

Commentary on the Reasons of German Religious Reform

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Abstract: From the 15th to the 16th centuries, Germany's economic achievements sprang up in Europe, while the political contrast between the Holy Roman Empire and the European countries was of great concern. With the decline of imperial power, the status of the Holy See began to shake. The Hussian movement touched the authority of the church and made preparations for religious reform. In the handicraft city guilds, the emergence of industrial systems and capitalism opened the way for religious reform. Coupled with the series of humanistic pushes, the final sale of redemption bills directly triggered religious reforms.

1. Introduction

The religious reform movement which appeared in Europe in the early 16th century lasted for nearly 150 years and had a great impact. It is not only a simple religious event, but also a large-scale social and political movement, which is the result of historical development in the past. It is initiated by the new citizen class, with peasants and urban civilians as the main force. It shocked the Roman church and prompted the Great Split of the Christian Church, thus forming the Christian Protestant sects [1]. Tracking history, the cause of this mental movement is extremely complicated, why it originated from Germany, the author believes that it is necessary to sort out the origin of this religious reform from the German social level.

2. The Background of Religious Reform in Germany and Italy

First of all, the political and economic development of Germany in this period has become increasingly dual. On the one hand, Germany's economic achievements are among the best in Europe, especially in the mining industry. Silver production ranked first in the world, three and a half times the total output of other parts of Europe at that time. Between 1460 and 1530, the annual output of German silver mines increased five times. In mining, metallurgy, textile and other sectors, decentralized or even a few centralized capitalist handicraft workshops are increasing [2]. In addition, German commerce, especially intermediary trade, is quite prosperous. Before the opening of new shipping routes in the 15th century, there were two major international trade zones in Europe: the Mediterranean Trade Zone and the Baltic Trade Zone. Germany was situated between these two trade zones and became a necessary place for international trade [3]. After the opening of the new route, the northern part of Germany still has many commercial and trade cities facing the Baltic Sea and the North Sea. At the time, Frankfurt am Main was a famous transit trade city in Europe. The city specializes in guards and escorted foreign caravans. Nuremberg, a city in southern Germany, trades almost with Western and Central European countries. Augsburg mainly deals in Italian silk fabrics, spices and commodities from India and the East, and is one of the distribution centers for East-West commodity trade. In Spain, Portugal and other countries, there are German stores. At the beginning of the 16th century, some big bankers in Germany, such as the Fugel family, were not only creditors of the German emperor and princes, but also managed the Tirol silver mine and Hungarian copper mine, which not only controlled the economy of Central Europe, but also controlled the politics of Germany.

The favorable geographical conditions of Germany not only promoted the development of German commerce, but also promoted the prosperity of the city. Deutsche's cities grew up in the

garrisons of secular and religious rulers, and bishops often built churches, fortified buildings and houses for clergymen on hilltops. Due to the frequent religious worship, holiday celebrations, religious meetings and religious trials, as well as numerous collections and treasures, these churches and castles have attracted past business travels, so they developed into trade centers and eventually became cities. The German word *Messe* expresses both "mass" and "market", reflecting the early connection between trade and church rituals [4].

Secondly, the great contrast between the German Holy Roman Empire and the political aspects of European countries is worthy of attention. In other European countries, such as the United Kingdom and France, the monarchy of the country in the 15th-16th century has been consolidated, and its national cohesion and independence have reached a considerable level. The kings know how to use and intelligence the money lenders, and the fiscal rights are balanced by political rights, enough to resist the Pope's violation of his authority and prevent the Roman Catholic Church from collecting taxes on its own nationals. The bishops and churches are becoming more and more nationalized and become the pillars of the kingship. The German imperial power is in a state of rivers and rivers. Despite their ambitions, the princes lacked financial resources and access to income. The emperor was deprived of the property of the Empire and relied entirely on the financial support of the princes and princes. Emperors suffered from poverty and were always in debt to some of the inhabitants. Charlie himself was elected in 1519, and the election was an auction of the title of emperor. The competition between King Charles of Spain (later Charles V) and King Francis of France depends entirely on the amount of bribes they can offer to the candidates. As election time approached, these princes raised their prices day by day, and they insisted on securing payment from the Falgar family, Germany's most reliable banker. In this way, the election ultimately depends on these German money lenders. Secular politics is not the only area in which the Fogel family exerts its influence. The banking family also sponsors German priests to buy church officials. All this illustrates the degree of freedom and rights that the financial industry has in Germany [4]. At that time, as a famous banker, the Fogel family had a huge capital of 4.7 million Gulbert in 1564 [5].

