

Protestant Reformation

Civilizational Significance

On October 31, 1517 Martin Luther, a Catholic priest, and future leader of the Reformation, nailed his famous 95 theses to the door of his church in Wittenberg. Contents of the 95 theses represent a critique of various misconceptions and superstitions of that time, by which the church manipulated people. For example, Luther's 27. thesis was: *"They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory."* 90. thesis was: *"To repress these very sharp arguments of the laity by force alone, and not to resolve them by giving reasons, is to expose the church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies and to make Christians unhappy."* Etc.

As Catholic Church has not been able by the arguments of common sense to dispute Luther's critiques, she turned for assistance to political power and decided that by an imperial decree to restrict the freedom for Protestants to openly stigmatize her delusions. But against this decree, before the National assembly, objected a group of German princes and representatives of 14 cities. Their protest was based on the biblical principle: *"We must obey God rather than men."* (Acts 5:29). Protest had encouraged a mass of people to act in accordance with their conscience and to show a willingness to sacrifice for freedom of their conscience and biblical

principles of their beliefs. After this protest, reformers of the faith were named Protestants.

What was the essence of their criticism of Catholicism?

Protestants advocated that, as the Jewish Church experienced apostasy when the scribes and Pharisees sat on Moses' seat, also the early Christian church experienced apostasy that culminated when on her throne sat the lawless one (the Pope) who was foretold by the New Testament apostles:

"Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God." (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

"I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." (Acts 20:29-30)

DELUSIONS OF THE APOSTATE CHRISTIANITY

The Reformers, in rejecting the authority of the Scriptures, saw the source of evil in the Catholic Church. But, is it possible that the evil of the Catholic Church throughout the history was the result of the inconsistency of the Catholic clergy with the Catholic belief, or may it be that the evil was actually the result of the corrupted Catholic doctrine? How is it possible that that evil was a consequence of the Church doctrine, when the Catholic Church itself condemns violence against conscience, robbery, murder, pedophilia and any other form of immorality?

It is possible if: **1)** the church promotes its moral values in a way that arouses fanatical motives of human nature: pride, fear of guilty conscience and selfish sentiment; **2)** directs the believers to repent for the symptoms of the behavioral sins, not for their cause in the bad motives of the heart; **3)** pacifies the believers' guilty conscience through the system of rituals and good deeds, even when they have not repented for their sins; and **4)** discourages the believers to use their own reason in order to stay unaware of the previous three misconceptions, and gives them blind faith in the church authorities, instead the reasonable review of their own experiences. We will explain more precisely the negative influence of apostate Christianity:

1) Apostate church, by frightening people with eternal torments in hell, by flattering to the vanity and by provoking the sentiment, prompts the believer to, instead out of love, do the good deeds out of the fear of the unclean conscience, pride, selfish sentiment and other fanatical motives. Such a believer finds the strength for struggle against his weaknesses and for his repentance in fear of unclean conscience, shame of wounded pride and in sentiment of his selfishness, rather than in true love. For example, church fathers advocate:

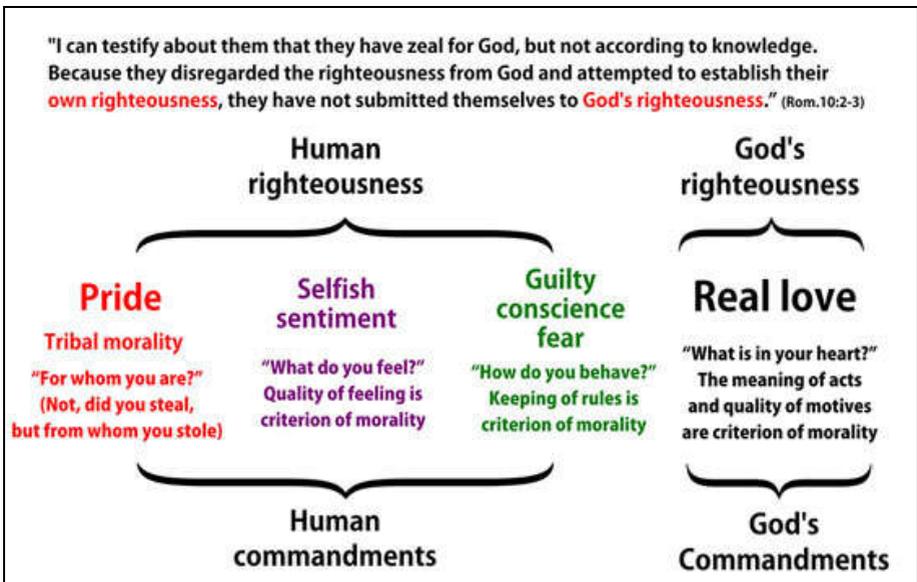
"My humble opinion is that it suffices for our salvation to meditate continually and seriously about death..." (Leontius of Neapolis, *Life of St. John the Almsgiver*, 41)

"Nothing is so effective in rooting out sin and so helpful for a virtue to grow and flourish, as constant fear." (John Chrysostom)

"See the deep pit, the impenetrable darkness; fire without brightness... Then imagine a kind of worm that is venomous and carnivorous, that can eat ravenously without ever being filled, and that cause unbearable pain with its bites. Then

think of the worst punishment of all: eternal reproach and shame. Fear these things; and trained by this fear, rein in your soul from its desire for evil." (St. Basil on the Torments of Gehenna)

"At that greatest of all spectacles, that last and eternal judgment how shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates liquefying in fiercer flames than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sages philosophers blushing in red-hot fires with their deluded pupils; so many tragedians more tuneful in the expression of their own sufferings; so many dancers tripping more nimbly from anguish than ever before from applause." (Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, Chapter XXX)

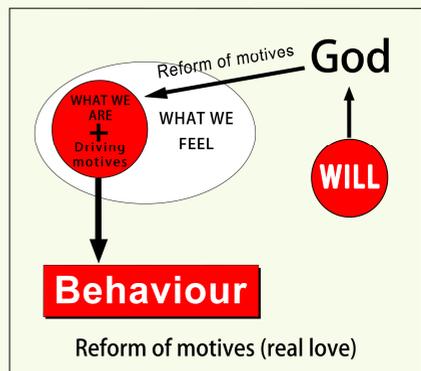
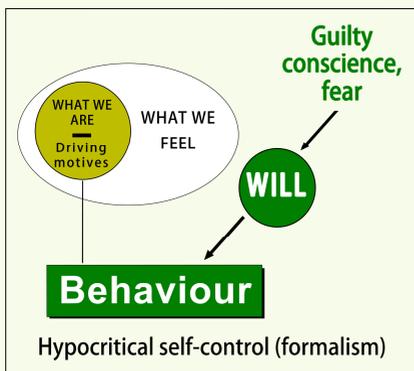


The result of fear of the unclean conscience is a hypocritical restraint of a person's weaknesses of character in their expression, their projection to others through suspicion and false moral judgements, and a tendency to impose these moral values on others by violence upon their

conscience. The result of pride as the motivation of kindness is vain offensiveness, hatred and a propensity to violence. The result of selfish sentiment is a lability of personality and cowardice for which a man loses the motive of goodness, as soon as the the unpleasant circumstances spoil his feelings. Clergy prompts fanatical motives, and then hypocritically criticizes the fruits of the sown fanaticism quoting Jesus' words: "**Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you**" (Matthew 5:44).

