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### On The Eve Of Reform 1200-1500 AD

In the 12th Century heresy was the denial by a baptized person of any revealed truth of the Christian faith or any disobedience to established authority. The church had two primary objectives in dealing with heresy: the conversion of the heretic and the preservation of Christian society.<sup>1</sup>

More and more, the heretics were defined as those who opposed church authority rather than those who opposed Biblical truth. To be sure, the heresies of the first four hundred years were still to be found, as in the case of the "Cathari" or Albigenses. But there were also those whose only heresy was calling for a return to the Bible. The Waldenses were such a group and yet, though we see in them a foreshadowing of the Reformation, their view of salvation, a life of penance and poverty, lacks the clear note of God's grace that sounded so powerfully in the Reformation.<sup>2</sup>

In a completely different category from the Waldenses were the Albigenses (named for the town of Albi in southern France where they were very influential). The Albigenses referred to themselves as the Cathari (meaning "pure ones"). Like the Gnostics of the early church, the Cathari perceived the universe as an eternal conflict between two powers, the one good and the other evil. Matter, including the human body, is the work of this evil power.

From the Waldenses we hear the first loud voice calling for the surrender of worldly power by the Church and for the supremacy of scripture over papal declaration of truth. From the Albigenses we hear a perversion of Biblical truth: Christ was pure spirit, not a man. He was one who came to teach the path to salvation, but who was not the means of salvation itself.

For the Catholic Church, there was no difference between the two. A Spaniard named Dominic Guzman (1170-1221) felt that the heretics who preached a gospel of poverty and penance mixed with heresy, could somehow be reached if the Church presented itself to them in the same poverty. Then, perhaps, these groups would accept the church's teachings because they would perceive the church's teachers as speaking with sincerity and truth. And so the Dominicans were created as a direct response to the Albigenses. Two years after the

<sup>1</sup> Bromiley, Geoffrey *Historical Theology* (Eerdmans, GrandRapids, 1978), p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 227

Dominican mission to southern France was ended by Innocent II's "get tough" policy, the Catholic Church's new response to both the Albigenses and the Waldenses was the creation of the Inquisition. It had begun in 1184 when Pope Lucius III required bishops to "inquire" into the beliefs of their subjects. Heresy or harboring a heretic brought immediate excommunication. In 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council under Innocent III's leadership provided for State punishment of heretics, the confiscation of property, excommunication for those who failed to take action against heretics, and total forgiveness of sins for those who cooperated.

In 1220 the pope took the Inquisition from the bishops and placed it in the hands of the newly formed Dominicans. In 1229 the Synod of Toulouse formalized the procedures of the Inquisition in such a way that the alleged heretic had virtually no rights, the inquisitor had no restraints of law, the trial was held in secret and the accused had to prove his innocence. In 1252 Pope Innocent IV authorized torture as a valid means of obtaining information. The Inquisitor was forbidden by Canon law from shedding blood - but anything else was permissible to save "the body by amputating a rotten limb."<sup>3</sup>

In 1300 Pope Boniface VIII declared a jubilee and authorized a full pardon of all sins for all who reverently visited the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul during The Holy Year. He appeared before the visiting pilgrims in imperial robes declaring, "I am Caesar. I am emperor." His crown contained 48 rubies, 72 sapphires, 45 emeralds and 66 large pearls.<sup>4</sup>

So confident of his power was Boniface that he decided to challenge two kings: Edward I of England and Philip the Fair of France. Since 1296 Boniface had a continuing conflict with them both over taxation of the clergy and church property. Boniface had to concede to these monarchs the necessity of taxation of clergy for a common defense and for other valid reasons. However, in 1301 when Philip imprisoned a French bishop on charges of treason, Boniface ordered the official's release and rescinded his earlier concession on taxation. Boniface then issued "Unum Sanctum" in which he asserted "It is altogether necessary for every human being to be subject to the Roman pontiff."<sup>5</sup> Philip had already gathered his country's leadership into the Estates General. He now mustered their support to depose Boniface. He accused Boniface of an illegitimate election, heresy, simony and immorality. Boniface was confronted at his mountain retreat in Anagni by Philip's lieutenant Nogaret and some troops. Boniface died several weeks later.

