

T H E
REFORMATION

I. The Reformation as a Reaction Against Medieval Religious Distortions of the Biblical and Early Christian Church's Teaching

- A. Illustration from Luther.
- B. Luther—German; Zwingli—Zürich; Thomas Cromwell—England; Calvin—Geneva.
- C. Biblical view of salvation (grace only) and its effect on certain aspects of church construction.
- D. Real meaning of destruction of artwork in Reformation.
- E. The Reformation rejected.
 - 1. Medieval distortion of Church's having made its authority equal to the authority of the Bible.
 - 2. Medieval distortion of Church's having added human works to the finished work of Christ for salvation.
 - 3. Medieval distortion introduced by Aquinas: mixture of biblical thinking and pagan thought.
- F. Summary of humanistic influence in church.
 - 1. Illustrated by Raphael's *School of Athens and Disputà*.
 - 2. Illustrated by Michelangelo's making pagan prophetesses equal to Old Testament prophets in Sistine Chapel.
- G. For William Farel and the other Reformers it was the Scriptures only.
 - 1. Erasmian Christian humanism rejected by Farel.
 - 2. Bible gives needed answers not only as to how to be right with God, but concerning the meaning of life and what is right and what is wrong, and concerning mankind and nature.
 - 3. The people of the Reformation did not have humanism's problem, because the Bible gives a unity between God—as the ultimate universal—and the individual things.
 - 4. The Reformation was no golden age, but it did aspire to depend on the Bible in all of life.

II. The Reformation and the Arts

- A. German Reformation music tradition peaks in Bach.
- B. Significance of Cranach's and Luther's friendship.
- C. Dürer's identification with Luther evidenced in his diary; significance of his work.
- D. Rembrandt's paintings show that he understood that his sins had sent Christ to the cross, and that Christ is the Lord of all of life.

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- E. Point is not to romanticize Reformation art but refute view that reformation was either hostile to art and culture, or did not produce art and culture.
 - F. *Wittenberg Gesangbuch*, Geneva Psalter, and revival of congregational singing.

III. Comparison of Renaissance and Reformation.

Both sought freedom. In the South license resulted from lack of absolutes; in the North freedom lasted through absolutes.

Questions

1. Can you clearly differentiate between the key ideas of the Renaissance and the Reformation, respectively?
2. “The Reformation is simply the last gasp of medieval Christianity. Once exhausted, the truly modern and humane force of the Renaissance dominated the West.” Comment.
3. “As a man thinketh, so is he”—the renewed emphasis upon the Bible’s teaching in the Reformation had practical results. If some of these results are no longer common among us, how far may this be attributed to a de-emphasis upon biblical teaching today?

Key Events and Persons

Erasmus: c. 1466-1536

Dürer: 1471-1528

Lucas Cranach: 1472-1553

Martin Luther: 1483-1546

Farel: 1489-1565

Johann Walther: 1496-1570

Calvin: 1509-1564

Erasmus’ Greek New Testament: 1516

Luther’s 95 Thesis: 1517

Reform at Zürich: 1523

Wittenberg Gesangbuch: 1524

England breaks with Rome: 1534

Calvin’s Institutes: 1536

Geneva Psalter: 1562

Rembrandt: 1606-1669

Raising of the Cross: 1633

Bach: 1685-1750

Further Study

As with the Renaissance, make sure to follow up the artwork and music mentioned. Different publishers and record companies have many alternate versions of works of the artists and composers mentioned.

A.G. Dickens, *Reformation and Society in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (1966);

The Counter Reformation (1969).

J.Huizinga, *Erasmus and the Age of Reformation* (1957).

B.Moeller, *Imperial Cities and the Reformation* (1972).

E.W. Monter, *Calvin's Geneva* (1967).

F.Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought* (1963).

D.Ziegler, ed., *Great Debates of the Reformation* (1969).