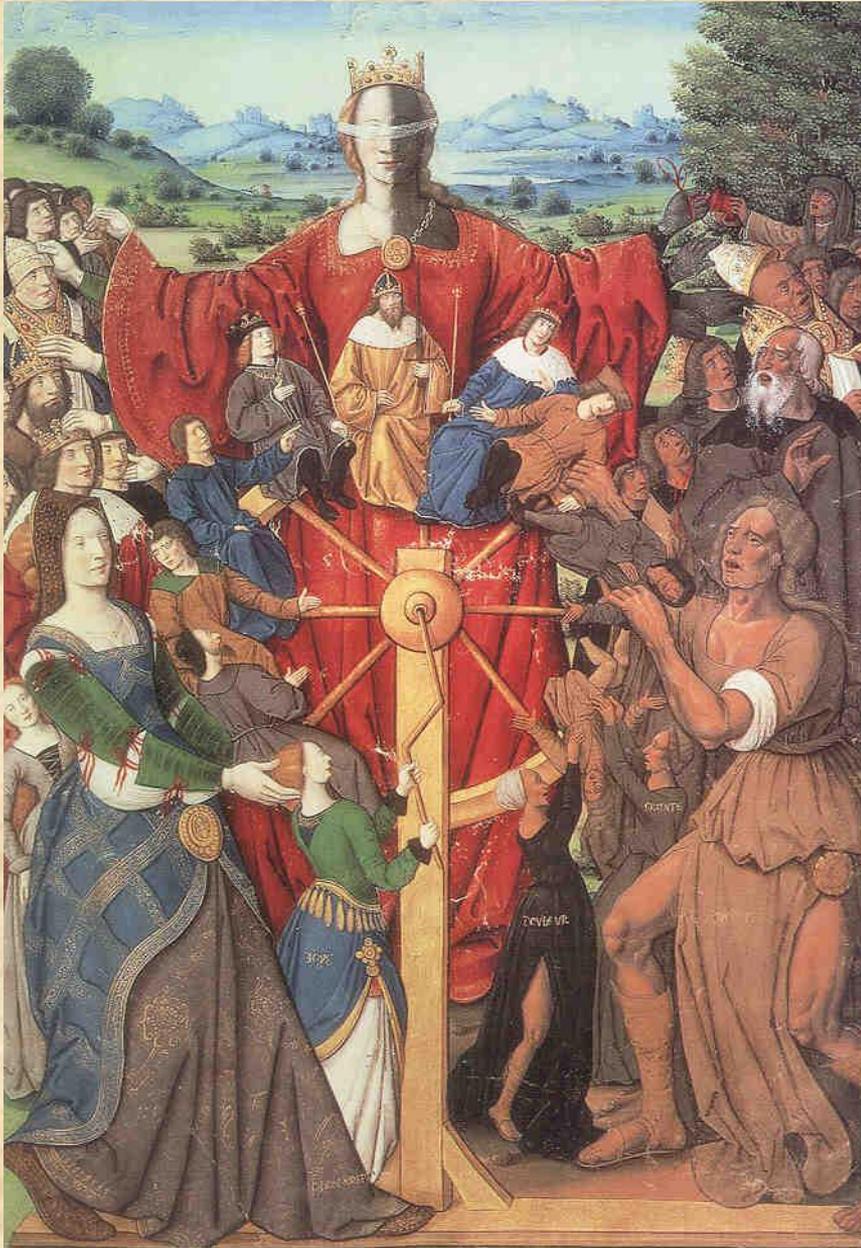


# The Renaissance: Rise of Mysticism and Humanism

History of the Church  
Grace Bible Church  
Randy Broberg  
2003

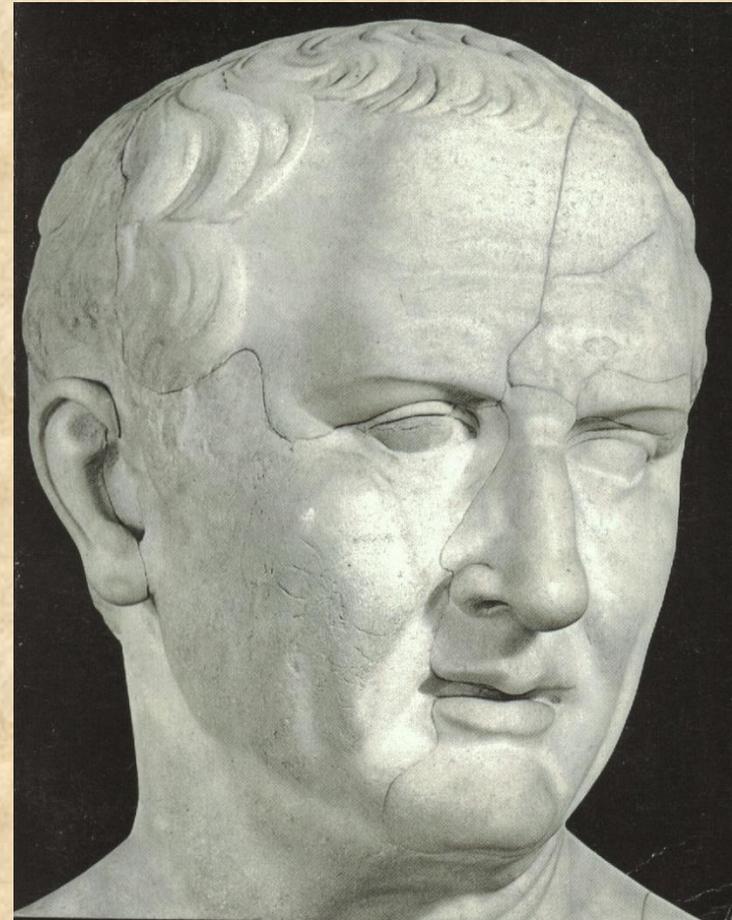


THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE, CONTROLLING HUMAN LIVES

Fortuna (Lady Luck)  
with “Wheel of Fortune”

# Remember Past Lessons:

- The Acculturation of the Church (merger of pagan practices and thinking into the church)
- Influence of Greek Philosophy on Origen and Clement of Alexandria– view of philosophy as a second source of God’s truth.
- Tertullian’s opposition to integration of philosophy, “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?”
- NeoPlatonism permeating Eastern Orthodox Church– Pseudo Dionysius the Areopogate.
- NeoPlatonism of Boethius in early Middle Ages
- Aristotle’s Influence on late Medieval Catholic theology, especially Aquinas
- Influence of “mysticism” especially in East.