2) During preaching, the priests ignore the depth and spirit of the law of God, so that the believers come to God driven by the sinful desires, asking of Him to satisfy their sinful desires, instead of making them free of such desires.

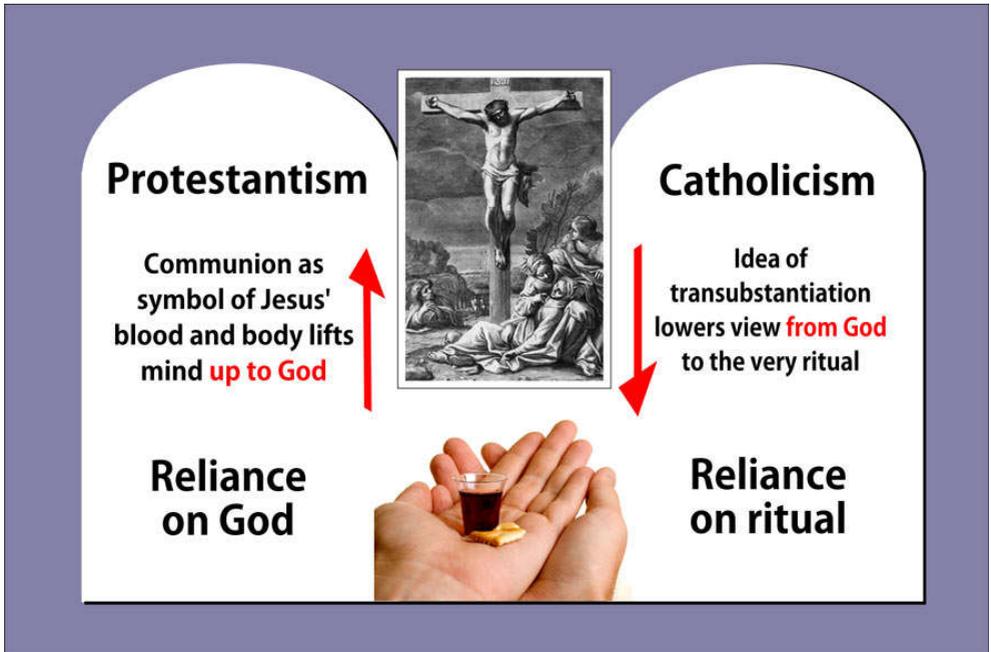
Instead of God's law, the Catholic Church promotes superficial moral demands that cannot rebuke bad motives of man's heart and initiate a sincere cry to God for the reform of the motives, because without the law of God a believer does not even become aware of them. The result is that a Catholic believer repents for allowing sin to manifest itself, but he does not repent for a sinful motive of the heart.



For example, he will repent for something bad he told you, but will not repent that he is such in his heart, because the superficial rules prevent him to become aware of the sinful motives, but just of their symptoms shown in actions and feelings.

3) Clergy promotes a system of rituals, confessions, techniques and rules of behavior that offer psychological satisfaction to the believers even when their sins are not truly repented, thus allowing them to continue to live sinfully with their conscience silenced.

Being unrepentant for their sins, the believers cannot have peace with God or be satisfied with forgiveness of sins promised by God, and therefore they are trying to achieve the inner peace on their own merits, performing the various techniques and good deeds.



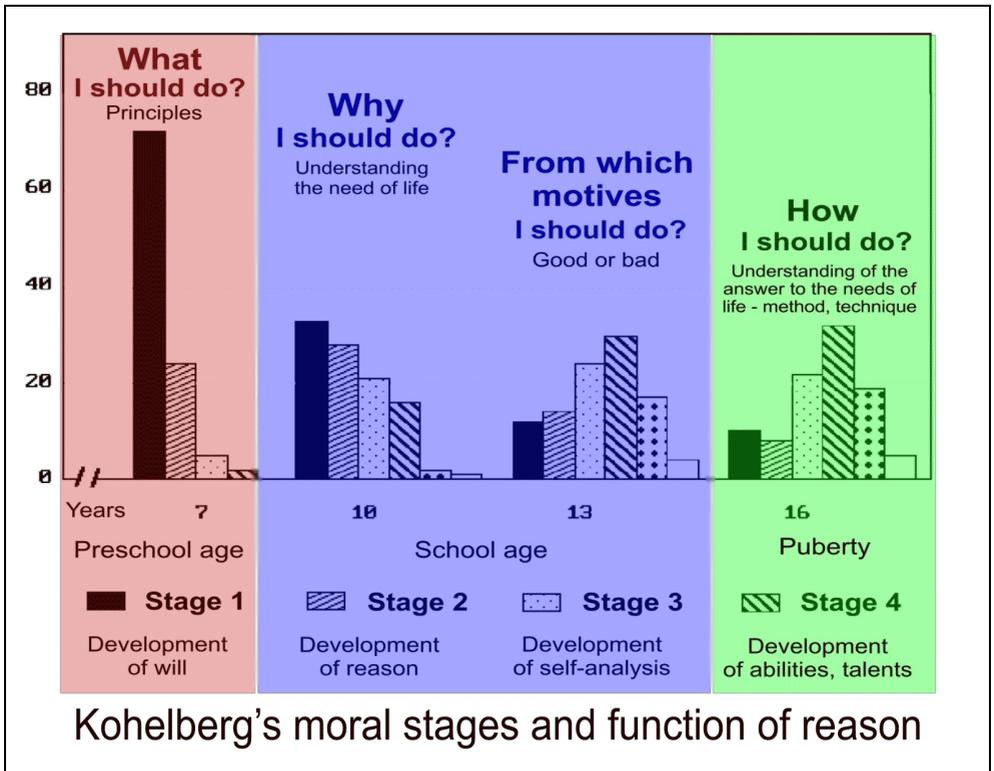
For example, instead of elevating people's thoughts and trust to God and to everything He has done for the salvation of man, the Catholic Church through a magical interpretation of communion makes the believers' look down from God to man himself and to the ritual, misleading them to seek salvation in taking communion. A believer who truly repented of his sins would have a clear conscience without having to pacify his conscience using additional techniques and performing good deeds. His righteous life would be the consequence of relying on God, not on the technique supposedly needed for deserving God's favor.

4) Lest he become aware of the previous three misconceptions, the church prompts the believer to rely on spiritual authorities to do the thinking rather than on himself, or to rely on his feelings, or on the blind rules of conduct, rather than to reasonably examine his driving motives and sense of his beliefs. The apostate church advocates:

"Let us trust with firm confidence those who have taken upon themselves the care of us in the Lord, even though they order something apparently contrary and opposed to our salvation." (St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 104)

"That we may be altogether of the same mind and in conformity with the Church herself, if she shall have defined anything to be black which to our eyes appears to be white, we ought in like manner to pronounce it to be black." (Ignatius of Loyola, *Rules for Thinking with the Church*, Spiritual Exercises, II)

By leading the believers to blindly trust the Church authorities and to blindly hold the rules of conduct, the apostate Christian Church holds the believers in the development of their reason to a the level of preschool age, when it is natural for a child to blindly believe his parents.



A child of preschool age is characterized by a formal logic of thinking, so he can judge whether something is logical, but not if it makes sense. By school age, a child develops reason to understand the correct meaning of the acts and correct quality of driving motives, while in puberty he develops techniques and methods (talents) to respond to the needs of life.

