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The Religious vs / Cooperates with the Secular Zwingli: A Church & State Equilibrium through Sola Scriptura ("Only Scripture")*

Şevket YAVUZ**

No civil authority needs fear that Christ's teaching will be an obstacle to it. On the contrary, the magistrate will soon see that his duties are never better, more peacefully, and more completely carried out than when the Word of God is being strongly and clearly preached.¹

No doctrine is more favorable to the exercise of secular authority, or more adequate as a basis for it, than the doctrine of Christ.²

Abstract

Viewing that church and state are not two distinct and apart entities; rather one and under the sovereign commandment of God, Zwingli claims that the religious authority and the secular authority are expected to serve for the wellbeing of the whole community and its life. Hence, both are regarded as the servants of God, serving and carrying out the will of the divine. On the other hand, the roles and functions of minister (religious authority) and of magistrate (secular authority) are different and act in various levels. The former administers and actualizes the "word" of God through its actions and discourses; whereas the latter implements the will of God through the "sword", an instrument of God. Hence, church and state cooperate with one another; work together; yet not in the same person. In the last analysis, the "sword" is a real and proper measure and means in preserving the good and proclaiming the Scriptura. Thence, the Zwinglian reformation project offers "a church and state equilibrium through Sola Scriptura preserved and protected by the sword.

Key Words: Zwingli, Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Sword, Secular Authority, Religious Authority, Church-State Equilibrium, Ministry, Magistrate.

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¹ Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke (Corpus reformatorum, vols. 88 ff.) (in publication process) (Leipzig: Heinsius, from 1905), II 304 /8-9, 18-22. Hereafter cited as: *Sämtliche Werke*

² Sämtliche Werke, II 504/12-13.

Zwingli'de Dini Olanın Seküler Olan ile Çatışması / Kavuşması: Sola Scriptura /"Yalnızca Kutsal Kitap" Kanalıyla Din ile Devletin Denge Arayışı Projesi

Özet

Kilise ile devletin birbirinden ayrı ve kopuk iki unsur olarak görülmesi yanlıştı; aksine her ikisi de tek bir gerçeğe işaret ederler ve Tanrı'nın bağımsız emrinin koruması altındadır. Bundan dolayı da her ikisi de Tanrı'nın hizmetkârları olarak kabul edilirler ve ilahî iradenin icracılarıdır. Öte yandan, dinî ve seküler otoritenin rolleri ve fonksiyonları farklıdır ve farklı seviyelerde faaliyet gösterirler. Önceki otorite (dinî), Tanrı'nın "söz"ünü söylem ve eylemlerle gerçekleştirir ve onunla yönetir; sonraki otorite (seküler) de Tanrı'nın iradesini "kılıç" ile O'nun iradesinin vasıtası olarak gerçekleştirmeye çalışır. Bu yüzden, kilise ve devlet birbirleriyle ortaklaşa çalışırlar; birlikte hareket ederler; bununla birlikte bu iki güç tek bir kişide toplanmaz. Son tahlilde "kılıç"; iyiliği ve iyiyi koruma ölçü ve vasıtasıdır; aynı zamanda Kutsal Kitap'ın tebliğcisidir. Bunlara bağlı olarak, Zwingli'nin reform projesinin özeti ve tezi şudur: "Kilise ve devletin dengesi ve insicamı, 'kılıç' ile korunsun ve desteklenen Yalnızca Kutsal Kitap iledir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Zwingli, Yalnızca Kutsal Kitap, Yalnızca İnanç, Yalnızca Rahmet, Seküler Otorite, Dini Otorite, Kilise-Devlet Dengesi, Dinî Erk, Dünyevî Erk.

I. Prologue & Methodic Précise

Of the most salient figures of the Reformation process, Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) was the leader of the Swiss Reformation. Influenced especially by humanists of the era, most notably, Erasmus, he viewed that the Bible (Sola Scriptura), not (the) church (read: Roman Catholic), is the source of doctrine. His arduous will for learning and passion for individual freedom become highly influential in his later life and notions. Confronted with many unwanted situations, Zwingli opposes sale of mercenaries.

Doctrinally, adopting the notions of Luther, Zwingli accepts the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Rejecting the authority of the Church in interpreting the Bible, he begins to "reform" / "reject" some traditional praxes, such as the dispensing of indulgences, clerical celibacy, monasticism, installation of images in churches, complex liturgy, the sacrament of Communion, and the like.³

Not to mention, he, unlike Luther, rejected the corporeal existence of Jesus at the Eucharist /Lord's Supper. Thus, some of his followers later broke away and founded Anabaptism.⁴

After this brief prolegomena, the historical conjuncture of the 16th century should be evaluated. In the West, this century represents the flaring up of the

³ "Huldreich Zwingli", The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed..(The Colombia University Press, 2013).

⁴ "Huldreich Zwingli", The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed..(The Colombia University Press, 2013)

Reformation, which found its earlier nuclei in the movements of the Lollards⁵, founded by John Wycliffe (d. 1384) in England, and of the Hussites⁶, wrought by John Huss (d. 1415) in Bohemia, but these movements remained largely local. In general, the Reformation movement aimed to purge the medieval abuses and misrepresentations of the Roman Catholic Church and to rectify the doctrines and practices of the Christian teaching based only authority of the Bible (*Sola Scriptura*) and justification by grace through faith (*Sola gratia* -*Sola Fide*).