*The Rise of Humanism*



*Babylonian Captivity*

1350

John Wycliffe

John Hus

Thomas a Kempis

Savonarola

John Colet

1500

**The Renaissance and Early Reformation Period**

Francesco Petrarch

Conciliar Movement



**The Great Schism  
Rome & Avignon**



Erasmus

Erasmus

*THE REFORMATION*

# Papal Critics: William of Ockham (c. 1285- 1349)



- Popes could err in spiritual interpretation
- Heretical popes could be removed from office
- Strongly Influenced Martin Luther
- For Ockham the power of the pope is limited by the freedom of Christians that is established by the gospel and the natural law.
- It is therefore legitimate and in keeping with the gospel to side with the empire against the papacy or to defend, as Ockham did in 1339, the right of the king of England to tax church property.
- From 1330 to 1338, in the heat of this dispute, Ockham wrote 15 or 16 more or less political works; some of them were written in collaboration, but *Opus nonaginta dierum* (“Work of 90 Days”), the most voluminous, was written alone. 1324, Ockham called for a college of popes to rule the church and claimed that Christ was the only head of the church.
- Ockham entirely rejected papal authority in temporal matters.

# Ockham's Emphasis on Revelation over Reason

- “This was not a disbelieving theology, willing to believe only that which reason could prove. It was rather a theology which, after showing that reason could not reach the depths of God, placed everything in God’s hands, and was ready to believe anything that God had revealed. And to believe it, not because it made sense, but because it had been revealed....Since reason cannot prove that a doctrine is true or false, one must make such determinations on the basis of infallible authorities. Ockham himself believed that both the pope and a universal council could err, and that only the Bible was infallible...God’s promises must be trusted, even though reason might lead us to doubt them.

- Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, p. 364.



# Papal Critics: Marsilius of Padua (1280-1343)

- produced his famous book *Defensor pacis* (Defender of the Peace), c. 1320.
- advocated a secular basis for the state, based upon the will of the people being ruled, and not a churchly authority over the state.
- taught that only the Church was infallible, not the Pope.
- the papacy was not divinely created; it was created by the Christian community and could be abolished

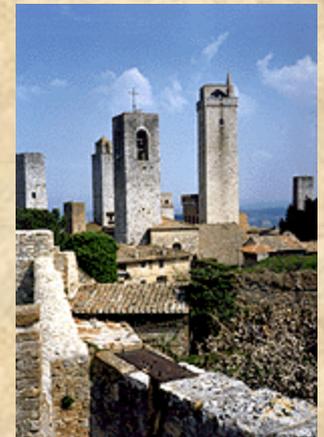


# Augustinian: Gregory of Rimini, d. 1358

- Italian theologian whose **theology of divine grace** borrowed from Augustine.
- University Prof and **Superior General of the Augustinian Hermits**
- “Gregory was a most pertinacious champion of the teachings of [Augustine], and had no hesitation in opposing the general teaching of the Scholastics with respect to the need for grace in fallen man and the punishment of original sin.” *Catholic Encyclopedia*
- Gregory taught Augustinian doctrine,
  - incapacity of man to lead a moral life by free will alone without divine grace.
  - unconditional election and double predestination.
  - complete insufficiency of human will.
- Attacked the Semi-Pelagianism of the Thomists and other scholastics.
- Believed babies dying without Baptism would suffer eternal punishment, thus Gregory's opponents delighted to call him the "Infantium Tortor" (Tormentor of children).
- The widespread influence of Gregory's doctrine over much of late medieval Europe is evidenced by the similar teaching from the 16th-century Augustinian faculty at the University of Wittenberg, Germany, the monastic order and the school of the Protestant Reformer Martin Luther.

# Rise of “Mysticism”

Christianity is not a religion, it's a relationship.



- Emphasized personal emotional experiences of Christ
- Theological view that God is “unknowable” and can only be experienced, not understood.
- Don’t confuse with *charismatic* elements which sometimes overlap.
- “The recurrence of mysticism in eras when the church lapses into formalism testifies to the desire of the human heart to have direct contact with God in the act of worship instead of passively participating in the coldly formal acts of worship performed by the clergyman. The mystic desires direct contact with God by the immediate intuition or contemplation.” Earl Cairns, *Christianity Throughout the Centuries*, p.242
- Factors Contributing to Mysticism:
  - Scholasticism contributed to mysticism, as a reaction against cold logic and forensic outlook.
  - Dead liturgy and religious ceremonies contributed to mysticism, as reaction against a merely external religion.
  - Influence of Greek East and Greek writings

# Meister (Master) Eckhart (1260-1327)

- German Dominican.
- His teaching was condemned by the pope after his death.
- depicts the ascent of the soul to God in Neoplatonic terms.
- God is NOT knowable by study or rational argument or any human concept
- True knowledge of God is intuitive and achieved only by mystical contemplation
- Individual soul has a "spark" of the divine, an inner knowledge of Himself that God has placed in each soul.
- By renouncing all knowledge of the self, one is able to retreat into that "spark" and reach God., by fusion of the human essence with the divine essence.
- By gradually purifying itself from the body, the soul transcends being and knowledge until it is absorbed in the One. The soul is then united with God.

The aim of the Christian should be union of the spirit with God by a fusion of the human essence during an ecstatic experience.