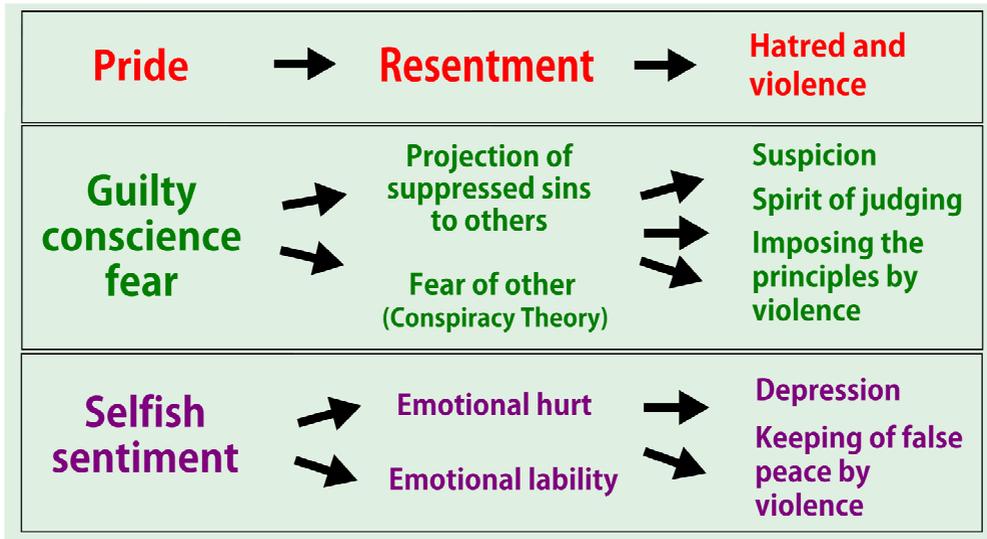
Without the sound reason, which develops during school age, and which analyzes the meaning of behavior and examines the motives of the heart, a person can not even repent for his or her bad motives or reject the systems by which he or she suppresses their unclean conscience, because they are not aware of them.

The consequences of such a distorted religious system were disastrous for the development of the human personality and of the human civilization itself during the entire Middle Ages.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE BELIEFS OF THE APOSTATE CHRISTIANITY

Every repressive regime in history that implemented moral values by manipulation and violence produced in people a mass hysteria of fear of the enemy, on which the people projected the very same desires they cherished in their own hearts, but did not dare to express for the fear of punishment.

Let us remember the communist systems in the East, where tens of millions of people were executed as dissidents, and then Nazism in the heart of Europe, where the fear was projected towards the Jews. Let us remember Islam which by fear compels people to the same hypocrisy and the need to impose Islamic values to all in a repressive way.



Of course, we will recall the Middle Ages, too, when the Catholic Church had the political power to impose its values to others and when it was killing the heretics.

Today the Catholic Church is deprived of the great political power it had had in the Middle Ages, but its believers today cry out for its former political power with which they would compel others to advocate Catholic values, what we can see today in the political options of imposing an abortion ban act and Sunday worship law.

In the Holy Scriptures, in Revelation 17, prophetically is described the reliance of the apostate church on earthly rulers, because she is trying to regain her spiritual powerlessness with political power over her subjects:

"Then one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls came and told me, "Come, I will show you how the notorious prostitute who sits on many waters will be judged. The kings of the earth committed sexual immorality with her, and those living on earth became drunk with the wine of her immorality." (Revelation 17:1-2)

A need for reliance on political power is a natural product of the contents of every single authoritarian ideology, and thus a product of the Catholic faith.

Whoever, by force, adopts moral and cultural values, will, by force, impose them on others.

Whoever understands civil liberties as the source of evil among the people, he, indeed, by projection of his own mechanism, concludes that without external repressive pressure he, himself, would relent in open expression of his unconquered weaknesses of character.

Of course, the morality which is imposed by fear of criminal law has no value, because it is forced and formal. It has only declarative, but not practical value, because it is not able to resist the real temptations of life.

How tragic position of human personality was in the time before the Reformation perhaps in a the simplest way reveals Erich Fromm when he describes as a characteristic of the Middle Ages "general lack of personal freedom, to the exploitation of the mass of the population by a small minority, to its narrowness which makes the peasant of the surrounding country a dangerous and suspected stranger to the city dweller-not to speak of a person of another country-and to its superstitiousness and ignorance. ...

What characterizes medieval in contrast to modern society is its lack of individual freedom. Everybody in the earlier period was chained to his rule in the social order. A man had little chance to move socially from one class to another, he was hardly able to move even geographically from one town or from one country to another. With few exceptions he had to stay where he was born. He was often not even free to dress as he pleased or to eat what he liked." (Erich Fromm, *The Fear Of Freedom*, 1942, III/1)

To oppose the superstitious crowd at that time was a feat and demanded from a man to conquer all those weaknesses of character out of which he would, under the pressure or blackmail, be inclined to renounce the principles of honesty and justice.

But Protestants, with the authority of the Holy Scriptures, boldly set out to reprove the delusions of their time.

RETURN TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

1) By the Holy Scriptures Protestants were rebuking bad driving motives:

"Their fear of me is a commandment taught by men."
(Isaiah 29:13)

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love." (1 John 4:18)

"And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:3)

Protestants didn't preach "motivational sermons" because they were aware that by this they would arouse fanatical motives of the human nature. Through the understanding of the meaning and spirit of God's Law, they became aware that a man can not find justice in himself, but only in God. From that which proud man thinks he can do for God, they have elevated people's thoughts towards God and to what He has done for their salvation on the cross of Calvary.

"And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature." (Romans 7:18)

"Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and patience, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4)

2) By the Holy Scriptures Protestants were rebuking superficial moral demands and preaching reform of the inner motives of heart:

"You have such a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your own tradition! " (Mark 7:9)

"How terrible it will be for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but on the inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence." (Matthew 23:25)

"It's what comes out of a person that makes a person unclean, because it's from within, from the human heart, that evil thoughts come, as well as sexual immorality, stealing, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, cheating, shameless lust, envy, slander, arrogance, and foolishness. All these things come from inside and make a person unclean." (Mark 7:20-23)

"Therefore, circumcise your heart and stop being stubborn." (Deuteronomy 10:16)

"And you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." (Ezekiel 36:25-27)

3) By Holy Scriptures, Protestants were rebuking the psychological satisfaction of an unclean conscience achieved by believers through rituals, good works and idolatry:

"And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words." (Matthew 6:7)

"For by such grace you have been saved through faith. This does not come from you; it is the gift of God and not the result of actions, to put a stop to all boasting." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

""You are not to make for yourselves an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above, or on earth below, or in

the water under the earth. You are not to bow down to them in worship or serve them;" (Exodus 20:4-5)

A person who is truly repenting of and rejecting his sins has peace from God Himself, and doesn't have a need for additional techniques of conscience-calming, nor a need for feelings, miracles and any other signs to assure himself that he is with God.

Righteous life is not a cause, but a consequence of salvation fruit of an inner reformation of the driving motives.