Third, in Germany, the various political structures of the empire are intertwined with the Holy See. A large group of secular princes and church princes share the pope's tax revenues and the proceeds of the sale of blasphemy. In his own country, the emperor not only did not become a representative of national cohesion, but also reduced himself to a prince in the process of collusion and conflict with the pope, allowing the Roman Catholic Church to extort and collect taxes from its subjects [3]. The last emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Maximilian I (1493-1519) of the Habsburg dynasty tried to revitalize the authority of the empire. In 1477, he passed the marriage with the royal family of Burgundy. It has acquired the rich heritage of Burgundy. At the beginning of the 16th century, his son Philip married King Ferdinand of Spain and Juana, daughter of Queen Isabella of Spain, and gained the right of succession to the Spanish throne, which expanded the power of the Habsburg Dynasty, but his expansion was hindered both in the East and in the west. After the death of Maximilian I, his grandson, Karl V (1500-1558), became the heir of the Habsburg Dynasty and the King of Spain. He tried to rebuild the Germanic Empire in the Middle Ages. In the West, he was at odds with France, and in the East, he wanted to prevent the invasion of Turkey. He hoped to unite Germany through the common belief of the old Christian religion, and to carry out the necessary military confrontation against his Protestant princes. This brings religion and politics together. Charles V, as the last German emperor crowned by the Pope, was still emotionally inclined to the old religion, while Protestantism was in the ascendant in Germany [6].

3. The Relationship Between the Fate of the Roman Empire and the Fate of the Pope's Rule

The fate of the Holy Roman Empire is closely related to the fate of the Pope's rule itself. With the decline of imperial power, the status of the Holy See began to shake. When one of them tries to seize the rights of the other, it eventually destroys itself. In Germany, the struggle between the emperor and the pope broke this feudal empire into a large number of local governments [4].

The Catholic Church in the early Middle Ages was itself independent, unaffected by secular rulers, and even enjoyed many freedoms and immunities. It has huge wealth throughout Europe, and of course its expenditure is huge. The secular property accumulated by the Catholic Church in various ways makes it vulnerable to criticism of internal corruption and criticism from truly devout Christians.

During the reign of Frederick II (1194-1250), the conflict between the Church and the Holy Roman Empire over the empowerment reached its climax, indicating the weakening of Catholic Church rights. In 1254, during the religious conference in Lyon, France, Pope Innocent IV officially announced the abolition of Frederick II. In order to get rid of the Hohenstaufen family and to ask for the help of powerful France, the Pope handed Sicily over to Charlie, the brother of King Louis IX of France. Since then, Western kings have become the most dangerous opponents of the pope. Both Britain and France are trying to impose taxes on the property of the Catholic Church. In the year of Catholic Amnesty in 1300, Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) reiterated his position in the Christian world in the face of pilgrims, but the regimes of Western countries have been consolidated. In France, for example, the Pope removed Philip's teachings and stopped the French people's right to threaten, but it caused Philip's counterattack, and the Pope became his prisoner. As the Holy See moved from Rome to Avignon, the French monarch made the French elected as the Pope, and the Pope was actually controlled by the King. And the Pope's court, whether in Rome or in the life of Avignon, the Pope seized all opportunities to increase income. Johannes XXII. (1245/1249-1334) invented the "voucher of atonement". Benedikt XII (1285-1342) formulated the "price list of atonement", which gave birth to reformists within the church, especially Bohemian clergymen in the Holy Roman Empire, and Huss, president of the University of Prague [7]. Influenced by Wickliffe's theory, only the Bible is the standard of faith, and salvation depends only on faith. To be a Christian is to be honest with Christ, not to be baptized. Huss lashed out at the pope's corruption and the priest's depraved life, and called on the people to reform the church. This reform movement caused by belief eventually triggered religious debate and religious conflict. Because Hus denied that the unforgivable sin had the right to govern the country and the church, provoked the pope and the priest, and under the direct intervention and coercion of the pope, the original promised to help Huss, the emperor Sigismund (1368-1437) disappoints Huss' trust in him, and eventually defaults to all charges against Huss, and Huss is executed [4].

The "heretical" elements were eventually suppressed, but their activities had far-reaching effects. Shortly after Huss' death, the Hussite movement in Germany spread to the vast regions of Eastern Europe and Central Europe for nearly 20 years. The Huss movement eventually prompted the church to make concessions, really affected the unity and universal authority of the church, and prepared for religious reform.

4. The Emergence of Industrial System and Capitalism also Paved the Way for Religious Reform

To some extent, the emergence of industrial system and capitalism in handicraft guild cities also opened the way for religious reform. In the process of human civilization, the main factors determining human life were not always determined by economy at first. At least in the society before the end of the Middle Ages, material production and profit were not decisive factors. Moreover, in all periods when religion still has influence on people, economic forces cannot decide the life of the general population decisively. Religion first binds people to various rituals, and irrational fears and sacred ideas prevent people. Unrestricted pursuit of material goals. It is in the German handicraft guild city that the gradual weakening of human rights is demonstrated in religion [4]. The economy is exerting an ever-increasing influence on all aspects of human life, and people are beginning to move towards secular life.