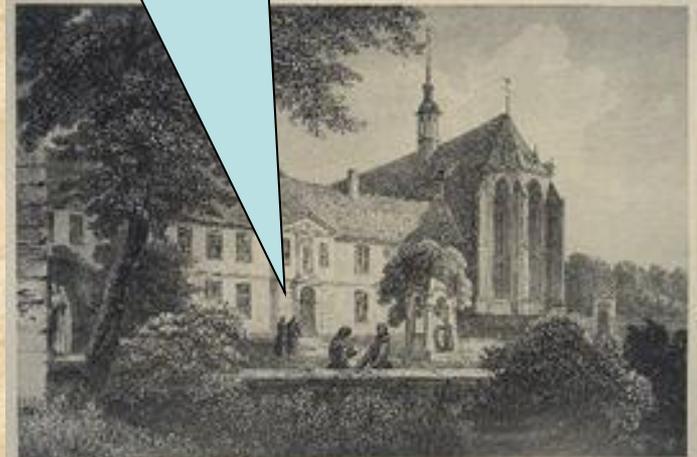


# Mystic: Geert Grote 1340-1384

## Importance of Personal Relationship with Christ

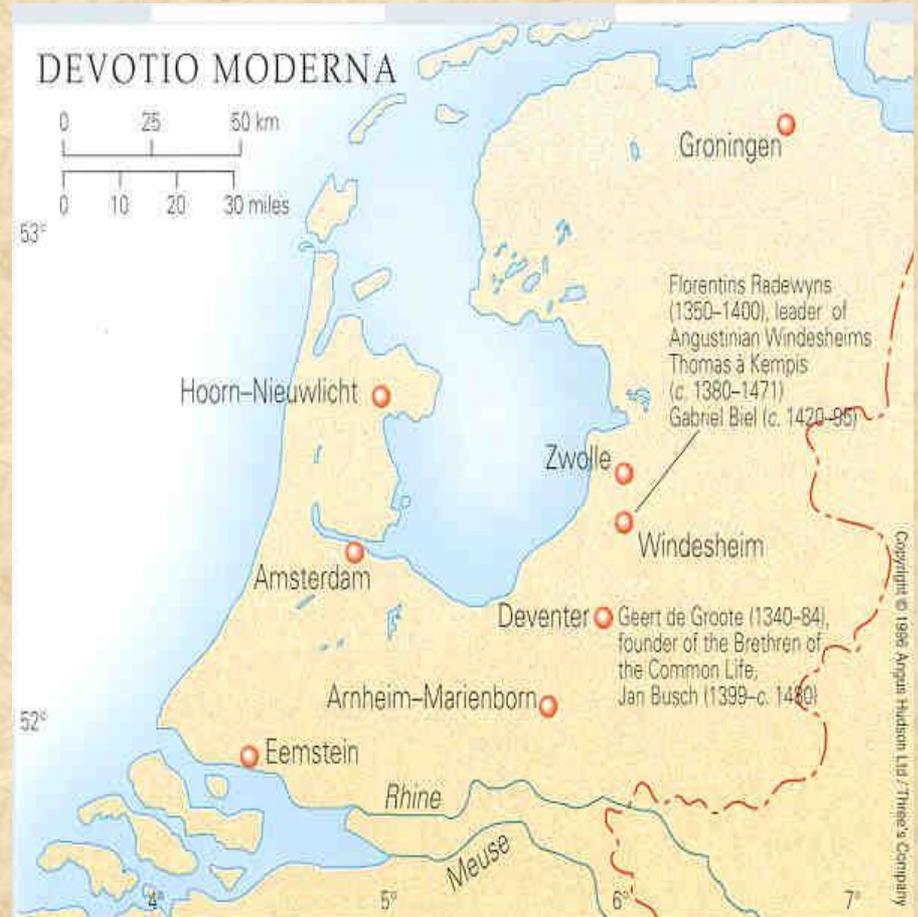
- Experienced a conversion at age 30
- wrote several "Decisions and Intentions"
  - forgoing income from the Church,
  - reducing possessions;
- main focus on the salvation of his soul.
- He gives away the largest part of his possessions, becomes a guest in a monastery without himself becoming a monk
- After three years he begins to preach penance, prayer and fasting, not as outward exercise only but sincerely carried out.
- For Grote the pivotal point is the search for *inner peace*, Geert Grote himself forbidden to preach
- Grote retired and died in 1384.

You're church service seems dead to me. I want to go to a church that's alive with the Spirit, where I can really feel like I'm connecting with God.



# Communal Mystics: “Brethren of the Common Life” Followed *Devotia Moderna* (1340-84)

- Grote’s followers begin to lead a communal life, without vows, in houses of the "Brethren and the Sisters of the Common Life"
- stressed meditation and the inner life, attaching little importance to ritual and external works
- believed that religion is to love God and worship him, not the taking of special vows or studying theology.
- the renewal of the practice of living a spiritual life is of central importance, not arguing doctrine.
- central concern is to immerse oneself in the life of Jesus and to imitate the life of Christ.



# Mystic: Thomas a Kempis (c. 1380-1471)

## “Bear Your Cross”

- member of *Devotio Moderna* and *Brethren of the Common Life*
- entered Augustinian monastery
- Wrote *The Imitation of Christ*, the most influential devotional work in Christian literature after the Bible.
- Noted for its simple language and style, it emphasizes spiritual over materialistic life and affirms the rewards of a life centered on Christ.
- In many sentences of wisdom the imitation of Christ is to be achieved by renouncing the world and turning to Christ: (II,1,1f.)
- Kempis believed all individual Christians could appeal directly to God. Priests and the church were not intermediaries.

"Disdain that which is superficial, dedicate yourself to your inner being and you shall see that the Kingdom of God grows inside you."



# *The Imitation of Christ*

- From the second book, chapter 11: Few Love the Cross of Jesus:
- JESUS has always many who love His heavenly kingdom, but few who bear His cross. He has many who desire consolation, but few who care for trial. He finds many to share His table, but few to take part in His fasting. All desire to be happy with Him; few wish to suffer anything for Him. Many follow Him to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the chalice of His passion. Many revere His miracles; few approach the shame of the Cross. Many love Him as long as they encounter no hardship; many praise and bless Him as long as they receive some comfort from Him. But if Jesus hides Himself and leaves them for a while, they fall either into complaints or into deep dejection. Those, on the contrary, who love Him for His own sake and not for any comfort of their own, bless Him in all trial and anguish of heart as well as in the bliss of consolation



# “In His Steps”/“What Would Jesus Do?”

- **From the second book, chapter 12: The Royal Road of the Holy Cross:**
- If you carry the cross willingly, it will carry and lead you to the desired goal where indeed there shall be no more suffering, but here there shall be. If you carry it unwillingly, you create a burden for yourself and increase the load, though still you have to bear it. If you cast away one cross, you will find another and perhaps a heavier one. Do you expect to escape what no mortal man can ever avoid? Which of the saints was without a cross or trial on this earth? Not even Jesus Christ, our Lord, Whose every hour on earth knew the pain of His passion. ....How is it that you look for another way than this, the royal way of the holy cross? The whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom, and do you seek rest and enjoyment for yourself? You deceive yourself, you are mistaken if you seek anything but to suffer, for this mortal life is full of miseries and marked with crosses on all sides. Indeed, the more spiritual progress a person makes, so much heavier will he frequently find the cross, because as his love increases, the pain of his exile also increases.

# Thomas a' Kempis on Piety vs. Doctrine

- “What good is it for you to be able to discuss the Trinity with great profundity, if you lack humility, and thereby offend the Trinity? Verily, high sounding words do not make one holy and just. But a life of virtue makes one acceptable to God. It is better to feel repentance, than to be able to define it. Were you to memorize the entire Bible and all the sayings of the philosophers, what good would this be for you without the love of God and without grace? Vanity of vanities. All is vanity, except loving God and serving only God.”
- Imitation of Christ, 1.1.3.

My darling,  
your problem  
is your faith is  
all in your  
head, and not  
in your heart.

Didn't Paul  
say, be  
transformed by  
the renewing  
of your mind?  
Right doctrine  
leads to right  
living.



# Early Renaissance Study of “Humanities”

- *Studia Humanitatis*, a course of classical studies that, consisted of grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history, and moral philosophy.
- Educational philosophy based on the study of the classic Greek and Roman texts.
- Compared with typical medieval works, ancient pagan writings seemed new and fresh.
- The emphasis on the culture of ancient Greece and Rome.
- revived the knowledge of the Greek language



# Vernacular Poet and RCC/Papal Critic: Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) *The Divine Comedy*, 1310

- Synthesis/Merger of Christian and Pagan elements.
- It is an allegory of universal human destiny in the form of a pilgrim's journey through hell and purgatory, guided by the Roman poet Virgil, then to Paradise, guided by Beatrice.
- By writing it in Italian rather than Latin, Dante almost single handedly made Italian a literary language, and he stands as one of the towering figures of European literature.
- Dante locates Boniface's soul in the Eighth Circle of Hell, face down in a fissure in the rock. In the Fourth Circle, naked squads of cardinals heave boulders for eternity as punishment for their avarice.



