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How *their* view of God affects *your* life in 1800

Pre~reformation

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

John Wickliffe, justly termed 'the Morning Star of the Reformation.' This learned, faithful, and distinguished scholar, taught at Merton College, Oxford, from A.D. 1350 to 1371. His efforts were directed chiefly to recover the Church from her idolatry. This he did by upholding the doctrine of 'election by grace.' Wickliffe also fearlessly exposed the evils incident to the orders and priests of Rome. He further contended against the supremacy of the pontiff, proclaiming that Peter had no superiority over the other apostles. He went further still in maintaining the essentials of scriptural government in the Church. 'One thing,' he declares, 'I boldly assert, that in the primitive Church, or in the time of the Apostle Paul, two orders of clergy were thought sufficient — viz., priest and deacon. And I also say, that in the time of Paul a priest and a bishop were one and the same.

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The Lollards were followers of Wickcliffe. The word Lollard was at first employed to describe a community of brother weavers who lived and wrought under a spiritual director in the thirteenth century. This term, brought from Belgium, was applied as a term of reproach to the numerous followers of Wickcliffe in England in the fourteenth century, and not only were they persecuted, but that Council of Constance, of infamous memory, in a solemn decree condemned the memory and opinions of that reformer. In A.D. 1428 Rome's minions actually dug up the bones of Wickcliffe and had them publicly burned! The term Lollard is, however, not an inappropriate expression, as it means, from its German derivation, 'one who sings or prays much.' In the vulgar of the old German, therefore, a Lollard was a man who was continually praising God with sacred songs. Those distinguished for piety might well endure this reproachful term, although it was meant to denote those who concealed great vices under the cloak of religion.

The first Lollard who suffered death in England was William Sawtre, who held that 'a priest was more bound to preach the Word of God than to recite particular services at canonical hours.' Paul Crawar, 'the medical missionary,' as he would now be termed, who came from Prague in Bohemia to preach the gospel in Scotland, was also consumed by fire at St. Andrews in 1431. Before him James Resby, a follower of Wickcliffe, had suffered the same fate at Perth in 1422. Their crimes were the same. They dared to proclaim the salvation of Christ, disowning the power and authority of the Popish prelates. Besides these, there were other Lollards in Kyle, a district in Argyleshire, who in 1494 narrowly escaped a similar doom. Only by the intervention of the monarch did these thirty persons of distinction escape with admonition. These facts testify that the truth was spreading far and wide in the fifteenth century. Multitudes in secret received and embraced the grand essential truths of salvation. They breathed after deliverance from the tyranny and corruption's of dominant Popery, and consequently for the scriptural constitution and government of the Church.

From the James Begg Society: The History of the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Jan Hus was born in Bohemia around 1370. He received a master's degree from Charles

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University in Prague in 1396, was professor of theology by 1398, and ordained to the priesthood in 1400, was rector of the University in 1402.

In Hus' day only the consecrated bread was offered to all Christians in good standing, but restricting the chalice to the priest alone in the Lord's Supper. Hus denounced this restriction as contrary to Holy Scripture and to the ancient tradition of the Church. He also held that Church officials ought to exercise spiritual powers only, and not be earthly governors. Taking a page from Wycliffe, Hus also wrote against the crusades. Michael de Causis carried a complaint to the Pope, who ordered the Cardinal of St. Angelo to proceed against Hus without mercy. In 1412 his archbishop excommunicated him, not for heresy, but for insubordination.

Hus' troubles were more political than theological. The real problem was that Hus supported one papal claimant and the archbishop another. The one point on which Hus could be said to have a doctrinal difference with the Council, was that he taught that the office of the pope did not exist by Divine command, but was established by the Church. He was tried, and ordered to recant certain heretical doctrines. He replied that he had never held or taught the doctrines in question, and was willing to declare the doctrines false, but not willing to declare on oath that he had taught them. Found guilty of heresy, he was burned at the stake on 6 July 1415. At the last moment, the imperial marshal, Von Pappenheim, asked him to recant and thus save his life, but Hus declined with the words "God is my witness that I have never taught that of which I have by false witnesses been accused. In the truth of the Gospel which I have written, taught, and preached, I will die today with gladness." Amongst Hus' last words are allegedly that, "*in 100 years, God will raise up a man whose calls for reform cannot be suppressed.*" Just over one hundred years later, Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the Wittenburg Church door in 1517.

