Writers, Martyrs and Rulers: Women and the Protestant Reformation
Katharina von Bora (1499-1542)
Argula von Grumbach,

The open letter of a Christian woman of the Bavarian nobility, with arguments based on divine Scripture, which criticizes the University of Ingolstadt for compelling a young follower of the gospel to contradict the word of God (1523)
Matthew Zell (1477-1548), Strasbourg reformer
“It is proper to (and part of) being a Christian to suffer, but it is not at all proper for him to be silent, for that silence is half a confession that the lies are true… write not only for my husband, but for the whole multitude of those who preach the Gospel, such as Luther…I have written for all good-hearted people—not only those in this city, who hear and know enough, but those in other lands where such fearful lies come, so that they may know how to take these lies.”

Katharina Schutz’s apologia for Master Matthew Zell, her husband, who is a pastor and servant of the word of God in Strasbourg, because of the great lies invented about him (1524)
“I have placed myself and my husband in God’s hand with a joyous heart: may His will be done in us! If someone says: ‘This is none of your business, it belongs to other folk than you, and Paul says that women should keep silent.’ I answer, do you not know, however, that Paul also says in Galatians 3 ‘In Christ there is neither man nor woman’? And God in the prophet Joel says in Chapter 2, ‘I will pour out my Spirit over all flesh, and your sons and daughters will prophesy.’ And you know also that Zechariah became dumb, so that Elizabeth blessed the Virgin Mary.”
“I do not seek to be heard as if I were Elizabeth, or John the Baptist, or Nathan the prophet who pointed out his sin to David, or any of the prophets, but only as the donkey whom the false prophet Balaam heard. For I seek nothing other than that we may be saved together with each other. May God help us do that, through Christ His beloved son.”

--Katharina Zell (1524)
“I beg you, loyal believing women, also to do this: take on you the manly Abraham-like courage while you too are in distress. When you may meet with imprisonment in towers, chains, drowning, banishment, and such like things; when your husbands and you yourselves may be killed, meditate then on strong Abraham, father of us all….Consider the words of Christ, where He says ‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.’”

Katharina Zell, Open letter to the suffering women of the community of Kentzingen (1524)
Modern mural portrait of Katharina Zell
"We are not obligated to accept all opinions and beliefs, but are obligated to show love and mercy toward everyone, as our teacher Christ taught."

"I have begun many things that previously were not normal for women, and not many [women] followed my example... but I have done faithfully and simply according to the measure of the gift that God and his spirit has given to me."

Katharina Zell, *Letter to the whole citizenry of Strasbourg* (1557)
The burning of Anne Askew, 1546
“I hear the Trumpet sounding,  
From far off I hear her blast! . . .  
Murderous seed, what will you do?  
Offspring of Cain, you put to death  
The lambs of the Lord, without just cause—  
It will be doubly repaid to you!  
Death now comes riding on horseback,  
We have seen your fate!  
The sword is passing over the land,  
With which you will be killed and slain,  
And you will not escape from Hell!”

Anna Jansz “Trumpet Song” (1534)
“My son, hear the instruction of your mother, and open your ears to hear the words of my mouth. Watch, today I am travelling the path of the Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, and drink from the cup from which they have all tasted. . . . But if you hear of the existence of a poor, lowly, cast-out little company, that has been despised and rejected by the World, go join it. . . . Honor the Lord through the works of your hands. Let the light of Scripture shine in you. Love your Neighbor; with an effusive, passionate heart deal your bread to the hungry.”

Anna Jansz, Testament to her son (1539)
Anna Jansz on the way to her execution, from the 1685 *Martyrs’ Mirror*
Maria of Monjou being drowned, from the 1685 Martyrs’ Mirror
A Song about Jeronimus Segersz and his Wife Lijsken

….The Wolf then turned his craft on Lijsken, Thinking he would make that woman recant; But her pillar was the word of God, And she endured, remained fast standing Against the Anti-Christ’s rough rabble, Who so harshly did pursue her, Even coming around to Scripture.
Jeroen, going to the sacrifice,  
Was very well prepared to die;  
Big Hendrik, standing there as well  
Patiently waited for death with him.

They stepped together, the two of them,  
Thus to the stake, and had no fear,  
For their Father they did long  
To whom they did commend their spirit.
Jeroen had to leave his love
That was for him a sorrow great
For she was fruitful with their child.
And when she had born that child,
In torment, with great labor,
They threw that small sheep into the Sheldt.

From the martyrology and songbook Het Offer des Heeren (Sacrifices of the Lord) 1570
Marguerite of Navarre (1492-1549): ruler, writer, reformer
Elisabeth of Brunswick-Calenburg (1510-1558): ruler, reformer
Elisabeth and her husband Erich, in a marble bas-relief, St. Blasius church in Münden
Elisabeth’s book of consolation for widows
Former hospital in Münden, supported by Elisabeth
Maria van Monjou. 1552.