“IN HIS  
WILL IS OUR  
PEACE”

DANTE ALIGHIERI, WRITING ABOUT GOD

# From “Humanities” to “Humanism”



- the term “humanism” was first employed (as humanismus) by 19th-century German scholars to designate the Renaissance emphasis on classical studies in education.
- Man’s chief aim was no longer to worship and enjoy God.
- Belief in the primacy of human reason over faith
- shift of interest from afterlife to earthly life
- man’s “dignity” and free will
- challenge to superstitions and the established laws of universe

# Humanism and Society— *contra* Monastic Ideals

- Humanism meant the development of human virtue, in all its forms, to its fullest extent.
- implied not only such qualities as are associated with the modern word *humanity*—understanding, benevolence, compassion, mercy—but also such more aggressive characteristics as fortitude, judgment, prudence, eloquence, and even love of honour.
- the possessor of *humanitas* could not be merely a sedentary and isolated philosopher or man of letters but was of necessity a participant in active life.
- Just as action without insight was held to be aimless and barbaric, insight without action was rejected as barren and imperfect.
- Humanitas called for a fine balance of action and contemplation.
- Humanism called for the comprehensive reform of culture, the transfiguration of what humanists termed the passive and ignorant society of the “dark” ages into a new order that would reflect and encourage the grandest human potentialities.
- From *Encyclopedia Britannica*





# Francesco Petrararch (1307-1374)

## The “*father of humanism*”

- In 1326 Petrararch abandoned his legal studies; discovered Cicero, Virgil, and the Latin classics
- Man has no fixed place in the universe
- Has freedom to choose his way of life = free will
- Man is a chameleon
- “We can become what we will” = man’s dignity
- If one puts no effort into his development, he will remain among the brute beasts
- But if he tries, through contemplation and prayer he might come to know God
  - *“Let a certain holy ambition invade our souls, so that, not content with the mediocre, we shall pant after the highest and (since we may if we wish) toil with all our strength to obtain it.”*



# Founder of Science of Textual Criticism: Lorenzo Valla (1406-1457)

- attacked Biblical *textual criticism* with a vengeance and proved the so-called Donation of Constantine to be a forgery,
- Laid the foundation of New Testament textual studies with his critical comparison of the Latin Vulgate with the Greek text.
- (Meanwhile Bessarion using textual criticism discovered that the supposed “Dionysius the Areopagite” was a not written by Dionysius but a later Neo Platonic Syrian monk

For man to be responsible, he must be free.



# Platonic humanism:

## Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1499)



- Giovanni Pico della Mirandola
- Neoplatonic view of universe
  - Hierarchy of God, angels, animal life
  - So where is man?
- *Oration on the Dignity of Man*
  - *After thinking a long time, I have figured out why man is the most fortunate of all creatures and as a result worthy of the highest admiration and earning his rank on the chain of being, a rank to be envied not merely by the beasts but by the stars themselves and by the spiritual natures beyond and above this world. ...*

The Neoplatonic hierarchy

# Oration on the Dignity of Man Cont.

- *[God] made man a creature of indeterminate and indifferent nature, and, placing him in the middle of the world, said to him "Adam, we give you no fixed place to live, no form that is peculiar to you, nor any function that is yours alone. According to your desires and judgment, you will have and possess whatever place to live, whatever form, and whatever functions you yourself choose. All other things have a limited and fixed nature prescribed and bounded by our laws. You, with no limit or no bound, may choose for yourself the limits and bounds of your nature. We have placed you at the world's center so that you may survey everything else in the world. We have made you neither of heavenly nor of earthly stuff, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with free choice and dignity, you may fashion yourself into whatever form you choose. To you is granted the power of degrading yourself into the lower forms of life, the beasts, and to you is granted the power, contained in your intellect and judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, the divine."*

# *Oration on the Dignity of Man Cont.*

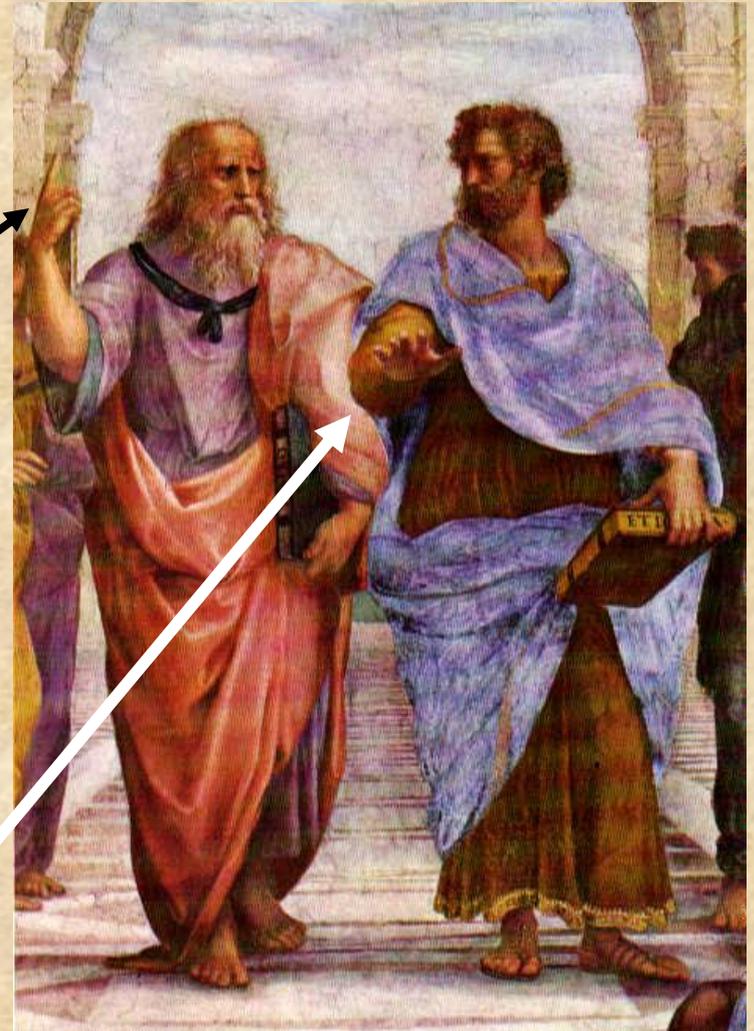
- *Imagine! The great generosity of God! The happiness of man! To man it is allowed to be whatever he chooses to be!.... Man, when he entered life, the Father gave the seeds of every kind and every way of life possible. ...Who could not help but admire this great shape-shifter? In fact, how could one admire anything else? . . .*
- 
- *Considering that we are born with this condition, that is, that we can become whatever we choose to become, we need to understand that we must take earnest care about this, so that it will never be said to our disadvantage that we were born to a privileged position but failed to realize it and became animals and senseless beasts. Instead, the saying of Asaph the prophet should be said of us, "You are all angels of the Most High." Above all, we should not make that freedom of choice God gave us into something harmful, for it was intended to be to our advantage. Let a holy ambition enter into our souls; let us not be content with mediocrity, but rather strive after the highest and expend all our strength in achieving it.*