At this point in time the pope's power began a steady decline and it became clear that the general populace of Europe understood a clear distinction existed between temporal and spiritual power and the boundary was not to be crossed. In 1305 the College of Cardinals elected a Frenchman as pope, Clement V. He never set foot in Rome. It began the 72 year period of the Babylonian Captivity of the papacy at Avignon in France. In 1378 an Italian pope, Urban VI, was elected at Rome. A counter-pope, Clement VII, was elected by the French marking the Great Schism of the papacy which lasted for the next 39 years.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 225-230

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 233

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 236

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 238-239

Out of this conflict between church and state, and between factions within the church, came two concepts basic to the Reformation. The first was the concept of a national church, and the second was the concept of a church governed by representative bodies, rather than ruled by executive fiat. Two men arose to articulate a whole new approach to church government, John Wyclif of England, and John Hus of Czechoslovakia.

### *Discipline - The Rule For All Ages*

The issue under debate was "dominion" or "lordship" and how it was to be exercised on behalf of God.<sup>7</sup> For our purposes, the issue is really discipline and how it is to be exercised by the church. We have seen a progression from the biblical period during which discipline was exercised by moral persuasion and personal example to amoral persuasion and impersonal rank. The path of training too was changed from personal experience in the biblical period to vicarious experience at an institution of higher learning during the middle ages, and at the same time from comprehensive universal discipleship for the masses to specialized exclusionary discipleship for an elite clergy.

**John Wyclif**, an instructor at Oxford, argued that the English government had the divinely assigned responsibility to correct the abuses of the church within its own borders and to remove from office those churchmen who continued in their sin. In a sense, Wyclif was calling for a return to lay investiture. In 1377 the pope condemned Wyclif's teachings. Only the power of the English throne protected him from the threats of the papal throne. To restate Wyclif's assertions in a way that more clearly reveals the Biblical foundations of his argument, Wyclif believed that dominion is founded on grace. Every man, whether priest or layman, holds an equal place in the eyes of God. It is a personal relationship between man and God with Christ alone as mediator. The only basis for clerical office is character.

Wyclif, at the point of the Great Schism, further asserted that poverty isn't an evangelical tool for the Dominicans or other mendicant monks, but a prerequisite for all would-be apostles. "Such a view leaves no room for the temporal power of the pope."<sup>8</sup> Christ alone is head of the church, and we are all his servants. Wyclif then went on to identify both popes as the antichrist. In his predestinarian view of the church, Wyclif taught that it includes the whole number of the elect containing "only men that shall be saved." No man, not even a pope, knows whether he is a limb of the fiend, or a limb of the church. "As each man shall hope that he shall be safe in bliss, so he should suppose that he be a limb of the holy church."<sup>9</sup>

The consequences of such a view of the church, a view completely at odds with the teachings of the Catholic church at the time, led Wyclif to conclude that the church is a unity without hierarchy and without sects of monks, friars and priests. Nor can the salvation of the elect be conditioned on masses, indulgences, penance or "priestcraft." He went on to attack pardons, absolutions, pilgrimages, idol worship, adoration of the saints, a treasury of merit dispensed by the pope, and extreme unction.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 243

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 244

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 245

Still not content, Wyclif declared the right of every man to examine Scripture for himself as the ultimate source of authority. When he reached the doctrine of transubstantiation and produced a 12-point argument against it saying that Christ's presence in the eucharist was sacramental, not material, he lost his support among the English clergy. The Archbishop of Canterbury declared him a heretic. He was silenced at Oxford in 1382, but not before he led a team of translators in the production of an English Bible.

Anne of Bohemia and King Richard II of England were married forming an alliance between the two countries. As a result, students of both countries traveled back and forth between the universities at Prague and Oxford. By this means, Wyclif's teachings had a profound effect in Bohemia. A strong national party there was led by John Hus who adopted Wyclif's teachings. He preached them from the pulpit at Bethlehem Chapel near the university of Prague where he influenced many of the students. The Archbishop of Prague complained to the pope who authorized Wyclif's teachings be stamped out. When Hus opposed the sale of indulgences for support of King Wenceslas' war against Naples, Hus lost his king's support and protection. He retired to southern Bohemia.