After his death, his followers continued to insist on administering both bread and wine to all that would partake in the Holy Communion. His followers also led a rather successful rebellion against the Pope. In 1436 the Basel Compact was signed, by which the Church in Bohemia was authorized to administer Chalice as well as Host to all communicants. The followers of Jan Hus and his fellow martyr Jerome of Prague became known as the Czech Brethren and later as the Moravians. The Moravian Church survives to this day as the Unitas Fratrum, and has had a considerable influence on the Lutheran movement as well as most of the reformation.

The Reformation

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1528 - Martyrdom of Scottish reformer Patrick Hamilton, 24. Having spent time with Martin Luther and William Tyndale, Hamilton began promoting Reformation in Scotland. He was afterward arrested and burned at the stake one of the first martyrs of the Scottish Reformation.

I. A look at theology: Four roads

A. Anabaptists - Strictly speaking, the label *Anabaptist* as it is employed today applies to the less-radical Radicals—men such as Conrad Grebel and Menno Simons, whose ideas come to us today as Amish and Mennonite communities. Where Luther and Zwingli opposed the abuses of the medieval concept of the church, the Anabaptists attacked the concept itself. Where Luther and Zwingli looked upon Constantine as a positive period, the Anabaptists did not. For the Anabaptists Constantine's Edict of Milan was the illicit union of church and state that caused the fall of the church. The Anabaptists will date the Fall of the Church at AD 313-- Many Anabaptist ideas made valuable contributions to the Reformation.

1. Salvation

Anabaptists rejected the Reformed understanding of justification by faith alone. Menno Simons rejected Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone because they saw it as an impediment to the true doctrine of a 'lively' faith which issues in holy living.

Holiness of Life—Anabaptists gave much emphasis to spiritual experience, practical righteousness, and obedience to divine standards. They had no tolerance for those who claimed to be justified by faith while living unfaithful lives. Anabaptists pointed out that Scripture says, "Faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2:20).

2. Communion

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They believed the Lord's supper shall be held, as often as the brothers are together, thereby proclaiming the death of the Lord, and warning each one to commemorate, how Christ gave His life for us, and shed His blood for us, that we might also be willing to give our body and life for Christ's sake, which means for the sake of all the brothers.

All those who desire to break the one bread in remembrance of the broken body of Christ and all those who wish to drink of one drink in remembrance of the shed blood of Christ, must beforehand be united in the one body of Christ, that is the congregation of God, whose head is Christ, by baptism. For as Paul indicates (1 Cor. 10:21), we cannot be partakers at the same time of the table of the Lord and the table of devils. Nor can we at the same time partake and drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. That is: all those who follow the devil and the world, have no part with those who have been called out of the world unto God.

So it shall and must be, that whoever does not share the calling of the one God to one faith, to one baptism, to one spirit, to one body together with all the children of God, may not be made one loaf together with them, as must be true if one wishes truly to break bread according to the command of Christ.

3. Baptism

Believers' Baptism—The Anabaptists were the among the first to point out the lack of explicit biblical support for infant baptism. Most of them made no issue of the *mode* of baptism, and practiced sprinkling, however, so they were not true Baptists in the modern sense of the word.

Baptism shall be given to all those who have been taught repentance and the amendment of life and who believe truly that their sins are taken away through Christ, and to all those who desire to walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and

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be buried with Him in death, so that they might rise with Him; to all those who with such an understanding themselves desire and request it from us; hereby is excluded all infant baptism, the greatest and first abomination of the pope.