It would seem that the Reformation process was a kind of re-textualization process through the biblical consciousness of the great reformers at the expense of the papal and monarchic power structure of the Middle Ages. Though the causal factors of this historical change were highly complicated and multi-faceted; yet some of them can be the historical impact of the Great Schism of the papacy, the future effect of the Conciliarism⁷, the worldly ambitions of ecclesiastical authorities, the

⁵ The Lollards, founded by John Wycliffe (c. 1330-1384; taught at Oxford University and translated Vulgate into English) were a Medieval Protestant group in England opposing Roman Catholicism. They opposed to transubstantiation (the Eucharistic doctrine viewing that the substance of the Eucharistic elements is *converted into the body and blood of Christ at consecration*, yet the appearances of bread and wine remain as they were); condemned pilgrimages, auricular confession, and veneration of images. They denied purgatory and priestly celibacy. Encroaching lay preachers and use of the Bible in English, they encouraged pacifism in life. Some of them were martyred, others disavowed when put on trial. See on this: Jill C. Havens, Derrick G. Pitard, Fiona Somerset, *Lollards and Their Influence in Late Medieval England* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2003); Shannon McSheffrey, *Gender and Heresy: Women and Men in Lollard Communities, 1420-1530* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995); Rita Copeland, *Pedagogy, Intellectuals, and Dissent in the Later Middle Ages: Lollardy and Ideas of Learning* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁶ The Hussites was a Christian movement founded by the reformer John Huss /Jan Hus (circa 1369-1415). Huss, influenced by John Wycliffe, became one of the leaders of the Protestant Reformation. Socially and religiously propelled, the movement also created the Czech national self-awareness. Their present-day followers are the churches named by themselves the Moravian or Unity of the Brethren churches, and the re-founded Czechoslovak Hussite Church. In its long and embattled history, Hussites were attacked harshly by the Pope Martin V, who, while still Cardinal Otto of Colonna. In Bohemia Hussism organized itself between the years 1415-1419. Then, two parties of Hussism emerged: a) The adherents of Huss adhered to his thoughts. Hence, they preserved the whole hierarchical and liturgical order of the Church; b) the "radical" party following more boldly the doctrines of John Wycliffe. Thus, they shared his ambitious hatred of the monastic clergy and attempted the church return to the supposed situation during the Apostolic Time, negating all existing hierarchies and ecclesiastical possessions. Especially the second group of the Hussites valorized primarily the *sufficientia legis Christi* ("only the divine law: the Bible) as the only rule and canon for humanity with regard to ecclesiastical matters, as well as political and civil matters. Hence, the Hussites opposed, as early as the year 1416, everything, for them, having no basis in the Bible, such as the sacraments of Confirmation, the Anointing of the Sick, the veneration of saints, images, and signs, fasts, superfluous holidays, the oath, intercession for the dead, auricular confession, and indulgences. They propagated to chose their own priests. admitted laymen and women to the preacher's office. On this see: Peter Brock, *The Political and Social Doctrines of the Unity of Czech Brethren in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries*, edited by Cornelis H. Van Schooneveld (The Hague: Mouton; 1957); Richard C. Hoffmann, *Land, Liberties, and Lordship in a Late Medieval Countryside: Agrarian Structures and Change in the Duchy of Wroclaw* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); Robert Herndon Fife, *The Revolt of Martin Luther* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957); Alexander Clarence Flick, *The Decline of the Medieval Church. Volume: 2*. (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1930).

⁷ The Conciliar movement or "Conciliarism" was a reform movement in the 14th and 15th century Roman Catholic Church. The movement views that final authority and justification in religio-spiritual matters resided with the Roman Church as corporation of Christians, expressed in general church council, not with

abuses and immoralities of the papacy and clergy such as simony, nepotism, and indulgences, the increased disparity between Christians' expectations and the Church's ability to meet them can be counted as some of religio-political causes of the Reformation.

Economically, the growth of commercial transactions and the shift from a manorial economy to a moneyed economy give to birth a stronger middle class in urban societies. As a result of these changes, the church encountered financial difficulty, because the Church had become involved in the manorial economy, possessed massive lands, and had trouble meeting its expenses.

Politically, the continent was in state of turmoil. One of the most important episodes of the late Middle Ages was the crisis within the Holy Roman Empire (962-1806) through the disputation with the papacy in the Investiture Controversy, the growth of independent territorial princedoms and sovereign imperial cities, and the gradual development of the nation-states in western Europe. The monarchies in France, England, and, later, Spain gained dynastic power and unity. This process enabled them to control the church within their countries and resulted in the rise of national churches.