4) By Holy Scriptures, Protestants were rebuking reliance on their own feelings and on other people, rather than on reason:

"But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matthew 23:8-11)

"Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord." (Jeremiah 17:5)

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered." (Proverbs 28:26) "A fool has no delight in understanding, but that his heart may express itself." (Proverbs 18:2)

"The naive believes everything, but the sensible man considers his steps." (Proverbs 14:15)

Protestants have worked on mass literacy of the people so that the people could study the Holy Scriptures and so become saved from the papal delusions, and, of course, from the temptations of their own nature. It is interesting that Protestants were not aiming at any social reform, but at the elevation of the authority of the Holy Scriptures, as the principle of correct faith. They didn't at all assume civilizational character of their struggle for elevating the authority of Scriptures above superstitions that have crept into the church in the last thousand years. They have never dreamed that October 31, 1517, when Luther posted his 95 theses, will become, besides the discovery of America, another date which would mark marks the beginning of a new century and would represent a milestone in the history of mankind.

"Foremost among those who were called to lead the church from the darkness of popery into the light of a purer faith, stood Martin Luther. Zealous, ardent, and devoted, knowing no fear but the fear of God, and acknowledging no foundation for religious faith but the Holy Scriptures, Luther was the man for his time; through him God accomplished a great work for the reformation of the church and the enlightenment of the world." (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p.121)

"The blow was finally delivered when in 1517 Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the church door of Wittenberg. ... The emancipation came and it certainly led to the boldest intellectual and spiritual upheaval in the history of mankind." (Michael Pupin, *The New Reformation*, p.22, 1927)

When a critical mass of people decided to raise the truth above their human fear, when whole nations decided to reject the human traditions and to elevate the Gospel, there was

such a change of mentality, the like which never before or after, has been recorded in history.

From reformed human hearts came out the blessings of democracy, freedom of thought and speech, moral living, respect for the human personality, the absence of authoritarianism and cult of personality, a high awareness of personal responsibilities, complete mutual trust among people, the highest level of maturity of personality, a minimum level of crime, the termination of superstition, a high labor productivity, successful marriage relationships, victory over depression and blessings of very mature reaction to stress. Historical sources from that period (XVI-XIX century) recorded the following:

CHANGE OF MENTALITY

"'Peace has her habitation in our town,' 'no quarrel, no hypocrisy, no envy, no strife. Whence can such union come but from the Lord, and our doctrine, which fills us with the fruits of peace and piety?'" (James A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, Published by Hartland Publications, 2003, pg 496)

"Cursing and swearing, unchastity, sacrilege, adultery, and impure living, such as prevail in many places where I have lived, are here unknown. There are no pimps and harlots. Benevolence is so great that the poor need not beg. The people admonish each other in brotherly fashion, as Christ prescribes. Lawsuits are banished from the city; nor is there any simony, murder, or party spirit, but only peace and charity. On the other hand ... churches are quite free from all idolatry." (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, pg 645)

Speaking of the ancient Vikings, known for their warrior spirit, sources from the XVIII century were explaining the causes of the reform of their mentality:

"How came they to be so docile and tractable as to submit to the arts of agriculture? Does a nation, habituated to arms and to idleness, easily give itself up to industry and the arts of peace? If we can answer this question aright, we shall know to what the happy transformation of the North is to be ascribed. ... I have yet shown that the Gospel had now been for three centuries preached in Scandinavia. To this, doubtless, as the principal cause, we must attribute the happy alteration of manners in those barbarous regions. Christian godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. While it conducts enslaved souls into liberty, and, turning them from the power of Satan to God, invests them with the garments of salvation, it also meliorates their condition in this life, and diffuses through the world the most salutary precepts of peace, order, and tranquillity. Let not men expect the general civilization of the globe by any other methods. ...

We enjoy, at this day, the advantages of society derived to Europe, from the propagation of the Gospel, while we ungratefully depreciate the labours of those Christian missionaries, through which, under God, those advantages were conveyed to us. ...

The durable change of their manners intimates, that their country must have been blessed with one of those gracious "effusions" of the holy Spirit, the consequences of which are commonly felt for ages after." (*The Works of the Late Rev. Joseph Milner (1744–1797) in Eight Volumes*, vol. III, p. 298, 1810)

"Germans are pious, industrious and moderate. They live by this saying: work as if you were to live forever, but pray to God as if you were to die tomorrow. No peoples depict their shortcomings and mistakes by themselves so sharply as the Germans....

Everywhere you see happy and content people. Nowhere do you see malice or envy. Everyone rejoices in others welfare, everyone pities others misfortune. German communities are so shaped and arranged, that it seems to you as if everyone lives just for the benefit and satisfaction of their fellowmen. This is a country where they care for domesticated animals to feel the plenitude of humane civilization. Everyone is obligated to treat their cattle humanely. Over a few short time-spans, Germans achieved miracles, transformed their land into real paradise, a land Romans talked about as a Siberia; developed their industry, reformed the Roman faith, originated schools, sciences, laws, freedom, and with real enlightenment illuminated middle Europe. In the areas where the apostles came from, in the fatherhood of Jesus Christ, reigns darkness and superstition, but up North a German pastor fronting assembled people teaches Christian love and translates the gospel words in the way that is heard and understood by people who love real truth and who desire an ever further progress and enlightenment of their reason." (L.Nenadovic, *Letters from Germany*, 1874)

It is often argued that reform of the mentality of the people has to start from its government. But the experience of the English disputes this idea. French historian Taine wrote about Calvinists (Puritans, etc.) as of the bearers of reform of the English people, despite the fact that they were in conflict with the English ruling dynasty:

"These men are the true heroes of England. They founded England, in spite of the corruption of the Stuarts, by the exercise of duty, by the practice of justice, by obstinate toil, by vindication of right, by resistance to oppression, by the conquest of liberty, by the repression of vice." (Hippolyte Taine, *History of English Literature*, II, p. 473, 1873)

"The ethics of Moses, the judgments of Jeremiah, the high idealities of Isaiah, the heroic faith of Joshua, the impassioned eloquence of Peter, the profound spiritual philosophy of Paul, the ecstatic visions of John, and, above every other thing, the wonderful power, love and truth set forth in the teaching, and revealed in the life of the Christ, wrought a transformation in the English people, and they became a people of one Book, and that Book was the Bible.



It has not been so many years since a deputation of African royalty, bearing costly gifts to England' s Queen, was received in the Windsor halls. They said to the Queen, that they had been directed by their prince to inquire for the secret of England' s greatness. Victoria sent back with them a handsome copy of the Bible, with this message:

'Tell your prince that this Book is the secret of England's greatness.'

The Bible became the headlight of English civilization. A new highway is opened up for progress; moral improvement is as sure as material advance; and another epoch opens in the history of thought, and a new period begins in the course of civilization." (Scott F. Hershey, *The Roman Papacy*, 1895)

"The revels of Whitehall, the scepticism and debauchery of courtiers, the corruption of statesmen, left the mass of Englishmen what Puritanism had made them, serious, earnest, sober in life and conduct, firm in their love of Protestantism and of freedom. ...

Slowly but steadily it introduced its own seriousness and purity into English society, English literature, English politics. The history of English progress since the Restoration, on its moral and spiritual sides, has been the history of Puritanism." (John Richard Green, *Short History of the English People*, p. 586. 1874)

HIGH CIVIL SECURITY

"There is no country in the whole world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America; and there can be no greater proof of its utility, and of its conformity to human nature, than that its influence is most powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth. ...