# Revival of Neo-Platonism and Resurgence of Aristotlianism

- Renaissance philosophy and the renewed influence of Neo-Platonism
- The Renaissance brought renewed interest in the early philosophers and the classics.
- *Ad fontes* (“back to the sources”)
- Platonism Study Center in Florence

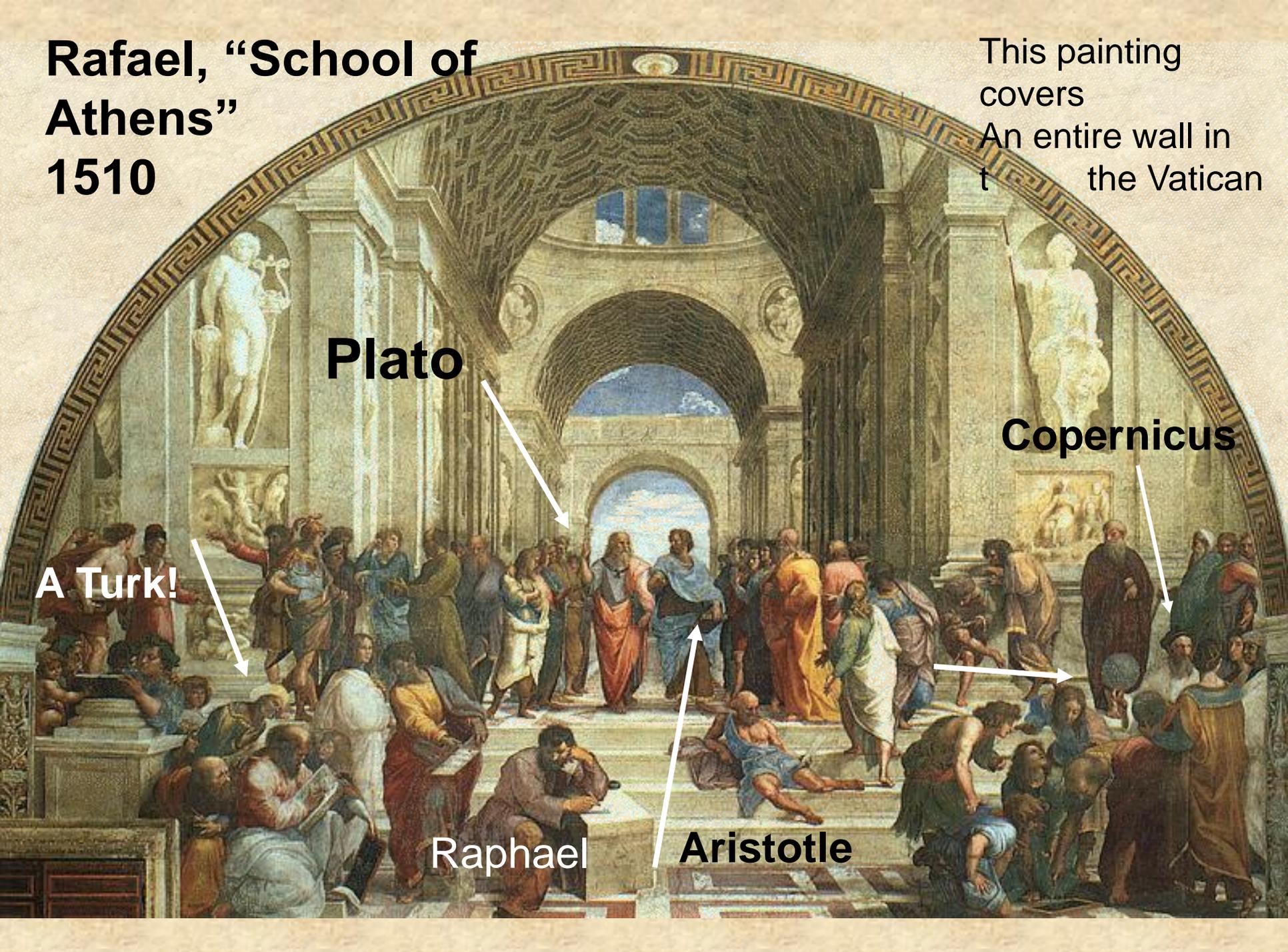
**Plato** points Up, emphasizing the universals, the ideals, deduction, logic

**Aristotle**'s hand points down, emphasizing the particulars, the real, induction and inference, scientific method



**Rafael, "School of Athens"  
1510**

This painting covers  
An entire wall in  
the Vatican



**Plato**

**Copernicus**

**A Turk!**

**Raphael**

**Aristotle**

# Backlash: Savonarola (1452-1498)

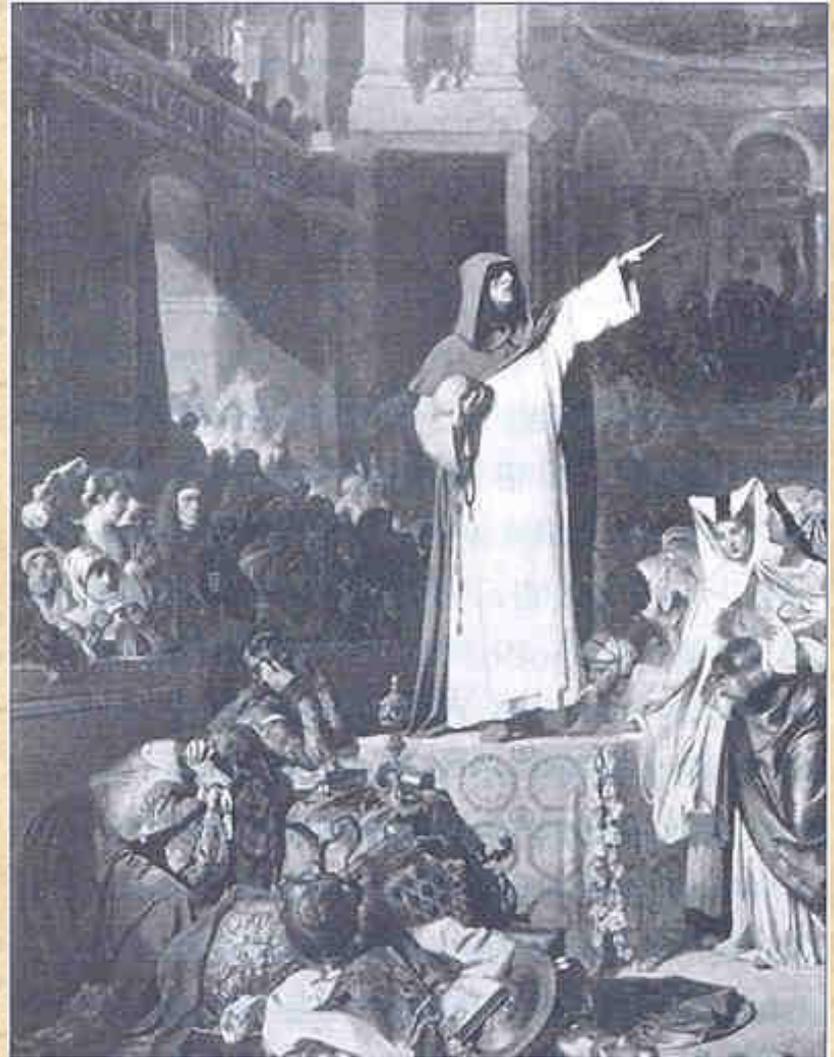
“I say to you, the Church of God must be renewed, and it will be soon.”

