As Hillerbrand has pointed out, Luther and the indigenous reformers (particularly Tyndale) did not consider the cause of reformation as merely a simple attempt to revise or renovate the life and thought of sixteenth-century Catholicism. Instead, both the German and English reformers called for the complete theological reinterpretation of contemporary Catholic theology. Each conceived of reformatio as being founded upon certain rather revolutionary religious assumptions: a profoundly christological orientation, the repudiation of extra-scriptural rites and traditions, the affirmation of the self-sufficiency of Scripture in the understanding of religious truth, and an emphasis on a personal and spiritual religion. However, whereas Luther believed it was necessary to restore the evangelical and soteriological character of early Christianity, Tyndale accepted


6. Ibid., 279.
Luther's theological achievement as the foundation upon which to restore the moralistic and covenantal tone of apostolic Christianity. While Luther preached the spiritual justification of Christians through God's grace, Christ's redemption and man's faith, Tyndale adopted Luther's views and subordinated them to his teaching of the moral renewal of Christians through God's will and Law, Christ's ethical demands, and man's faith, hope, and love. Consequently, Tyndale's idea of reformation paralleled Luther's in so far as it maintained the evangelical and christological substance of his theology, but differed from that of the German reformer in projecting a new moralistic and legalistic style.

The divergence in Luther's and Tyndale's approaches to religious reform provides an important basis for acquiring a clear understanding of the English and Continental Reformations. Their Sermon on the Mount commentaries clearly indicate that Luther's soteriological and Christocentric theology was transferred from the Continent to England through Tyndale's subtle appropriation and modification of Luther's religious thought. Tyndale's commentary reveals that he adopted Luther's primary doctrine of justification by faith, adapted it to the exigencies of English religion and society, assimilated it with his attitude toward law and morality and became adept at using it in a covenantal theme—based on Christian faith, hope, and charity—as a means to conduct an appropriate appeal for religious reform. Tyndale's conception of reformatio can be meaningfully applied to the historical relationship of the English and German Reformations once it is recognized that it skillfully synthesized the evangelical theology of the Continental Reformation as its substance, the covenantal morality produced from his approaches toward exegesis, reason, and law as its style, and the religious and social condition of England as its scope.
Consequently, a study of Luther's and Tyndale's ideas of reformation through a comparative analysis of their Sermon on the Mount commentaries does produce a clarification of the Luther-Tyndale controversy in recent Reformation historiography. Tyndale's orientation with respect to Luther is seen in a new light, far different from the views of Clebsch and Trinterud. Tyndale neither produced a verbatim rendition of Luther's theology nor constructed a new theology completely independent of Luther. Instead, Tyndale's relationship to Luther should be understood as one characterized simultaneously by a general reliance upon and subtle modification of Luther's religious views. Although Tyndale did emphasize the role of law, contracts, or covenants in his conception of reform, he did not formally integrate them into a nomistic or contractual theology. There is no real indication that he adopted the covenantal theology of the Zurich reformers. Instead, he retained the soteriological and Christocentric core of Luther's theology and imparted to it his own moralistic tone by using the practical analogy of a divine covenant as a more efficacious means of religious reform in England.
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