4. Music

5. Church/state

Anabaptists saw the church as the assembly of the redeemed, antagonistic to the world and sometimes hostile to society as a whole. For this reason they advocated separation of church and state.

Freedom of Conscience—because of the Anabaptists' convictions about the role of the secular state, they believed that the ultimate remedy for heresy was excommunication. They steadfastly opposed the persecution that was so characteristic of the churches of their age. They denied that the state had a right to punish or execute anyone for religious beliefs or teachings. This was a revolutionary notion in the Reformation era.

Lastly, one can see in the following points that it does not befit a Christian to be a magistrate: the rule of the government is according to the flesh, that of the Christians according to the spirit. Their houses and dwelling remain in this world, that of the Christians is in heaven. Their citizenship is in this world, that of the Christians is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). The weapons of their battle and warfare are carnal and only against the flesh, but the weapons of Christians are spiritual, against the fortification of the devil. The worldly are armed with steel and iron, but Christians are armed with the armor of God, with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and with the Word of God.

The oath is a confirmation among those who are quarreling or making promises. In the law it is commanded that it should be done only in the name of God,

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truthfully and not falsely. Christ, who teaches the perfection of the law, forbids His followers all swearing, whether true or false; neither by heaven nor by earth, neither by Jerusalem nor by our head; and that for the reason all swearing is forbidden. We cannot perform what is promised in the swearing, for we are not able to change the smallest part of ourselves (Schleitheim Confession (Anabaptist, 1527).

B. Calvin - John Calvin (1509 - 1564) was trained to be a lawyer. He studied under some of the best legal minds in France. His legal and exegetical training was important for Calvin because, once convinced of the evangelical faith, he applied these exegetical methods to the Bible. He self-consciously molded his thinking along biblical lines, and he labored to preach and teach what he believed the Bible taught. While Reformers such as Jan Hus (1370 - 1415) and Martin Luther may be seen as somewhat original thinkers that began a movement, Calvin was a great motivator of that movement, but not an innovator of doctrine. Calvin was very familiar with the writings of the early church fathers and the great Medieval Schoolmen, most of whom he disagreed with, and he was also in debt to earlier Reformers.

1. Salvation

Calvin had a great commitment to the absolute sovereignty and holiness of God. Because of this, he is often associated with the doctrines of predestination and election, but it should be noted that he differed very little with the other reformers regarding these difficult doctrines. The doctrines of predestination and election come almost a century after Calvin's death by his followers.

2. Communion

Calvin's view was that Christ is spiritually but not physically present in the sacrament, yet he asserted in the clearest terms a real, though spiritual, presence received by faith. "Christ, out of the substance of his flesh, breathes life into our

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souls, indeed, pours forth his own life into us, though the real flesh of Christ does not enter us"

But some of those thet came after Calvin later tend more towards Zwingli's memorialism than Calvin's doctrine.

3. Baptism

Calvin teaches thet baptism is a seal of what Christ has already done in the heart of the believer.

“Although in the text (Acts 2:38) and order of the words, baptism doth here go before remission of sins, yet doth it follow it in order, because it is nothing else but a sealing of those good things which we have by Christ that they may be established in our consciences;” (Calvin’s Commentaries on Acts)

4. Music

5. Church/state

At first look it seems that Calvin does not share Zwingli's medieval idea of church and state. He seems to agree mit Luther, on there being two kinds of governments, "one, in the soul, or the inner man, and relates to eternal life," and "the other, which relates to civil justice, and the regulation of external conduct" But, he makes *the regulation of external conduct a task of the church and, on the other hand, demands that civil government see that idolatry, sacrileges against the name of God, blasphemies against his truth, and other offenses against religion, be controlled. He actually abandons the separation of the church and state and lets the one encroach upon the territory of the other.*

Calvin demanded the people to respect and obey the magistrates "*whatever their characters may be,*" for "*they have their government only from God*" "*But in the obedience due to the authority of governors, it is always necessary to make one exception: that it do not seduce us from obedience to Him, to whose will the*

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desires of all kings ought to be subject"

With all this strong discipline, Calvin was not thinking first of the salvation of men, but the honor and glory of God. "Above all, the honor of God is maintained in punishing crimes" As far as the relation of church and state is concerned the Calvinistic churches of the present day (21st Century) stand for the complete freedom from state control. But still demand that the state enforce the church's rules of conduct. This is what happens when you have a lawyer doing a minister's job.