- Italian preacher, religious reformer, and martyr.
- He joined the Dominican order in 1475 and was sent to Florence to lecture at the convent of San Marco, where he became known for his learning and asceticism.
- Savonarola became abbot of San Marco at Florence.
- Savonarola preached to congregations of 15,000 in the Duomo!



# Savonarola's Message

- When he began to preach, his strong sense of right drove him to denounce the sins of the day.
- At first his sermons were too scholarly for the masses, but he simplified them.
- Large audiences heard him utter dark prophecies about the future of Italy and Florence and exclaim that the church was a prostitute.
- He preached that the church needed reforming, that it would be scourged and then renewed.
- Savonarola denounced the pope's sins and called on Europe's leaders to throw him out of office.



No building could hold the thousands who came for his sermons.

# Savonarola's Brief Republic, 1494-1498



**Piazza della Signoria**

- After the overthrow of the Medici family (1494), Savonarola became leader of Florence, setting up a democratic government and seeking to establish a Christian republic
- Dominicans roamed the streets enforcing a dress code.
- He called on the Florentines to burn all books, paintings, carvings and any other luxury that drew their hearts away from the deeper things of God. Florence listened.
- On February 7, 1497, he consigned the follies of the city in a great "bonfire of the vanities." Dirty pictures, gambling tables, dice, immodest dresses, perfumes, mirrors, lutes, books and art went up in smoke.
- Botticelli changed his art because of Savonarola, from the nude sensuality of the Birth of Venus to the Madonna of the Annunciation.

- Although some of Savonarola's predictions came true, others failed.
- Bad decisions, not all Savonarola's fault, brought the city to starvation.
- Its money chests were empty.
- Alexander VI threatened an interdict
- He was opposed by the Arrabiati, supporters of the Medici,
- The people of Florence turned against the preacher.
- A Franciscan challenged Savonarola to an ordeal by fire.
- Savonarola's disciple Domenico da Pescia accepted in his place. Crowds gathered. The Franciscan chickened out. Cheated of their spectacle, the crowds blamed Savonarola.
- The next day he was arrested.

# Counter Backlash Against Savonarola



# Savonarola Martyred, 1498



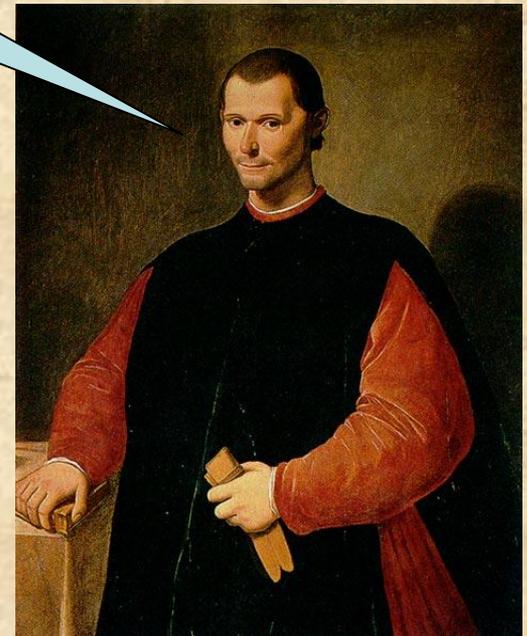
Burning of Savonarola

- Savonarola was tortured.
- Savonarola was tried, convicted of heresy, and hanged and burned.
- As the reformer's body was dumped into the fire, scoffers shouted, "If you can work miracles, work one now!" His hand flew up, two fingers extended, as if blessing the crowd.
- The crowd panicked and fled from the square, crushing several children to death.

# Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527)

*"the ends  
justifies the  
means."*

- Machiavelli rejected earlier humanistic assumptions that one needed merely to imitate the great leaders of the past. With the writings of Machiavelli, humanistic ideas of intellectual, moral, and political reform came to maturation.
- "Individuals are much more likely to respond to fear".
- Power rather than rhetoric makes for good government.



# Acculturation of the Church: Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*,

Greek Sybill!!!



# Michaelangelo Decorates Sistine Chapel with Pagan Sybils



# The Oxford Reformers c. 1450 to 1520

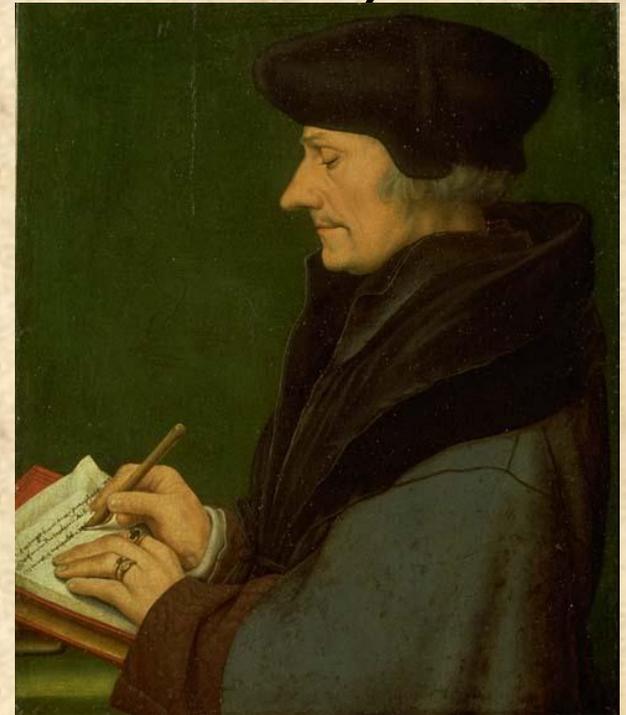
- A group of Oxford University Bible scholars, theologians and humanists including
  - *William Grocyn*: first one to teach Greek in England.
  - *John Colet*: teacher of Erasmus and Thomas More
- revived the study of Greek
- Combated medieval scholasticism, promoted Renaissance humanism
- Revived literal/plain meaning method of studying Scriptures (vs. allegorical method that had dominated for centuries).
- Attacked abuses and idolatry in the Church
- Believed that the study of the Bible was the only route to holiness



Oxford University

# Critic of Church Tradition: Erasmus (1466-1536)

- “Prince of Humanists”
- illegitimate son of a priest
- Joined Augustinian Hermits monks
- ordained as a priest in 1492
- studied in Paris
- to England in 1499 where he met Colet.
- stressed toleration, man's inherent dignity and the practical problems of living as a good Christian.
- Fame followed, and he returned to England, becoming friends with More (among others) and teaching at Cambridge.
- attacked church corruption through sarcasm
- In line with humanism, emphasized this life and ethical living
- dislike for the pretenses of medieval institutions and sacraments
- Strongly influenced by Lorenzo Valla



Hans Holbein the Younger:  
Erasmus von Rotterdam

# Handbook Of The Christian Warrior (1503)

“Wish For Good, Pray  
For Good, Act For  
Good...”