The flowering of the cultural Renaissance in the fifteenth century was a quintessential momentum for the Reformation, because it enhanced the level of education, set the stage for returning to the ancient classics of the Greco-Roman world, and contributed to the rise educational systems. The most salient outcome of this cultural "rebirth" was Humanism and rhetoric, offering an alternative discourse to Scholasticism. This new discourse emphasized the biblical languages and paid close attention to the literary texts. This phase ended in the notion of *Sola Scriptura* in terms of soteriology and axiology. By virtue of these rapid changes, the Renaissance provided the biblical exegesis that laid down the framework for the biblical reinterpretations of Martin Luther (1483-1546). What is more, Christian humanists like Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) were critical of ecclesiastical abuses and the immorality of the Roman Church. Erasmus gave a powerful momentum to the study of both the Bible and the church fathers.

The invention of printing press in the 1450's by Johann Gutenberg (d. 1468) reinforced Reformation ideas by spreading them widely. Additionally, the impacts of mysticism, nominalism, and geographic discoveries had also a great

the pope. The movement emerged as a result of the Avignon papacy – the popes expelled from Rome and came to Avignon, France; yet subject to pressures from the kings of France – and the ensuing schism that inspired the summoning of the Council of Pisa (1409), the Council of Constance (1414-1418) and the Council of Basel (1431-1449). The eventual victor in the schism was the reinstitution of the Papacy, confirmed by the condemnation of conciliarism at the Fifth Lateran Council, 1512-17. The final gesture however, the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, was not promulgated until the First Vatican Council of 1870.

impact on the rise of the Reformation process in Europe. In such a historical context, Zwingli came to the fore and proclaimed his own reformation agenda.

Zwingli was the most clear-headed and rationalizing among the Reformers. He did not pass through the discipline of monasticism and mysticism, like Luther, but through the liberal culture of Erasmus. He had no mystic vein, but sound, sober, practical common sense. He always preferred the plainest sense of the Bible. He rejected the Catholic views on original sin, infant damnation and the corporeal presence in the eucharist, and held advanced opinions which shocked Luther and even Calvin. But he nevertheless reverently bowed before the divine authority of the inspired Word of God, and had no idea of setting reason over it. His dispute with Luther was simply a question of interpretation, and he had strong arguments for his exegesis, as even the best Lutheran commentators must confess.⁸

"Zwinglian" reform themes covers such great subject as (a) the Christological reconstruction (Jesus alone is the only prototype for righteousness and uprightness); (b) the re-textualization of Church (It is born of the Word of God and whose head is Christ alone; whose laws are binding provided that they are in accord with the Scripture; marriage is lawful to all.); (c) the re-framing through Biblical founts of the relation of church and state (Ministry and magistrate are not contradictory, but complementary of each other, facilitating each other's roles and *telos*); (d) the iconoclastic realignment of the Sacraments (the Mass / Lord's Supper which is a tremendous affront to the sacrifice and death of Christ and no basis in the Holy Scripture in Jesus' corporeal presence in the bread and wine at the Mass. And there is no biblical foundation for the intercession of the dead, for purgatory, or for images, icons, or pictures.

According to Zwingli, through Biblical restoration, ministry and magistrate can work together for the betterment of humankind. Divine justice is the source of all goodness in this world and gives foundation for human justice administrated by magistrate. In fact, according to Zwingli, political and martial authority with its magisterial power is in the fold of divine justice-but-acting in human justice. Thus, church and state are to be in an equilibrium situation, interpenetrating one with another. In Zwingli's Reformation project, church and state along with society as one; hence, the government or council involved in the ordering of the life of the church. This notion affected the church-state relation in parts of Switzerland and other nearby countries. Hence, his project is little different from the other Reformed tradition such as Calvin, who proposed an independence from state in the

⁸ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*. Vol. 1 (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1882), 32-3. See also: 620-8; 669-82; 721-3.

organization of the church, and in particular in the matter of discipline.⁹ At this juncture, the following questionnaire can be posed: Though Zwingli tries to situate divine justice at the basis of human justice; to what extent would his project could be applicable in terms of interdependence to one another? How such a Christo-centric understanding of law and politics would fit in such an era when the process of the Reformation was at its climax? Is it possible theologically and practically to reconstruct an equilibrated state and church relations?

II. The Zwinglian Protestant Project: The Reconstruction of State & Church Equilibrium through *Sola Scriptura*

A. Prolegomena to His Reconstruction of Ministry and Magistrate Equilibrium

On the heyday of the Reformation in Europe, in Zurich, Switzerland, the movement was headed by Ulrich (Huldreich). Zwingli. During his time, the Swiss Confederation was not a centralized state, but many different states / cantons congruent on a few issues. These states used to seek independence from the Holy Roman Empire.

In 1519, Zwingli began his duties as the people's priest at the Grand Minster in Zurich, where he preached very strong sermons based on the Bible, criticized ecclesiastical abuses, denounced the mercenary trade, and refused his own papal subsidy. He proposed independence from episcopal control, and a reform of the city-state in which both priests and magistrates would conform to the order of God.

His masterpiece work *Sixty-seven Articles* (1523) for disputation became a basic doctrinal document for the Swiss reformed church. Furthermore, he married and thus broke his vow of celibacy. In 1524, the Neo-Iconoclasts removed religious statuary from the church, and in 1525 the Catholic mass was replaced with a Zwinglian communion using both bread and wine only as symbols of Christ's body and blood.

