

Reformation Primary Sources

Standard:

Describe the theological, political, and economic ideas of the major figures during the Reformation (e.g., Desiderius Erasmus, Martin Luther, John Calvin, William Tyndale).

"For if we believe it to be true that God foreknows and foreordains all things; that He cannot be deceived or obstructed in His foreknowledge and predestination; and that nothing happens but at His will (which reason itself is compelled to grant); then, on reason's own testimony, there can be no 'free-will' in man, or angel, or in any creature."
Martin Luther, from The Bondage of the Will

"It is no small matter then to understand rightly what the law is, and what is the true use and office thereof... we reject not the law and works, as our adversaries do falsely accuse us... we say that the law is good and profitable, but in his own proper use: which is first to bridle civil transgressions, and then to reveal and to increase spiritual transgressions. Wherefore the law is also a light, which sheweth and revealeth, not the grace of God, not righteousness and life; but sin, death, the wrath and judgement of God... the law, when it is in his true sense, doth nothing else but reveal sin, engender wrath, accuse and terrify men, so that it bringeth them to the very brink of desperation. This is the proper use of the law, and here it hath an end, and it ought to go no further."
Martin Luther from his commentary on Galatians

"By burning Luther's books you may rid your bookshelves of him, but you will not rid men's minds of him."
Desiderius Erasmus

"When I get a little money I buy books; and if any is left I buy food and clothes."
Desiderius Erasmus

Follow the right, do violence to no one, plunder no one, sell no public office, be corrupted by no bribes. To be sure, your treasure will have far less in it than otherwise, but take no thought for that loss, if only you have acquired the interest from justice."
Desiderius Erasmus The Education of a Christian Prince 1518