- Erasmus on Indulgences:
  - “I see some merchant or soldier or judge laying down one small coin from his extensive booty, and expecting that the whole cesspool of his life will be at once purified.”
- Erasmus on the Pope:
  - “What disaster would happen if the Pope imitated Christ? Thousands of scribes, sycophants, muleteers and pimps would be unemployed.”

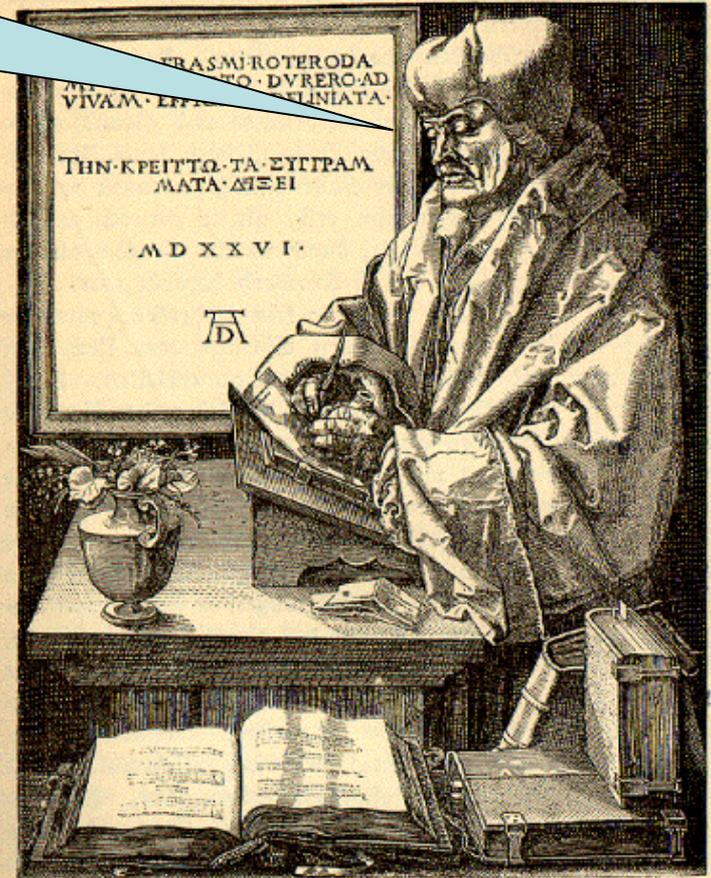
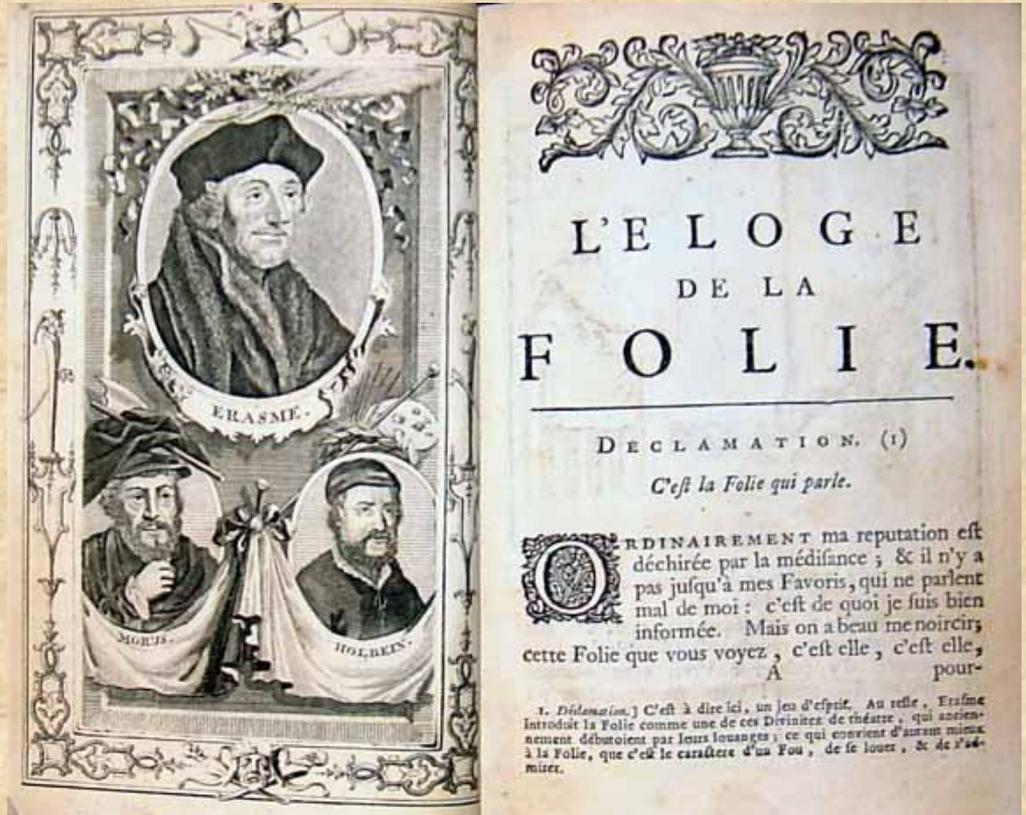


Abb. 8. Erasmus nach H. Dürer.

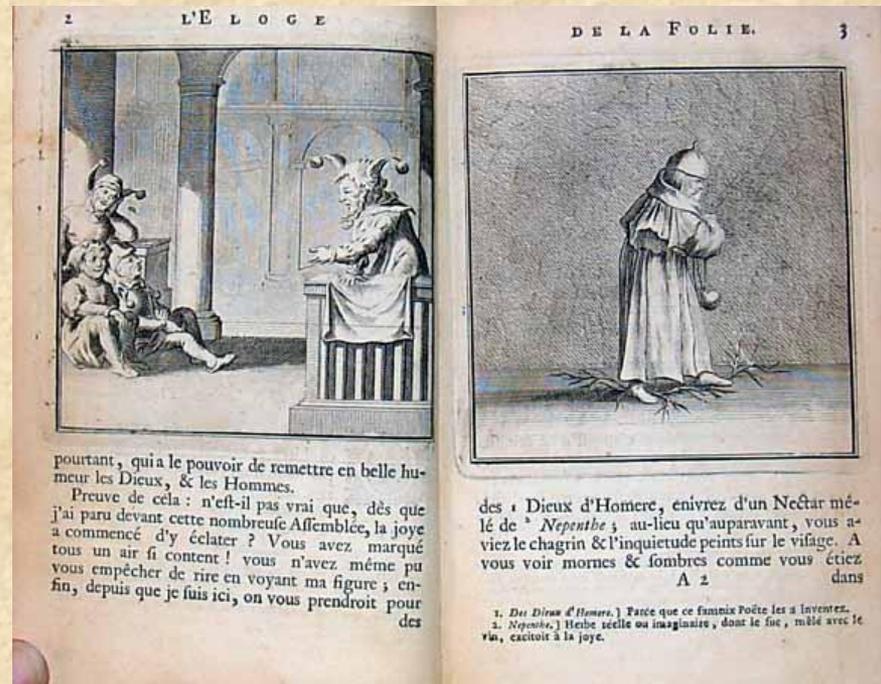
# Erasmus the Satirist: *Praise of Folly* 1511