Zwingli was active in spreading the reform ideas to other Swiss cities such as Basel, Saint Gall, and Bern. He was involved in controversy not only with Catholic rivalries, but also with the Lutheran reformers, including Luther; because he rejected Jesus' real presence in any form in the Eucharist. Though many conciliatory initiatives had been taken before, the effort to reconcile the notions of

⁹ W. Peter Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 5. Hereafter cited as Stephens, *Zwingli*.

Zwingli and Luther at the Colloquy of Marburg (1529) failed. Zwingli also opposed his offshoot, i.e., the Anabaptists, in Zurich who rejected infant baptism.¹⁰

On the other hand, when the Roman Catholic cantons took steps towards an alliance with Charles V. (1500-1588; the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire—king of Germany and Italy—between 1519 and 1556). Zwingli recommended that the Protestant cantons begin to take military initiatives to protect their territories. Zwingli urged for war, but his precautions were not shared by all of the other Protestant cantons. Thus, the Protestant cantons took economic measures towards the Roman Catholic cantons. In October of 1531, the five Roman Catholic cantons formed a coalition for a surprise attack on Zurich. The Protestants were nearly unable to defend themselves because there were no warnings of war. When their army was able to gather together, Zwingli marched out with the first soldiers and was killed in the battle of Kappel (1531).

Following this brief information about his life and activities, his general thought spectrums, intellectual foundations, and reformation projects can be evaluated.¹¹

Zwingli was greatly influenced by the theocentric outlook of Augustine (d. 430), and by his assiduous Neoplatonism.¹² He studied scholastic philosophy, music as well as humanistic approaches of the era he live. He was especially influenced by Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494)¹³ and Erasmus, one of the great humanists of the era. It can be adduced that he combined the Neoplatonic and the New Testament understanding of God through the influence of the former, i.e., Pico; because "(t)he Neoplatonic theosophy of God's transcendence and omnipresence filtered down from Dionysian texts to Pico and his commentaries."¹⁴ Succinctly, Pico had a great effect on Zwingli's notions of the church reform and on his humanist approach. In the same vein, he reached an evangelical understanding of Christianity through his study of the Bible and contacts with the Lutherans.

¹⁰ Stephens, *Zwingli*, 194-199.

¹¹ See more on this: J. Wayne Baker, Church, State, and Dissent: the Crisis of the Swiss Reformation, 1531-1536 in *Church History*, vol. 57, (1988).135-52.

¹² Stephens, *Zwingli*, 19-21.

¹³ Pico is a well-known Neo-Platonist thinker of the Italian Renaissance. His thought is an eclectic attempt to reconcile Judaism, Christianity, ancient Greek philosophy, and Christian orthodoxy in the search for a *philosophia perennia*. For him all things is divided into three categories: super-celestial, (God and the angels); the celestial, (the Sun, Moon, planets, and stars); and the terrestrial, (material things below the Moon). Mediating all these categories is humankind, "the Divine Masterpiece." Mankind has a special dignity in its freedom and its power to weave its own destiny.

¹⁴ Vasiliki Limberis, "Symbol and Sanctification: An Orthodox Critique of Zwingli," *Greek- Orthodox Theological Review*, xxi, 1981, 102-103.

¹⁴ Ulrich Zwingli, "On True and False Religion," *Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, ed. G.W. Heller, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: The Heidelberg Press, 1929), 3. Hereafter cited as: Zwingli, *True and False Religion*.

He wrote many treatises and books; especially his *Concerning Freedom and Choice of Good and Sixty-seven Articles* became widely renowned. One of his most salient and weighty treatises is *On True and False Religion*, which was written “so hurried(ly),” he says, “sweating night and night for three and a half months”¹⁵ in 1525. This comprehensive and overarching study proves his general thought frame in the Protestant tradition, his ethical and theological notions. This book sheds a very instructive light on such subjects as “the Christian Religion,” “the Gospel,” “Repentance,” “Baptism,” “Eucharist,” “Magisterial Office,” and “Statues and Images”. In general, his Reformist theses can be outlined as follows:

1. The church is born of the Word of God and has Christ alone as its head;
2. The laws of the church are binding only insofar as they agree with the Scripture;
3. Christ alone is man's righteousness and criterion of uprightness;
4. The Holy Scripture does not teach Christ's corporeal presence in the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper or the Mass;
5. The mass is a gross affront to the sacrifice and death of Christ;
6. There is no biblical foundation for the mediation or intercession of the dead, for purgatory, or for images and pictures;
7. Marriage is lawful to all.
8. Ministry and magistrate are not contradictory, but complementary of each other, facilitating each other's roles and *telos*.