Almost all Europe was convulsed by revolutions; America has not had even a revolt. The republic there has not been assailant, but the guardian of all vested rights; the property of individuals has had better guarranties there than any other country of the world; anarchy has there been as unknown as despotism. Where else could we find greater causes of hope, or more instructive lessons?" (Alexis de Toqueville, *Democracy In America*, 1835)

“Emile Durkheim argued that Catholics had higher homicide rates than Protestants in both Germany and other countries in the nineteenth century. Using conviction statistics, he pointed out that predominantly Catholic countries like Italy and Spain had homicide rates of approximately seventy per million inhabitants, but that Protestant-dominated countries like Germany, England, and Denmark had homicide rates of only about three per million inhabitants.” (Durkheim, *Suicide, A Study in Sociology*, trans. John A. p. 353)

SUCCESSFULNESS OF MARRIAGE COMMUNION

In 1835, Catholic historian Alexis De Tocqueville, in his book "Democracy in America", revealed that with French (Catholics) it was demonstrated that it was better if parents chose a husband for a woman, than if she were to choose one for herself because "as they had remarked that the small number of love-matches (marriage) which occurred in their time almost always turned out ill, they resolutely inferred that it was exceedingly dangerous to listen to the dictates of the heart on the subject. Accident appeared to them to be a better guide than choice." (*Democracy in America*)

The same cause of marital disaster when the marriage is formed on the basis of unconquered weaknesses of our own hearts, represents the cause of the misery and the collapse of the modern marriage. Emotionally and sexually immature personalities bring the decision for a marital partner based on unconquered selfish and bodily desires of their hearts. When feelings of falling in love go limp, partners wake up one morning next to the person they have never chosen to love, and unfulfilled selfish and bodily desires become the cause of mutual disappointment and depression.

In order to choose a partner reasonably, and to build a relationship with him based on true love, which serves

others, a person previously needs to overcome her selfish and bodily desires. In other words, a person needs to mature emotionally and sexually, and that means she needs to give the proper function to her abilities, and not to abuse them for satisfaction.

An emotionally and sexually immature personality prefers emotions and pleasure that her partner causes, rather than his very personality.

Emotional and sexual abilities should be a tool of expression of love for our spouse, and not our partner's being a tool for satisfaction of undefeated selfish sexual desires.

Catholics have been trying to solve the problem as the Catholic doctrine teaches them to act in all - by prohibitions and transferrings of their own responsibility of choice on to the authority, while Protestants, through a personal relationship with God, exercise the satisfying of all needs through their soul, so they haven't had a need to quench the thirst of their soul through the abuse of the feelings and sexual sensations. Instead of emotional and sexual abuse of their spouses, they live for them, to serve them.

With regards to the relationship of selfless love, a deeper knowledge of the spouse provides more cause for the expression of love, so as time goes by, the spouse becomes even more loved, while in the selfish relationship, unquenchable desires bring disappointment and mutual reproof to spouses accustomed to one another.

That a possibility of emotional and sexual maturing of the personality is not a utopia, clearly reveals the statistics from the period when the divorce became legal: In Protestant England and Wales for 25 years, from 1858 to 1883, there were 4836 divorces, while in Catholic France in just one year,

1887, there were as many as 5000 divorce. Tocqueville in 1831 also noted the difference in the United States and explained why Protestant women can freely choose their spouses, and remain truly happy in a marriage:

"Amongst almost all Protestant nations young women are far more the mistresses of their own actions than they are in Catholic countries. ... When the time for choosing a husband is arrived, that cold and stern reasoning power which has been educated and invigorated by the free observation of the world, teaches an American woman that a spirit of levity and independence in the bonds of marriage is a constant subject of annoyance, not of pleasure; it tells her that the amusements of the girl cannot become the recreations of the wife, and that the sources of a married woman's happiness are in the home of her husband." (Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835)

Russian historian Karamzin describes Englishwomen of that time, as they were not beautifying themselves with powder or make-up, but with the nobility of character:

"The pretty wife walks arm in arm with her husband and not with some charmer, some cicisbeo. In short, rare is the bachelor who would not sigh at the sight of the beauty and happiness of the children, the modesty and purity of the women. Yes, my friends, here the women are modest and virtuous and consequently the husbands are happy. An Englishwoman is trained for domestic life, and develops the qualities of a good wife and mother. Her soul becomes enriched with the interests and habits which keep us from feeling bored when we are alone and make one person a treasure to another." (N. M. Karamzin, *Letters of a Russian Traveler*, 1789-1790 p. 311)

In America of that time, romance novels were not read at all, among other things, because in them was advocated romance relationship between marital spouses, which was considered sinful, or which would be, by modern terms, called emotionally or sexually immature marital relationship. In novels was often described how people was led by their own feelings and examples of marital spouses who were not satisfied with their partners, and who, therefore, were entering into extramarital relationships in order to satisfy their unconquered sinful desires. But Americans considered that behaviour of a spouse can not be an excuse for the lack of love for him and for marriage infidelity:

"But American writers could never render these palliations probable to their readers; their customs and laws are opposed to it; and as they despair of rendering levity of conduct pleasing, they cease to depict it. This is one of the causes to which must be attributed the small number of novels published in the United States. ...

Philosophers and statesmen are heard to deplore that morals are not sufficiently strict, and the literary productions of the country constantly lead one to suppose so. In America all books, novels not excepted, suppose women to be chaste, and no one thinks of relating affairs of gallantry. ...

The Inquisition has never been able to prevent a vast number of anti-religious books from circulating in Spain. The empire of the majority succeeds much better in the United States, since it actually removes the wish of publishing them. ... Attempts have been made by some governments to protect the morality of nations by prohibiting licentious books. In the United States no one is punished for this sort of works, but no one is tempted to write them. It is not, however, that all citizens have pure morals, but the majority is regular in them.

There is certainly no country in the world where the tie of marriage is so much respected as in America, or where conjugal happiness is more highly or worthily appreciated. ... No girl then believes that she cannot become the wife of the man who loves her; and this renders all breaches of morality before marriage very uncommon: for, whatever be the credulity of the passions, a woman will hardly be able to persuade herself that she is beloved, when her lover is perfectly free to marry her and does not." (Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835)



DILIGENCE AND MODESTY

The book of the sociologist Max Weber, "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" (1905) reveals sociologists' attempt to answer the question of why the Protestants showed greater diligence and creativity in work than Catholics and why they so modestly spent achieved capital, so that it was being accumulated that they were able to successfully invest it in the further development of production. In order to remove all other factors in his analysis, he analyzed the differences between Protestants and Catholics in the same city, Baden.

In 1895, the town of Baden was composed of 37.0% Protestants and 61.3% Catholics. But denomination of the students in schools beyond the compulsory public school stage were, however, divided as follows in 1885-1891: students of real high school were 69% Protestant and 31% Catholic. Students of higher civil schools were 51% Protestant and 37% Catholic. Also, in 1895 in Baden tax was collected on capital: for every 1,000 Protestants 954,060 marks; for every 1,000 Catholics 589,000 marks. Max Weber also noted that Protestants do their work with great extent of quality, regardless of whether they are highly or lowly paid.

He also noticed that Protestants do not spend earned money for pleasure as much as Catholics did, because they found pleasure to be a sin. The less developed Catholic south of Germany in contrast to the Protestant north, was explained by the stinginess of the Catholics whose gross earned capital was "*put in the mattress*," while the backwardness of the south of Europe was explained by expressed corporality of Southerners, who spent money they earned on pleasure and then lived on the edge of existence.

