

History of the Received Text

The Real Story of Erasmus

Study Pak 7A

Dr. Phil Stringer

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"A Catholic writer, Hugh Pope, under an official Roman Catholic imprimatur and nihil obstat, says Erasmus was a heretic from Rome. He scoffed at images, relics, pilgrimages and Good Friday observances. Pope suggested Erasmus had serious doubts about every article of Catholic faith: the mass, confession, the primacy of the Apostolic See, clerical celibacy, fasting, transubstantiation and abstinence. He also ridiculed invocation of the saints, reverence for relics and prayers to Mary. There was scarcely any superstition or abuse in the Roman Church that Erasmus did not denounce. It is obvious then that Rome certainly has no desire to claim Erasmus. Erasmus was also a vocal opponent of Roman scholastic theology and of the ignorance of the monks. Thus, AV critic, Doug Kutilek, is incorrect when he says 'Erasmus did not disapprove of Roman Catholic doctrine.' To speak then of the Roman Catholic Erasmus: and to try to paint him as a loyal Romanist is to speak against the facts and slander Erasmus' name.

Hugh Pope continues regarding Erasmus and Rome: 'He seemed to take pleasure in suggesting doubts about almost every article of Catholic teaching ... Small wonder then that he came to be regarded as the man who paved the way for the Reformation ...'"

~~ From an internet article "In Defense of Erasmus by Dr. John Cereghin". ~~

I. THE ATTACK AGAINST ERASMUS (1466-1536)

- A. He was a _____.
1. He never left the Catholic Church.
 2. He dedicated the Textus Receptus to the Pope.
- B. He was a _____.
- C. He _____.

II. HIS LIFE

- A. He was born in Holland in 1466 A.D.
- B. He graduated from two universities with studies in Greek. One of the universities was Catholic; the other was operated by the Brethren of Common Life, an evangelical group.
- C. He became a priest in 1492 A. D.
- D. He studied in Paris in 1495.

- E. He studied for two years with English scholars from 1499-1500.
- F. He studied in England again in 1505 A. D.
- G. He studied in Italy from 1506-1509.
- H. He lectured in Cambridge from 1509-1514. He taught William Tyndale at Cambridge.

Clinton Branine, "Erasmus was by nature a nomad."

- I. Erasmus began to prepare a _____ and a _____ for general use. These were published in 1516 A. D.
- J. He spent the rest of his public life lecturing in Holland and Germany.
- K. He spent his last years living in a Protestant community in Switzerland. His funeral was preached by a Protestant preacher.

III. HIS WORK

- A. The regular study of Greek and Latin had fallen off greatly in Europe.
 - 1. There was no common edition of the Greek New Testament available to the people.
 - 2. The only Latin Bible commonly available was the Latin Catholic Vulgate which he _____.
- B. Erasmus criticized many of the teachings of the Catholic Church and determined to make _____.
 - 1. His Latin Textus Receptus was spread throughout Europe.
 - 2. His Greek Textus Receptus was published in five editions.

This would do more to _____ than any single event.

J. A. Froude, *Life and Letters of Erasmus*, writes:

"Erasmus had undertaken to give the book to the whole world to read for itself.

The original Greek of the Epistles and Gospel, with a new Latin Translation to wake up the intelligence, to show that the words had a real sense ... It was finished at last, text and translation printed, and the living facts of Christianity, the persons of Christ and the Apostles, their history, their lives, their teachings were revealed to an astonished world. For the first time, the laity were able to see, side by side, _____ and the Christianity of the Church with a Borgia pope, cardinal princes, ecclesiastical courts, and a mythology of lies. The effect was to be _____. Erasmus opens with a complaint of the neglect of Scripture (in his preface and notes to each gospel), of a priesthood who thought more of offertory plates than of parchments, and more of gold than of books: of the degradation of spiritual life, and of the vain observances and scandalous practices of the orders specially called religious ..."

3. A common proverb of the Sixteenth Century was, "_____."
4. He wrote many books praising the Protestant faith and attacking Catholicism.

IV. WAS ERASMUS A GOOD CATHOLIC?

- A. He never officially left Roman Catholicism.
- B. He pandered to the Pope for safety reasons (including dedicating the T.R. to him).
- C. The Protestant churches all used his work as the basis for their translations.
- D. He was attacked constantly by Catholic priests.
- E. He wrote about salvation by faith.
- F. The Catholic Church placed his works on the index of Forbidden Books.
- G. His books were burned by the Inquisition.

V. WAS ERASMUS A HUMANIST?

_____. In the 16th Century, being a humanist meant _____.

VI. WAS ERASMUS A SCHOLAR?

- A. He was the _____.
- B. He was offered positions all over Europe. He edited and published works by Jerome, Ireneaus, Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, Basil and Origen. He wrote foundational works on textual criticism.
- C. Erasmus spent his adult life traveling, visiting libraries, reading, lecturing and publishing.

VII. FOLLOW UP WORK ON THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS

- A. Robert Stephanus.

French printer, Robert Stephanus, published four further editions of Erasmus Greek Text (1546, 1549, 1550 and 1551). He examined _____ and _____ but his work almost completely matches Erasmus. His work became the commonly accepted Greek Text of evangelicals.

- B. Theodore Beza.

Beza was Calvin's successor in Geneva. He published ten editions of the Textus Receptus. _____ was used by the King James translators.

- C. The Elzevir Brothers.

Abraham and Bonaventure Elzevir published three editions of the TR-1624, 1633 and 1641.

They began to call their Greek text the Textus Receptus. This reflected the belief _____, that God's people had used for centuries, _____.

VIII. TEXTUAL RESTORATION

Erasmus' great contribution was his determination to _____. He believed that the Greek and Latin texts commonly available in his day had all been corrupted by heretics. But his belief in _____ caused him to believe that the pure word of God could be found and restored to the general public.

Millions of born again believers have benefitted from his works.

IX. EDWARD HILLS ON ERASMUS

"It was this common faith which guided Erasmus providentially in his task of editing the first printed Greek New Testament (1516). Although he was not himself outstanding as a man of faith, yet in his editing of the New Testament text, he was guided by the faith of others. He was desirous of publishing an edition of the New Testament which would be well received and offend no one. Hence in his labors on the New Testament text, Erasmus was probably expressing not so much his own views as the views of his contemporaries, views with which he would have become very well acquainted through his correspondence and his travels. **In short, as editor of the first printed Greek New Testament, ERASMUS WAS PROVIDENTIALLY CONTROLLED BY THE COMMON FAITH** _____

_____. Luther, Melancthon, Stephanus, Calvin, Beza, and the other scholars of the Reformation Period who labored on the New Testament text were similarly guided by God's special providence. These scholars had received humanistic training in their youth, and in their notes and comments they sometimes reveal traces of this early education. But in their actual dealings with the biblical text these humanistic tendencies were restrained by the common faith in the providential preservation of Scripture, a faith which they themselves professed along with their followers. Hence in the Reformation Period the textual criticism of the New Testament was different from the textual criticism of any other book. The humanistic methods used on other books were not applied to the New Testament. In their editions of the New Testament, Erasmus and his successors were providentially guided by the common faith to adopt the current text, primarily the current Greek text and secondarily the current Latin text ... **THUS THE LOGIC OF FAITH LED TRUE BELIEVERS OF THAT DAY, JUST AS IT LEADS TRUE BELIEVERS TODAY, TO THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS AS THE GOD - GUIDED NEW TESTAMENT TEXT**"

~~ (Hills, *Believing Bible Study*, p. 63). ~~

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