With respect to ministry and magistrate, Zwingli's notions change from complete equilibrium to complete separateness-but-interpenetration. Hence:

The relation of church and state in Zwingli raises other questions...some see to a greater stress on the Old Testament in the later Zwingli, especially in his understanding of the prophet. Zwingli undoubtedly exercised a political role in the city, though he was never, as it was once put, minister and mayor, councilor and clerk, all in one person. He certainly saw the situation of church and society in Zurich as more like that of the Old Testament than that of the New, but he was still expounding the New Testament as well as the Old Testament in the second half of the 1520s.¹⁶

Succinctly, Zwingli had a very positive attitude towards political authority and claimed that “the gospel of Christ is not opposed to government”; for no church can minister without magistrate and no cosmos and tranquility without the authority punishing persistent sinners. Harshly critical of the “usurpation by clerics” of political powers, he wrote that “the jurisdiction which the churchmen have arrogated to themselves belongs wholly to the secular magistracy”¹⁷. Not envisaging

¹⁵ Zwingli, *True and False Religion*, 3.

¹⁶ Stephens, *Zwingli*, 3-4.

¹⁷ Michael Mullett, *Zwingli and the Urban Reformation in History Review*. No 28 (1997), 18.

a theocracy, he somehow wishes a state functioning with religion; for "(t)here is no city happier than that where true religion is established".

B. From Incompatibility to Compatibility: State & Church in a Separate-But-Equilibrated Mode in the Zwinglian Reformation Project

1. The First Dialectic: Sin Necessitates Grace and Grace Heals Sin

Being the first generation of the Reformation, Zwingli had a great impact on the notions of church and state in the Reformation processes and shaped the way, by and large, leading to the equilibrium of religious and political powers. His important contribution became one of the most salient aspects in the formation of religious understanding and of political-corporeal cooperation. His stance regarding this can be cited as follows:

Firstly, it should be borne in mind that the time when Zwingli preached and wrote witnessed still a kind of Christendom in which minister (religious authority) and magistrate (civil administrative and legal authority) were to a great extent equally treated and expected to administer.

He was criticized due to the claim that his Protestant project aims at absorbing the church within the state. This claim was realized because the state of Zurich began increasingly to interfere with the affairs of the church. Being named and renowned as prophet in the Secret Council, Zwingli was the formal authority in interpreting Scriptures for magisterial authority.

He tries to construct his notions of church and state through theological parameters. Before detailing the subject, it is appropriate to give Zwingli's notion of the church:

The traditional marks of the church (as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic) are all related to Christ. They all feature in the early Zwingli, but in the first disputation the main concern is growth catholicity. Zwingli accepted two meanings of the word church in scripture: the communion of all those who believe in Christ and particular congregations or parishes. The church is both catholic or universal and local.¹⁸

For Zwingli, humanity is created to live together in harmony and a peaceful manner; but due to the perennial sin humanity is at odds with each other. Pertaining to his notion of péxhé originel:

¹⁸ W. Peter Stephens, *Zwingli: An Introduction to His Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1992), 112–23. Hereafter cited as Stephens, *An Introduction*.

He distinguishes between inborn sin (called *morbus* in Latin...), which comes from Adam, and actual sins, which are voluntary transgression of the laws of God. "Sin that is transgression is born of sin that is disease." Inborn sin, the old man, and the flesh, are synonymous terms. The primary motive of sinful man is *philautia*, self-love, which impels us to flee virtue and to pursue lusts, and to resist and to strive against the law of nature.¹⁹

This bleak situation was compensated through the coming of Jesus. Jesus Christ, Second Adam, was created by God in the aim that humanity may live together in peace and tranquility. Therefore, the result can be inferred from human condition: if peoples live in peace and in accord with each other, or form a good society, culture and civilization, then that means the Christ acts among them. This actuality of Jesus can be traced back to both pre and post- Incarnation in history. Briefly then Jesus is the fount of all human existence in the world and in history, be it individual, or collective. Thus, the possibility of existence here is dependent upon his commandments and orders, e.g. the precepts outlined in the Sermon on the Mount.

On the other hand, the real ethos and practices of human beings negate this kind of ideal. Thence, at the outset the ideal paradigm of Jesus is hard to get implemented. Being sinful, humanity is no longer able to fulfill this paradigm. This is because "(t)otal depravity and submission" of humankind make many ideal and *telos* impossible to achieve and unattainable in this life. To him, in life many things are related to or rise out sin. For instance, the problems of private property and the loan of money at interest are not approved by the Word of God. For him, private property is a consequence of sin; because it is the end of human's violation of the commandment to love one's neighbor as one loves oneself. What is more, to convert God's gifts into private property would be a sin in itself. Christ spoke truly when he spoke of the unrighteousness of riches (Luke 16:9). The Christian will possess as if he did not possess (cf. 1 Cor. 7:30). No one, Zwingli adds, is exempt from this sin, not even the beggar. "Apart from this, I cannot understand how a rich man can be a believer, because he will inevitably set his heart on earthly treasures instead of using them according to God's will."²⁰ As such how a sinful person can forgive his/her neighbor? How when struck on the left cheek, s/he can turn the other cheek, etc.? Under these circumstances, the

¹⁹ Clarence Nevin Heller (editor), *The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, vol. iii (Philadelphia: the Heidelberg Press, 1929), 16-17.