Max Weber tried to explain this difference as a result of the Protestant work ethic, which the Calvinists have defined in their belief. But Catholics have successfully challenged this interpretation when they realized that in Baden do not live Calvinists, but Lutherans, who do not have a defined work ethic. But by that, Catholics only confirmed that the enlightenment of the Protestants is indeed the consequence of spiritual experience of the new birth, ie. the reform of the essential driving motives, and not the consequence of promotion of work and modesty as a kind of ethical value.

If promotion of ethical values can change anyone's character, it would change the character of the Catholics themselves in those values that they promote the most.

No one as the communist leaders of the countries of East of Europe promoted the ethic of the working man, equality, brotherhood and unity, and in spite of this they didn't succeed at all to reform the mentality of nations over which they ruled. People are not prompted by the learned ethical values, but by the motives of behavior. **Manipulation** by mentality of people through ethical values, and **change** of mentality of people through the reform of the motives of the heart, are not the same thing. Without reform of essential motives of behavior, it is impossible to change the mentality of the individual and the nation.

Protestants exercised their business activities independently of the height of their wage, because they worked out of love, not for profit. Earned money they did not waste on pleasure, because they were relieved of the need for pleasure and not because their conscience felt guilty because of pleasure. Earned money they did not "*put in the mattress,*" because they were also the winners of their own stinginess. So capital was accumulated, which was invested in the further development of production. Diligence and modesty are the secret of economic prosperity.

If we want to analyze the prosperity of the Protestant spirit in even greater splendor, it is necessary to go back in time a century earlier, at a time when the historian Alexis De Tocqueville in his book "Democracy in America" (1835) reveals a pronounced diligence and creativity of Americans:

"The American people views its own march across these wilds—drying swamps, turning the course of rivers, peopling solitudes, and subduing nature. ... No natural boundary seems

to be set to the efforts of man; and what is not yet done is only what he has not yet attempted to do.

The whole life of an American is passed like a game of chance, a revolutionary crisis, or a battle. As the same causes are continually in operation throughout the country, they ultimately impart an irresistible impulse to the national character. The American, taken as a chance specimen of his countrymen, must then be a man of singular warmth in his desires, enterprising, fond of adventure, and, above all, of innovation. The same bent is manifest in all that he does; he introduces it into his political laws, his religious doctrines, his theories of social economy, and his domestic occupations; he bears it with him in the depths of the backwoods, as well as in the business of the city." (Alexis de Toqueville, *Democracy In America*, 1835)

At the same time, Americans were characterized by the disburdenment from the need for fun and enjoyment:

"If the Americans never spend the money of the people in galas, it is not only because the imposition of taxes is under the control of the people, but because the people takes no delight in public rejoicings. ...

Men who live in democratic countries do not value the simple, turbulent, or coarse diversions in which the people indulge in aristocratic communities: such diversions are thought by them to be puerile or insipid. In aristocratic communities the people readily give themselves up to bursts of tumultuous and boisterous gayety, which shake off at once the recollection of their privations: the natives of democracies are not fond of being thus violently broken in upon, and they never lose sight of their own selves without regret.

I thought that the English constituted the most serious nation on the face of the earth, but I have since seen the Americans and have changed my opinion. ... Life would have no relish for them if they were delivered from the anxieties which harass them, and they show more attachment to their cares than aristocratic nations to their pleasures. ...

The energy, however, with which they strove for the acquirement of wealth, moral enjoyment, and the comforts as well as liberties of the world, is scarcely inferior to that with which they devoted themselves to Heaven." (Alexis de Toqueville, *Democracy In America*, 1835)

VICTORY OVER STRESS IS NOT UTOPIA

Experience of the Western civilization in the time of Reformation (XVI-XIX century) reveals that victory over stress is not utopia. During that period, in Protestant nations, man was considered to be a responsible human being, able to utilize any trouble to foster spiritual growth and development of character. In fact, difficult life circumstances were considered as a test of a person's actual spiritual state.

During their mature suffering of serious trouble Englishmen showed such a calm spirit and preserved dignity that eventually the term "British coolness" was forged; also used by other nations when describing maturity of the English as exemplary, in comparison to their own customary reactions to trouble. It was considered then that a man of clean conscience can endure every trouble and misery without losing his peace and coolness.

"If we suffer for the good deed

Conscience is calm, heart is cheer."

(L. Nenadovic, mid XIX century)

There is nothing wrong with having feelings which are in accordance with actual reality, because such feelings direct us to those activities which provide answers addressing real needs of life. It is normal that gain, beauty and goodness provoke appropriate feelings of joy. However it is up to us, to either misuse those pleasant feelings for our own satisfaction, which makes us selfish, or to be grateful for such feelings. If we foster a selfish attitude towards the source of our pleasant feelings, we pave the way for our depressive reaction which will occur the day our selfish attitude is thwarted. Thus, the mature reaction to the source of our pleasant emotions is the spirit of gratitude.



Similarly, it is normal to feel fear when we are facing danger. However it is up to us whether we want to be cowards, or whatever we want to be brave. If we act as

cowards, we remain cowards although the danger has passed, but if we respond courageously, we remain courageous even after the challenge passes.

Likewise, it is quite normal that injustice prompts in us adequate feeling of anger. However it is up to us whether we respond to such injustice with hatred, or meekness. If we respond with hatred, hatred remains within us even when the external temptations are gone, but if we respond with meekness and forgiveness, we retain the built character of peace even after the source of injustice is removed. Moreover, it is quite normal that trouble, failure, or loss of loved ones, causes a corresponding feeling of sadness. However, it is up to us whether we respond to such troubles with anxiety, or concern, and whether we respond to the loss of loved ones by falling into depression, or maintain reasonable equanimity. Most people today fall into a deep depression as a consequence of stress that thwarts the objects of their satisfaction, but Alexis De Tocqueville recorded about Americans of that time the following:

"In the United States martial valor is but little prized; the courage which is best known and most esteemed is that which emboldens men to brave the dangers of the ocean, in order to arrive earlier in port—to support the privations of the wilderness without complaint, and solitude more cruel than privations—the courage which renders them almost insensible to the loss of a fortune laboriously acquired, and instantly prompts to fresh exertions to make another. Courage of this kind is peculiarly necessary to the maintenance and prosperity of the American communities, and it is held by them in peculiar honor and estimation; to betray a want of it is to incur certain disgrace. ... It has been observed that man rarely retains his customary level in

presence of very critical circumstances; he rises above or he sinks below his usual condition, and the same thing occurs in nations at large. Extreme perils sometimes quench the energy of a people instead of stimulating it; they excite without directing its passions, and instead of clearing they confuse its powers of perception. The Jews deluged the smoking ruins of their temple with the carnage of the remnant of their host." (Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835.)

But soon, the people of Western civilization are rejecting the spirit of Reformation and instead on the spiritual plane try to satisfy the thirst of the soul on the mental and physical plane.

