

patrons tended to keep him from really standing for anything very offensive to anyone important to him. No reformation could have come from him or from positions like his. It is another reason why we note that humanism did not produce the reformation any more than did the Renaissance.

In general, whether we like it or not, the erudite, polished, and careful for their own reputations, seem to be incapable of accomplishing any sweeping reforms. A reformer must have an attitude that makes everything secondary to the purpose of his work in reform. Erasmus had a gifted mind but did not know this sort of dedication.

Reuchlin 1455-1522

Chiefly a scholar interested in Hebrew (which, if your memory is good will show you that he was not afraid to study an unpopular subject...the medieval church did not trust the Jews nor their language), Reuchlin studied the Hebrew texts and produced a German/Hebrew lexicon and in general sought to preserve Jewish/Hebrew literature and culture. He was encouraged by Erasmus and during the period of 1510 - 1516 an exchange of letters occurred about the controversy of the renewed Hebrew studies. LETTERS OF EMINENT MEN was a work of praise for Reuchlin's efforts. Von Hutten, a fellow humanist and associate of Reuchlin, produced LETTERS OF OBSCURE MEN as a means of ridiculing the monks in general and Reuchlin's enemies in particular. Both men protested vigorously the destruction of Hebrew/Jewish works. Reuchlin, like Erasmus however, was not ready for the reformation and protested Luther's separation from the church.

In Summary, the humanistic spirit may be characterized this way:

-It was distrustful of the clergy and clerical aspirations...it felt a deep disdain towards the monks and suspected the church of being anti-human.

-It opposed interpretative allegory (although some humanists were not above using it for their own books and works).

-It moved in the direction of philosophical pragmatism, what works must be right.

-It had real interest in the arts and human welfare.