

## *The End of the Middle Ages*

### I. Break-up of Scholasticism

#### A. Monastic Orders and Scholarship

1. Dominican—teaching order, stressing the role of reason → Thomas Aquinas
2. Franciscan—more piety-oriented order, stressing church authority & suspicious of reason → Duns Scotus

#### B. John Duns Scotus (c. 1265-1308)

1. Franciscan who challenged Scholasticism
2. Critique of Scholastic ideas
  - a. Criticized Thomas Aquinas's synthesis of faith and reason
  - b. Questioned reason & stressed authority
  - c. Something can be true in philosophy & false in theology → You can't always reconcile faith w/ reason
3. Teachings
  - a. Known for speculation and convoluted reasoning, the "Subtle Doctor"
  - b. "Acceptation Theory" of the atonement, i.e., that God simply chooses to accept the merits of Christ as sufficient atonement for sin
  - c. Affirmed immaculate conception and helped establish doctrine

#### C. William of Ockham (or Occam; 1287-1347)

1. Franciscan theologian: "Divorce" of faith and reason
2. Rejected the validity of reason in the realm of faith → what revelation states reason cannot prove.
3. "Ockham's razor": always choose the simpler hypothesis to explain phenomena
4. Voluntarism = God's will determines right and wrong
  - a. God conforms to no standard
  - b. The foundation of everything is God's will, not God's nature
5. Church Reform
  - a. Secular governments have authority over the church
  - b. Conciliarism: Councils are greater than popes, based on the idea that the church is made up of individuals, not the special authority of the hierarchy
  - c. The Bible is infallible and the authority (against the authority of the pope)
6. Died excommunicate

### II. "Pre-Reformers"

#### A. John Wycliffe

1. "Morning star" of the Reformation
2. Taught at Oxford in the 14<sup>th</sup> century; also served as a pastor
3. "Dominion" ("Lordship") as a key aspect (Gonzalez)
  - a. All dominion derives from God's dominion & must be exercised righteously
  - b. Thought popes greedy, corrupt, and too involved in secular affairs
  - c. Fell into disfavor after the Peasants' Revolt (1381)
4. Attacked corruption in the church
  - a. Thought the church was the whole of God's elect, not defined by hierarchy or administering the sacraments
  - b. Strongly anti-papal (the papacy was the "antichrist")
  - c. Thought immoral clergy should lose their offices and property
  - d. Popular with the king for opposing the flow of funds from England to Rome

5. Sacraments
  - a. Attacked indulgences
  - b. Questioned confession and penance
  - c. Denied transubstantiation
  - d. Preaching the gospel the primary task of priests, not performing the sacraments
6. Scripture
  - a. Supreme authority of the Scripture (*sola scriptura*)
  - b. Interpreted by the illumination of the Holy Spirit
  - c. Bible translation
    - 1) Famous translation work, although w/ limited impact
    - 2) Translation suggested both perspicuity of the Scriptures and the priesthood of believers
7. Augustinian in salvation (predestinarian, monergistic)
8. “Lollards” followers of Wycliffe’s teachings who continued until the Reformation
9. Posthumously condemned by the Council of Constance (1415)

#### B. John Huss

1. Preached in Prague in Bohemia in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century
2. Influenced by Wycliffe
3. Four points of his teaching
  - a. Free preaching of the Word of God (asked to be refuted from Scripture)
  - b. The Eucharist must be served in two kinds
  - c. Priests must surrender earthly position and possessions
  - d. Punish all public sins
4. Put to death by Council of Constance (1415)
5. Aftermath
  - a. Civil war convulsed Bohemia
  - b. Bohemian (Hussite) Brethren continued his teaching
  - c. Later descendant: Moravian Brethren

### III. Renaissance Humanism

#### A. Definitions

1. “Renaissance” = “rebirth” (i.e., of classical Greek and Roman learning)
  - a. Southern Europe—Renaissance more pagan
  - b. Northern Europe—Renaissance more Christian
    - 1) Focused on the reform of the church
    - 2) Normally non-Augustinian
2. Humanism
  - a. Not “secular humanism,” for always remained ostensibly Christian
  - b. Focus on the humanities, acknowledging the value of human learning

#### B. Contributions

1. *Ad fontes*—back to the [original] sources
  - a. In religion, this referred to the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures
  - b. Crusades brought a flood of teachers & biblical mss. to western Europe
2. Philology (e.g., Lorenzo Valla disproving the authenticity of the Donation of Constantine)
3. Grammatical-historical interpretation
4. Desire for reform—follow the pattern of the ideal church of the past

C. Erasmus

1. Most notable humanist: “Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched.”
2. Humanist pattern of reform
  - a. Clean out corruption & superstition
  - b. Set a pattern of good works
  - c. Pursue scholarship and learning
3. Advocated a “philosophy of Christ”—a life of Christian devotion based on the pattern of Christ
4. Notable works
  - a. *Enchiridion*—handbook for Christian life modeling his “philosophy of Christ”
  - b. *In Praise of Folly*—an example of his keen satire of the church
  - c. Greek New Testament—his greatest contribution to the Reformation
  - d. *Freedom of the Will*
    - 1) Rejected Augustinian views (showing his differences w/ reformers)
    - 2) Spurred Luther’s *Bondage of the Will* in response