²⁰ *Sämtliche Werke*, II 516/12-15 II 518/11-13; Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 89-92.

ideals of Jesus, which are prerequisites for salvation, were very hard to implement.²¹

Nonetheless, these ideals were carried out by Jesus himself on behalf of us and in our place. That is grace that heals the wounds of humanity. Jesus bears our sins and reconciles us with God and brings humanity together. Society can only be liable only if Jesus act in it. Thus, through *sola gratia*, human can recognize God's Word. This is the only fount of goodness and beauty.²² Since Christ acts and does for ourselves, God sees humanity righteous and good. As a rule, commandments of God are means for the salvation of humanity. Hence, he views that: "I consider as Gospel everything that He reveals to man and everything that he requires of him"²³ and, for Zwingli, the will of God is in fact the wish to save humanity from errancies.

2. Divine Justice Contradicts to or Coalesce with Human Justice

Moreover, his notions of church and state are fathomed in the theory of "two kinds of justice": a) Divine justice; b) Human justice (von göttlicher und menschlicher Gerechtigkeit, 1523). The former is related to the inner human/ inward wo/man, or as he calls it "the law of nature." Zwingli accentuates on this "law of nature" by saying: "It seems to me that it is none other than the Spirit of God."²⁴ This law is perfectly summed up in the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12) and in Jesus' summary of the Laws (Matt. 22:37-39). The law of nature is thus "the very leadership of the Holy Spirit and his conduct of our lives" (Rom. 2:14).²⁵ This law is, for him, from our natural intelligence, for that we derive from Adam, and not from God the creator of all things. . . Only the believer recognizes and comprehends the law of nature. No one comes to God if God does not call him, and it follows from this that the law of nature must come exclusively from God himself.²⁶ The natural law was truly explained by Jesus through his "making the Law sweet" with his overarching love and his moral tenets such as: "Do not be angry; give to him who asks; do not covet what belongs to your neighbor; let your words imply a clear "yes" or "no"; love your enemies".²⁷ This law provides salvation and peace among humanity in accordance with God's will and plan. If the Law were carried out

²¹ Jaques Courvoisier, *Zwingli: A Reformed Theologian* (Richmond, VA.: John Knox Press, 1963), 80-1. Hereafter cited as Courvoisier, *Zwingli*.

²² Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 80.

²³ *Sämtliche Werke*, II 79/11-12, 15-17

²⁴ *Sämtliche Werke*, II 262/25-26

²⁵ Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 80-1.

²⁶ Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 80-1. *Sämtliche Werke*, II 325/16; 325/29; 326/3; 326/9-10.

²⁷ *Sämtliche Werke*, II 492/14.

perfectly by all, human society would be perfect. Due to the sinful nature of humanity, no one can be righteous without Christ himself. Thus, divine justice /the law of nature should be kept effectively. And again being sinful, humanity is not up to the ideal standards as prescribed by divine law. In fact, if divine justice is in effect, then human justice may be not unnecessary. Thence, there must be human justice alongside this Law.

This second justice is to deal with the outward praxes of human being; thus it is named by Zwingli "human justice". Its biblical codes can be as follows: Thou shall not kill; thou shall not commit adultery; thou shall not steal; give to every man his due, etc. This justice, compared to Divine Justice, is lower than the former; for it cannot lead humans to salvation and open for them the Kingdom of God.

One reason for this low status is that a person can be innocent with respect to the criteria of human justice, but may be guilty by the standards of divine justice. For instance a person who does not commit adultery, yet envy his friend's wealth and luxury cannot be blamed on the level of human justice, yet it cannot be so according to the standards of divine justice. Briefly, human justice is weak, poor and ephemeral; but on the whole this human justice cannot be overridden so long as humans do not act in accord with divine justice. Though human justice to some degree is worthy; for it is formed by God and thence must be observed by all, be they Christian, or not.

Although life in human society does not measure up to the requirements of divine justice, God nonetheless wants man to live at peace with his neighbor.

This is why we are asked to pray for the civil authorities: "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life" (1 Tim. 2:2). The duty of government is to protect the weak by bridling the wild appetites of "stubborn rams." Because they are entitled to punish the wicked in proportion to their misdeeds, the civil authorities hold the power of the sword.²⁸

This "power of the sword" makes it possible in human society to live peacefully; for with punishment the sword wishes to remind the guilty as well as everyone else of what is right or wrong.²⁹ Nonetheless, both modes of justice are in fact dependent upon Jesus via whose acts and praxes life go on and history unfold itself.

3. Minister Contradicts to or Dialectically Functions with Magistrate

Depending on the current situation in the Roman Catholic Church and its representatives throughout Europe, Zwingli was critical of the church's political and

²⁸ Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 84.