GREAT SOCIAL BLESSING

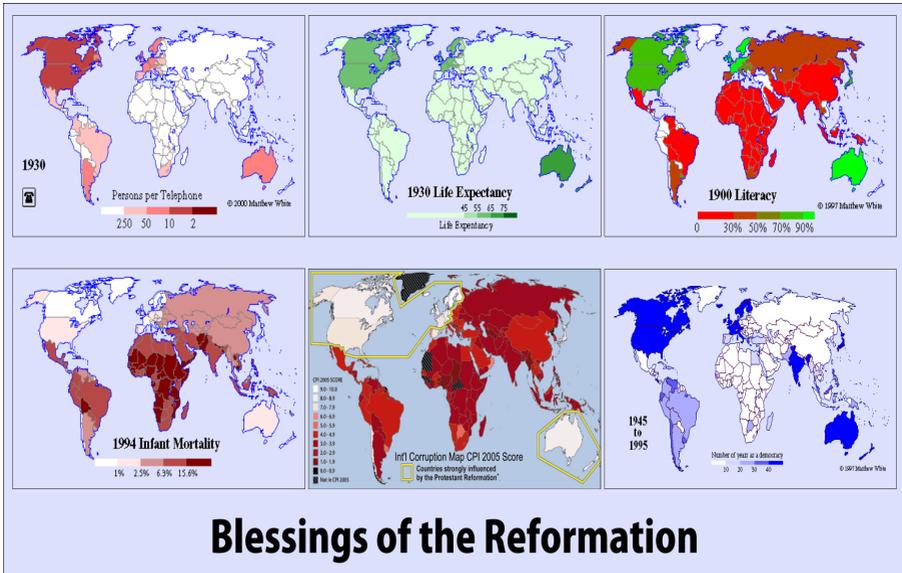
In the nineteenth century, other nations have not yet managed to "parasitize" on the achievements of the Reformation, so the differences between them and the Protestants were drastic. Therefore, in "Protestant quarterly review " from 1846. we read:

"Ask yourselves which religion,—Protestant or Popish,—will spread widest in an age of science and knowledge—which is best fitted to the growth of the human mind? In all Protestant countries, wealth, intelligence, and a high civilization! are everywhere seen; in all Catholic countries, dead-ness and decay rest upon everything which nature made beautiful. Under Protestantism, every department of science has made rapid progress. The very spirit of freedom breathes through the Newtonian and Baconian philosophy. Everywhere, from the harsh, barren soil of northern nations, sprang up life and light England, Scotland, Prussia, in men of strong intellect, are superior to any of the older nations, in any preceding age. Mathematics, natural philosophy, metaphysics, ethics, commerce, agriculture, legislation—the

whole extent of modern civilization—date from the Reformation, and exist only in Protestant countries.

And those nations of Europe which caught but a glimmer of liberal opinions, but which in the Catholic or Popish reaction were again subjected to Rome, are far in advance of those countries, beautiful as they are, in the South of Europe, which never saw Protestantism. A single glance into the history of modern science, literature, and politics, will fully convince any candid mind of this.

The entire spirit of northern institutions, their great progress, their growing intelligence, are all owing to Protestantism. They date their birth from it, they are thoroughly imbued with its spirit, they must live still in its spirit. Firm governments and wise laws; just and liberal rulers; free and intelligent people; nobler views of man; nobler views of God; more knowledge; more liberty; more faith;—these have the genius of Protestantism imparted, and in their ever-growing life it will live. How different from this is the condition of the old Catholic States! ... How are we to account for this immeasurable difference between the realms of Protestantism and those of Catholicism? Are the Italians inferior by nature to the Scotsmen, or the Spanish to the Danes? We cannot admit this; all history and philosophy disprove it. Yet now, in their degradation, they can scarcely appreciate their ancient grandeur; while the heavy nations of the north, have suddenly leaped far beyond their utmost limit. The only cause which can be assigned for this, is the vast difference in the genius of the two religious influences: Catholicism has blighted, Protestantism has advanced and strengthened. Can this ever be undone?" (*Protestant Quarterly Review for the month of January, 1846*)



BLESSING OF DEMOCRACY

Contemporary philosopher Jurgen Habermas claims that the Reformation is responsible for the formation of free and critical public opinion in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but that it ceased to exist in the twentieth century. About the importance of the Gospel for the achievements of freedom and democracy, Habermas claims the following:

"Universalistic egalitarianism, from which sprang the ideals of freedom and a collective life in solidarity, the autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, the individual morality of conscience, human rights and democracy, is the direct legacy of the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love. This legacy, substantially unchanged, has been the object of continual critical appropriation and reinterpretation. To this day, there is no alternative to it." (Jürgen Habermas - *"Time of Transitions"*, Polity Press, 2006, pp. 150-151, translation of an interview from 1999)

In the Bertelsmann Lexicon from 1997, we read that modern democracy is the fruit of the Protestant Reformation:

"Modern democracy grew out from the Calvinist faith convictions from the seventeenth century, especially in Scotland, England, and the Netherland..." (*Bertelsmann Discovery Lexikon* 1997)

But the attempt of the nonprotestant nations to copy Protestant social systems, without the inner spiritual reform, results in the abuse of democratic freedoms and the formation of anarchy, which immediately use the right-wing forces as an excuse for the introduction of their dictatorships.

"The Reformation has favoured the progress of the nations which have adopted it, by permitting them to found free institutions, while Catholicism leads to despotism or anarchy, and often alternately to both. Representative government is the natural government of Protestant populations. Despotic government is the congenial government of Catholic populations. ... Catholics, unable either to found liberty, or to do without it, make despotism necessary, and yet will not submit to it. ... Regulated liberty is not possible without good morals." (Emile De Laveleye, *Protestantism and Catholicism in their bearing upon the Liberty and Prosperity of Nations*, pp. 30-31, 52, 1876)

"Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters." (Benjamin Franklin)

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) argued that the French Revolution failed because it had not been preceded by a prior Protestant Reformation, as in the German states. Freedom, he insisted, depended on a mental change; it could not be enforced politically:

"Thus Liberalism as an abstraction, emanating from France, traversed the Roman World; but Religious slavery held that world in the fetters of political servitude. For it is a false principle that the fetters which bind Right and Freedom can be broken without the emancipation of conscience—that there can be a Revolution without a Reformation." (Lectures on the Philosophy of History)

"The Mexicans were desirous of establishing a federal system, and they took the Federal Constitution of their neighbors, the Anglo-Americans, as their model, and copied it with considerable accuracy. But although they had borrowed the letter of the law, they were unable to create or to introduce the spirit and the sense which give it life. Mexico is alternately the victim of anarchy and the slave of military despotism. ... The great colonies which were founded in South America by the Spaniards and the Portuguese have since become empires. Civil war and oppression now lay waste those extensive regions. ... But upon examining the state of society more attentively, I speedily discovered that the Americans had made great and successful efforts to counteract these imperfections of human nature, and to correct the natural defects of democracy. ... Thus whilst the law permits the Americans to do what they please, religion prevents them from conceiving, and forbids them to commit what is rash or unjust. ...

I have endeavored to point out in another part of this work the causes to which the maintenance of the political institutions of the Americans is attributable; and religion appeared to be one of the most prominent amongst them. I am now treating of the Americans in an individual capacity, and I again observe that religion is not less useful to each citizen than to the whole State.

The Americans show, by their practice, that they feel the high necessity of imparting morality to democratic communities by means of religion. What they think of themselves in this respect is a truth of which every democratic nation ought to be thoroughly persuaded. It should therefore be the unceasing object of the legislators of democracies, and of all the virtuous and enlightened men who live there, to raise the souls of their fellow-citizens, and keep them lifted up towards heaven." (Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835)

American president John Adams in 1798 warns that the American Constitution was made only for the pious people and that there was no way for it to survive if people are corrupt, because the American government does not know the repressive power by which it could confront the evil of people, if people do not overcome their own temptations themselves:

"While our country remains untainted with the principles and manners which are now producing desolation in so many parts of the world; while she continues sincere, and incapable of insidious and impious policy, we shall have the strongest reason to rejoice in the local destination assigned us by Providence. But should the people of America once become capable of that deep simulation towards one another, and towards foreign nations, which assumes the language of justice and moderation, while it is practising iniquity and extravagance, and displays in the most captivating manner the charming pictures of candour, frankness, and sincerity, while it is rioting in rapine and insolence, this country will be the most miserable habitation in the world. Because we have no government, armed with power, capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and religion.