In 1414 as the Council of Constance approached, Hus saw an opportunity to present his views to an assembly of clergy from around the world. When he arrived he was arrested by the Inquisition, tried, held prisoner for 8 months, and then burned at the stake, July 6, 1415. He prayed,

O most holy Christ, draw me, weak as I am, after Thyself, for if Thou dost not draw us we cannot follow Thee. Strengthen my spirit, that it may be willing. If the flesh is weak, let thy grace precede us; come between and follow, for without Thee we cannot go for Thy sake cruel death. Give me a fearless heart, a right faith, a firm hope, a perfect love, that for Thy sake, I may lay down my life with patience and joy. Amen!

For the followers of Wyclif and Hus, it was clear that reform would not come from within the church. Only a separate and opposing movement could ensure God's Word would reign. Wyclif's bible was smuggled into England from abroad and retranslated into the native tongue of many other nations. When Guttenburg's printing press was invented in the mid-fifteenth century, there was nothing finer to publish than the Bible. The vernacular text of God's Word was disseminated throughout Europe to a people hungry for the Truth of God and the Gospel. The church had so far deteriorated that even the priests weren't sure what they were reading in Latin on any given Sunday morning. But within just a short time, even the lowliest peasant was aware of the contents of Scripture. The stage was set for the Reformation and the sweeping of the temple.

### ***Dawn of a New Age : The Reformation***

#### **Enlightenment, Reason and Rationalism**

This will be a brief excursion into philosophy. It is necessary to understand why the Reformation became the focal point for the three-way split in human thought mentioned earlier in the course. The Reformation itself lasted 130 years or so from October 31, 1517 when Luther posted his ninety-five theses on the door of the Wittenberg Chapel, to October 24, 1648 when the

Treaty of Westphalia marked the end of the Thirty-Years War and established legal Protestant states.

Wyclif contributed several basic concepts to the pre-Reformation movement. These were grounded in the teachings of Aquinas, Augustine and Thomas Bradwardine of England. "Everything that happens, happens by necessity." God is the essential cause of everything except evil. For Augustine this meant that the church is the congregation of the predestined, because God does not call evil into the Kingdom of Heaven, and yet those whom God calls will irresistibly come to him. This is so because of the very nature of God. If God causes all things to be, then he causes salvation for those whom he chooses. The chosen do not cause their own salvation. Hence this idea of predestination runs counter to the theology of the Roman Church, because if there is predestination for some, then logically there are others who are not predestined. And perhaps some of the hierarchs of the Roman Catholic Church are in the group that is not predestined. This would indicate that participation in or absolution by the Roman Catholic Church institution is irrelevant to salvation because only God knows who will be saved. This is confirmed by Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares that we began the course with.

Therefore, the true church is not the hierarchical institution of salvation, as the Catholic church portrayed itself; in fact the true church must be in opposition to the "mixed body" in the hierarchical institution of the church in the same way that those who follow Christ must belong to him and not to the world. The basic law of the true church is not the law of the pope which is transient, but the law of the Bible which is eternal. These concepts of Wyclif were not intended to be anti-Catholic, nor did Wyclif feel compelled to leave the Roman Church.

But if there are some who are predestined, and some who are not, then there must surely be some basis by which to distinguish the two groups. The basis is the law of Christ: the external manifestation of an inward change in response to the love of God. Wyclif noted two forms of human domination: the evangelical which flows from the law of love and service, and the civil which flows from the need to control sinful behavior by force. Since the church is the body of the predestined, force is not needed to supplement the ministry of the Holy Spirit who guarantees the salvation of the believer. There is a mutual commitment to love on the part of believers which expresses itself in service and which is under the rule of Christ. From this it follows that the church must be poor; it must not exercise the economic and political control which characterizes the civil form of domination through force and coercion.