²⁹ *Sämtliche Werke*, II 486-487.

economic pursuits. Hence, he attacked the exercise of temporal political power by the ministers of the church and the misuse of the ministerial office for material gains, such as the abuse and excessive application of excommunication and the sale of masses. For him, a minister is to be "an honorable proclaimer of the word of God and a custodian for the salvation of souls". To proclaim the word means the care and visiting of the poor, the sick, and the needy as "all these things belong to the word of God".³⁰ Preaching is the most salient aspect of the ministry, and the word of God to be preached is for Zwingli both law and gospel, "for in it we learn what God demands of us and with what grace he comes to our aid".³¹

According to Zwingli, both minister and magistrate have reciprocal roles. The civil authorities/magistrate offices/states have the right to use force and wield the means at their disposal to do so. On the other hand, Christian ministers have no power except the Scripture/the Word of God; because ministers are expected to be merely servants, messengers of Christ. A bishop or priest, above all, is nothing but a "watchman"; hence, "the power which the clergy has usurped ought to be taken away and handed over to the civil government, to which ministers must be subject like everyone else."³²

Their role model was Jesus who did not act as a judge during his earthly life, because he reserved the exercise of judgment power until the last day (John 5:22). Thus, ministers should not act as judges, but teach the Gospel of justice and truthfulness. Preaching the Gospel, ministers are expected to render to God the things that are God's and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. (Matt. 22:21). Leaving aside taking over secular authority, priests/ministers should heed to secular authority. This is because magistrate / secular office has its ultimate origin and justification in God.

A Christian believer is expected to seek the Kingdom of God through righteousness; thus, other felicities can be achieved (Matt. 6:33). Like the minister, the magistrate too "derives his authority and power from Christ's life and teaching" (Matt. 22:21; Luke 2:4; Matt. 17:24- 27), following the patterns set by Jesus through obeying to worldly authority.

As for the governor, he should act in accordance with Christ's rule, for he is not the author of the rule.³³ That is to say the laws promulgated may not be "against God's will". Then the rules observed by the magistrate can be outlined as follows: a)

³⁰ Stephens, *Zwingli*, 120-1.

³¹ Stephens, *Zwingli*, 120-3.

³² *Sämtliche Werke*, II 310; Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 84-5. Emphases added.

³³ Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 86

The magistrate should not attempt to change, or amend God's orders, for "(y)ou are too much a child for that. You do not judge the Word of God; the Word judges you"; b) the magistrate should use the sword or power to cut off the rotten parts of the human society and to protect the common good.³⁴ The office of magistrate is called in German Amt ("Office") as the same word used in the ministries of the church, proving the justification of worldly authority.

The magistrate is expected to forgive errs "seventy times seven"; thus, "if there is any hope that the guilty man may mend his ways one must give God's grace a chance to act." He should also not forget that he will have to give account of his administration before God. What is more, for Zwingli, the magistrate is "the servant and administrator of a spiritual office (*Geistliches Amt*) before God"³⁵; for he restrains terror and chaos by force, office, ministry, or the sword. Judging according to outward actions, not inner intentions or wills, the magistrate, according to Zwingli, should be tolerant and based his judgments on outward actions. Furthermore, for him, "(t)he authorities have a primary duty to see that the people acquire a proper knowledge of God," for to obey the civil laws fully is to obey them for conscience's sake."³⁶

To Zwingli, there is a close correlation between stability and spread of the Word of God; for no society is more peaceful and God-fearing than the society in which God's Word is openly and faithfully proclaimed. Briefly, he views that "(w)here the Word of God is most clearly preached, there the law is most faithfully observed" and "(t)he more fully a government believes, the more stable it is."³⁷

According to Zwingli, the ultimate purpose of human justice is to create a situation in which the Gospel can be preached without a hinder. And human justice, though cannot lead to the eternal life, expedites for humans to hear about that life. Chaos and anarchy, for Zwingli, impede the proclamation of the law of love and manifestation of faith. At this juncture, the magistrate is a fellow-worker with God in the aim to lead humans to Him who plumbs their hearts, guide them and save them. Succinctly, a magistrate who is a believer and knower of his duties requires the ministers of the church to perform their duty of proclaiming divine justice; because divine justice is the *raison d'être* of the human justice administrated by the civil rulers.³⁸

³⁴ *Sämtliche Werke*, II 323/25-26; 324/4-8.

³⁵ *Sämtliche Werke*, II 337/15.

³⁶ Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 87-8.

³⁷ *Sämtliche Werke*, II 310/22-23; 330/29-331/3; 330/10-11. Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 87-91.

³⁸ Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 87-9.

4. Obey or Resist to Authority

Human justice, for Zwingli, is an ephemeral justice but at the same time it is willed by God. Without this justice human society cannot function and may become in a kind of savage disposition. Due to these elevated duties, administrators and judges may be honored as God's ministers and helpers. God forbids humans to take oaths and commands them to make their "yes" mean "yes" and their "no" mean "no" (Matt. 5:37). God wants humans to bind themselves by oath (since taking an oath is to call upon God as a witness, Exod. 22:11) If an oath is broken, then a kind of punishment may follow it. Perjury is simply a denial of God and its punishment is by stoning (Deut. 17:5).³⁹

What is more, the believing Christian should obey the laws for the sake of conscience and not for fear of punishment. The believer knows that s/he has nothing to fear from the authorities or powers; for her/his submission is to be out of obedience to God. This is because "it is highly comforting to die for justice' sake."⁴⁰ And s/he is obedient not because of the authorities but because s/he knows God commands and orders. The oppressors of humans act in childish, feeble-minded manner and attended by a court like "a band of decked-out women." If the oppressors attack God's Word/Scripture, or command preachers to distort the Word of God for their own purposes, then it is necessary to resist them, or oust them if needed; for "we must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).⁴¹ "If you are not courageous enough to risk or even suffer death to change the status quo, then you have to endure the tyrant and possibly be struck down with him, for God's chastisement always threatens an evil ruler."⁴²