C. Luther - Martin Luther (1483 - 1546) Reformer priest, Doctor of Theology. Is credited with leading most of the Protestant reformation. Luther accepted practices within the church as long as they were not contrary to explicitly stated Scripture.

1. Salvation

One major difference in theological opinion between Zwingli and Luther is that of grace versus works as it relates to the Christian sacraments. Many consider Luther to have been the originator of the belief that God's covenants to man are unconditional; wrapped up by the teaching of Sola Gratia; Sola Scriptura; Sola Fide; Sola Christus; Sola Deo Gloria. Luther wrote, "Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins and was raised again for our justification... therefore, it is clear and certain that this faith alone justifies us... nothing of this article can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven, earth, and everything else falls."

2. Communion

Luther believed that the body and blood of Christ are really present in the bread and wine of this sacrament (a view often called consubstantiation by non-Lutherans), described by Luther as "in, with and under the bread and wine" bread and wine are eaten and drunk and blood and Christ body are received in the spirit of the receiver. As opposed to the Roman point of view that the bread

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and wine transubstantiate into body and blood.

3. Baptism

Luther believed that God's grace alone was sufficient for man's salvation thereby defining baptism simply as a sign of having received a divine guarantee of this grace. Yet he says "To put it most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save. No one is baptized in order to become a prince, but as the words say, to 'be saved.' To be saved, we know, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil and to enter into the kingdom of Christ and live with him forever."

4. Music

Music in all forms is a great part of worship.

5. Church/state

Luther teaches that there are two governments "one, which is in the soul, or the inner man, and relates to eternal life," and "the other, which relates to civil justice, and the regulation of external conduct". And that the inner man, not society, should rule the individual. (Freedom of conscience)

D. Zwingli - **Huldrych Zwingli** (1484 – 1535) was the leader of the Protestant reformation in Zürich Switzerland, and founder of the Swiss Reformed Church.

Independent from Luther, who was *doctor biblicus*, Zwingli arrived at similar conclusions, by studying the Scriptures from the point of view of a humanistic scholar. Zwingli accepted practices within the church that were explicitly specified in Scripture.

Zwingli was killed at Kappel am Albis, in a battle against the Roman Catholic cantons. He saw himself as a prophet, meaning one who interprets God's word. This makes him neither 'political' nor 'apolitical' in the modern sense. His type of 'rational' Reformation gained in appeal. Particularly as regards eucharistic theology, a large

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proportion of modern Protestants are in fact Zwinglians.

For the final establishment of the Reformation in Zürich thanks must go to Zwingli's successor, **Heinrich Bullinger** (1504—75). The *Consensus Tigurinus* between him and Calvin (1549) led to Reformed Protestantism's bearing the stamp of Calvinism rather than 'Zwinglianism', despite Bullinger's international reputation.

1. Salvation

Zwingli, proposed that God's covenants were just that--spiritually binding contracts between God and man that were vulnerable to man's relapse into the sinful life that could eventually lead to an annulment of God's part in the contract.

2. Communion

A key doctrinal difference between Zwingli and the rest of Protestantism was his view on the Lord's supper. Zwingli thought the sacrament to be purely symbolic and memorial in character. Zwingli was also known for his belief that the Christian sacrament was similar to a military oath or pledge in order to demonstrate an individual's willingness to listen and obey the church law.

3. Baptism

Zwingli taught that God's grace in addition to man's work was necessary for salvation thereby defining baptism as a covenant between God and man. This covenant/contract involved two parties wherein both were given specific responsibilities; if one party did not comply with said agreements, the opposite party was relinquished of all responsibilities detailed in the contract.