Because Wyclif's attack is based on the law of Christ as given in the Bible, he developed the authority of Scripture over and against the authority of tradition and against the symbolic interpretation of the Bible. This led him to conclude that the Preaching of the Word of God is more important than all the ecclesiastical sacraments. This further led to a change in spiritual emphasis during this period from the visual to the aural, i.e. from the seen sacrament, ceremony and architecture of the Roman Church to the spoken and heard law of God which we see in the pre-Reformation movement. It marks a turning point in religious philosophy from realism to nominalism. Realism sees the essences of things, their "ideas" (from *eidos* or "picture"), while the nominalism of William of Ockham perceives the "atoms" or individuality of things, meaning indivisible discrete entities (such as words). Scripture is not an allegorical compendium of

mystical concepts, but a concrete exposition of God's law that is to be heard and obeyed in a very practical way.<sup>10</sup>

From this pre-Reformation philosophy, we move into the Reformation itself. The most critical difference in this period is the emphasis on the Grace of God as distinct from Wyclif's emphasis on the Law of God. Because of the Gutenberg printing press, the stir caused by Luther's unintended battlecry is carried around the world by pamphlet. It precipitates a military as well as religious revolution. The liberation of thought from the dominion of the Roman Catholic church has profound effects on humanists such as Erasmus, and the lack of restraint by any recognized spiritual authority leads to the splintering of the church and to the splintering of the European territories as well. The rush of ideas, philosophies and movements, and the freedom from fear of Roman retaliation (because of the rediscovered power of the kings), leads into a Scholastic revival called the Age of Reason. It is led by astronomer-mathematicians Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, Boyle, Leibnitz, and Newton in the 17th century. This is followed by the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century, where we meet physicists Bernoulli, Fahrenheit, Franklin, Watt, Coulomb and Volta, as well as political and social philosophers such as Hume, Montesquieu, Diderot, Rousseau, Voltaire, Blackstone, Kant, Malthus, Burke and America's own Madison. But first we'll examine the life of Martin Luther to examine the source of this new-found freedom of expression.

### **"Wild Boar in the Vineyard"**

#### *Martin Luther*

Luther was a German theologian and a major leader of the Protestant REFORMATION. Luther, the son of a Saxon miner, was born at Eisleben on Nov. 10, 1483. He was brutally disciplined as a child and carried his image of inadequacy and sinfulness into his adult spiritual life. He entered the University of Erfurt when he was 18 years old. After graduation he began to study law in 1505. In July of that year, however, he narrowly escaped death when a bolt of lightning knocked him to the ground in a thunderstorm. In a typical response of the middle-ages to danger, Luther vowed to the patron saint of miners to become a monk, "St. Anne, save me! and I'll become a monk." To his parents' chagrin, he entered the monastery of the Augustinian Hermits at Erfurt, where he was ordained in 1507. The following year he was sent to Wittenberg, where he continued his studies and lectured in moral philosophy.

In 1511 he received his doctorate in theology and an appointment as professor of Scripture, which he held for the rest of his life. Luther visited Rome in 1510 on business for his order and was shocked to find corruption in high ecclesiastical places. He was well acquainted with the scholastic theology of his day, but he made the study of the Bible, especially the epistles of Saint Paul, the center of his work. Luther found that his teachings diverged increasingly from the traditional beliefs of the Roman church. Trying every means available to rid himself of his sinfulness by penance and self-denial, Luther grew frustrated and angry with God over his inability to merit favor from God. He perceived God to be the same stern, unforgiving, and punishing task-master that his father had been in his youth.

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<sup>10</sup> Tillich, Paul A History of Christian Thought (Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 1968), pp. 203-207.

In 1515, while reading Romans 1:17, Luther was suddenly struck by the apprehension of the grace of God embodied in salvation by faith alone. "I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise."<sup>11</sup>

"In devil's dungeon chained I lay  
The pangs of death swept o'er me.  
My Sin devoured me night and day  
In which my mother bore me.  
My anguish ever grew more rife,  
I took no pleasure in my life  
And sin had made me crazy.