On the other hand, resistance to rulers out of obedience to God must never involve murder, war, terror, or rebellion (1 Cor. 7:15). If a tyrant got its power by vote of the people, then he must be removed in the same way. If s/he was put in office by princes or aristocrats, then the matter is to be solved through their involvement into the case. In addition to these, to resist successfully, it is necessary to get united; for unity and thus its political manifestation are the fruit of faith and just dealings. Hence, according to Zwingli, "(w)hen tyranny gets a grip on a nation what is lacking is not the means for overthrowing the oppressor, but piety itself!"⁴³

³⁹ Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 80-5.

⁴⁰ *Sämtliche Werke*, II 344/27-28.

⁴¹ Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 84.

⁴² *Sämtliche Werke*, II 344/30-345/3.

⁴³ *Sämtliche Werke*, II 346/9-10.

III. Epilogue or Apologia?

In Christian theology, the problem of church and state has been discussed throughout its history. Hence, like Augustine and Aquinas before him, Zwingli seeks to give some answers to the question at length. In his whole theological system, the Christological core is obvious and a determinant aspect.

For Zwingli, church and state are not two separate communities or institutions; but one and the same community and institutions under the sovereign rule of God. Hence, the minister and the magistrate should concern with the whole crevices of community life. By serving so, each is regarded as the servant of God. On the other hand, this wholeness is to be in the realm of functionality, not in specific personality. Namely, the roles of minister and magistrate are different. In another word, the Bible or the word of God was divine instrument in the hands and mouth of the minister, as the sword is God's instrument in the hands of the magistrate. Church and state belong together, but not in the same person. He thought that the sword was a proper means both to preserve the good and to proclaim the *Scriptura*. Ironically, his death was in battle of Kappel (1531) against the Catholics in the aim to protect the preaching of the Gospel. As chaplain, he joined the battle and did not falter to fight with his soldiers when needed. This salient aspect differentiates him from other renowned reformers.⁴⁴

Moreover, in his writings, Zwingli as a rule distinguishes between divine and human justices. Yet there is a search to construct equilibrium or coalescence between the two. Hence, for him, just as church discipline and service are administered on the basis of human justice, so the magistrate, when he intervenes in church affairs, does so as a church member. That is to say, the two realms are distinct, on the one hand, but they interpenetrate each other in temporal existence.

The basis and justification of civil government are based on divine justice which is the foundation of law. Divine justice reinstitutes the fullness of what is human and of how humans should act. Human justice obliges human being to look toward the divine law as a source of meaning and *telos*. Like the relations between church and state set in practice in Calvin's Geneva, Zwingli's Zurich represents, to a great extent, the Reformation project that was outlined by this great theologian.

An authentic Reformed theologian of the era, Zwingli used to rely to a great extent on the Word of God in the Holy Scripture. For him, the visible church is the church of Christ in its authentic quintessence and the Scripture gives guidance

⁴⁴ Stephens, *Zwingli*, 123-4.

pertaining to its structure and function, including the ministry of discipline. Based on this re-textualization of the extant ethos of the era through Biblical outlook, he expounds a theory of church and state, of government, politics, magistrate and social ethics in the context of the universal kingdom of Christ. Jesus' main paradigm, for Zwingli, was "divine justice" which is preached by the church and administrated by the state through "human justice" via using the force of the sword.

Namely, the administrators or civil authorities are to deal with the wayward situations and take certain precarious measures in the face of injustices. Using the rod/ the sword in the aim to correct debauchery and waywardness is just in accord with the Divine Law. To preserve the social cohesion and structure truth needs to be well sought out. This mode of government was also advised by Paul in his statement: The government has no power over wicked thoughts, but it certainly does over wicked deeds (Rom. 13). In fact this mode of justice is weak and naïf, for it cannot root out the source of evil actions and deeds. Nevertheless it is necessary to obstruct unlawful behaviors and conducts. And human justice helps to separate the righteous from the evil doers.

On the other hand, there are some shifts in his position in relation to church-state equilibrium and interpenetration in his later years. Due to abnormal interference of the political authority in the affairs of the church, he realigned his positions a bit; hence, after January 1523, he clearly separated these two realms, i.e. church and state, but not putting one against the other, and put emphasis on the inalienable rights of the former.⁴⁵ His idiosyncratic attitude can be seen in his statue below:

⁴⁵ Courvoisier, *Zwingli*, 79-91.



This statue of Zwingli in Zurich, Switzerland,⁴⁶ in which Zwingli holds the Word /the Scripture and the sword at the same time, contradicts, to some extent, his Reformation project; but represents his actual life and death at battle of Kappel (1531). This irony on the one hand shows how state-church equilibrium and interdependence can be constructed; on the other hand how *de facto* life imposes its existential necessities and insistences on human being.

⁴⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huldrych_Zwingli (25.04.2007).

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