

Erasmus of Rotterdam who produced the first printed edition of the Greek text of the NT. This became the base for the subsequent translational activity of Martin Luther and William Tyndale.

The Reformation is not only a major doctrinal shift, but it includes a hermeneutical shift as well: sola gratia (by grace alone) is intimately tied to sola Scriptura (by Scripture alone). We note several specific aspects of Reformation exegetical procedure:

1. The Scripture has supreme authority.

The Bible stands above the traditions of the Church, the councils, the Pope, and the opinions of the philosophers. All human opinions or knowledge is to be subjected to the authority of the Word. As Luther put it,

What else do I contend for but to bring every one to an understanding of the difference between the divine Scripture and human teaching or custom, so that a Christian may not take the one for the other and exchange gold for straw, silver for stubble, wood for precious stones, as St. Paul teaches, I Corinthians iii, likewise St. Augustine in many places.

—“*Answer to the Superchristian, Superspiritual, and Superlearned Book of Goat Emser,*” Works of Martin Luther, Vol. III, p. 372.

Philosophy understands naught of divine matters. I don't say that men may not teach and learn philosophy; I approve thereof, so that it be within reason and moderation. Let philosophy remain within her bounds, as God has appointed, and let us make use of her as of a character in a comedy; but to mix her up with divinity may not be endured.

—Table-Talk, #XLVIII.

Cited from H.T. Kerr, A Compend of Luther's Theology.

Thus, theology should once again become exegetically based.

2. The Bible should ideally be studied in its original languages.

And let us be sure of this: we shall not long preserve the Gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which we carry this jewel; they are the vessel in which we hold this wine; they are the larder in which this food is stored; and as the Gospel itself says, they are the baskets in which we bear these loaves and fishes and fragments. . . .