Thus spoke the Son, "Hold thou to me,  
From now on thou wilt make it.  
I gave my very life for thee  
And for thee I will stake it.  
For I am thine and thou art mine,  
And where I am our lives entwine,  
The Old Fiend cannot shake it."<sup>12</sup>

His studies had led him to the conclusion that Christ was the sole mediator between God and man and that forgiveness of sin and salvation are effected by God's grace alone and are received by faith alone on the part of man. This point of view turned him against scholastic theology, which had emphasized man's role in his own salvation, and against many church practices that emphasized justification by good works. His approach to theology soon led to a clash between Luther and church officials, precipitating the dramatic events of the Reformation.

### *Dispute over Indulgences*

The doctrine of indulgences, with its mechanical view of sin and repentance, aroused Luther's indignation. The sale by the church of indulgences --- the remission of temporal punishments for sins committed and confessed to a priest --- brought in much revenue. The archbishop of Mainz, Albert of Brandenburg, sponsored such a sale in 1517 to pay the pope for his appointment to Mainz and for the construction of Saint Peter's in Rome. He selected Johann TETZEL, a Dominican friar, to preach the indulgences and collect the revenues. When Tetzel arrived in nearby Saxony and people poured across the border to buy indulgences from him, Luther decided it was high time that someone brought the whole issue into open debate. Being an instructor at the school, the common method of calling for a debate was to post a topic for discussion and to invite opposition. It is likely Luther had no idea of the impact his challenge would have on the Roman Catholic hierarchy. He posted his famous 95 theses on the door of the castle church at Wittenberg on Oct. 31, 1517.

Although some of the theses directly criticized papal policies, they were put forward as tentative objections for discussion. In his preface, Luther explains, "In the desire and with the purpose of elucidating the truth, a disputation will be held on the underwritten propositions... He [Luther] therefore asks those who cannot be present and discuss the subject with us orally, to do so by letter in their absence." In his more formal protestation he says, "I implore all men, by the faith of Christ either to point out to me a better way, if such a way has been divinely revealed to any, or at least to submit their opinion to the judgment of God and of the church."<sup>13</sup> Copies of the 95 theses were quickly spread throughout Europe and unleashed a storm of controversy. The 95 theses invited debate on three general subjects:

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Bromiley, p. 257

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Bromiley, pp. 257-258

<sup>13</sup> Cairns, Earle E. *Christianity Through the Centuries* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1981), p. 235.

- 1) the traffic in indulgences, which Luther insisted was unscriptural, ineffective, and dangerous;
- 2) the power of the pope in forgiveness of sins, which Luther rejected; and
- 3) the treasury of the church, which Luther contended was the gospel and not the merits of Christ and the saints.

During 1518 and 1519, Luther defended his theology before his fellow Augustinians and publicly debated in Leipzig with the theologian Johann ECK, who had condemned the ideas of Luther. Meanwhile, church officials acted against him. The Saxon Dominican provincial charged him with heresy, and he was summoned to appear in Augsburg before the papal legate, Cardinal CAJETAN. Refusing to recant, he fled to Wittenberg, seeking the protection of the elector FREDERICK III of Saxony. When the Wittenberg faculty sent a letter to Frederick declaring its solidarity with Luther, the elector refused to send Luther to Rome, where he would certainly meet imprisonment or death.

### *Reforms*

In 1520, Luther completed three celebrated works in which he stated his views. In his Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, he invited the German princes to take the reform of the church into their own hands; in A Prelude Concerning the Babylonian Captivity of the Church, he attacked the papacy and the current theology of sacraments; and in On the Freedom of a Christian Man, he stated his position on justification and good works.

The bull of Pope LEO X Exsurge Domine, issued on June 15 that same year, gave Luther 60 days to recant; the mails were no better then: Luther received his 60-day notice three months later. It began, "Arise, O Lord, and judge Thy cause. A wild boar has invaded Thy vineyard." Forty-one of Luther's beliefs were judged to be "heretical, or scandalous, or false, or offensive to pious ears, or seductive of simple minds, or repugnant to Catholic truth." In December of 1520, Luther led a throng of his students outside Wittenberg to burn copies of the Canon Law. He said, "They have burned my books, I burn theirs." <sup>14</sup> The Decret Romanum Pontificem of Jan. 3, 1521, excommunicated Luther.

