

2002

Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn: The Western Dilemma: Calvin or Rousseau? Study Guide

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Recommended Citation

Samson, Steven Alan, "Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn: The Western Dilemma: Calvin or Rousseau? Study Guide" (2002). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 147.
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**ERIK VON KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN:
THE WESTERN DILEMMA: CALVIN OR ROUSSEAU?
STUDY GUIDE, 2002
Steven Alan Samson**

Outline

- I INTELLECTUAL SWAY OF THE TWO JOHNS OF GENEVA
 - A. VACILLATION OF THE WESTERN WORLD BETWEEN THE TWO
 - 1. John Calvin: The Protestant Work Ethic
 - 2. J.-J. Rousseau: The French Revolution and Its Descendants
 - B. PROTESTANT REFORMATION AS A CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION
 - 1. Luther's Augustinian Opposition to Modernity
 - a. His Rejection of Renaissance Humanism and Its Revival of Paganism
 - 1) Medieval View: World as a Circle with God as Its Center
 - 2) Renaissance Placed God and Man at the Center
 - b. Reformation as a Reaction against Humanism
 - c. Conservative Adherence to the Gothic Style, to The Old Order, and to Common Law
- II LUTHER AND CALVIN COMPARED
 - A. NEITHER INAUGURATED THE MODERN LIBERAL-DEMOCRATIC OUTLOOK
 - 1. Calvin's Attitudes Were Aristocratic and Oligarchical
 - 2. Theory of the Right to Resistance Was Developed by Later Calvinists from Medieval Sources [But Actually before the Edict of Nantes of 1598]
 - 3. Predestination
 - B. THEOCENTRIC DOCTRINAL POSITIONS
 - 1. Adherence to Strict Discipline and Opposition to Catholic Humanism
- III. EIGHTEENTH CENTURY RATIONALISM AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT
 - A. SOURCES IN SCHOLASTICISM AND THE RENAISSANCE
 - 1. Both Emphasize the Power and Glory of Man
 - 2. Both Are Expressions of Human Self-Assertiveness
 - 3. Catastrophic Consequence: the French Revolution
 - B. THE GENIUS OF THAT REVOLUTION TRIUMPHED IN THE REFORMED ORBIT
 - 1. Paradox: The Catholic World, Where It Originated, Was Vaccinated Against the Infection
 - 2. Effects on the Churches of the Reformation
 - a. Schism between Orthodox and Secularized Branches
 - 2. Intrusion of the Secular Spirit Has Created a Semantic Confusion about the Differences between the Catholic and "Protestant" Inclinations
 - C. JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU: SOURCE OF THE CHANGED ATTITUDE
 - 1. Goodness of Human Nature
 - 2. His Contradictory Message:
 - a. Appeal to Man's Innate Goodness
 - b. Collective Concept of Liberty
 - c. Restrictive Political Order
 - 3. Twin Poles of His Thinking
 - a. Totalitarian Concept of the General Will (*volunte*)

origins and effects of eighteenth century rationalism and Enlightenment
Jean Jacques Rousseau's contradictory message and its influence
Calvinistic foundations of the American system and the shift to Rousseau