Avarice, ambition, revenge and licentiousness would break the strongest cords of our Constitution, as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people." (John Adams, Letter to the Officers of the First Brigade of the Third Division of the Militia of Massachusetts, 11 October 1798)

In the nineteenth century Protestant thinkers and clerics have warned that the blessing of democracy will soon be converted into anarchy, and anarchy into totalitarianism, if the light of prophetic self-criticism would be extinguished.

"While celebrating American democracy and material progress, Dorchester and Strong worried about the implications of these values. They extolled democracy but warned that democracy unchecked by moral restraint would descend into anarchy. They rejoiced in material progress but cautioned against materialism.

Because America was a set of principles to be realized more than a finished product, loyal Americans could never rest content. In the spirit of the Puritan jeremiad, they needed to engage in ceaseless self-criticism and repentance as a means of corporate rededication to America's destiny." (Jonathan D. Sarna, *Minority Faiths and the American Protestant Mainstream*)

The famous American preacher Henry Beecher (1813 - 1887) also warned:

"The worst thing in this world, next to anarchy, is government." (Henry Ward Beecher)

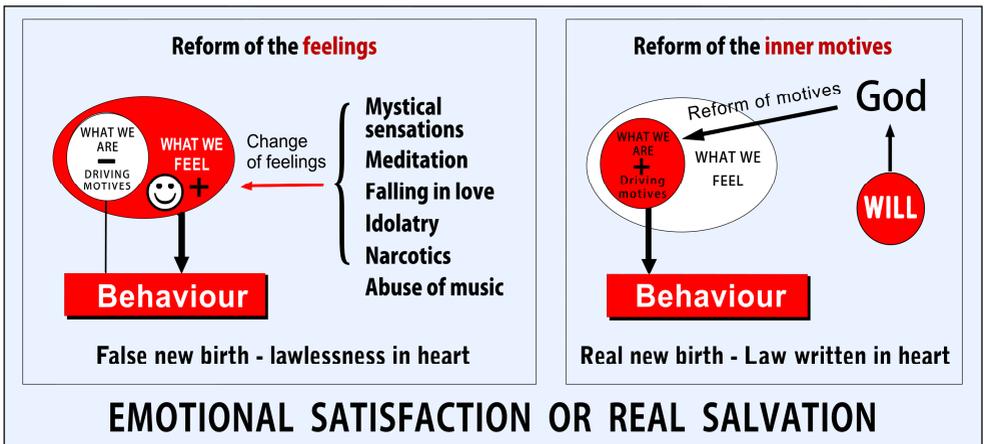
The requirement that makes democracy function is a critical mass of uncorrupted people who will not abuse their freedoms and who have a high awareness of their own responsibility:

"The citizen of the United States is taught from his earliest infancy to rely upon his own exertions in order to resist the evils and the difficulties of life; he looks upon social authority with an eye of mistrust and anxiety, and he only claims its assistance when he is quite unable to shift without it. ... All that he asks of the State is not to be disturbed in his toil, and to be secure of his earnings. ...

The same spirit pervades every act of social life. If a stoppage occurs in a thoroughfare, and the circulation of the public is hindered, the neighbors immediately constitute a deliberative body; and this extemporaneous assembly gives rise to an executive power which remedies the inconvenience before anybody has thought of recurring to an authority superior to that of the persons immediately concerned." (Alexis de Toqueville, *Democracy In America*, 1835)

RENUNCIATION OR PERVERSION

During XIX century, the Western world abuses the blessings of the Reformation and experiences decadence into hedonism. As Protestantism doesn't offer psychological satisfaction to the unrepentant, majority of Protestants become atheists.

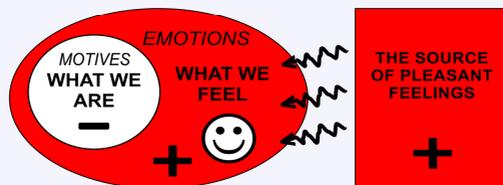


Many others are perverting their belief so it doesn't reprimand them anymore for the selfishness of their hearts. In order to distort the notion of love as a sentiment that satisfies human selfishness, they reject the Old Testament and God's law (Ten Commandments), claiming that the Law was abolished at the Cross. The principle "Sola Scriptura" they are replacing with the principle "Sola feelings".

Instead of overloading with guilt, a contemporary apostate Protestantism, and even a Charismatic movement in Catholicism evoke selfish sentiment as a motive of religious zeal. Such believers are afraid of God's law, which proves that they are still under the condemnation of the law, because their sins are not truly repented. Since they are not really at peace with God, they cannot be satisfied with the simple faith in God and His promises, so they are constantly burdened with proof that they are saved, looking for it in their feelings, miracles and spiritual gifts. Instead of internal reform of driving motives, they are promising the reform of feelings, which inebriates people and suffocates their need for internal reform.

Fundamental Delusion of Hedonism and Mysticism:

"Sensations can satisfy me!"



Truth:

No matter how feelings are exalted, strong or prolonged, they can never satisfy the thirst of the soul, but can only suffocate consciousness of human inner spiritual dissatisfaction.

Contemporary methods of inebriating conscience and reason with modern popular music, drugs, and carnal pleasures, exceed the effects of intoxication with former "plenary indulgences" (Catholic pardons), rituals, and idolatry. While the Catholic Church used inquisition and war to fight against the truth which rebukes their sin, the contemporary world fights against this reprimand with the label of "hate speech" and "political incorrectness".

An attempt to retain the achievements of the Reformation, no longere with enlightenment and spiritual rebirth, but with strong government involvement and its repressive solutions, drags the present-day society back into the civilization level of the Middle Ages.

RETURN TO MIDDLE AGES



The Middle Age fear of an all-seeing eye of God, which threatens the disobedient with everlasting torture in hell, is replaced today with fear of an all-seeing eye of government, which records everything with its cameras and threatens the disobedient with criminal prosecution.

GOD'S RESPONSE TO TEMPTATION

The Christian church, as a "pillar and fortress of truth", instead of reprimanding the lawlessness of the world with the truth about the infinite and unchanged God's law, became a "Babylon the Great" which inebriates people with poisonous wine.

The response to the lawlessness of the world and the delusions of apostate Christianity we find in the three angels' message in Revelation of John:

"Then I saw another angel flying overhead with the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the time for him to judge has arrived. Worship the one who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

Then another angel, a second one, followed him, saying, "Fallen! Babylon the Great has fallen! She has made all nations drink the wine, the wrath earned for her sexual sins."

Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying in a loud voice, "Whoever worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or his hand will drink the wine of God's wrath, which has been poured undiluted into the cup of his anger. He will be tortured with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the lamb. The smoke from their torture goes up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image or for anyone who receives the mark of its name."

Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to their faithfulness in Jesus." (Revelation 14:6-12)



Project: Video series of 30-40 short video broadcasts for
500th Anniversary of Reformation in 2017:

"Rise and Fall of Protestantism – Rise and Fall of Western Civilization"

mishabogdanovic@gmail.com