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4. Music

Zwingli was one of the first Protestants to abandon the use of musical instruments during worship services. He was attempting to return to a practice of a cappella singing, he had a strong distaste for music, regarding it as a distraction from the preaching of the word of God. Much of the Reformed movement fell into agreement with the banning of instruments, but none followed the elimination of music. The organ in particular was denounced by leaders of the Reformed churches, as being a prominent example of what they meant by the corruption allowed into worship by the Roman Catholic Church. Zwingli recommended that a better use for an organ would be to sell it and give the money to the poor. The Reformed Church's aversion to musical instruments, became at times a point disagreement mit the musically rich Lutherans. Non-instrumental singing continues to be a distinctive feature of some branches of the church, like the Campbell branch. This practice is based on the belief that musical instruments should not be used in Christian worship, as their use is not specifically mentioned in the new testament. Believing this to be an old testament practice, done away mit at Pentecost.

5. Church/state

According to Zwingli, church and state are not separated and independent, each in its sphere; on the contrary, Christianity is a matter of the state. The duty of the government is laid down by God in the Bible. *The laws of the state are valid only in so far as they conform to the law of the church.*

Zwingli held that a government which sets itself against God and the Bible is to be abrogated.

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Zwingli, Huldrych By Alfred Schindler

Second Helvetic Confession

A closing thought:

“Hard studies, much knowledge, and excellent preaching, if the ends be not right, is but more glorious hypocritical sinning.” - *Richard Baxter (1651-91)*

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Five solas

The Latin word *sola* means "alone," "only," or "single" in English. The five solas were what the Reformers believed to be the only things needed in their respective functions in Christian salvation. Listing them as such was also done with a view to excluding other things that hindered salvation. This formulation was intended to distinguish between what were viewed as deviations in the Christian church and the essentials of Christian life and practice.

Sola Gratia ("by grace alone")

This means that salvation is an unearned gift from God for Jesus' sake. While some maintain that this doctrine is the opposite of "works' righteousness" and conflicts with some, the difference in doctrine lies mainly in two facts: that of God as sole actor in grace (in other words, that grace is always efficacious *without* any cooperation by man), and second, that man cannot by any action of his own, acting under the influence of grace, cooperate with grace to "merit" greater graces for himself. God acts alone to save the sinner. The responsibility for salvation does not rest on the sinner to any degree as in Arminianism. Luther holds that this doctrine must not be maintained to the exclusion of *Gratia universalis* (that God seriously wills the salvation of all people).

Sola fide ("by faith alone")

Justification (interpreted in Protestant theology as, "being **declared** guiltless by God") is received by faith only, not good works, though in classical Protestant theology, saving faith is automatically accompanied by good works. Some Protestants see this doctrine as being summarized with the formula "Faith yields justification and good works". This doctrine is sometimes called the material cause of the Reformation because it was the central doctrinal issue for Luther and the other reformers. Luther called it the "doctrine by which the church stands or falls" *Sola fide* excludes even the sinner's own righteousness of sanctification or his "new obedience" from his justification.

Sola Scriptura ("by Scripture alone")

The Bible is the only inspired and authoritative Word of God, the only source for Christian doctrine, and is accessible to all — that is, it is plain and self-interpreting. The Bible requiring no interpretation outside of itself. This doctrine is part of the material cause of the Reformation.

Solus Christus ("Christ alone")

Christ is the only mediator between God and man, and there is salvation through no other (Acts 4:12). While rejecting all other mediators between God and man, classical Lutheranism continues to honor the memory of the Virgin Mary and other exemplary saints. The priesthood of all believers is a central point of the Reformation.

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Soli Deo Gloria ("Glory to God alone")

All glory is due to God alone, since salvation is accomplished solely through his will and action—not only the gift of the all-sufficient atonement of Jesus on the cross but also the gift of faith in that atonement, created in the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit. The reformers believed that human beings—even saints canonized by the Roman Catholic Church, the popes, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy—are not worthy of the glory that was accorded them.