Summoned before Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in April 1521, Luther again refused to recant and was put under the ban of the empire. The meeting hall was surrounded by Luther's knightly supporters, permitting Luther to speak his mind in relative safety. When asked if he still stood by all that he had written, Luther asked for time to reflect on his reply, and the next day he strongly affirmed that he did. When he began to explain the basis for his beliefs, he was interrupted and told to make it short. Luther responded in autonomous fashion,

Since then your majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by the Scriptures and plain reason --- I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other --- my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen. <sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid. Bromiley, 255.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Cairns, p. 241.

Afterward, Luther took refuge in the Wartburg castle, where he lived in seclusion for eight months. During that time he translated the New Testament into German and wrote a number of pamphlets.

In March 1522 he returned to Wittenberg to restore order against enthusiastic iconoclasts who were destroying altars, images, and crucifixes. His reforming work during subsequent years included the writing of the Small and Large Catechisms, sermon books, more than a dozen hymns, over 100 volumes of tracts, treatises, biblical commentaries, thousands of letters, and the translation of the whole Bible into German.

With Philipp Melanchthon and others, Luther organized the Evangelical churches in the German territories whose princes supported him. He abolished many traditional practices, including confession and private mass. Priests married; convents and monasteries were abandoned. These were difficult times. Luther lost some popular support when he urged suppression of the Knights' Revolt (1522) and the Peasants' War (1524-26); his failure to reach doctrinal accord with Ulrich Zwingli on the nature of the eucharist (1529) split the Reform movement. He also split with the leading humanist, Erasmus.

At the outset of the Reformation movement, Erasmus had sympathized with Luther, insisting that he was not a heretic. In fact, the two men were so much alike in their thoughts on church reform that their writings were often confused with each other. Erasmus, however, worked for reform from within the church and his view of the nature of man stemmed from his humanistic philosophy that tended toward a concept that man is competent to work out his own salvation. He therefore differed markedly with Luther on the doctrine of salvation as it applied to free will.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, Luther found personal solace in his marriage (1525) to a former Cistercian nun, Katherina von Bora; they raised six children.

At Worms, Luther had stood alone. When the Evangelicals presented the AUGSBURG CONFESSION to Charles V and the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, many theologians, princes, and city councils subscribed to that classic Protestant statement of faith. By the time of Luther's death, a large part of northern Europe had left the Roman Catholic church for new Evangelical communities.

Late in 1545, Luther was asked to arbitrate a dispute in Eisleben; despite the icy winter weather, he traveled there. The quarrel was settled on Feb. 17, 1546, but the strain had been very great and Luther died the next day.

Luther left behind a movement that quickly spread throughout the Western world. Luther had been spared the pain of seeing Protestants and Catholics in open warfare, but the next year, in April of 1547, hostilities began. Luther's doctrines, especially justification by faith and the final authority of the Bible, were adopted by other reformers and are shared by many Protestant denominations today. As the founder of the 16th-century Reformation, he is one of the major figures of Christianity and of Western civilization.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Cairns, 243

<sup>17</sup> Spitz, Lewis W. "Luther," Grolier's Electronic Encyclopedia, 1987.

### ***Philosophical Foundations of the Reformation***

We are going to look forward at this point, to the philosophy of the Enlightenment to gain an appreciation for the Reformation's contributions to a new world view. While it throws us off chronologically, it is in the Enlightenment that we find the Reformation analyzed and categorized.

We will look at four main concepts:

1. The Kantian definition of Autonomy;
2. Reason versus Revelation;
3. Nature; and
4. Harmony

#### **AUTONOMY**

Immaturity is the inability to use one's own reason without the guidance of somebody else. In other words, there is an inability to distinguish right from wrong. The free use of reason is the essence of enlightenment. One lives much more comfortably if one has guardians, whether religious, political, philosophical or educational. But it was Kant's intention "to drive men out of their security under the guidance of other people" because this security contradicts the true nature of man.<sup>18</sup> Autonomy means "self-law" or a law unto one's self. It is not arbitrariness or willfulness, nor is it lawless subjectivity as we might define sinfulness. The essential nature of the human will according to Kant is the law of reason. It is the law implicit in man's rational structure. Many philosophers of the Enlightenment identified autonomy with the divine will or as Scripture might define it, the law which God has written on men's hearts.