On the other hand, in the Middle Ages, it was the Catholic Church that stimulated economic activity. In Germany, the church first promoted and encouraged the trade of church settlements. According to the doctrine, commerce is the most condemned occupation of all human beings, but

because business is indispensable to civilization, and because it strengthens the status of the bishops as city lords, the church cannot evade it but encourages it. Take the credit industry as an example, from the Christian point of view, it is even more disgusting than business. However, economic development and the financial needs of princes and princes make it increasingly necessary to lend money. The churches and the popes themselves encouraged the credit industry among the Christian people when they urged tax collectors and redemption coupon collectors to lend and collect interest [4].

The sale of redemption bills was a special case before the Christian Reform Movement, which directly led to religious reforms in the 16th century. The redemption voucher originally belonged to the confession system of the medieval church. After a Christian commits a crime, he will repent of the priest. The priest will declare God's forgiveness, and generally also ask for certain: "Compensation"---the act of atonement, which is the "worldly punishment" added by the church. Medieval theology clearly distinguishes between the concepts of "sin" and "punishment". Although the priest can declare the forgiveness of sin, only God can forgive the crime. Since punishment is added to the church by the church, it can of course be removed from the church. The redemption vouchers are just a voucher that represents the exemption or mitigation of "worldly punishment" from the church [8]. In Germany, the Pope filled the treasury to cope with the huge expenses of luxury life, and repeatedly imposed the redemption tax. By the beginning of the 16th century, the redemption vouchers were purely brought to the pope and the church was rich in money. The Pope levied tribute taxes from Germany, even more than the Emperor [1]; The Holy See urges the lay believers to believe that they can be protected from punishment by purchasing a voucher of atonement, even if they do not repent sincerely. In accordance with the terms of exchange between Pope Leo X 1475-1521 and Albrecht von Brandenburg 1490-1545, Albrecht served as Archbishop of Magdeburg and Mainz, and the Grand Bank of Augsburg in the Middle Ages prepaid 29,000 guilders to Rome. Albrecht promised to sell papal vouchers and sell purses within his church. It includes Brandenburg, Magdeburg, Halberstadt and Mainz. The Falgars, the Pope and the Archbishop agreed that half of the money sold in atonement vouchers was used to repay the debt owed to the Family Bank of Falgar, and the other half went directly to the Pope of Rome [4]. In order to obtain the emperor's consent to the deal, they also had to pay the emperor 3000 guilders. Germany became not only the "dairy cow" of the Pope, but also the last support of the Catholic Church as the spiritual authority of Europe. All kinds of contradictions before the religious reform eventually concentrated in Germany [3].

5. The German Reform of Religion stems from the Series Promotion of Humanism

The Reformation movement took place in Germany and benefited from the series of humanistic push. At the end of the 15th century, with the development of productivity and the advancement of science and technology, Europe entered a new era. Different from the fact that the Middle Ages only pay attention to religion, the new era people become more important, and at the same time oppose the religion controlled by Rome, which has a new understanding of the relationship between people and society. This is the symbol of European humanism. Since everything in the Middle Ages is centered on religion, churches and secular rulers fool people in various ways in order to preserve religious interests. Among them, the redemption vouchers for the church and the pope to increase wealth are typical examples. The purpose of humanism is against God. Authority [6]. Humanists exposed corruption in churches in various ways. Erasmus, a famous German humanist born in the Netherlands, spent the main stages of his life and work in Germany. He refused to be honored in official career and fully enjoyed his freedom of thought and action. He once wrote: People build cities, and princes tear them down. Citizens work hard to create wealth, but are plundered by noble robbers. People's representatives have made good laws, only the royal family can violate them, the people pray for peace, but their rulers are looking for every opportunity to wage war [9]. His masterpiece Ode to the Fools satirizes the hypocrisy of the church, the debauchery of the clergy and the mediocrity of the secular aristocracy with sharp strokes. He pointed out that religion could not exist if human beings were not ignorant and people were less credulous. He believes that the core of

religious regeneration lies in education. The goal of education is not to abandon doctrines and churches, but to enhance the moral cultivation of believers in accordance with the spirit of early Christianity [10]. Another humanist scholar is Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522). In an article on "Anonymous Letters" based on Roy Hillin's thought, unsigned scholars use ironic and sarcasm. The church and the religious system have attacked, indicating that the religious reform is about to come to a close, because it is the only public opinion attack on the state power in the history of Germany [3]. Of course, most humanities at the time wanted the church to reform and rectify, not completely denying the pope and the church. However, their criticism and exposure to the various defects of the Holy See have shaken the authority of the Holy See and prepared for the religious reform of Luther [11].

The use of movable-type printing technology improves the speed of knowledge dissemination. Gutenberg first printed the Latin Bible and made it popular, thus breaking the Church's monopoly on the Bible and shaking the authority of the Pope.

6. Conclusion

In the religious reforms in Germany, among many factors, economic factors are its roots, politics is its driving force, and the demise of church morality is undoubtedly the trigger for the fire of this reform.

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