

Good Divine Rights

THE HISTORY of the nations that have come and gone, as well as those that are still able to preserve their national entity, shows a general pattern that is applicable to all.

At first, chiefs elected by popular will guide the people. All have equal rights to the use of the earth. But as wars increase, the war chiefs are metamorphosed into hereditary kings. For generations these kings rule over the people, but eventually they become rulers *over the land*.

For hundreds of years the English kings were styled Kings of the English, but in time this was changed to Kings of England. In Belgium, the kings at first were Kings of the Belgians; later, they became Kings of Belgium. It was in the long-ago year of 1360 that Jean II of France had a coin, the franc, struck off which bore the following words: "Francorum Rex," which means literally King of the Franks.

Invariably, when families of human beings are able for generations to compel others to fetch and carry for them, so that they may live without working, they take on ideas of grandeur. And thus kings came to believe that they are possessed of divine rights. When kings are the government, subjects are dependent for any measure of happiness upon favors from the king.

In subtle form the idea of favors from the king has persisted in America down to this day. For example, certain highly-placed individuals in the present National Administration have expressed the belief that the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights are privileges given the people by their federal government.

In 1837, two years before the birth of Henry George, that great apostle of Freedom, Caleb Cushing, member of Congress from the State of Massachusetts, delivered an address in the House of Representatives in the course of which he identified in stirring words the true source of the people's liberties. The following passage from that memorable speech is worth treasuring:

"Gentlemen talk of these, our great fundamental rights—the freedom of speech, of opinion, of petition—as if they were derived from the Constitution of the United States. I scout such a doctrine . . . We hold them by the concession of a higher and broader charter than all the constitutions in the land—the free donation of the eternal God when He made us to be men . . . It is a liberty—native, inborn, original, undervied, imprescriptible, and acknowledged

in the Constitution itself as preeminently before and above the Constitution."

Inspired words, those, as true today as when spoken more than a hundred years ago.

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