

Importance

- Dutch Humanist
- He was an accomplished classical scholar, but was also learned in the history of the Church and the writings of its early Fathers. He was devoted to the study of the scriptures, but was also familiar with the scholastics
- He was an educational reformer in touch with all the major European humanists, a satirist and a political thinker

Works

- Greek Testament that was pieced together from various manuscripts and fragments
- Latin New Testament, which was translated from the Greek original,
- Greek-Latin New Testament
- *The Paraphrases* - Set of commentaries on the books of the New Testament
- *The Praise of Folly*

Erasmus Reformation Tendencies

- Proponent of translating the bible into vulgate (common languages)
- William Tyndale based his English Translation on Erasmus' Greek/Latin Testament
- Believed that only through the imitation of Christ is one truly Christian
- His writing did much to shape the early reformation movement
- Did much to ensure the Martin Luther was not silenced and put to death
- Never joined the Reformation movement – felt that the reformed church must be one and must be reformed peacefully

Paraphrases

- Written in Latin
- Attempts to establish an accurate text and to explain the gospels in such a way that the Christ of the apostles and evangelists might be heard clearly and plainly
- One of his chief interests was in controversial passages, which had come to have special doctrinal significance
- Used multiple techniques to achieve his goals. These included simple elaboration of the biblical details, exploration of state of mind of biblical characters, traditional allegorical or typological techniques of exegesis, and satire
- The *Paraphrases* were translated into English late in the reign of Henry VIII under the patronage of Queen Catherine Parr
- Erasmus' *Paraphrases* on the Gospels and Acts were part of a national program of Christian education intended to produce a distinctively English church

Praise of Folly

- Written in Latin 1509 and first printed in 1511
- Written to amuse Thomas More, on whose name its Greek title *Moriae Encominium* is a pun
- Ironic encomium (praise of a person or thing), after the manner of the Greek satirist Lucian

- Best known work of Erasmus
 - By Erasmus death it was translated into French, Czecholovakian and German, and 36 Latin editions had been printed
- Three main sections
 - Series of orations in which Folly praises herself, self-deception and madness
 - Satirical examination of the abuses of the Catholic doctrine and their corrupt practices
 - Statement of Christian ideas
- In Praise of Folly
 - Her appearance makes her welcome
 - Proper for Folly to praise herself
 - Her speech is unprepared but genuine
 - Her ancestry and birth – child of Plutus (wealth) and Youth
 - Born in the Fortunate Isles – nursed by Drunkenness and Ignorance
 - Folly's power over humanity
 - Owe your existence (birth) to her
 - Infancy is the merriest part of life – we cherish their folly
 - Brings the old back to a second childhood
 - Marriage
 - Friendship
 - Folly and Society
 - War is dependent on Folly – both parties are sure to lose more than they get
 - Civil society – society is not run by philosophers
 - Arts founded on foolishness – men are seeking fame
 - Folly
 - Gives true prudence
 - Brings true wisdom
 - To be foolish is to be happy
 - To be mad or deluded is not necessarily bad
 - Greater than the other gods – she bestows her gifts on all
- Divines (Theologians)
 - Pronounce heresy on people who are not in their favor
 - Use new-found world and prodigious terms
 - Explain the most hidden mysteries according to their own fancy
 - Try to express things better than the Apostles - fail
 - Rules of ethics that they do not explain
 - They correct and criticize the apostles
 - They try to convert unbelievers with their logic rather than their lives
 - The learned pious men are disgusted by them
 - They believe they uphold the church
 - They make-up their own pictures of hell and heaven
 - They don't follow the proper use of grammar and use a language of their own
 - They glory in the title of "Our Masters"