The opposite of autonomy is heteronomy, meaning "strange" or foreign law. Kant viewed heteronomy as arbitrariness or willfulness because if we obey a strange authority in contradiction of our "self-law" then we abandon reason. We are seeking security from a foreign authority which deprives us of the courage to use our reason because of fear of punishment. Thus in attempting to escape fear we actually submit to fear of the foreign authority to which we have fled for security! All religious authority can become heteronomous if it is not also theonomous - based on God's divine law which is an absolute standard.

Even Calvin clearly stated that the Bible can be our authority only when the Holy Spirit witnesses to it. Where this inner witness is lacking, the authority of the Bible has no meaning. Obedience to biblical authority without such a witness would be mere external subjection without inward personal experience. Tillich writes, "Men are always looking for the security of heteronomy --- the breaking up of ecclesiastical heteronomy means that the masses of people run to other heteronomies, such as the totalitarian systems, sectarian fanaticism, or fundamentalistic narrowness, thus closing themselves off from the whole development of autonomous thought in modern times." <sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Tillich, Paul *A History of Christian Thought* (Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 1968), p. 321.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 323

## **REASON**

In the Age of Enlightenment and before, Reason carried four meanings with it, none of which should be viewed as contradictory to God's revelation; rather these are some of the means by which God reveals himself to man, and by which God's Word is interpreted by man:

- a. Universal Reason or logos - the logos is the universal form and principle of everything created, whether in reality as a whole or in the mind in particular. The reality of an idea grasps the mind at the same instant the mind grasps the reality of the idea; both are part of the logos structure created by God.
- b. Critical Reason - It was not conceived of as a calculating reason which decides whether to do this or that. Rather, it was a full, passionate, revolutionary emphasis on man's essential goodness in the name of the principle of justice (as in the French Revolution). It was based in part on a belief that by transforming society the human mind is able to re-establish the logos structure originally created by God.
- c. Intuitive Reason - This is a non-analytic reason which expresses itself in terms of descriptions; it looks at the meanings of things, trying to understand them. We look at samples and examine them, compare them, and obtain a universal concept which covers the different samples and shows their point of identity (deductive reasoning).
- d. Technical Reason - This analyzes reality into its smallest elements and then construes them into other larger things. It is our most common understanding of the word "reason" in today's world (inductive reasoning).

## **NATURE**

Nature has two fundamental concepts:

- a. The Material nature which refers to things in nature that may be studied under the topics of physics, biology, botany, etc. and normally are sub or non human.
- b. The Formal nature which refers to man as distinct from other creatures, because man's body contains a mind or spirit.

When the term "natural law" is used in the Age of Enlightenment, it usually means rational law and refers to the formal nature of a thing rather than its material nature.

## **HARMONY**

This idea forms the core of "providence." In spite of every individual thing and every individual human being going his own way, there is an overall harmony to creation and to history. This harmony disavows the notion that God long ago created the earth and now sits on his throne asleep. The reformers fought this "watch maker" theory tooth and nail.

In spite of human frailty and estrangement from God, God determines every moment bringing to fulfillment his will and the overall structure, integrity and purpose of his creation. He maintains its harmony.<sup>20</sup>

Now let's apply these philosophical viewpoints to daily living: if there is no belief in harmony there can be no democracy, because the minority will not accept the validity of the decision of the majority. The Christian has no need of a central authority because harmony is founded on the authority of Scripture. Scripture unites the Christian's experiential knowledge of the world with God's revealed knowledge of the world as it is related to him.

To explore more of the Reformation period we'll look at some of the famous battle-cries of the Reformation, the historical events of the three centuries from the 1500's through the 1800's, and at the teachings of John Calvin in our next lesson. In the final lesson, we'll examine the Scientific Age from 1900 to the present, and at some of the modern theologians around the world.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Tillich, pp. 320-335.