- A satire that mocked follies of all classes, especially the clergy
- Through humor conveyed his contempt to others Erasmus truly embodied the spirit of humanism and the Renaissance with his love and study of the Latin and Greek classics and his firm conviction concerning the dignity of man.
- his biting critique of the superstition, immorality and corruption of the Catholic Church,).
- Satirizes on worldly wisdom
- Pleas for Christians to have the simple faith of a child



- It will be pretty to hear their pleas before the great tribunal. One will brag how he mortified his carnal appetite by feeding only upon fish; another will tell of how many days he fasted and what severe penance he imposed upon himself; another will produce on his own behalf as many ceremonies as would load a fleet of merchantmen; another will plead that in threescore years he never so much as touched a piece of money, except he fingered it through a thick pair of gloves;...; another will tell his Judge he has lost his voice by singing holy hymns and anthems; and still another, that he has forgotten how to speak by having kept perpetual silence, in obedience to the Psalmist's injunction to take heed lest he should offend with his tongue. But the Savior will set aside their fine excuses by saying, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; verily I know you not."

# From In Praise of Folly



# Erasmus Publishes Greek New Testament

- Erasmus is best known for his production of a Greek New Testament
- New, more accurate Greek edition, combined with revolutionary new Latin translation!
- Encouraged translation into vernacular & wanted distributed to humblest



# From the preface to Erasmus Greek New Testament

I wish that even the weakest woman should read the Gospels – should read the Epistles of Paul; and I wish that they were translated into all languages, so that . . . the farmer should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plow, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, that the traveler should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey. All communication of the Christian should be of the Scriptures.



# “Erasmus Laid The Egg, & Luther Hatched It”

“Perhaps you believe that all your sins are washed away with a little paper... You are utterly deceived... Ceremonies do no make you a Christian.”

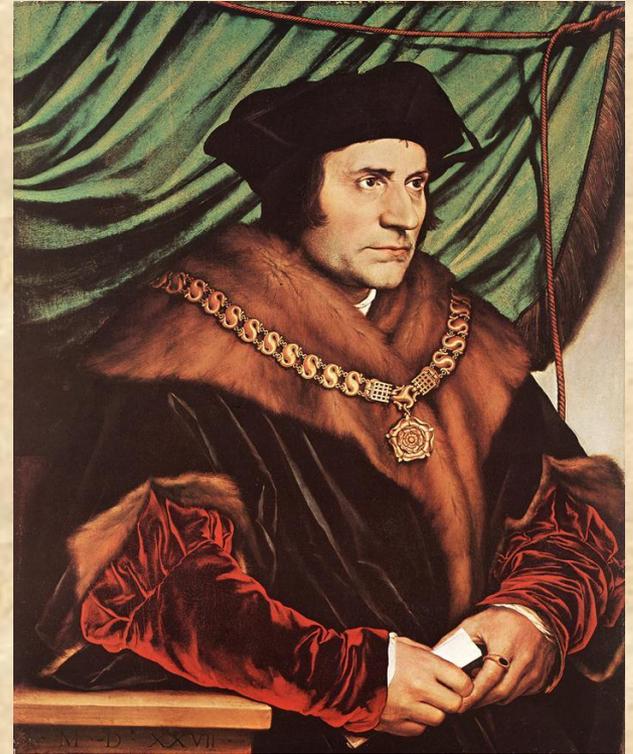


- Despite his criticism of Roman Catholicism, when the Reformation broke out Erasmus opposed it and particularly Luther vehemently.
- His *On the Freedom of the Will* (1524) was against Luther's heavy emphasis on man's sinfulness and God's election and brought forth Luther's classic reply, *On the Bondage of the Will*.
- He had called for reform in the Catholic Church through education, piety and morality, but he had no sympathy whatsoever for the Protestant Reformation theologically.

# Resister of the Church State

## Thomas More, 1478-1535

- Lawyer, parliament, diplomat, chancellor
- received his education at Oxford, with Grocyn as his teacher and Colet and Erasmus as intimate friends.
- Authored *Utopia*, 1515
- entered the parliament at 22 and for a time was a favorite of Henry VIII, which raised him to the position of Lord Chancellor, the high office in the state.
- He revised Henry's rebuttal to Luther (1521),
- More lost the king's favor and finally his life because he refused to recognize the king's divorce from Queen Catherine and the Act of Supremacy.
- Executed, 1535, refusal to acknowledge king as supreme head of church
- Opposed to Protestantism, favored church reform from within.



Sir Thomas More, Hans Holbein the Younger

# Backlash Against Hebrew Scholar: Johannes Reuchlin (1455--1522 )

- German humanist, and classics scholar
- Uncle of Philip Melancthon
- 1506, he published "*On the Fundamentals of Hebrew*", a grammar and lexicon that was of great importance in promoting the scientific study of Hebrew and hence of the Old Testament in its original language.
- When the Dominicans of Cologne led by Johannes Pfefferkorn succeeded in getting Emperor Maximilian I to order (1509) the destruction of Hebrew books as hostile to Christianity, Reuchlin defended the study and preservation of Hebrew literature.
- As the dispute went on, the entire European liberal and humanist community aligned itself on Reuchlin's side against the Dominicans.
- 1515 "*Letters of the Obscure Men*", a satirical pamphlet by young humanists that mercilessly ridiculed late scholasticism as represented by the Dominicans.



# Questions to Consider

- Is God knowable? How do we know him? How important study vs meditation and contemplation?
- What's your pray/read ratio? Is it the right ratio?
- Is Piety in conflict with doctrine or does “right thinking lead to right living”?
- Is a “classical education” (training in Greek and Roman writings) the best education for our children?
- Can we be Christians and “humanists” at the same time or are these concepts mutually exclusive?
- Is our will really free? Can we be anything we choose? Can we choose anything we desire?
- Is moral self improvement possible?
- Can one be virtuous in contemplative isolation or is some impact on life and the world required? Is God pleased if you are just holy in a private or family way or do you need to advance His Kingdom?
- How much of modern day evangelical Arminianism is really humanism in disguise?

